

“Lenten Series: A Handful of Palms”

2018: The Year of the Winner

Scripture: John 12:12-16 (NIV)

¹² The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. ¹³ They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting,

“Hosanna!”^[a] “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”^[b] “Blessed is the king of Israel!” ¹⁴ Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written: ¹⁵ “Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.”^[c]

¹⁶ At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

Subject Question: In John’s telling of Jesus triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday what three expectations does John attempt to bring to light in His Holy account?

Compliment answer: The Expectation of the Crowd (Vs.12-13a), The Expectation of the Prophet (Vs.13b-15) and the Expectation of the Disciples (Vs.16).

Big Idea: In John’s telling of Jesus triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday the three expectations he attempted to bring to light in His holy account were: The Expectation of the Crowd (Vs.12-13a), The Expectation of the Prophet (Vs.13b-15) and the Expectation of the Disciples (Vs.16).

Homiletical Idea: “Palm Leaves in the Family Tree”

Purpose: I want the congregation to see the irony of the expectations that those who were at that triumphal entry had and how some of those same expectations are very much present today.

Ground Work:

MacLaren's Expositions

A NEW KIND OF KING

John 12:12 - John 12:26.

The difference between John's account of the entry into Jerusalem and those of the Synoptic Gospels is very characteristic. His is much briefer, but it brings the essentials out clearly, and is particular in showing its place as a link in the chain that drew on the final catastrophe, and in noting its effect on various classes.

'The next day' in John 12:12 was probably the Sunday before the crucifixion. To understand the events of that day we must try to realize how rapidly, and, as the rulers thought, dangerously, excitement was rising among the crowds who had come up for the Passover, and who had heard of the raising of Lazarus. The Passover was always a time when national feeling was ready to blaze up, and any spark might light the fire. It looked as if Lazarus were going to be the match this time, and so, on the Saturday, the rulers had made up their minds to have him put out of the way in order to stop the current that was setting in, of acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah.

They had already made up their minds to dispose of Jesus, and now, with cynical contempt for justice, they determined to 'put Lazarus also to death.' So there were to be two men who were to 'die for the people.' Keeping all this wave of popular feeling in view, it might have been expected that Jesus would, as hitherto, have escaped into privacy, or discouraged the offered homage of a crowd whose Messianic ideal was so different from His.

John is mainly concerned in bringing out two points in his version of the incident. First, he tells us what we should not have gathered from the other Evangelists, that the triumphal procession began in Jerusalem, not in Bethany. It was the direct result of the ebullition of enthusiasm occasioned by the raising of Lazarus. The course of events seems to have been that 'the common people of the Jews' came streaming out to Bethany on the Sunday to gape and gaze at the risen man and Him who had raised him, that they and some of those who had been present at the raising went back to the city and carried thither the intelligence that Jesus was coming in from Bethany next day, and that then the procession to meet Him was organized.

The meaning of the popular demonstration was plain, both from the palm branches, signs of victory and rejoicing, and from the chant, which is in part taken from Psalm 118:1 - Psalm 118:29 The Messianic application of that quotation is made unmistakable by the addition, 'even the King of Israel.' In the Psalm, 'he that cometh in the name of Jehovah,' means the worshipper drawing near to the Temple, but the added words divert the expression to Jesus, hail Him as the King, and invoke Him as 'Savior.' Little did that shouting crowd understand what sort of a Savior He was. Deliverance from Rome was what they were thinking of.

We must remember what gross, unspiritual notions of the Messiah they had, and then we are prepared to feel how strangely unlike His whole past conduct Jesus' action now was. He had shrunk from crowds and their impure enthusiasm; He had slipped away into solitude when they wished to come by force to make Him a King, and had in every possible way sought to avoid publicity and the rousing of popular excitement. Now He deliberately sets Himself to intensify it. His choice of an ass on which to ride into Jerusalem was, and would be seen by many to be, a plain appropriation to Himself of a very distinct Messianic prophecy, and must have raised the heat of the crowd by many degrees. One can fancy the roar of acclaim which hailed Him when He met the multitude, and the wild emotion with which they strewed His path with garments hastily drawn off and cast before Him.

Why did He thus contradict all His past, and court the smoky enthusiasm which He had hitherto damped? Because He knew that 'His hour' had come, and that the Cross was at hand, and He desired to bring it as speedily as might be, and thus to shorten the suffering that He would not avoid, and to finish the work which He was eager to complete. The impatience, as we might almost call it, which had marked Him on all that last journey, reached its height now, and may indicate to us for our sympathy and gratitude both His human longing to get the dark hour over and His fixed willingness to die for us.

But even while Jesus accepted the acclamations and deliberately set Himself to stir up enthusiasm, He sought to purify the gross ideas of the crowd. What more striking way could He have chosen of declaring that all the turbulent passions and eagerness for a foot-to-foot conflict with Rome which were

boiling in their breasts were alien to His purposes and to the true Messianic ideal, than that choosing of the meek, slow-pacing ass to bear Him? A conquering king would have made his triumphal entry in a chariot or on a battle-horse. This strange type of monarch is throned on an ass. It was not only for a verbal fulfilment of the prophecy, but for a demonstration of the essential nature of His kingdom, that He thus entered the city.

John characteristically takes note of the effects of the entry on two classes, the disciples and the rulers. The former remembered with a sudden flash of enlightenment the meaning of the entry when the Cross and the Resurrection had taught them it. The rulers marked the popular feeling running high with bewilderment, and were, as Jesus meant them to be, made more determined to take vigorous measures to stop this madness of the mob.

The second incident in this passage contrasts remarkably with the first, and yet is, in one aspect, a continuation of it. In the former, Jesus brought into prominence the true nature of His rule by His choosing the ass to carry Him, so declaring that His dominion rested, not on conquest, but on meekness. In the latter, He reveals a yet deeper aspect of His work, and teaches that His influence over men is won by utter self-sacrifice, and that His subjects must tread the same path of losing their lives by which He passes to His glory. The details of the incident are of small importance as compared with that great and solemn lesson; but we may note them in a few words. The desire of a few Greeks to see Him was probably only a reflection of the popular enthusiasm, and was prompted mainly by curiosity and the characteristic Greek eagerness to see any 'new thing.' The addressing of the request to Philip is perhaps explained by the fact that he 'was of Bethsaida of Galilee,' and had probably come into contact with these Greeks in the neighboring Decapolis, on the other side of the lake. Philip's consultation of his fellow-townsmen, Andrew, who is associated with him in other places, probably implies hesitation in granting so unprecedented a request. They did not know what Jesus might say to it. And what He did say was very unlike anything that they could have anticipated.

The trivial request was as a narrow window through which Jesus' yearning spirit saw a great expanse-nothing less than the coming to Him of myriads of Gentiles, the 'much fruit' of which He immediately speaks, the 'other sheep'

whom He 'must bring.' The thought must have been ever present to Him, or it would never have leaped to utterance on such an occasion. The little window shows us, too, what was habitually in His mind and heart. He, as it were, hears the striking of the hour of His glorification; in which expression the ideas of His being glorified by drawing men to the knowledge of His love, and of the Cross being not the lowest depth of His humiliation, but the highest apex of His glory-as it is always represented in this Gospel-seemed to be fused together.

The seed must die if a harvest is to spring from it. That is the law for all moral and spiritual reformations. Every cause must have its martyrs. No man can be fruit-bearing unless he sacrifices himself. We shall not 'quicken' our fellows unless we 'die,' either literally or by the not less real martyrdom of rigid self-crucifixion and suppression.

But that necessity is not only for Apostles or missionaries of great causes; it is the condition of all true, noble life, and prescribes the path not only for those who would live for others, but for all who would truly live their own lives. Self-renunciation guards the way to the 'tree of life.' That lesson was specially needed by 'Greeks,' for ignorance of it was the worm that gnawed the blossoms of their trees, whether of art or of literature. It is no less needed by our sensuously luxurious and eagerly acquisitive generation. The world's warcries to-day are two-'Get!' 'Enjoy!' Christ's command is, 'Renounce!' And in renouncing we shall realize both of these other aims, which they who pursue them only, never attain.

Christ's servant must be Christ's follower: indeed service is following. The Cross has aspects in which it stands alone, and is incapable of being reproduced and makes all repetition needless. But it has also an aspect in which it not only may, but must, be reproduced in every disciple. And he who takes it for the ground of his trust only, and not as the pattern of his life, has need to ask himself whether his trust in it is genuine or worth anything. Of course they who follow a leader will arrive where the leader has gone, and though our feet are feeble and our progress devious and slow, we have here His promise that we shall not be lost in the desert, but, sustained by Him, will reach His side, and at last be where He is.

Benson Commentary

John 12:12-16. On the next day — On Sunday; much people that were come to the feast — From different parts of the country, particularly from Galilee; took branches of palm-trees, &c. — So that this multitude consisted chiefly, not of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but of persons from other places. See this story explained at large, Matthew 21:1-16; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-40. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass — Called by the other evangelists, a colt. But the Greek here, *εὑρων δε ο ἰησους οναριον*, may be better translated, Now Jesus, having found a young ass; sat thereon, &c. — For the evangelist does not mean that Jesus was saluted by the multitude before he mounted, but his meaning is, that Jesus was riding when they saluted him. As it is written — Namely, Zechariah 9:9; Fear not, daughter of Sion — For his meekness, as well as the end of his coming, forbids fear; behold thy king cometh, sitting on an ass's colt — We shall easily see the propriety of applying Zechariah's prophecy to this transaction, if we remember that, in the East, riding on horses was anciently reckoned the greatest ostentation of magnificence. It was, therefore, becoming the meekness of the lowly Jesus, that in his most public entry into the capital city, he chose to ride on an ass. At the same time, there was nothing mean or ridiculous in it, asses being the beasts which the eastern people commonly made use of in riding. These things understood not his disciples, &c. — They did not at that time know what their Master designed by this entry, or by any of the circumstances of it. Probably they considered it as the first step of his exaltation to the throne. But when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they, &c. — After his ascension, recollecting the prophecies concerning the Messiah, they remembered how exactly they had been fulfilled in him, and found their faith greatly strengthened thereby. In like manner, the design of God's providential dispensations is seldom understood at first. We ought, therefore, to believe, though we understand not, and to give ourselves up to the divine disposal. The great work of faith is, to embrace those things which we know not now, but shall know hereafter.

Messianic Prophecies

Introduction

One of the authenticating proofs for the inspiration of the Bible, which at the same time authenticate the claims of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the only Savior of the world, are the many fulfilled prophecies which find their fulfillment in the person and life of Christ, Jesus of Nazareth. We have in the Holy Scripture, an array of prophecies which extend over hundreds of years

and yet find their complete fulfillment in the short thirty-year life span of one person, Jesus of Nazareth, many being fulfilled in one day. These prophecies truly accomplish the purposes of the Gospel writers as they carefully pointed to the person, words, and works of Christ.

“But these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31)

“But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled” (Matt. 26:56).

And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. (Luke 24:25-27).

Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled” (Luke 24:44).

The following twenty-five Old Testament prophecies deal with events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus Christ including His betrayal, trial, death and burial. They were uttered by many different voices and over a period of 500 years, yet they were all fulfilled within twenty-four hours on the day that He died for the sins of the world.

Prophecies Relating to Christ’s Crucifixion

1. **SOLD FOR THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER**

Prophecy: Zechariah 11:12 And I said to them, “If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!” So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages.

Fulfillment: Matthew 26:14-15 Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, ¹⁵ and said, “What are you willing to give me to deliver Him up to you?” And they weighed out to him thirty pieces of silver.

2. **BETRAYED BY A FRIEND**

Prophecy: Psalm 55:12-14 For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, Then I could bear it; Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, Then I could hide myself from him. ¹³But it is you, a man my equal, My

companion and my familiar friend. ¹⁴ We who had sweet fellowship together, Walked in the house of God in the throng. (See also Psalm 41:9; Zech 13:6).
Fulfillment: Matthew 26:49-50 And immediately he went to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. ⁵⁰ And Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you have come for." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him.

3. THE MONEY CAST TO THE POTTER

Prophecy: Zechariah 11:13 Then the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them." So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD.

Fulfillment: Matthew 27:5-7 And he threw the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. ⁶ And the chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the temple treasury, since it is the price of blood." ⁷ And they counseled together and with the money bought the Potter's Field as a burial place for strangers.

NOTE: Notice that in both prophecy and fulfillment we find stated that (1) it was silver; (2) there were 30 pieces (Matt. 27:3); (3) they were thrown down; (4) they were cast down in the House of the Lord; and (5) the money was used to purchase the potter's field.

4. THE DISCIPLES FORSOOK HIM

Prophecy: Zechariah 13:7 "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, And against the man, My Associate," Declares the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; And I will turn My hand against the little ones.

Fulfillment: Matthew 26:56 "But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left Him and fled. (See also Mark 14:27)

5. ACCUSED BY FALSE WITNESSES

Prophecy: Psalm 35:11 Malicious witnesses rise up; They ask me of things that I do not know.

Fulfillment: Matthew 26:59-60 Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, in order that they might put Him to death; and they did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward. But later on two came forward, . . .

6. SMITTEN AND SPIT UPON

Prophecy: Isaiah 50:6 I gave My back to those who strike Me, And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.

Fulfillment: Matthew 27:30 And they spat on Him, and took the reed and began to beat Him on the head.

NOTE: Note here the details that correspond in both prophecy and fulfillment (1) He was to be smitten, (2) He was to be smitten on the face (as well as the other parts of the body). See Luke 22:64. (3) He was to be spit upon, and (4) He was to be spitten upon in the face.

7. DUMB BEFORE HIS ACCUSERS

Prophecy: Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.

Fulfillment: Matthew 27:12-14 And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He made no answer. Then Pilate said to Him, “Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?” And He did not answer him with regard to even a single charge, so that the governor was quite amazed.

8. WOUNDED AND BRUISED

Prophecy: Isaiah 53:5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.

Fulfillment: Matthew 27:26, 29 Then he released Barabbas for them; but after having Jesus scourged, he delivered Him to be crucified. . . . And after weaving a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they kneeled down before Him and mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”

9. FELL UNDER THE CROSS

Prophecy: Psalm 109:24 My knees are weak from fasting; And my flesh has grown lean, without fatness.

Fulfillment: John 19:17 They took Jesus therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew,

Golgotha. Luke 23:26 And when they led Him away, they laid hold of one Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus.

NOTE: Evidently the Lord was so weak that His knees gave way under the weight of the heavy cross. So they had to put it on another.

10. HANDS AND FEET PIERCED

Prophecy: Psalm 22:16 For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet.

Fulfillment: Luke 23:33 And when they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.

NOTE: Christ was crucified in the customary Roman manner, the hands and feet being pierced by huge spikes which fastened the body to the wooden cross.

See John 20:25-27 “. . . except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails . . . Then said He (Jesus) to Thomas, reach hither thy finger and behold My hands,” etc.

11. CRUCIFIED WITH THIEVES

Prophecy: Isaiah 53:12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.

Fulfillment: Mark 15:27-28 And they crucified two robbers with Him, one on His right and one on His left. 28 (And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And He was numbered with transgressors.")

12. PRAYED FOR HIS PERSECUTORS

Prophecy: Isaiah 53:12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors. (emphasis mine)

Fulfillment: Luke 23:34 But Jesus was saying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.

Here Jesus, as foreseen by Isaiah, “interceded for the transgressors” who nailed him to the cross.

13. PEOPLE SHOOK THEIR HEADS

Prophecy: Psalm 109:25 I also have become a reproach to them; When they see me, they wag their head.

Fulfillment: Matthew 27:39 And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads.

14. PEOPLE RIDICULED HIM

Prophecy: Psalm 22:8 “Commit yourself to the LORD; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him.”

Fulfillment: Matthew 27:41-43 In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking Him, and saying, ⁴²“He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we shall believe in Him. ⁴³“He trusts in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He takes pleasure in Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”

15. PEOPLE ASTONISHED

Prophecy: Psalm 22:17 I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me;

Fulfillment: Luke 23:35 And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, “He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One.”

16. GARMENTS PARTED AND LOTS CAST

Prophecy: Psalm 22:18 They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.

Fulfillment: John 19:23-24 The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. ²⁴They said therefore to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be”; that the Scripture might be fulfilled, “They divided My outer garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.”

NOTE: How exact the inspired prophecy! The garments were to be parted among them, but the vesture was to be awarded to one by lots. These were statements that would appear almost contradictory unless explained by the record of the scene at the cross.

17. HIS FORSAKEN CRY

Prophecy: Psalm 22:1 For the choir director; upon Aijeleth Hashshahar. A Psalm of David. My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.

Fulfillment: Matthew 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

18. GALL AND VINEGAR GIVEN HIM

Prophecy: Psalm 69:21 They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

Fulfillment: John 19:28-29 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, “I am thirsty.”²⁹ A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop, and brought it up to His mouth.

19. COMMITTED HIMSELF TO GOD

Prophecy: Psalm 31:5 Into Thy hand I commit my spirit; Thou hast ransomed me, O LORD, God of truth.

Fulfillment: Luke 23:46 And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.” And having said this, He breathed His last.

20. FRIENDS STOOD AFAR OFF

Prophecy: Psalm 38:11 My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague; And my kinsmen stand afar off.

Fulfillment: Luke 23:49 And all His acquaintances and the women who accompanied Him from Galilee, were standing at a distance, seeing these things.

21. BONES NOT BROKEN

Prophecy: Psalm 34:20 He keeps all his bones; Not one of them is broken.

Fulfillment: John 19:33, 36 but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; . . .³⁶ For these things came to pass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled,” Not a bone of Him shall be broken. “

NOTE: It is profitable to notice two other prophecies concerning His bones which undoubtedly had an exact fulfillment, although such is not stated in Scripture in so many words. We draw our conclusions from honest inference. (1) Psalm 22:14 "All my bones are out of joint." Hanging on the cross by the hands and feet would easily disjoin the bones, especially when we remember that the body was fixed to the frame while lying on the ground. (2) Psalm 22:17 "I may tell all My bones." He was left hanging on the cross naked (John 19:23) and all His bones could thus easily be seen. The extension of the body and the wasting pangs of crucifixion would make the bones more prominent than usual.

22. HEART BROKEN

Prophecy: Psalm 22:14 I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me.

Fulfillment: John 19:34 but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.

NOTE: The blood and water running out of the pierced side presented an evidence that the heart had literally burst.

23. HIS SIDE PIERCED

Prophecy: Zechariah 12:10 "And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.

Fulfillment: John 19:34-37 but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. ³⁵ And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. ³⁶ For these things came to pass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled," Not a bone of Him shall be broken. " ³⁷ And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

24. DARKNESS OVER THE LAND

Prophecy: Amos 8:9 "And it will come about in that day," declares the Lord GOD, "That I shall make the sun go down at noon And make the earth dark in broad daylight.

Fulfillment: Matthew 27:45 Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour.

NOTE: The Jews reckoned twelve hours from sunrise to sunset. This would make the sixth hour about noon, and the ninth hour near three o'clock.

25. BURIED IN A RICH MAN'S TOMB

Prophecy: Isaiah 53:9 His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.

Fulfillment: Matthew 27:57-60 And when it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.⁵⁸ This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given over to him.⁵⁹ And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,⁶⁰ and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away.

Introduction: The week had finally come. Jesus lifelong date with destiny was at hand. Or as one commentator put it: *Because He knew that 'His hour' had come, and that the Cross was at hand, and He desired to bring it as speedily as might be, and thus to shorten the suffering that He would not avoid, and to finish the work which He was eager to complete. The impatience, as we might almost call it, which had marked Him on all that last journey, reached its height now, and may indicate to us for our sympathy and gratitude both His human longing to get the dark hour over and His fixed willingness to die for us.*

Yet, as we recount the story now we find that although Jesus Himself understood His mission and His purpose, and the Via Delarosa (The Way of Suffering) that awaited Him, many... if not all, had different expectations of and for this One who came in the "Name of the Lord," their long awaited Messiah. Let's explore some of those expectations as we consider our text today: The Expectation of the Crowd (Vs.12-13a), The Expectation of the Prophet (Vs.13b-15) and the Expectation of the Disciples (Vs.16).

(Truth is often full of Irony)

- A. The Expectation of the Crowd (Vs.12-13a). ¹² *The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem.* ¹³ *They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting,*

- B. The crowds were gathering. Many had come to see the newly raised to life Lazarus. Word had spread quickly of the miracle and the miracle worker. The sick, the lame, the curious... all rushed to Bethany and then on to Jerusalem. There was a gathering of fascination. They seemingly, had so much to gain! The religious crowd was gathering as well. As it was pointed out earlier in the chapter, in verse 12, *The chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well...* This Jesus, and His followers were getting out of hand. He was leading people astray. He had to be stopped. There was a gathering of fear. They seemingly had so much to lose... Both however were probably wondering and maybe hoping, could this be the long awaited Messiah?
- C. For both the crowds and the leaders the idea of the Messiah was plain. He was to be a military leader, able to throw off the oppressors of the day. One who would rule with majesty and righteousness and power? One who was worthy of the palm branches that were being waved which signified victory and rejoicing? One who could live up to the chant-- *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord...* And better, *Blessed is the king of Israel!* How surprising it must have been to have this conquering King to forgo a mighty stallion or a majestic chariot to enter the Holy City... His seat of Power. And instead? Mount a lowly donkey. Was this really the all-powerful Messiah? He certainly didn't seem to... to look the part....
- D. Jesus still draws crowds: Always has. The curious, the sick, those who want and need things. Can this Jesus fulfill my expectations and meet my needs. What can I lose; I have so much to gain! There are others as well. The successful, the wealthy, the fit, the powerful... they already have a lot and they as well, also have a lot to lose. What will this Jesus expect of me? Can he offer me something that I don't already have? Does he really hold the key to happiness and fulfillment and maybe even the greatest of all mysteries, death? Is there or can there be something beyond just this life ...? I want to know. People don't change much in each generation. They gather at churches or bible studies or small groups with the same questions and maybe even the same expectations. And of course, the biggest stumbling block to them, this all powerful Son of God, carrying lambs on His shoulders, being killed by an angry Roman mob and all the while claiming that He died for me? He certainly doesn't seem to... to look the part...

(Truth is often full of Irony)

- A. The Expectation of the Prophet (Vs.13b-15). ¹³ *They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna!^[a]” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”^[b] “Blessed is the king of Israel!”* ¹⁴ *Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written: ¹⁵ “Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.”^[c]*
- B. The peoples expectation were and are one thing, but what the prophet’s seemed to understand and expect from the messiah were quite different. Consider some prophecies written concerning Christ, years, decades and centuries before He was born; (See notes: 25 listed just concerning Christ on the cross) Greatest prophetic Messianic picture:

Isaiah 53 New International Version (NIV)

53 Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
² He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
³ He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.
⁴ Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.
⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.
⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.
⁸ By oppression^[a] and judgment he was taken away.
Yet who of his generation protested?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished.^[b]
⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.
¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the LORD makes^[c] his life an offering for sin,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.
¹¹ After he has suffered,
he will see the light of life^[d] and be satisfied^[e];
by his knowledge^[f] my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.
¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,^[g]
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,^[h]
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

C. For the crowd Jesus may not have looked the part, but for the prophet there was and is no one who has ever looked more the part. Jesus did not come to fascinate people or to make people fear. He came for one purpose—to die for the things that we have done and do that separate us from a holy God—our sins. We are by nature and by choice rebellious people, intent on having and doing our own thing. We are sinners. The bible teaches us that, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God sinners.*

D. His kingdom is for the redeemed—those who have heard the good news and accepted the fact that Jesus carried their sins on His back and He died for them—he is THE SAVIOUR and He offers His gift of salvation to all who have ears to hear and a heart to believe. God loves you. Christ has died for you. He wants you to come to Him and accept Him as your savior. Each person, every one of us in this crowd, has everything to gain and nothing but our guilt and shame to lose. Jesus did not come to be the great Santa Clause in the sky—He came as King of kings and Lord of Lords, the precious lamb of God, the Holy Son of the Living God, slain from the foundation of the world for you and me. You alone can set Him on the throne of your life. He won't do it by force. He comes by invitation.

(Truth is often full of Irony)

- A. The Expectation of the Disciples (Vs.16). *¹⁶ At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.*
- B. Throughout history there have been a number of what we call paradigm shifts. Events with such an impact that they literally change the way one thinks and considers. Ex. Earth Flat—Sun circled the earth—Disease is a curse—seeing is believing. For the disciples they thought like the crowd, that Jesus had come to establish a great worldly kingdom. And they were concerned—even asking Jesus to let one sit at His right hand in His Kingdom and one on His left. They wondered who was going to be the greatest in the Kingdom. Frankly during Jesus' lifetime they never really got it. Their expectations were just as wrong as everyone else. Just as wrong as many people's today.
- C. They had been there when Jesus said; I am the good shepherd who lays down His life for his sheep. They had heard him say, love your enemies, do good to those who persecute you. They sat and listened and yet did not understand.
- D. Next week we consider the paradigm shift that took place in their hearts and lives with the resurrection of the Messiah, the Messiah of the dreams, the Messiah of their holiness and best expectations. And that

paradigm shift happens to everyone, the fanciful as well as the fearful,
when they put their trust in the meek , donkey riding King of hearts.

(Truth is often full of Irony)