

## Our Hosanna to the King John 12:12-19

I was curious about false Messiahs so I did a quick Google search to see what came up. Here's what I found from Wikipedia in which it states that "Messiah in Judaism originally meant a divinely appointed king or 'anointed one' and included Jewish priests, prophets and kings such as David, Cyrus the Great or Alexander the Great. Later, especially after the failure of the Hasmonean Kingdom (37BC) and the Jewish-Roman wars, the figure of the Jewish messiah was one who would deliver the Jews from oppression and usher in an Olam HaBa ('world to come') or Messianic Age.

Some people were looking forward to a military leader who would defeat the Seleucid or Roman enemies and establish an independent Jewish kingdom. Others, like the author of the Psalms of Solomon, stated that the messiah was a charismatic teacher who would give the correct interpretation of Mosaic law, restore Israel, and judge mankind.

Throughout history from the first century until today, there have been a number of those who claimed to be the Messiah either by themselves or by their followers. It's not surprising that a secular source like Wikipedia would include Jesus as one who claimed that title. Emphasis on CLAIMED.

John MacArthur offers some reasons behind the motivation of others who claimed the title of Messiah. He notes that some were themselves deceived. Others used the title to exploit people. Some did it for personal prestige, others did it to deliver their people from oppression. Some did so with violence, while others were passive in their approach by fasting and praying. Whatever their real motivation, they all had one thing in common. They were counterfeits to Jesus true Messiah.

It seems to me that if they only took the time to read the Old Testament prophecies surrounding the description of the one who would be the true Messiah that any reasonable student would have to summarily conclude that Jesus fits it 100% of the time. Wikipedia is correct in saying that over time

the idea of the Messiah shifted to one who would be a political deliverer from Jewish enemies. We'll see that in our text as it was proclaimed by the crowd. Even the disciples believed that up to the time of His ascension when we read in **Acts 1** that they asked Jesus if now was the time when He would bring His kingdom to earth.

As he writes to the Jewish people, Matthew alone records 18 times the phrase "**that it might be fulfilled**" to stress the fulfillment of some Old Testament prophecy.

There are over 400 prophecies that Jesus fulfilled. Consider just some of the many that He did fulfill.

- The place of His birth
- The time of His birth
- The manner of His birth
- The betrayal
- The manner of His death
- The people's reactions
- The piercing of His side
- The burial

It's been mathematically estimated that the probability of any one person fulfilling all 8 of these prophecies is 1 in  $10^{17}$  power. That's 1 with 17 0's.

Some of the other Messianic prophecies include

- His anointment by the Holy Spirit
- His ascension
- His bones would not be broken
- His being born of a virgin
- His being called Lord
- His crucifixion between two thieves
- His entrance into Jerusalem on a donkey
- His family line through Jesse
- His being forsaken
- His garments parted and gambled for
- His hands and feet pierced

People can deny it all they want but the reality is that Jesus is the Messiah, not just a good teacher or great prophet, a delusional person, or even someone bent on exploitation.

**MacArthur concludes by saying that "the bogus claims of all such pretenders fall far short of the**

biblical qualifications for the Messiah. Jesus Christ alone possesses the credentials of the true Messiah; the words He spoke, the miracles He performed, and the prophecies He fulfilled prove that He was who He claimed to be (Matthew 26:63-64; John 4:25-26).”

At one point near the end of his own ministry, while spending time in prison, John the Baptist sent some of his followers to ask Jesus this question: **“Are you the expected One (referring to the Messiah), or should we look for someone else?”** (Matthew 11:3) Are you the One that was promised? Jesus responded by telling them to tell John that His miracles were proof that He was the Messiah. **“The blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up”** (Matthew 11:4-5). They didn’t need to look any further than His miracles. If He wanted to, He could have also cited the many prophecies that had been fulfilled up to that point in time, but the miracles were proof enough. **So why didn’t people accept Him as the true Messiah?**

I trust we will see that in our text. On this day in what is considered as part of Holy week, I want us to take a look at the various people around Christ, their plans for Christ, and then conclude with our praise of Christ.

## I. THE PEOPLE AROUND JESUS

Our text is what we have come to know as the triumphal entry of Jesus. It was a time when He officially presented Himself to the people of Israel as the Messiah. This single event started a chain reaction that set in motion the circumstances that would ultimately lead to His arrest, trial, and crucifixion. While the religious leaders wanted Him dead and buried and plotted for that to happen, make no mistake about it, this was a preplanned set of events foreordained by God. Solomon was correct when he wrote in Ecclesiastes that there is a time and season for everything, and this was the time for Jesus to make His official presence known. **John MacArthur adds that “As the King came to die, He did so at the proper moment, with the passionate multitude, in the predicted manner, and**

**to the perplexity of men.”**

At this preordained time Jesus was making Himself known to the people of Israel. The first group we see is the passionate crowd.

### A. The Passionate Crowd

It only takes one person or the right circumstances to stir up a crowd to a fever pitch. The electrifying energy sensed throughout an auditorium or arena can ignite impassioned people to cheer a great play with thunderous applause on the court or boo a bad call by an official. One person can start a standing ovation or start a riot. This was a festive time and many throughout the region were gathering for the annual Passover celebration.

So there is already a heightened sense of enthusiasm because of the Passover. Coupled with that was the awareness that it had always been expected that the Messiah would make Himself public at this festival.

Our text begins by telling us that it was the next day to which you may wonder the day after what? We learn from **verse 1** that it was six days before the Passover. We read that Jesus traveled to Bethany. Bethany was where His friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived and where Jesus had earlier raised Lazarus from the dead. Because the religious leaders began to voice threats of killing Jesus, He left Bethany and headed north to the village of Ephraim. When the Passover arrived, He left with His disciples and once again headed to Bethany and to the home of His friends where they enjoyed a meal together honoring Jesus.

The next day Jesus and His disciples began their trek to Jerusalem. Our text tells us that a great crowd had gathered in Jerusalem hearing that Jesus was on His way there. Now there was already a crowd following Him from Bethany because of His having raised Lazarus from the dead. Then there was this crowd from Jerusalem who heard He was on His way. **Verse 13** says they went out to meet Him. Somewhere outside Jerusalem these two bands of people met. Some sources indicate that there may have been as many as one million people

who joined together in bringing Jesus to Jerusalem that day.

The Beatles once quipped that they were more popular than Jesus. I sincerely doubt that. The Beatles never raised anyone from the dead, never healed the diseased, never gave sight to the blind, never gave speech to the mute, never fed multitudes with a few fish and loaves of bread, never gave the deaf hearing (although if people played their music too loud may have caused the opposite), never cast out demons, never forgave sins, never taught with authority, never died for anyone to give salvation.

For all the crowd thought Jesus to be and because of the upcoming Passover, they were passionate.

The crowd was passionate about Jesus.

The second group we see here in our text are the puzzled disciples.

## B. The Puzzled Disciples

**Have you ever been around someone for a long time only to learn something new about them, even after you thought you knew everything about them?** I've been in social settings where you go around the room and tell everyone something they don't know about you sometimes with much laughter. A more fun way to do it is to write it on a piece of paper and everyone must guess who it is.

**When I worked for hospice, we had annual grief camp. All the staff had to write down a nickname they had been called. The kids were to guess what name went with the staff person. I wrote down 'Spike' and not because I once had spiked hair. At the time of I was bald. I played volleyball in a city league and my team gave me that name, because that's what I liked to do.**

Jesus had traveled with this same group of 12 men for 3 and a half years. Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James (Son of Alphaeus), Thaddeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot. They were companions wherever they went. That was the life of a disciple. They were together night and day so that the teacher could impart wisdom and truth to his disciples.

They saw His miracles. They heard Him teach. They saw His compassion for everyone, His tenderness when He dealt with others, yet they also saw Him boldly speak against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees or challenge their flawed traditions. They saw His righteous indignation when He cast out the money changers from the Temple. They saw Him calm storms and challenge their faith. They heard Him use terms about Himself that openly conveyed His deity.

They were there when the disciples of John the Baptist came and asked Jesus if He was the One they should be expecting and heard His reply that His miracles should answer the question. After the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus asked them who people thought He was. They were aware of their opinions. When asked who they thought He was, Peter responded with an affirmation that He was the Christ, the Son of God. **It was the right answer, but did they really comprehend its meaning? Did they really know what that meant for them?**

After calming the storm with just a spoken word, they wondered who He was.

Did they fully understand what He meant that He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life and that no one could come to the Father except through Him?

He referred to Himself as the Great Shepherd, the Door, the Light of the world, the Vine, the Alpha and the Omega, and the I Am.

He had taught them everything He wanted them to know about Him and even after said He would send another Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who would teach them all things and bring to remembrance what He had taught them.

But even here, now as Jesus is being escorted into Jerusalem, hailed as the King, they still didn't completely understand who He was. We read in **verse 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 they had done these things to Him."**

John adds a little parenthetical point here that it was only after Jesus was glorified, after the ascension, that they understood what was going on. They didn't understand until after the Holy Spirit came on them and taught them the truths they missed along the way. Jesus had given them a clear roadmap of His identity, but they didn't understand. Only later did the dots connect.

Paul gives us a clue why they didn't get it at first, and really why none of us get it: **“The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.” I Corinthians 2:14**

Without the Spirit of God, they couldn't fully grasp the truth even though it was right in front of their collective noses all along. As a Christian we sometimes find it completely amazing that what seems so obvious to us from Scripture is so foreign to someone who isn't a Christian as if they came from another planet.

It's like the two guys walking to Emmaus after Jesus had been raised from the dead. Jesus strolled up beside them and engaged in conversation. They were quite downcast about the events of the past three days. Jesus asked what was going on. They talked about Jesus in the past tense and said they “had hoped” He was the Messiah. Notice it's past tense. They believed that with His death and subsequent disappearance from the tomb that their hopes in Jesus being the Messiah had vanished. Jesus took them back to Moses and the Prophets and taught about why those events had to happen as they did, but it wasn't until He broke bread with them that the understanding of their spiritual eyes were opened.

Whether it's the people Paul spoke to in Corinth or when Jesus spoke to these two travelers, we were all like them at one time before being saved. Our spiritual eyes were darkened until the Holy Spirit opened our heart and revealed the truth.

The disciples were having a difficult time understanding what was happening and this isn't

even the trial and the crucifixion. If they didn't understand the triumphal entry, they surely wouldn't grasp the meaning of the cross. For now, these disciples remain puzzled.

The third group we see in this passage are the Pharisees and they are provoked.

### C. The Provoked Pharisees

Hypocritical, jealous, proud, showy, legalists, and haters are just some of the terms we could use to describe this group of men bent on the demise of Jesus. From the very beginning they were suspicious of Jesus. They condemned His actions and His teachings because He often undermined their own authority.

They condemned Him for healing on the Sabbath. They condemned Him for forgiving sins, an act only God could do.

They condemned Him for claiming to be deity.

They condemned Him for casting out demons.

They condemned Him for teaching against tradition.

They condemned Him for calling them hypocrites.

They never once made an effort to search the Old Testament to see that He fulfilled each and every prophecy or that what He taught was true.

Please understand that what the Pharisees said in **verse 19** is an exaggeration. The whole world had not gone after Jesus, but to them it sure seemed like it had. Jealousy, envy, hatred can cause opinions to be exacerbated. This outburst of joy over Jesus by the crowd only furthered to fuel their animosity.

Think about each of these groups of people. **Who are you most like?** At one time or another we all fit into one of these categories. We were the crowd, compelled to follow Jesus because of the wonderful things He did, but not drawn by any spiritual interest or insight. We read in **John 6:66** that after some very difficult teaching by Jesus, many followed Him no more. When your ears stop getting tickled and your belly is no longer fed, the fickleness of the crowd takes over and they scatter.

In **John 1:11**, the unfortunate reality is that Jesus came into the world, and even His own countrymen

didn't receive Him. They had no place for Him.

We may be like the disciples who don't see the connection until after the Holy Spirit reveals the truth about Jesus. We want to understand, we follow like we understand, we nod our head like we understand but we really don't. In reality, the truth is lost on us for a time until we have a spiritual awakening through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Or we may be like the religious leaders, lost in our own sense of pride unwilling to see the truth because we are stuck in tradition or blinded by our own hatred rendering us incapable of wanting to see the truth.

The passionate crowd, the puzzled disciples, and the provoked Pharisees, those are the people around Jesus. **So what were their plans for Jesus?**

## II. THEIR PLANS FOR JESUS

Returning to the crowd, their plans for Jesus were to crown Him as King.

### A. The Crowning Of Jesus

Though not clearly stated it is implied in the text. We get that by reading their response.

#### Verses 13-15

The palm branches, the donkey, the names, the praise were all indicative of victory and kingship. Palm branches were a symbol of victory. We see it in John's vision of heaven where he saw palm branches being waved.

**Revelation 7:9 (ESV) "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, people, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands."**

Palm branches were a symbol of victory, but also a symbol of peace, which was fitting for a city that was called the city of peace.

These revelers took branches and waved them and lined the dirt road with them much like laying out the red carpet for a celebrity. They were paving the

way for Jesus to take His rightful place to be crowned as their King on the throne of David. Their anticipation and expectation was that Jesus would at last free them from political oppression much like Moses did for Israel when he led them from their captivity in Egypt.

Earlier in His ministry the crowds had attempted to crown Him as King. They were willing to use force necessary. John tells us about it earlier in his gospel. **John 6:15 "Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make Him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by Himself."**

It was a joyful time for them because they thought their king had finally come to reign.

As an expression of their joy, they shouted a term of praise. So just for fun I want to teach you a Greek word and a Hebrew word. It's the word Hosanna. Our English word hosanna is the same word in Greek, hosanna, which is the same word hoshy ana in Hebrew. How about that? Now you can speak three languages. It's a word that means save or save now we pray. Originally the term was a plea for help, but over time it became a word of praise. It was a cry of praise welcoming the king who would save them. Hosanna meant both we want you to save and we're glad you are here to save.

Quoting from **Psalm 118:25** and **Zechariah 9:9**, they refer to Jesus as the one sent from the Lord who is the king of Israel. It speaks to His royalty.

While the horse was a symbol of military victory, the donkey was a sign of peace. He came wearing no crown, He bore no sword, He rode no chariot pulled by a mighty steed. Instead, He chose to enter in humility by riding a symbol of peace. Those things alone should have said to the crowd that His intentions were not for the purpose of military aggression. Jesus didn't come to condemn the world, to judge it, but save it, to give it peace, not from war without, but war within, from the war of sin that every person is waging through the salvation He would offer on the cross.

For the crowd, it was a time of Jesus's crowing.

For the disciples, it was a time of Jesus's Kingdom.

## B. The Kingdom of Jesus

Like their fellow Israelites, the Disciples also wondered about the kingdom of Jesus and if it was time for Him to step in and reign. We see that just before His ascension. **Acts 1:6** “**So when they met together, they asked Him, ‘Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?’**”

This verse begins with the connective word ‘so’ linking it to the previous verse where Jesus instructed them to remain in Jerusalem at which time the Holy Spirit would be sent to them. The reference to the Holy Spirit is a way of trying to line up the dots suggesting that with the arrival of the Holy Spirit Jesus must be preparing to establish His kingdom on earth. In their minds the two were closely connected. The Old Testament linked them. **Ezekiel 39:28-29**  
**Joel 2:28-3:1\***

When Jesus told them about the soon coming Spirit, their immediate conclusion was that He would restore Israel and set up His kingdom right then.

They weren't around when Jesus was questioned by Pilate, when He told him that His kingdom was not of this world. Still, they thought that Jesus was about to usher in His kingdom at that time. There was no a reason for Him to delay.

The Pharisees had something altogether different in mind for Jesus. The condemning of Jesus.

## C. The Condemning of Jesus

Outraged by all the fanfare the crowd was giving Jesus, they were all the more eager to put Jesus to death. Their intention was to wait until after the Passover celebration when they could arrest Him quietly to avoid a riot, especially now since so many were lauding Him with a triumphal entry into Jerusalem, expressing a desire to make Him King.

**Matthew 21:46**

**Matthew 26:14-16**

Their hatred, jealousy, pride, and hard-heartedness brought them to a boiling point where in just a few days they would bring Jesus to trial and condemn Him to die

on the cross. It was sooner than they wanted but it would bring the same result – the death of Jesus. They would get what they so desperately sought. In the end they were no different than Judas, filled with the devil who blinded them with hatred to condemn Jesus to die.

These three groups of people all had plans for Jesus, motivated by their own perception of who they thought Him to be.

**So where does that leave us? What is our perception of Jesus?** Your answer will determine your destiny. A true understanding of Jesus should lead to our giving Him rightful praise.

## III. OUR PRAISE OF JESUS

As we think about this very special time of the year in celebrating Easter, and our response of praise to Jesus, I am drawn to John's vision of heaven in Revelation where he witnessed a vast gathering of angels that counted into the millions. In John's day they didn't even have a word for the number of angels he saw. As they circled the throne, their voices were unified in an anthem of praise as together they joined with one voice in praising Jesus. Let's allow John to describe the scene for us.

**Revelation 5:6-14**

Imagine that you are part of this chorus of praise, because in all reality if you are a child of God one day you will be there lifting your voice with everyone else. No one voice will be heard above another. **Did you notice in verse 12 that they sang with a loud voice?** There will be no bad singers in heaven. No one will be silent. No one will want to be silent. All will be singing praise to the One who is worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing because He was slain and with His blood He purchased for God people from every tribe and language and nation with His blood, people who will live to serve God in His kingdom.

As a follower of Christ, our shout of Hosanna is not with false pretense as it was with the crowd. It won't be with misunderstanding because we don't really know who Jesus is. There will be no hostility toward Him. Our praise will be genuine because we know who Jesus is. So today as we close, there are so many fitting songs of praise we can sing to conclude our message today, but I have selected the song *We Will Glorify* because Jesus is worthy of our praise. He is worthy of all praise.