

I. Cultural and Traditional Experience

- A. The events of what has become known as the “Triumphal Entry” or “Palm Sunday” are fairly well known in the body of Christ. As we celebrate this event today, I would like to paint you a picture of the actual event as best I can based upon multiple historical traditions and accounts. My hope is to pull you into the emotions, thoughts, and actions of this event as if you were there.
- B. There are multiple historical cases of such receptions, many of which were followed by speeches of welcome and flattery from select members of a welcoming delegation. Strong evidence thus suggests that it was custom for religious, political, and social leaders in Egypt, Palestine, and Asia Minor to venture outside a city to greet the visiting dignitary and to provide a formal welcome and military escort.
 1. According to historians, Roman leaders certainly enjoyed a similar reception upon arrival to Jerusalem. They would enter with a sizable number of troops and horsemen as a show of Rome’s force. It would have been clear to those watching who was in control of whom and to whom the city’s inhabitants would need to bend the knee to.

II. Three Prophetic Types and Shadows

- A. Triumphal Entry of King Solomon - Near the end of David's life, one of Solomon’s brothers named Adonijah stirred up followers and proclaimed himself King. However, the Lord had clearly spoken that David's son Solomon was to succeed him as ruler of all of Israel. When word reached David that Adonijah had gathered supporters together and proclaimed himself King, he gave instructions for a great triumphal entry that would very publicly and officially proclaim Solomon as King. (1 King 1:5-53)
 1. David commanded that Solomon ride his royal mule into the city from outside the city, starting at the Gihon headwaters, where he was to be anointed as king, and then paraded up to the city gates and through the city in a very public procession.
- B. Laying their Coats at the Feet of King Jehu - Approximately 100 years after Solomon's triumphal entry, the word of the Lord came to Elisha to anoint a young commander and son of King Jehoshaphat named Jehu. His anointing was not just to be the next King in line but specifically to destroy the kingdom of darkness ushered in by Ahab and Jezebel.

Upon hearing this, the military leaders and prominent men took off their outer garments and laid them on the ground under Jehu's feet as a sign of submitting their strength to him and trusting in his leadership to overthrow the enemy and reign in victory. (2 Kings 9:1-13; It is of note that this is the only time we see this act in the Old Testament)

- C. Zechariah's Prophecy - In Zechariah chapter 9, he prophesied that the Lord has a burden against the evil rulers that oppress His people and promote idolatry and darkness in the earth. In light of this, God tells His people that He will watch over them and set up protection for them against their enemies and ultimately rid them of oppression and wickedness forever. He will do this by sending them a humble and just King who will fulfill the promises of salvation. The sign that they were to recognize that this King was here is that he would ride into the city on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zech. 9:8-10)
- D. The Prophesied Triumphal Entry - The scriptures are replete with a prophesied time when the nation of Israel and the city of Jerusalem will be surrounded by all nations bent on their destruction. It will be their final moment and there will be no hope of human deliverance. They will cry out to God for deliverance and He will answer them by sending the Messiah or Anointed One to fight against those nations and deliver His people. The scriptures prophecy that after winning victory in the Kidron valley, where these nations would be gathered, there would be a grand procession. A procession of victory and celebration that even creation itself would participate in, as this Messianic warrior is paraded into the city of Jerusalem to be crowned King of the earth forever. (The Battle - Ps. 45:3-6; Is. 63:1-6; Zec 14:2-9; Eze. 38:18-23 The Victory March Entire Chapters Ps. 24:1-10; Ps. 98:1-9; Ps 118)

III. The Progressive Event

- A. Saturday evening Anointed for His Death in Bethany - Thousands of pilgrims began to make their way to the city of Jerusalem according to God's command for the feast of Passover. Jesus and his disciples did the same, staying at Simon the Lepers house in Bethany. While there, Mary the sister of Lazarus, anointed Jesus for His burial. We are told that a great crowd began to gather there to see Jesus and the man that He had raised from the dead. (Mat. 26:6-13; Mk 14:3-9; Jhn. 12:1-9)
- B. Sunday Morning at Bethphage at the Mt. of Olives - The next morning they made their way from Bethany to Bethphage, about a mile walk. On the way, Jesus tells two of His disciples to go ahead of them and untie the donkey and her colt they find there and bring it back to him. (Mat. 21:1-3; Mk 11:1-6; Lk. 19:28-34)

- C. Go into the Village and you will find a Donkey and her Colt - The two disciples do as they are told and find the mother donkey and her colt tied right where Jesus had told them to look. Jesus also knew what the owners were going to say and told the disciples simply to tell them that the Lord, “Messiah”, has need of it. Luke adds the detail that Jesus knew no one had ever ridden the colt. John adds the detail that the disciples had no idea that this event was fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah until after Jesus’ resurrection. (Mat. 21:3-6; Mk 11:4-6; Lk. 19:30-34; Jhn 12:14-16)
- D. They Threw their Cloaks on the Colt and under His Feet - The throwing of the outer garments on the donkey for Jesus to sit on, and also on the road at the donkey's feet, was a sign of offering their allegiance, strength, and trust to an individual. In the bible, we see this act only when it is in support of an acknowledgement of one's ability to physically remove perceived wickedness by force. (Mat. 21:7; Mk 11:7; Lk. 19:35; 2 Kings 9:13; Acts 7:58)
- E. They took Palm Branches and Spread them on the Road - In Jewish traditional understanding the main meaning of the palm tree or the palm branch will immediately connect to the annual feast of Tabernacles. This is a remembrance and celebration of God's deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt, and then dwelling with them as their Shepherd in the desert, as He led them to the promised land. When we see palm branches in scripture, they always point to God giving victory and peace. (Lev. 23:39-43; Rev. 7:9-10)
- F. They Started down the Road from the Mt. of Olives—the Whole Crowd Erupted - The various texts on this moment speak of a great multitude (probably thousands) who erupt with such celebration that it causes the entire city of Jerusalem to be aware of it. The distance from Bethphage to the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem is roughly 2 miles. So we must picture an event that lasted at least 30 minutes, if not more, and spanned—like a giant parade—thousands of people stretched from the Mount of Olives, down through the Kidron Valley, and up to the city gates in Jerusalem.
- G. “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord”- This phrase is used in the Old Testament to address kings who have the power to save or deliver someone from oppression. It literally means , “Oh King Save Us!”. With this in mind, it's easy to understand that they were recognizing Jesus as the promised Son of David, the King who would save them and usher in an eternal reign of peace from His throne in Jerusalem. (Ps. 118:25-26)

- H. Teacher rebuke your Disciples - If you were someone who understood the prophecies of Psalm 118 and saw crowds gathering around an individual screaming this phrase, you, too, would be concerned. They appeal to Jesus as a “teacher” of the scriptures and tell Him to correct his disciples from committing such error.

- I. “If they keep silent, these stones would cry out!” - There is no greater verse that speaks about the significance of this moment. This triumphal entry is such a strong prophetic fulfillment, and shadow of its ultimate fulfillment, that if people in Jesus' day did not recognize it for what it was, creation itself would fill in the gap and cry out. (Ps 65:12-13; Is 55:12)

- J. When He saw the City He Wept over It - As Jesus crested the hill up from the Kidron valley, and the city of Jerusalem came back into His view, He saw and felt the coming consequences of their rejection of Him. He saw the devastation and felt the death and pain that His people would endure in the days to come. The Greek wording describing how he wept speaks of an uncontrollable sobbing or loud wailing. (Jer. 9:1, 13:17; Hos. 11:8)