

48. Jesus Entered the City of Jerusalem

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand both the evil in the heart of those who are still under the control of sin and the love that develops in such a life when that person allows the love of Christ to take control of his or her heart. In our topic today, we are going to see that many of the followers of Jesus showed their love when Jesus publicly offered Himself as the King of the Jews.

The day following the dinner at the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, we read that Jesus made a very public entrance into the city of Jerusalem. John 12:12-16 says, “The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: ‘Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! The King of Israel!’ Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: ‘Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt.’ His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and *that* they had done these things to Him.” Here, we see that Jesus presented Himself as the Messiah.

During the time of the Passover, as many as 500,000 Jews would come from other areas to the city of Jerusalem for the Passover. A sizeable group of these people came from the area of Galilee where they had seen Jesus do many miracles. These visitors to the city of Jerusalem would usually gather in the temple courtyard during the time of the various feasts. Word quickly spread through this great crowd of people that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. Many people took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Jesus. There were, and still are, many date palm trees around the city of Jerusalem so it was easy for the people to find many palm branches.

When the people met Jesus, they began to shout and cry out, “Hosanna! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’ The King of Israel!” The word “Hosanna!” came from the Hebrew and means *give salvation now*. Psalm 118:26 says, “Blessed *is* he who comes in the name of the LORD! We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.” We see that statement was included as part of the words that the people were shouting. During the various Jewish feasts, the choir in the temple at Jerusalem would sing Psalms 113-118. Jewish writers on the Psalms wrote that Psalm 118 was speaking about the Messiah. The King of Israel was also a title that the Jews gave to the Messiah. As a result, as these people met Jesus and shouted out these words, they were recognizing Him as the Messiah.

Jesus had chosen to ride into Jerusalem on a young donkey. Zechariah 9:9 says, “‘Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He *is* just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.’” Matthew quoted from this verse as he wrote about the disciples that Jesus sent to get the donkey. Matthew 21:4-5 says, “All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: ‘Tell the daughter of Zion, “Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”” Here, we see that it was the plan of Jesus to offer Himself to the Jews as the promised Messiah. The common people recognized the offer that Jesus made.

We see that the disciples did not understand what was happening at that time. It was only after Jesus was glorified that the disciples remembered that these things were written about Him. The night of the resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples. Luke 24:44-45 says, “Then He said to them, ‘These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.” On the night of the resurrection, Jesus taught them what the Old Testament taught about His death and resurrection. He gave them understanding so that they could understand the Old Testament Scriptures. The disciples then fully understood that Jesus was the Messiah.

John 12:17-19 says, “Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, ‘You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!’” The people who were with Jesus when He called Lazarus from the tomb gave witness of that fact to the common people. That is why the common people recognized Jesus as the Messiah. That was why the common people had come to meet Jesus with the palm branches. The disciples had been with Jesus in Ephraim after Jesus called Lazarus from the tomb. They did not know what the people who had been at the tomb that day were telling the other Jews as they came to Jerusalem for the Passover. That was why the disciples did not understand until after the resurrection.

In contrast, the Pharisees had heard all of the people talking about Jesus calling Lazarus out of the tomb. They heard that the people recognized this as a sign that Jesus was the Messiah. They now heard the crowd of people shouting as they escorted Jesus into the city of Jerusalem. They saw that many people had gone to meet Jesus because of the fact that Jesus had called Lazarus from the grave. The Pharisees heard the words that the people were shouting and knew that the words came from Psalm 118, which was recognized as a Psalm about the coming Messiah. This caused the Pharisees to start talking among themselves as they saw and heard the common people escorting Jesus into the city of Jerusalem.

The Pharisees realized that their efforts to prevent the common people from following Jesus were not working. They suddenly recognized that their efforts had been useless. That was why the Pharisees said, “Look, the world has gone after Him!” The Pharisees realized that the number of people following Jesus was continuing to increase and that soon their control over the people would be gone. Jesus had read Isaiah 61:1-2a early in His ministry in the synagogue where He grew up in Nazareth. Luke 4:18-19 says, “‘The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.’” Then, Luke 4:21 says, “And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’” Jesus came to give spiritual sight to the spiritually blind and set free those who were captives of dead religion. Many common people were now beginning to see the results of the words of Jesus in their own lives as they received spiritual understanding and were set free from their dependence on the traditions of the religious

leaders.

However, we also see that it was more than just the common Jews who wanted to have their spiritual eyes opened and be set free from the bondage of religion. John 12:20-22 says, “Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’ Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.” These Greeks were probably Gentile proselytes to Judaism. As proselytes to Judaism, they had come to Jerusalem for the Passover. They had probably heard the Jews talking about the fact that Jesus had called Lazarus out of the tomb a few weeks earlier. They had observed this great crowd shouting as they escorted Jesus into the city of Jerusalem. As a result, they also wanted to see Jesus.

The Greeks saw that Philip was one of the disciples of Jesus and so they went and told him that they would like to see Jesus. Philip did not know quite what to do and so he went and told Andrew. We see that Andrew did know what to do. Andrew is only mentioned three times in the book of John. John 1:40-42a says, “One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus...” In John 6:8-9, Andrew brought a young boy with a lunch to Jesus. Now, here he knows what to do and brings these Greeks to see Jesus. We also want to show our children how to help others meet Jesus.

Here, we see that Jesus was showing in advance that many Gentile proselytes would turn to Him as the Gospel spread to the Gentile world. Acts 11:20-21 says, “But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.” Acts 13:42-44 says, “So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God.” Acts 17:4 points out the same thing when that verse says, “And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.”

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the power of the Gospel to change the lives of both Jews and Gentiles. More people are willing to learn about Jesus than there are people willing to share that message with them. That is one reason why it is important to show your children how to talk about Jesus to others. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to share Jesus with others.