

The Arrival of the King  
John 12:12-50  
March 20, 2016  
Palm Sunday

For several thousand years, the Jewish people had been looking forward to the coming of the promised Messiah. Most of them were looking for a powerful military leader, the one who would overthrow all their enemies and re-establish Israel to its former state of greatness.

What the people didn't expect was their king would be a carpenter. They never expected he would come with no weapons, no army, and no political power. They certainly didn't imagine their king would die on their enemy's cross.

However, throughout Jesus' earthly life, he gave countless evidences of whom he was. His identity was revealed in the circumstances surrounding his birth, his preaching, and his miracles. Still, the people refused to believe he was the long-expected Savior. Time and again he revealed himself, and time and again the people rejected him. Their rejection was so blatant, John writes in his Gospel: *He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him* (Jn 1:11).

The 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of John's Gospel account describes one last attempt Jesus made to reveal his true identity. We're going to look at that chapter so we might gain a good understanding of whom Jesus is, what he came to do, and how he accomplished his mission.

**The Presentation of the King:**

**John 12:12-19** *The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just 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 had been written about him and had been done to him. The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him."*

Kings and military leaders made their entrances on mighty war horses. Jesus entered Jerusalem on a lowly donkey. Hardly a proper entry or a proper mode of transportation for God's Messiah. But those who were familiar with Scripture would have remembered the prophecy from Zechariah and seen their Savior. Jesus came exactly the way it was foretold.

The timing of his entry was also important. It was Passover; the time when a spotless lamb would be sacrificed for the sins of the people. The lamb entered Jerusalem just in

time for the sacrifice.

The people must have had some understanding of whom Jesus was, because he was greeted with cries of “Hosanna” which means “save us.” In light of Jesus’ miracles, topped off by the raising of Lazarus from the dead, the people might have reasoned this must be the one who would overthrow the Romans.

But, the people were fickle. They would accept Jesus as long as he fulfilled their expectations. When they didn’t see what they wanted in the next five days, their welcoming shouts of hosanna turned into cries of “crucify him.”

### **The purpose of the King:**

**John 12:20-28, 32** *Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” [Jesus said], “When I am lifted up from the earth, [I] will draw all people to myself.”*

These verses paint a clear picture of why the King came into this world. He came to die. His ministry wasn’t about his preaching, his miracles, his lifestyle, or his disciples. His entire life was centered around the day he would climb calvary’s hill, be nailed to a Roman cross, and die.

As the King, Jesus was interested in drawing people to himself. During his life, many people were drawn to Jesus; just as the Greeks in the reading. But Jesus explains that his death on the cross would draw untold numbers of people to him.

There is something compelling about the cross when a sinner finally understands what was done for him or her. When the Holy Spirit makes clear the purpose of the cross, it’s no longer a sign of foolishness; it becomes a thing of great power and amazement. To think that God, himself, would endure such a thing for someone like me. He did it for me, he did it for you, he did it for every sinner. It’s mind boggling.

When Jesus speaks of a seed dying to produce more seeds, he’s saying something very special about all of his followers. The seeds produced by the death of the initial seed bear the same DNA as the original seed. The seed has literally reproduced itself.

Jesus died to reproduce his nature in those who follow him. When a person places his or her faith in Jesus, they undergo a change in their spiritual DNA. They literally become a new person. Listen to Paul describe this change: *I have been crucified with Christ. It is*

*no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me* (Ga 2:20).

Jesus not only saves us from our sins, he gives us a brand new life; a life impossible for us to live in our sinful state. Jesus takes us just as we are and then changes us by his power. He begins to live through us and that makes us new people.

### **The prejudice against the King:**

**John 12:32-43** [Jesus said], “When I am lifted up from the earth, [I] will draw all people to myself.” He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.” Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

When the people heard Jesus speak of being “lifted up” they understood he was speaking about crucifixion. They couldn’t reason through the idea of their Messiah dying as a way to defeat their enemies. Of course, they were confused because they saw the Romans as their enemy, instead of sin. For that reason, they rejected Jesus and continued in their sin.

People today make the same mistake. They spend their lives fighting the enemies of this world, instead of the enemy of their souls. They think they can gain some form of righteousness though good works or being religious. The only salvation available comes from the cross.

The people also rejected Jesus’ ministry. Their question, “Who is this Son of Man” is a rejection of everything Jesus had done during his life. They turned their backs on his teaching, his miracles, and his unconditional loving ways. If we just consider Jesus’ miracles, the proof is undeniable.

People today continue to reject the miracles all around them. They can see lives totally changed by the grace of God, and yet they deny the change that comes with faith in Jesus. If you know someone whose life has been completely re-arranged by the love of Christ, you’ve witnessed a miracle.

## **The promise of the King:**

**John 12:44-50** *And Jesus cried out and said, "Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment – what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me."*

In these verses, Jesus gives us three promises:

The promise of revelation. Jesus promises that those who see him also see the Father. Jesus came to present God to the world. Jesus is the exact representation of the Father because both Jesus and the Father are God. If you want to know how much the Father loves you, look to Jesus. If you want to know how far the Father will go to have you home with him, look to Jesus. If you want to know the Father's plan for this world, look to Jesus.

The promise of release. Jesus promised that those who believe in him will have sight to see beyond the darkness of this sinful world. Knowing Jesus gives the believer the power to break the chains of sin. Jesus promised: *So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed* (Jn 8:36).

The promise of rescue. Jesus promised that all who place their faith in him are rescued from the eternal wrath of God. With faith in Jesus, you are delivered from the penalty of your sins. Jesus promised: *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life* (Jn 5:24).

We have passed from death to life because the King has come to us. This is the best news a sinner can hear, but this good news is for more people than just us. Find someone who doesn't know Jesus as their Lord and Savior and share with them the good news of God's plan of salvation for all people.