



JOHN 12:12-19

***They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting,
“Hosanna!”***

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

“Blessed is the King of Israel!”

***Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written,
“Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion;
see, your king is coming,
seated on a donkey’s colt.”***

***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.***

(verses 13-16)

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Excitement was in the air. The people of Israel had been yearning for centuries for the fulfilment of the Lord's promise to send a Deliverer, Redeemer – the Messiah. Those yearnings had perhaps only intensified under Roman rule, being politicized as the conquered people chaffed at the bit, longing to be set free. For some in the crowd, this was the moment.

For others, Jesus' teaching and miracles were enough to warm their hearts, directing their attentions to the Lord God with newfound eagerness and anticipation. Could this be the one who would usher in the Kingdom? They pressed forward, hoping.

Still others were simply curious. Hadn't this one raised a dead man out in Bethany? Weren't the religious leaders plotting against him? At least, that was the rumour. Hadn't he given sight to the blind and caused the lame to walk, right here in Jerusalem? The prospect of new marvels piqued their interest. They joined the crowd.

Date palms were abundant in Jerusalem. Eagerly, people cut the branches, waving them high as a sign of celebration, and possibly something more, for the palm branch had become a nationalist symbol of Israel. The crowd shouted their celebration. "*Hosanna*," commonly used as a shout of "*Praise*," was literally a petition for the Lord's intervention: "*Give salvation now!*" The cry from the Psalms, blessing the "*one who comes in the name of the Lord*," was understood as a blessing on Messiah. And the final phrase capped it: "*Blessed is the King of Israel!*" The eagerness was palpable. They yearned for a conquering Deliverer.

So Jesus' choice to climb on the back of a donkey's colt spoke volumes. He wasn't arriving in Jerusalem on a war horse, ready to be a political liberator. No. Instead he took up the symbol of peace, enacting the prophecy from Zechariah 9:9 – "*see your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt.*" The full quotation (which John doesn't give us) includes the notation that this coming king is "lowly" or "humble" or "gentle", and the succeeding verse (Zechariah 9:10) goes on to say that he will bring an end to war and indeed will bring peace to the nations, his rule extending from sea to sea and to the very ends of the earth. Prince of Peace. Yes!

But further, although the shouts of the crowd proclaimed the glory of a king, the true glory was coming later. John tells us the disciples didn't even quite realize

what was being said until later – not until *“after Jesus was glorified”* (verse 16). It’s one of the uniquenesses of John’s Gospel that the glory of Jesus is seen principally in the cross. That’s where the full majesty of his person was most clearly seen. That’s where he revealed his credentials as King. That’s where he paid the price of the peace he was bringing.

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

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Lord Jesus, blessed be your name. Praise you for your glory. It was revealed in your sacrifice. It was made known at the cross. You have brought peace for all who believe. Welcome, O King.

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Pray:

Make this your prayer throughout the day. Pray it often. Give him thanks. Welcome him afresh. *“Hosanna!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Blessed is the King!”*