

## What Kind of King Do We Expect?

4/14/2019

Y. Joe Kim

yhjoekim@gmail.com

*After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. <sup>29</sup> When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, <sup>30</sup> saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup> If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" <sup>32</sup> So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. <sup>33</sup> As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" <sup>34</sup> They said, "The Lord needs it." <sup>35</sup> Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. <sup>36</sup> As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. <sup>37</sup> As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, <sup>38</sup> saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" <sup>39</sup> Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." <sup>40</sup> He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out." (Luke 19:28-40)*

### 1. Praying with Expectation

At our church, we have something called a prayer chain. When someone is hospitalized, she or he can let Cathy Sharon-Matthews know and people will pray for that person. Our Monday night prayer group shares this information and prays for those who are in need.

Why do we pray for others? It is because we believe the Lord hears our prayers and answers them according to His will. When we pray, we expect God to intervene in our situation and help. But there are times when God doesn't meet our expectations. God may often do something that is different than what we are asking.

About two thousand years ago, Jesus entered Jerusalem. Jesus' disciples and the crowds had big expectations for Jesus. But God had a very different plan for the Messiah, our Lord.

### 2. Jesus' Triumphal Entry

Luke 19:28-40 is called "the triumphal entry." This event is recorded in all four gospels. In Luke, Jesus teaches on the parable of the pounds at

Jericho and then Jesus and his disciples go to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. On the way, Jesus and his disciples stop in Bethphage & Bethany where they spend the Friday evening until Sunday morning. Bethphage and Bethany are located about 1.5 miles to the east of Jerusalem on the south-eastern slope of the Mount of Olives.

The triumphal entry happens on a Sunday. The Passover festival is about to begin and many Jews come from all over the Roman world to Jerusalem for the week-long celebration. The Passover festival was the celebration to remember the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt.

Before Jesus enters Jerusalem, he sends two disciples into a village to find a colt and bring it to him. Why does Jesus do this? The Gospel writers tell us that this is to fulfill what the prophet Zechariah prophesies in Zechariah 9:9. ***“Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”***

At the time the Jews were waiting for their Messiah. Jesus would enter the city on the colt, announcing the arrival of the Savior. In Zechariah 9:10, Zechariah tells us what the Messiah will do. ***“He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war-horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations.”*** Zechariah tells us that the Messiah will not be a warrior king but a peaceful king riding on a donkey’s colt.

How do the crowds respond to Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem? According to Matthew 21:9, the people shout, ***“Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.”*** “Hosanna” means, “save.” The people believe that God would send a king to save them according to God’s promises to David in 2 Samuel 7:12-14, ***“When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup> He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. <sup>14</sup> I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me.”*** Here God is not talking about David’s son Solomon, but the coming Messiah. The Messiah would be a descendant of David, and the people believed that Jesus would fulfill this prophecy. Jesus would be called the son of God.

How do the people know that Jesus would be the Messiah? John 12:13 tells us that ***“they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him.”*** The waving of palm branches was a symbol of celebration of the victory two centuries prior. The Jewish Maccabees conquered and

retook Jerusalem from the pagan rulers. The Maccabees were considered the Messiah.

The crowds believed Jesus to be a warrior king Messiah. But they may have missed the sign in the kind of animal that Jesus was riding. Instead of riding on a horse as a warrior king, Jesus rode a colt, a symbol of his servanthood and his sacrifice on the cross. Matthew 20:28 says, **“Just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”**

### 3. Two Different Expectations

In Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, we see two different set of expectations for Jesus. The disciples and the crowds want Jesus to be the king of the Jews and to establish God’s kingdom. The religious leaders see Jesus as a fake Messiah or a trouble maker in Jewish religion and wanted to kill him. Jesus was already aware of the plans of both groups of people.

God had a very different plan from both groups of people. The people wanted Jesus to be their ruler, but God sent Jesus to be the savior of the world.

### 4. Jesus Does Not Change Wrong Expectations

In verses 39-40, the crowds praise Jesus and wave their palm branches, throwing their cloaks at the feet of the colt, shouting **“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!”** At the moment, the Pharisees tell Jesus, **“Teacher, order your disciples to stop.”** Jesus answers, **“If these were silent, the stones would shout out.”**

The Pharisees understand the meaning of what is going on. So they ask Jesus to rebuke his followers and stop them calling him Messiah or king. Jesus responds that there must be some proclamation that He is the Messiah. Jesus doesn’t change his followers’ expectations, but let them praise Him because Jesus was sent by God to establish God’s eternal kingdom. Even if it is going to happen in a way that no one would have expected.

### 5. Conclusion

Jesus’ followers praised him when he entered the city. But when Jesus was arrested and crucified on the cross, they were devastated. In the moment, we can imagine that they would have prayed, “God, where are you?” “What are you doing while our savior is dying on the cross?”

But God keeps quiet because God had a different plan from the beginning. God knew that Jesus would turn the world upside down and would establish God's eternal kingdom through his death and resurrection. Hope was lost in Jesus' death. But God gives Jesus the final victory by raising him from the dead.

## 6. Application

As we celebrate the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, I would like to ask you and me a question, what kind of God do we expect? Do we want God to meet our expectations always? Or do we want us to accept God's plan and be grateful for the mystery?

There was a man who fell off the edge of the Grand Canyon. When he was falling into a cliff, fortunately he grabbed a tree branch. He was so scared to death and shouted, "Is there anyone up there? Help me!" He heard a voice. The voice says, "Here I am. I am your God." He was so happy to hear the voice of the Almighty God. He said, "Lord, I am so glad you are there. Please save me." The Lord says, "Sure I will. But let me ask you a question, do you believe that I can save you?" He says, "Of course, I do." God says, "You said you believe that I can save you. Then, take your hands off the branch. Let go of your hands off the branch." The man says, "Lord, if I take my hands off the branch, I will fall down and die." God says one more time, "Let go of your hands off the branch." For a few minutes there was a moment of silence. The man shouts, "is there anyone else up there?" He couldn't trust the Lord.

When we learn that God has a different plan from ours, would we trust in God's plan and wait for his guidance? Or would we look for a different way to satisfy our desires? We may not know the details of God's plans. But even though we may not know the details, we should trust that God has the best plan for us and will lead us according to His plans. Listen what St. Paul says to the Romans, "***I am convinced that neither death nor life neither angels nor demons, neither the presence nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord***" (Romans 8:38-39). Amen.