

**Home : Sermons : Apr 9, 2006**

Triumph on Palm Sunday – John 12:12-19

Introduction – Jesus did not come into Jerusalem to accomplish some little thing in the first century (C.E. – common era) for a small, insignificant group of people. His entry into Jerusalem (marked today in the church calendar) signaled the arrival of the King of Israel for the salvation of the world (A.D. – anno Domini). At Palm Sunday, the cross is certainly in view, but the cross is not a sign of defeat for Jesus or His disciples as they came to understand. Death would be swallowed up in victory, and as Jesus entered into the great city, His triumph was already being proclaimed.

Triumph Over Death (vv12-13) – **Jesus rode into Jerusalem in triumph in spite of the cross before Him.** John records this entry on the heels of the account of raising Lazarus from the dead. This event had caused quite a stir among the Pharisees who began plotting to put Jesus to death (John 11:45-53). Jesus returned to visit Lazarus, and even more came to believe in Christ, which caused the chief priests to be even more worked up (John 12:9-11). The next day, a great multitude (many of whom must have been these great many Jews who believed) welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem. They waved palm branches and were singing Psalm 118.

Psalm 118 – This psalm sings of Jesus, and the crowds knew it. The promised mercy of the Lord had come (118:1-4). Jesus was entering trusting in His Father and not in men (118:5-9). Jew and Gentile alike would crucify the Lord, but Jesus knew He came in triumph (118:10-14). The Psalm speaks triumphantly of life (118:15-18), and of the Way of Salvation (118:19-21). This is followed by the irony of God's intentions through the wicked plans of sinners (118:22-24). Then comes the verses that John says the crowd lingered upon – *Hosanna* means, "Save us!" (118:25) and then v26 is quoted. The word "cords" in v27 can be translated "branches" which explains the waving of the palm branches at His coming.

Triumph From the Prophecies (vv14-16) – **Jesus rode into Jerusalem in triumph in step with the Scriptures which prophesied about Him.** He rode into the city as the son of David did (1 Kings 1:33), on a young donkey, for Solomon was only a type of the true Son of David. John shows us in these verses what the disciples did not understand at the time but came to understand after Christ's resurrection. Zechariah had declared that the daughter of Zion would rejoice greatly at the coming King (Zech 9:9). He would come in humility, riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey. His humility does not diminish His glory, for the work of this humble Servant-King will be peace "from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth" (Zech 9:10). Jesus is coming in such humility by faith, for He knows that the blood of His covenant will "set your prisoners free from the waterless pit" (Zech 9:11-12). Jesus was willing to endure the cross because of the joy that was set before Him. He knew what was to be accomplished in the coming week. His own Word had spoke to it and now the Word made flesh was doing it.

Triumph Over the World (vv17-19) – **Jesus rode into Jerusalem in triumph in view of the whole world which would be saved through Him.** Psalm 118 spoke of the triumphant King of Israel coming to save His people. Zechariah 9 spoke of the blood of this covenant extending from sea to sea and to the end of the world. Those who had come to see Jesus came because they had seen a resurrection of sorts (in Lazarus) but they would see an even greater resurrection soon. Those who heard about the events with Lazarus also came (v18). Caiaphas had spoken in prophecy about the death of Jesus for the nation (11:51-52), and the Pharisees now spoke in prophecy that they could not accomplish anything for "Look, the world has gone after Him" (12:19). Even the Greeks sought out Jesus (vv20-21).

"The World Has Gone After Him!" – Just as the Pharisees spoke far above what they knew, so we can be tempted to speak far under what we know. *God did not send the Son to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him* (John 3:17). We must join with Jesus in faith even now, before the full manifestation of what has been declared. We are to join with Him in the proclamation of His glory and kingdom, and we are to join with Him in humble service to the nations. In so doing, God's Spirit will be poured out upon the nations, and the peoples will flow to the mountain of the Lord (Mic 4:1-2). We are not to prepare for Easter Sunday as a private, religious ceremony in our little Christian sub-culture. We are to prepare for a glorious declaration of the power and mercy of God, the God of all the nations. Jesus is Lord! He is the King of Israel, and His covenant covers the face of the world – even now.

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