

Riding into Jerusalem

Introduction: Matt. 21:1-9; Mark 1:1-11; Luke 19:29-40; John 12:12-19

A. In the four Gospel accounts, Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem takes place a few days before His death and a week before His resurrection.

1. The common folk recognized the circumstances of His entry as the coming of the King and rejoiced - Zech. 9:9
2. The Sanhedrin saw what was implied and was enraged - Matt. 21:15
3. The people sang a Psalm - Psalm 118:25-26
4. The Sanhedrin barked orders - Luke 19:39-40

B. Background

1. The symbolism of the donkey may refer to the Eastern tradition that it is an animal of peace, versus the horse, which is the animal of war. A king came riding upon a horse when he was bent on war and rode upon a donkey when he wanted to point out he was coming in peace. Jesus' entry to Jerusalem on an unbroken donkey would doubly symbolize His role as the Prince of Peace.
2. In the ancient Middle East, it was customary to cover the path of someone thought worthy of highest honor - 2Kings 9:13; 1Kings 6:29
3. Fronds of palm (Greek phoinix). In Jewish tradition, the palm is one of the four things carried for Succoth, as symbols of rejoicing - Lev. 23:40
4. The palm branch was a symbol of triumph and victory in the culture of the Roman Empire. In ancient Egyptian religion, the palm represented eternal life. In the late first century, the palm branch became a symbol of Christian martyrs and their spiritual victory over death - Rev. 7:9
5. "Hosanna" - Help, I pray! Or Save us, now! From yasha'anna or hosh'ana (Hebrew)
6. In less than five days, they will be saying: "Stauroo autos" Crucify Him! Mark 15:14
7. There were great crowds around Jerusalem during those high holy days. "At such a time Jerusalem and the villages round about were crowded. On one occasion a census was taken of the lambs slain at the Passover Feast. The number was given as 256,000. There had to be a minimum of ten people per lamb; and if that estimate is correct it means that there must have been as many as 2,700,000 people at that Passover Feast." (William Barclay, Commentary on John, p. 115)

I. THE KING RIDES

A. The triumphant entry was not Jesus' greatest glory - John 12:23-24

B. Jesus realizes the immense import of this event - John 12:27-28

C. He sees what's coming; the world does not - John 12:29-36

1. He rode into the city in triumph; in a few days He would trudge up Mount Calvary in shame
2. What if the Jews had accepted Jesus as King that day? - Rev. 13:8.
3. He came to die to save us - 2Peter 3:9; 1Cor. 1:18; John 10:10

II. THE KING RETURNS

His ride

1. Riding on a colt
2. He came alone
3. He wore a crown of thorns
4. Called King of the Jews
5. Had no money for taxes
6. He was mocked
7. He came as a man
8. He was meek and lowly
9. He had nails in His hands
10. He hung on a cross
11. Judged in Pilate's hall
12. He came as the lamb

His return

1. Riding a great white horse
2. Returns with saints and angels
3. Will wear a Crown of crowns
4. Will be King of kings
5. He will own everything
6. They will fear
7. He will come as God
8. He will come in power and glory
9. He will have a rod of iron
10. He will sit on a throne
11. He will be the Judge of the world
12. He will be the lion

A. He entered the city to die; He will return to rescue the righteous - Jer. 29:11

1. "To the multitude witnessing Jesus' entry into the city, it must have been only a matter of time until the trumpets rang out and call to arms sounded and the Jewish nation swept to its long delayed victory over Rome and the world. Jesus approached Jerusalem with the shout of the mob hailing a conqueror in his ears -- and it must have hurt him, for they were looking in him for that very thing which he refused to be" (Barclay's Commentary on John, p. 117).

B. He is King over a greater nation than Judah of old; He is King of kings reigning from heaven.

1. John 18:36; Dan. 2:44, 7:14

C. One of the greatest ironies of that week is that it began with the people confessing Him as King when it began - John 12:13

1. And ended with them denouncing him as a criminal - John 19:14-16

Conclusion:

A. Aristotle would have called this "Peripeteia," a dramatic reversal of circumstances or fortune. He would have been wrong.

B. The triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem followed immediately by His ignominious crucifixion was the fulfillment of God's eternal plan, and it highlighted the desperate condition of sin in which the human race was drowning.

C. 1Peter 1:17-23