

## **The World Has Gone After Him    March 24, 2024**

### **John 12:12-19**

12 The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. 13 So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord — the King of Israel!" 14 Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written: 15 "Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" 16 His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him. 17 So the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify. 18 It was also because they heard that he had performed this sign that the crowd went to meet him. 19 The Pharisees then said to one another, "You see, you can do nothing. Look, the world has gone after him!" (NRSV).

Jesus had a very difficult job. He had to fix a wayward religious establishment, save the world from ourselves, and replace forced compliance with love. When people reject Jesus, they reject God's gift, God's word, and God's self. The problem is that humans are set in their ways of putting ourselves first. Jesus reveals what God wants but the religious leaders hate what Jesus has to say. As a consequence, they reject him. Repentance is always necessary to get right with God but before you can repent, you have to be honest with yourself.

The Scripture is about the triumphant entry into Jerusalem and it is found in all four of the Gospels. You know the story; it is covered every year. A great crowd had gathered for the Passover festival. The crowd heard that Jesus was coming. This is from the multitude that he fed, the witnesses of miracles, and the people in awe of his teaching. In John, one commentary stated that Lazarus is resurrected as a great miracle so that the people could understand a greater miracle.

They gave him a royal welcome with palm branches and shouts of exclamation. There are three groups of people in the crowd. The followers of Jesus are his disciples and their support group. The spectators want to stand by and watch to see what will happen next. They have a shifting allegiance for whatever is favorable for the moment. Then there are the religious leaders that scheme to undermine his ministry. One of the Pharisees summed up their concern when he stated "we can do nothing, look the world has gone after him." Their concern was that the popularity of Jesus would cause them to lose their power. Jesus had criticized and insulted them but they could not stop him, so their only solution was to kill him.

Thousands of people gathered in Jerusalem as a sacred duty that was ordained by scripture. The holiday would have a festive spirit. Imagine the scene it. It is sort of like a parade with no ticker tape, lights, balloons, or floats. The one and only attraction is Jesus. A parade is exciting, full of special attractions, and lots of celebration. Use your imagination and see a popular parade like we used to watch on TV when I was little. See the band leading the parade. See the floats carrying famous people. Then after great anticipation, see the hero or star of the show. See all the people waving. Hear the cheers and the noise of the crowd. In this parade from antiquity Jesus is the one and only attraction. People lined the streets hoping to see a king. People waved palm branches and shouted praises.

Every Sunday we honor and remember Jesus. Today we focus on honoring and remembering the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. A lot happens in the life of Jesus during this Holy Week. A king riding into Jerusalem on a donkey is prophetic. Prophecy is not a prediction, it is divine revelation. It is accurate because it comes from God. Therefore, prophecy confirms and proves God does exist, is alive, and active. Prophecy gives us the word of God to guide, direct, and warn us so that we can follow the will of God. Prophecy gives us amazing detail about Jesus. Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

The plot thickens like a chess match. Each opposing side has its own strategy. One move triggers the next move and each has to think several moves ahead. Only this time the competition is very serious. This competition is a matter of life and salvation for the world. The religious leaders were offended by Jesus teaching with authority. They were afraid of losing their power. In a conspiracy the actual offence does not get addressed. It is because they can't make a case that they engage in a conspiracy. God's people were so bad, they made up an offense. Jesus came to the earth because God's people were so bad. The Plot has been established. The network has developed its power base. The weakest link was Judas and then the conspiracy was out in the open.

Jesus spent a few years talking about it. He could call a legion of angels to rescue Him. But Jesus did what he had to do. It was God's will. It was necessary for mankind to be able to receive forgiveness. We are redeemed from the curse of sin because Christ took it for us. He died in our place for our sins. The sacrifice of Jesus ties into old scriptural sacrifices. In the Old Testament, the practice of worshipping with a blood sacrifice was necessary for sin. Able made an animal sacrifice that was pleasing to God. Moses made formal acts of animal sacrifice as a payment for sin. The sins of the people were paid for with blood. God reversed the sacrifice. God sacrificed for the people instead of people sacrificing for God. The sins of the people are now paid for with the blood of the Son of God.