**TRIUMPHAL ENTRY –** March 24, 2024

As we approach Holy Week, where we celebrate the events of Jesus’ final days here on earth. We look into His word, particularly the gospels where we see glimpses of those final moments, what He said and how that impacted the world forever and is very important for us today.

As we read through the gospels, we watch him come from relative obscurity to an instantly famous teacher, healer and miracle worker throughout Israel. He collected 12 Apostles and is being followed by massive crowds. The Pharisees however, feared Him and were intimidated by His power and influence and plotted on how they can capture him and put him to death.

All along the way, from the time He was born, along with his teaching and miracle-working, Jesus had been accomplishing an important mission; fulfilling the Messianic prophecies that were written of Him since ancient times.

He also prophesied about Himself *three times*, that he would; go to Jerusalem, be arrested, suffer, be crucified and rise again. The apostles do not seem to understand the ramifications of His death and resurrection, each time they answered with less--than-appropriate responses .

**Mark 8:31**He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

**Mark 9:30-32**  **“**They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.” But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.”

**Mark 10:33-34** “We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”

This week it is about to happen. Jesus and his apostles arrive in Jerusalem for one final week, before the crucifixion.

The *way* He enters Jerusalem is very significant. It was no ordinary entry and was in fulfillment of an ancient prophecy having to do with the Messiah;

This prophecy was from Zechariah 9, and the entry is called “The Triumphal Entry”

**Zech. 9:9** “Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

This prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 was different than other Messianic prophecies, not just because it involved a donkey. The prophecy required him to make a public proclamation of himself as “King and Messiah”, and would definitely set off a chain of events that would rapidly lead to His arrest, torture and crucifixion.

Jesus knew that when he fulfilled this one, that the end would come quickly. As much as it was a huge celebration of Worship of Him in Jerusalem, it was in effect, the *beginning of His death-march* because He knew what would happen soon after.…

**Mark 11:1-11**As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, **2**saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. **3**If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’”

**4**They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, **5**some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” **6**They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go.

**7**When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. **8**Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields.

**9**Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

“Hosanna!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

**10**“Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!”

“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

**11**Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

This was a PUBLIC statement*. It wasn’t just a pleasant pony-ride into town : )*

He knew that the Pharisees were aware of the prophecy, and would react harshly, and he was right.

*By Him doing this: He was either extremely audacious OR He is the Messiah!*

They could all hear the crowds shouting;

 *“Hosanna!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”*

*What did that mean?*

*HOSANNA – (“SAVE US”) – Is not so much a name, or even a praise, but a cry for help to a king or to God.*

The Hebrew words *Yasha* (“deliver, save”) and *anna* (“beg, beseech”) combine to form the word that, in English, is “hosanna.” Literally, *hosanna* means “I beg you to save!” or “please deliver us!”

*It’s followed by the words, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord”*

It was being shouted by huge crowds of people!

They are quoting

 **Psalm 118:25,26**

“Lord, save us! Lord, grant us success!

**26**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

*“Baruch HaBa Beshem Adonai!*

This is very much a “praise-phrase”,

It was a worship event like no other that ever been!

This is the most fantastic Worship Celebration that Jerusalem has ever experienced because Jesus was being worshiped right there in Jerusalem. (Much like 2 Samuel 6 when David came up to Jerusalem with the Ark of the Covenant – dancing with all his might unto the Lord.)

*PHARISEES RESPONSE:*

**Luke 19:39-40** *“Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!” “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”*

*Jesus once again demonstrated that He had all authority over even the natural world. Including the wind and the waves, the laws of gravity & flotation, sickness, disease and even mortality. IF the crowds did not worship him in this divine moment, then God would have allowed even the* ***stones*** *to become animated and cry out in praise and worship.*

*[I wish that would’ve happened]*

This is not just worship, it is also a *cry for help* to the Lord,

A recognition, welcome and appeal to the Messiah.

Jesus received it from the adoring crowds as he traveled down the Mount of Olives, through the Kidron Valley and into the Eastern Gate. They were waiting for a King-Messiah to free them from the tyranny of Rome and restore Israel to the Powerful place it held under King David.

Even while these crowds praised him however, He knew that He would soon find himself rejected at the temple by their leaders and Priests.

In fact if you look ahead to this rejection, you see in Matt 22 that he wept and spoke forth another prophecy, using *the very same words* that were proclaimed to him in praise…

**Matt 22:37-39**

**37**“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. **38**Look, your house is left to you desolate. **39**For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say,

‘*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*

*“…you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” ( Baruch Ha Ba Beshem Adonai)*

As we saw in Mark 8, 9, and 10 Jesus words about His own suffering in Jerusalem were rejected or misinterpreted by the Apostles.

Here in Mark 11, his actions in fulfilling this ancient prophecy, as much as they were a Holy celebration of “Jesus the Messiah”, were misinterpreted by some in the crowds as well, this time in Jerusalem.

They had expectations of a King-Messiah who would kick out the Roman Empire, get rid of Herod and *“…reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom” (Isa. 9:7)*

They were projecting their own political aspirations on Jesus, even though throughout the journey He would promise only of “The Kingdom of God”.

You can imagine the great disappointment of the crowds when a week later *their King-Messiah Hero* was being arrested, flogged, beaten, tortured and sentenced to death by the Romans.

Their “*hopeful political enthusiasm”* turned into “*hateful disdain”* as they shouted, “Crucify Him”. *Probably because of their extreme disappointment in His NOT living up to their expectations.*

*What happened?*

**They allowed their own personal aspirations to drive their expectations and understanding of Jesus and the kingdom of God**. *(repeat)*

* Jesus was very clear all along, that His journey would lead to the cross,
* He told them clearly that He *“did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*
* His message was no different to the Apostles than it was to Pilate when He said *“My Kingdom is not of this world"*

Do we ever make the same mistake?

Do we ever project our own agendas and aspirations upon Jesus and Christianity.

We need to be very careful that we *Keep our Eyes on Jesus*, and *not on our own agendas*, especially in the super-charged political climate that we live in.

We need to seek God’s will above our own, and understand that His ways are higher and His thoughts are wiser, even as we approach this election year.

Make no mistake, I encourage all of us to support and vote for political candidates that we feel, best represent Biblical values in their policy. Especially those candidates who will appoint Supreme Court Justices who will interpret the laws of our land.

I have specific issues that I feel best reflect what I think is important as a Citizen, a Pastor, a Father and a Christian.

As a thinker, I have strong opinions on some of these issues, we all do…

but I encourage us all to be wise and prayerful as to how and when we share them.

As a Christian;

* I *do not* however, have anything more than temporal hopes and aspirations in the success of a Political candidate or party.
* I have seen God move during times when there were good leaders, as much as during the terms of bad leaders.
* Throughout the Bible we see the hand of God move mightily for His people under both godly *and* wicked rulers.

Either way we need to put our trust in Jesus, and our hope in God.

* He will provide,
* He will protect .
* He will sustain us.
* He will guide us.

Will He use people, leaders and governments? Yes, absolutely.

Should we pray and vote as God leads us “Of course”.

But ultimately we need to cry out just like they did at the Triumphal Entry

“Hosanna!”, “**God** save us!”

“GOD save us!” Because He’s the only one who can.

Lastly, The Donkey

I think about the donkey in the story of the Triumphal entry. He is sometimes overlooked, but is in reality the most significant donkey in the history of the universe.

All he did was lift up Jesus and carry him on his back to the place where people could experience Him. Whether it’s to cry to him for help “Hosanna” or to worship Him as Lord “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord”

That’s our job as well

Lift Him up in praise, and carry him to the people who desperately need him.

Jesus told the crowd after His Triumphal Entry:

**John 12:32** “if I be lifted up from the earth I will draw all people unto myself”.

People are in desperate need of hope, comfort, assurance, healing and salvation that can only be found in Jesus.

***[Being Jesus in the Christmas play ]***

People NEED Jesus in their lives, whether they know it or not. YOU and I are given the job of bringing Him to them.

That’s what we are to do, as individuals, and as a church.

***What does that look like in your life?*** *(take the opportunity to reach out to people by text, email, chat or even phone call). Invite them to church. Make the most of every situation.*

In your homes, schools, towns, communities, neighborhoods, at your jobs etc.

the most important thing you can do, in fact the only thing you can do with eternal significance is to Lift up Jesus in all you do, through this season and beyond, till the day we go to Him, or He comes for us.

Lift up Jesus, and watch what happens…

He will draw people to himself, through you!