

## **Triumph and Tears**

Scripture: John 12:12–17

Code: 43-62

Open your Bible to John chapter 12. We come into chapter 12 of John's gospel and to a monumental moment in the history of our Lord. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all record this event. Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19, John 12. This is the event, which we tend to call the triumphal entry. Sometimes it's called Palm Sunday. A more accurate chronology of this week in the life of our Lord would actually put it on Monday, the second day of the week of Passover. But this is a very traditionally well-known moment in the life of our Lord when he enters the city of Jerusalem to all of the praise and hosannas of the people who are acclaiming Him as the King and the Messiah. It's a familiar part of Christian tradition and even Scripture revelation. But what is really going on on that day deserves a very close look, and John helps us with that. I'll try to fold in some insights from Matthew, Mark, and Luke as we go as well.

While this on the surface looks like a triumphant day of acclamation, just exactly what our Lord might have been hoping for after 3 years of ministry and 33 years of life in this world, since He was born to a virgin in Bethlehem. It looks as if this would be finally the realization of what He had all along wanted, but as you well know, the hosannas died very fast. In fact, our Lord did much to kill them the very day they were given.

By Friday, the people were crying for Barabbas to be released and the one they had claimed as King to be crucified, just a few days later. But before we get to that, let's pick up the story on this traditional triumphant day in which our Lord comes into Jerusalem. I'll start reading in verse 12.

"On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, 'Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.' Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, 'Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, seated on a donkey's colt.' These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him. So the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify about Him. For this reason also, the people went and met Him because they heard that He had performed this sign. So the Pharisees said to one another, 'You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him.' Now there were some gentiles among those who were going up to worship at the feast; these then came to Philip who was from Bethsaida of Galilee and began to ask him saying, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip came and told Andrew, Andrew and Philip came and told Jesus."

With that, we begin the Passion Week of our Lord on Monday. They hailed Him as King. He comes into the city to the hosannas and the hallelujahs and the praise of the people of Israel. "King Jesus," they say, "has arrived to take His throne." Their hearts are bright with hope, anticipation that the long-awaited Messiah is indeed this one named Jesus of Nazareth, this Galilean. He has accumulated a massively profound reputation by doing miracles for three years during His ministry;

which have been talked about across the land and essentially done in every village and town and hamlet throughout Israel from north to south and side to side.

It all culminated in this amazing raising of Lazarus from the dead. This our Lord chose to do in the little village of Bethany. Two miles east of the eastern wall of the temple in Jerusalem very close to the city where word about this resurrection could be verified and where testimony would spread literally and infiltrate the whole of Jerusalem. And do so at the very time when the most massive congregation had arrived there from all over the world as Jews came on the pilgrimage to Passover.

This at the surface, at the beginning looked like the most hopeful moment in the life of our Lord, but this King came to die. This King came to die, and still we say, "Long live the King." For He came to die, and then to rise again. This is Monday. Now, we all know what happened when He arrived. He arrived a couple of days before. We saw that at the beginning of chapter 12. Jesus came six days before the Passover. That puts Him in Bethany. He came through the little tiny hamlet of Bethpage into Bethany, and then He spent that Sunday with his friends: Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. There was actually a supper made for Him there in the home of a leper that He had healed by the name of Simon. Simon must have had a home to accommodate our Lord. Simon's family, Mary, Martha, Lazarus, all the disciples who were traveling with Him. So it was a great supper to celebrate the Lord who had raised Lazarus from the dead, a wonderful celebration.

At that celebration there was a high point of love and affection that came towards Jesus from the two sisters of Lazarus. There was Martha, who was serving. Her service, as we pointed out last week was noble, loving service. And then there was Mary in verse 3, who took a pound of very costly ointment kind of perfume of pure nard. Nard was an herb that produced an amazing fragrance that could be captured in oil, and this was pure. It came from the Himalayas. It had to come by camel, so it was rare and it was costly. Judas even points out that it would take a year's income to buy a pound of this.

In a lavish and extravagant expression of her love, she broke the alabaster jar in which it was contained and poured it all over Jesus, the other writers tell us, from head to foot. The whole house was filled with the fragrance. Then she loosened her hair, which was not to be done by a woman of dignity, but she did it and wiped His feet with her hair. An amazing treatment of our Lord out of deep, profound spiritual love for Him. No sooner does the fragrance of the perfume dominate the room in an expression of love than we see immediate hate in Judas in verse 4, who says, "Why wasn't this perfume sold for that year's wages and given to poor people?" He said this not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief and he had the money box."

He was the traveling treasurer of the disciples and he used to pilfer or steal what was put in it. So the pinnacle of love and hate was seen in that very first day at the very supper when our Lord was to be honored. He was honored in lavish expression of love, but He was dishonored by the betrayal of Judas that very same event. The word got out, as you remember, that Jesus had arrived. He was the most important person at Passover. He was the most important person in the country. He was the person everybody wanted to see because He cast out demons, He healed, He created food. There had never been and never will be anybody like Him. They wanted to take every advantage of the opportunity to be a part of what He was doing in a miraculous way.

So a large crowd of the Jews in verse 9 learned that He was there, "And they came not for Jesus' sake alone, but they came to Bethany that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the

dead.” Now, I told you that there had been other resurrections, but there had not been another resurrection in which a four day period had passed from the death to the resurrection. So that maybe somebody might have explained away the earlier resurrections, but not this one. The fact that it happened with such proximity to the city of Jerusalem made it the topic of conversation. All the people who might not have known about it otherwise who were pilgrims from all around the Mediterranean and North Africa would find out about it, and it drew a tremendous crowd.

But on the other hand, the leaders planned to put Lazarus to death also. They wanted to execute Lazarus because his testimony so effective that the Jews were abandoning the temple religion and heading toward believing in Jesus. This miracle had a massive impact at the final moment of our Lord’s public ministry. It is His final public ministry. In the dark, later in the week, He will restore an ear, but a very private miracle indeed in the darkness of the garden. This is the great culminating public miracle.

That’s Sunday. That’s Sunday. On that same day, people are milling around in Bethany wanting a glimpse of Lazarus and of Jesus. Now we come to Monday, verse 12 on the next day. “The large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.” Now, let me just stop there for a moment and say this is a pretty dramatic change. It’s a very dramatic change. There had been times before when they would have wanted to crown Jesus king, but He didn’t allow it to happen.

Back in chapter 6 after He had just created food to feed maybe 20,000 people plus in Galilee. Verse 15, Jesus perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king withdrew again to the mountain by himself alone. They wanted to make Him a king back in John 6, up in Galilee. He didn’t allow it to happen. He prevented it from happening, and He disappeared.

In chapter 8, Jesus goes into the temple treasury in Jerusalem and taught there. It says in verse 20, “No one seized Him because His hour had not yet come.” His hour had not yet come. At the end of that eighth chapter, verse 59, “They picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.”

Sometimes He removed Himself. Sometimes they were restrained. Sometimes, no doubt, they were restrained by divine power because it wasn’t His hour, but look at verse 23 of chapter 12. Jesus answered them saying, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” Now it is His hour. It is His hour because it is God’s hour.

So understand this: Jesus creates a demonstration. He creates all of this. He sets this up. He sets it up by healing Lazarus, raising him from the dead. He comes to Bethany, the point of that miracle, days or maybe a few weeks earlier. He lingers there. He remains there to draw the crowd to see Him, to see Lazarus, to strengthen the testimony of that miracle power. He deliberately sets Himself in a situation to draw the largest possible crowd of people, and a crowd comes on Sunday to Bethany and overruns that little village. Then another crowd packs the city of Jerusalem.

We’re talking hundreds of thousands of people in that city and this Passover season. He wants to generate the enthusiasm of the masses. He wants not only to be received for who He is, the King, even if it’s only a fickle reception. But He also wants to exacerbate the fury of the leaders of Israel so that they will against their own plan wind up crucifying Him on the very day that God has ordained at

the Passover. He forces the Sanhedrin to change their plans with respect to His execution to harmonize with the purpose of God.

The Sanhedrin did not plan to kill Him at a time when the city was overrun with pilgrims and at a time when He was the most popular in His entire ministry. But that's exactly when they would crucify Him because that's when God had planned His crucifixion. So He comes to die. Now with that as kind of a background, let's look more closely at the story and we'll work our way through it. It's pretty simple; not a lot hidden here. First, we could say there is the presentation the Lord makes of Himself.

He comes to Jerusalem at the end of verse 12, and as He comes, the large crowd took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him and began to shout, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel." There are two crowds in this scene, like two waves colliding. There is the crowd that is in the city of Jerusalem surging toward Him as He approaches.

Then if you drop down to verse 17, there is the crowd of people, "Who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, and continue to testify about Him. For this reason also the people went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign."

So you have a crowd in Jerusalem surging to meet Him when they hear He's coming, and you have a crowd that is already gathered again on Monday, apparently in Bethany coming with Him to Jerusalem. So there's two crowds coming at Him really from both sides. Just to reconstruct, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John without belaboring the point, Jesus left Bethany on that Monday morning. Probably had spent the night with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in their home because He had done that before, and they were very, very dear friends.

You remember how true a friend Lazarus was, causing deep sadness to Jesus even over his death, even though He knew He would raise him from the dead. So very likely, He stayed in their home. He'd had the supper the day before at the home of Simon. In the morning on that Monday, he left. Very soon after leaving, He approaches the Mount of Olives. If you are standing at the eastern gate of the temple mount and you look directly east, you'd look over the Kidron Valley, and that is where the blood flowed that was run from the animals that were being sacrificed.

So it would be a time that you would see blood flowing into that stream if it was the morning sacrifice, the evening sacrifice, and especially later in the week at Passover when the lambs were all being slaughtered. You would see the Mount of Olives, and you would see the Mount of Olives rise. Well, if you went around to the right, you'd go to the back side and two mile walk, you'd come to Bethany. Jesus leaves Bethany in the morning and has to come up a little of the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives and around that mount.

As He begins His journey, He asks two of His disciples to do something. He sends them to a nearby hamlet, and He says, "Go to this place, and you will find a post, and you will find a donkey and a donkey's colt tied to the post. I want you to bring those animals to Me. Bring the donkey and bring the donkey's colt." Now, when the disciples reached the village, they found the right home. They saw exactly what Jesus said they would see; these two animals tied to a post. They start to untie the animals to take the animals with them, and the owner comes out and says, "What are you doing?"

Why are you taking these animals?" You remember their answer? Very cryptic, brief answer. They said, "The Lord needs them. The Lord needs them."

That should indicate to you that whoever was the owner of that house and those animals knew the Lord. They don't have to describe who they're talking about. "The Lord needs them." Plenty of reason to think that this may well have been a follower of Jesus who was eager to provide for Him whatever He asked for. The disciples then, once they'd secured the animals, took off their outer cloaks, which they would be wearing in the morning up in the mountains where they were. They threw the outer garments over the colt and over the mother of the colt and brought them to Jesus.

You remember the story. Jesus chose the colt to ride and not the mother. Why the two? Jesus wanted to come into the city in humility. He didn't even ride the older more mature animal. He rode the weaker, younger animal. The mature animal was brought along to lead the young colt because the colt will always follow his mother. This is the way Jesus could demonstrably express the humility that was going to come His way during that week. As He approached the city and the crowd began to gather around Him, people spread their garments in front of Him, like throwing down the red carpet. They spread their clothes in the path so that the little animal could walk along their garments, and then they would pick them up.

Along the way, others cut down palm branches, which were ubiquitous in that country at that time. They threw those palm branches down in front also to make a highway, make a pathway for their coming King. Palm branches are always associated in the Old Testament with celebrations. They were used in celebration. They were used in expressions of joy. This is the most joyous moment certainly in the life of Israel during the time of our Lord.

They had done something like this 100 years before. A conqueror by the name of Judas Maccabeus had essentially conquered Acra, brought back Acra to Israel. One hundred years before our Lord, they did something like this. They threw down palm branches, and were hoping that he who had conquered Acra was their Messiah who would throw out all the occupying enemies and give them back their freedom and bring in the promises of God. He was not.

So here they are 100 years later, a completely different generation expressing the same kind of joy and euphoria to this one who has demonstrated power far beyond the previous one 100 years earlier. No one had ever raised the dead. Jesus comes to Jerusalem and the enthusiasm of the crowd mounts. He is officially creating His own coronation. He is the Messiah. He is the King. He will not deny their hosannas. In fact, as I will read a little later, He actually says, "If these people don't cry out hosanna, the rocks will cry out."

So He creates His own, I guess you could say, fateful presentation of Himself; but He is not a typical conqueror. He's not riding on a white horse. John sees Him doing that the next time He comes with blood splattered garments and a two-edged sword. But this time, He comes humbly. He comes peacefully. He comes to die. His coming has critical biblical prophetic significance. He will fulfill prophecy. He will fulfill divine prophecy.

When He comes, notice verse 13, "They took the branches of palm trees." Now, remember this is a large crowd. How large is this crowd? Well, it's hard to know. Hundreds of thousands, nobody would debate. We have one extant existing census, ancient census indicating that on one Passover

in Jerusalem 256,500 lambs were slain. That's a quarter of a million lambs. If you establish, say, ten people for each lamb because a lamb was a family sacrifice, that would take it up to 2.5 million people. We can't be certain of that.

This is a massive crowd, crushing crowd, a crowd overrunning everything, and they have these palm branches, which are symbols of strength and beauty, strength because they flourish in a desert; beauty because they are evergreen. They become symbols of joy. They become symbols of enduring salvation.

In fact, the apostle John in one of his visions seeing into heaven in chapter 7 of the book of Revelation sees a scene that is depicted using palm branches. You will remember this. John sees the vision in Revelation 7:9. A great multitude is what he sees as he looks into heaven. He says it's such a great multitude it can't be counted from every nation and tribe and people and tongue standing before the throne and before the lamb clothed in white robes, a symbol of purity, righteousness, and palm branches were in their hands. And they cry out with a loud voice saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb." So here John sees heaven and the joy of heaven is depicted in the vision as symbolized in palm branches. That just simply demonstrates how they were used and familiar to John.

They are hailing the conquering hero. That's what they're doing. Their redeemer has arrived. Deliverance from Roman domination is imminent. They require a mighty deliverer. This is a mighty deliverer because He raised Lazarus from the dead. So they say, "Hosanna." That word is in Psalm 118:25. It is actually the word "hosanna." It gets translated to "save now." That's what it means, but it is the word "hosanna". It is a plea for deliverance. Save now, save now, deliver us.

They are using Psalm 118 because Psalm 118 is the conqueror's Psalm and Psalm 118 was always read and always recited at Passover. It is the final Psalm in the Hallel, the sequence of praise psalms. So they are at the Passover celebrating God's salvation, salvation to come, and they cry out, "Save now, save us!" They are calling Jesus their savior. Matthew adds that they also called Him "Son of David." The Messiah, according to 2 Samuel 7 would be David's son, who would have an everlasting kingdom. Then they say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord," again from Psalm 118. I read that earlier, verse 26. That is a Messianic expectation, and that same Psalm also, do you remember, has a statement that is referred to by our Lord later in the week in the parable that He tells in Mark 12 when He says, "The chief cornerstone rejected becomes the head of the corner. It is a marvelous thing that God has done."

So you see they see Him as their king, their savior, their deliverer, their Messiah. Their hope and their expectation is that at any moment, this power over death that He exhibited, this miracle power will be exercised against Rome. They will be crushed and Jesus will establish His throne and fulfill all of the promises through Abraham, David, and all the prophets. There is prophecy fulfilled here. In verse 14, when Jesus found that young donkey, He sat on it. It was to fulfill a prophecy of Zachariah 9:9, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming seated on a donkey's colt." Hmm. The dull statement of Zachariah is this, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, the King comes to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly riding on a donkey upon a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Prophesying the arrival of a Messiah. You not only have a fateful presentation. You have a fulfilled prophecy. As Jesus comes exactly the way the prophets said He would come. There's another

prophecy that has to be considered, being fulfilled at this very moment. Turn to Daniel 9, Daniel 9. Hurrying to explain this is a little challenging, but I'll try. Daniel 9:24. I would commend you maybe listening to the messages on our website at Grace to You if you want to download them to get the full picture here. But let me just sum it up for you.

Daniel is praying in the first part of this chapter all the way down to verse 20. God sends Him an answer to His prayer. He's praying for the deliverance of Israel from Babylon, okay. He knows that God has promised 70 years of captivity. He says that in Daniel 9:2, and he knows the 70 years are up, and he's praying for God to fulfill His promise and deliver Israel out of Babylon. In response to that prayer, God gives him a far more vast promise, not just a promise of deliverance from Babylon. God fulfilled that. God fulfilled that. Cyrus wrote a decree that sent the Jews back. They went back under Nehemiah, rebuilt the city and did all of that.

Now that's contained within this prophecy, but this prophecy stretches to the millennial kingdom. Daniel 9:24, "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city." Seventy weeks of years, seventy times seven, 490 years; 490 years have been decreed. God's plan and purpose for Israel and the bringing in of the kingdom. What do you mean? To finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, the end of revelation, and to anoint the most holy place. This is the full history until God is done and He has established His Messiah on His everlasting throne. This full history will run for 490 years, 490 years.

Now, it's got six elements. The first three are fulfilled at His first coming: to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity. The first time Jesus came, He came to deal with transgression, sin, and iniquity. The second time He comes: to bring in everlasting righteousness, to bring an end or fulfillment to all vision and prophecy, and to anoint the holy place, to set Himself on the throne. So the two comings are implied by those two different works. This is 490 years, but it's broken down very importantly into 2 parts.

Verse 25 says, "There will be a period of seven plus sixty-two." That's 69, 69. The decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Messiah, the Prince arrives, 69 weeks. That's 483 years. So what was the decree to restore and rebuilt Jerusalem? That decree was given by Artaxerxes. That decree was given in the year 445, 445 B.C. If you start with that, and you follow the calendar from 445 B.C., and you go 483 years, that's the 69 weeks that are mentioned there, you end up in the year 30 in the month Nisan. You end up at the very time when Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem. That's when the Messiah, the Prince will come, and He did come on schedule. But verse 26 says, when He comes after the seven, "And after the sixty-two when the Messiah comes, He will be cut off and have nothing." Hmm. That's what happened.

"And the people of the prince who is to come." Who is the prince who is to come? Anti-Christ. Daniel says a lot about him. The antichrist, the people who belong to the antichrist and all those who reject Christ belong to the antichrist. "The people of the antichrist who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary." In this case obviously the Romans, the destruction in 70 A.D., "And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined." We still have one week don't we? What happened to that seventieth week? That's in the future when the antichrist will make a covenant with the many with Israel for one week. In the middle of the week, he will violate the covenant. This is the abomination of desolation that Daniel writes about that Jesus comments on in the middle of the tribulation, which then brings horrendous destruction for the remainder of that

seven years at the end of which our Lord comes to bring in everlasting righteousness, to establish His kingdom.

So we are in the period of time between the first 69 weeks, which ended in 30 Nisan, and the final week, which is the time of great tribulation preceding the kingdom. But for us, go back to John 12. The important point is, and scholars have studied this with tremendous care and intensity. The important point is they pinpoint the year A.D. 30, the Friday, the ninth of Nisan, the Jewish month of Nisan, as the time when Jesus came into the city.

It looks wonderful. It looks glorious. It looks hopeful, fulfilling prophecy, but remember Daniel said the Messiah will be cut off. What does that mean? Killed and have nothing. Then desolation and destruction will follow and that's exactly what did follow as the people of the prince, the antichrist forces come and destroy Jerusalem.

But still, they don't take into account that prophecy anywhere in the narrative of the Passion Week, but it is there and it was fulfilled. Again, it looks good, but if you go with me for just a moment, one other text that's very helpful, and I alluded to it earlier. Go to Luke 19. This is Luke's account of the triumphal entry. As they come into the city, He's approaching down the Mount of Olives, verse 37, "The whole crowd praising God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles they had seen." They were all shouting, verse 38, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord," from the Hallel, Psalm 118:26. They say, "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples.' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!' When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it saying, 'If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another.'" And they did not, they dismantled the temple down to the foundation, "Because you didn't recognize the time of your visitation."

To illustrate it, He entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling. He didn't attack the Romans. Who did He attack? He attacked the Jewish people at the heart of their worship, their religion. They are beside themselves with fury as they express in verse 19, "The world has gone after Him." They try to silence the disciples and to get them to silence their Master. Can't happen. The stones would cry out. He is worthy of all of this praise, but it's so short-lived and He knew that. He knew exactly what was coming, and He gave them a preview of what was coming by attacking their system personally at its busiest time of the year, throwing people out of the temple.

So we see this fateful presentation and fulfilled prophesy, even prophesy from Jesus as to what was going to happen began to be fulfilled with His attack on the temple. Then we can add one other thought or two maybe. We see the perplexity of the disciples. Verse 16, "These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him."

They didn't get it when it was happening. I just have to say it this way: they were ignorant actors in the drama, but don't be surprised. They had been ignorant for a long time. They didn't get most things. They did not understand most things. They did not certainly understand why He was talking about dying. They even tried to rebuke Him for that in the words of Peter. They didn't understand



why He was humbling Himself and washing their feet. He said, "I have to do this. I have to do this. This is part of my humiliation." When He said, "I'm going away," they panicked and Philip says, "Where are you going to go? We don't know where you're going. We don't know how to get there."

Even in chapter 1 of Acts, they were still lingering in the dark about the kingdom. "Are you going to bring the kingdom now? Is it coming now?" It was all very confusing to them until He was glorified. Why? Then it all began to make sense. Why? Because previous to His glorification, what had He done? He had gone back to the Old Testament and taught them the Old Testament, all the things in the Old Testament about Himself. Remember, on the road to Emmaus, Luke 24? And then in the Upper Room in the night of His resurrection, He explained Old Testament prophecies that He had fulfilled in His death and resurrection, and it began to make sense. Then in Acts 2, right after His glorification, right after He ascends into heaven, the Holy Spirit comes and with the Old Testament course that He gave them after His resurrection, and the arrival of the Holy Spirit. Then they remembered that these things were written of Him.

I've been telling you over the last number of months that when you now open the book of Acts after chapter 1 begins, they start to make sense out of the Old Testament. Then when the Spirit comes, it really explodes. John is looking back as he writes this, and he's saying of himself and the rest, we didn't understand what was going on. We didn't understand it. In other words, we were caught up with the crowd. We were caught up with the enthusiasm. We were caught up with the messianic fever. We never did understand until we looked back after His glorification and begun to make sense of what He had said.

All the way along, all week long, they're going to be confused. Thursday night in the Upper Room, they're very confused, very confused. So even His own beloved followers show perplexity. The crowd? Well, they're described in verse 17 and 18. They're there as we read earlier. They're curious. They're fascinated. Why are they there? Are they there because they're interested in Jesus' theology? No. They heard that He had performed this sign. They're attracted by the supernatural, false followers, thrill seekers, who by Friday choose Barabbas, a well-known criminal to be released; Jesus to be held prisoner, and then screamed for Him to be crucified. Fickle crowd.

If the crowd is fickle, the Pharisees are angry, verse 19. So the Pharisees said to one another, you see that you are not doing any good. What you're trying to stop is not working. You're not having any effect. "The world has gone after Him." That's such an important statement. That shows you the massive impact of Jesus on a superficial level to people who were only looking for supernatural experiences and events. The same people screamed for His crucifixion a few days later. It's really a testimony to the far-reaching reality of superficial faith. Hear them now.

John 19, we jump ahead. Pilot brings Jesus out in verse 14, "'Behold, your King!' So they cried out, 'Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!' Pilot said to them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but Caesar.'" What liars they were. And then a most interesting word appears.

We close at this point. Verse 20, "There were some gentiles who wanted to see Jesus." What is this? The rejection of Israel caused God to turn from the Jews to the gentiles. Here is a preview of the church. It's a preview of the church. We don't know who they are, but they were gentiles who had come to embrace Judaism, proselytes. There was, oh by the way, in the temple a court for the gentiles where they would be able to stay and not go in any further.

So they were from Bethsaida of Galilee, Galilean gentiles and they began talking to Philip. Knowing he was a disciple of Jesus they said, "We want to see Jesus." Philip came and told Andrew, and they came and told Jesus. The gentiles want genuinely to see Jesus. They desire an interview. It might have been hard to get to Jesus in this massive mob scene, but they wanted to see Him.

It doesn't say whether they did, but I know this, it does say in John 6:37, "Whoever comes to me, I will not cast out. I will not turn away." So maybe what we have here in a little small way is the beginning of what we're all a part of, the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, people who truly want to see Jesus.

Father, we thank you for the time that we've been able to look at this. We haven't by any means come close to seeing all that is here. We would have to read Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, think about all these things for a long time. But Lord, even what we have come to understand is so wonderfully true. It just has the ring of reality to us. There are many religious books in the world, many religions: convoluted, fantasies, demonic inventions, ridiculous scenarios, lies and deception. The simple majestic realities of Scripture stand alone and apart from all lies as true. Thank you for the combined testimonies of the gospel writers writing at different times and all saying the same thing in a perfectly blended story. There is a sadness in our hearts even as there was a sadness in the heart of Jesus. He wept. They were shouting with joy and waving palm branches, and He was crying.

They thought the kingdom was coming. He knew judgment was coming. They thought they would crown Him. He knew they would kill Him. The King came to die, but by Sunday He came out of the grave. Long live the King. Because He lives, we live and share His life forever. We rejoice in all of this.

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