THE GOSPEL OF
JOHN

The King Jesus Parade!

INTRODUCTION

Riding on a humble beast of burden is not the way in which most people would expect a king to enter into His reign, but that is exactly how the Lord of glory entered His. Though almost no one could see it at the time, Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday marked the beginning of the final events that would lead to His exaltation (Matt. 21:1–11).

When we say that almost no one could see it at the time, we are not speaking of what the crowd of Passover pilgrims first thought when they saw Jesus approaching Jerusalem on a donkey. The greatest king in their history, after all, often rode through the Holy City and the Promised Land in a similar manner (2 Sam. 13:29; 1 Kings 1:33). Thus, the people who cried "Hosanna to the Son of David!" on Palm Sunday expected a mighty, conquering king, one who would throw off the yoke of their Gentile oppressors just as David had defeated the Philistines centuries earlier.

The true enemies that had to be defeated were not pagan Gentiles but rather sin and death. This could not be done on a white horse and with great armies. Instead, it took humility, a willingness to take the form of a servant and submit to the punishment that God's people deserve for their sin (Phil. 2:5–11). Only by receiving the worst that sin and death could throw at him could the Davidic king "outsmart" our enemies. In thinking that they were gaining the upper hand, sin, death, and even Satan himself did not see that their actions were ultimately working under the sovereignty of God so that His wrath would be satisfied in the death of His Son. They did not see that by killing Jesus they were actually ensuring their own defeat, for the Son of David whom they murdered was stronger than death itself. Passing through death, He conquered it by rising again. Jesus took the worst that His foes could do and triumphed over it. His humble entry into Jerusalem in fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy anticipated His final conquering act.[1]

OPEN IT

1. **Which form of transportation have you found most enjoyable to you? Flying? Driving your favorite car you've owned? Motorcycle? Skateboard? Boat? Skis? Hoverboard? Golf cart? Uber? Bicycle? Something else?**

---

[1] Ligonier Ministries. The Triumphal Entry. December 10, 2013. https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/triumphal-entry

READ IT

John 12:12-19

EXPLORE IT

2. **Why was there a large crowd in Jerusalem again? (John 12:1 and 12:12 contain a couple clues.)**

3. **What prestigious title does the crowd call Jesus in verse 13?**

4. **Which Old Testament passage did Jesus fulfill by sitting on a young donkey?**

5. **When did the disciples finally connect the dots about the meaning of Jesus' triumphal entry?**

6. **Which unprecedented miracle mentioned in verses 17-18 left the crowds clamoring for more?**

APPLY IT

Crowds Flock to King Jesus for Different Reasons

Jesus' so-called "Triumphal Entry" into Jerusalem at the beginning of Passion Week should perhaps be called His "Tragic Entry," because it triggered events that led to His death. Luke (19:41) reports that when Jesus approached Jerusalem, He wept over it. The crowds lined the street and cheered for Jesus as the long-expected King of Israel, but they were hoping for a political king, who could lead a military victory against Rome and provide eventual peace and prosperity for their nation. They were not so interested in a Messiah with a spiritual kingdom, who would provide forgiveness for their sins and who would be Lord of every aspect of their personal lives. So within a week, the shouts of "Hosanna!" turned to "Crucify Him!" The fickle crowd was following Jesus for the wrong reasons. Such a faulty foundation inevitably collapses.[2]

7. **What are some possible reasons people today may take an interest in Jesus?**

8. **Is it right or wrong to pursue Jesus so He can make your life better? Why do you think that?**

9. **Read Luke 22:42. In your own words, describe Jesus' attitude toward the painful parts of the Father's plan for His life?**

---

[2] Cole, Steven J. Following Jesus for the Right Reason (John 12:12-19) . August 31, 2014. https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-65-following-jesus-right-reason-john-1212-19

10. How can our church better align with God's plan for our lives, whether comfortable or stretching?

Why King Jesus' Arrival Was So Exciting

Our English word "hosanna" comes from a Greek word "hosanna" which comes from a Hebrew phrase *hoshiya na*. That Hebrew phrase is found in one solitary place in the whole Old Testament, Psalm 118:25, where it means, "Save, please!" It is a cry to God for help. Like when somebody pushes you off the diving board before you can swim and you come up hollering: "Help, save me . . . Hoshiya na!" ...

Over the centuries the phrase *hoshiya na* stopped being a cry for help in the ordinary language of the Jews. Instead it became a shout of hope and exultation. It used to mean, "Save, please!" But gradually, it came to mean, "Salvation! Salvation! Salvation has come!" It used to be what you would say when you fell off the diving board. But it came to be what you would say when you see the lifeguard coming to save you! It is the bubbling over of a heart that sees hope and joy and salvation on the way and can't keep it in.[3]

11. Have you ever had a moment where you prayed something like, "God, please get me out of this mess!" What brought you to that place of desperation?

---

[3] Piper, John. Hosanna! March 27, 1983. https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/hosanna

12. **Read Zechariah 9:9-17, the prophecy Jesus partially fulfilled by riding a donkey. Which phrase from this poem or song encourages you from this fuller picture of Jesus' conquering salvation?**

13. **Each week, our church gathers to cry out praises to the King of Israel, and of the world. What place should genuine and enthusiastic worship have in the life of a true disciple?**

14. **You may have a place in your life right now where you desperately need God's intervention. Write a one sentence prayer in your own words asking God to "Save, please!"**

Three Reactions to King Jesus' Parade

As Augustine explains, Jesus's royal glorification "was an act of condescension and not promotion; a token of compassion, and not any increase of power."[4] That is why the Jesus we worship is finally depicted as a lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne." (Rev 5:6).

The Christian acclaims King Jesus as the slain lamb, the crucified God, the one who bowed his head and gave up his spirit. But as the Christian knows, this is not weakness but strength; this is not defeat but victory. This is our King's "glory." And for this reason, "God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on Earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:9-11). This is our King. This is the one to whom we owe absolute devotion and service. Long live this King![5]

15. **Imitate the Disciples: What's one way you've grown in your understanding of God's work since 5 years ago? Since 1 year ago?**

16. **Imitate the Crowd: What's one phrase you could say at work this week to bear witness about what God has done in your life?**

---

[4] Augustine. John. 51.4.284.
[5] Klink, Edward W. III. Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: John. 2016.

17. **Don't imitate the Pharisees: They admit their opposition to Jesus isn't working. What are some forces we sometimes wrongly believe can thwart Jesus? What can stop God according to** Job 42:2 and Romans 8:38-39?

18. **Make it your prayer that God would open your eyes to His work in your life and that you would see the plans of the unstoppable King unfold this year!**