

Don't Make The Rocks Cry Out

The Bible is clear, we are here by God and for God. The Bible says this about Jesus Christ, *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.* Colossians 1:15-17

There's a lot packed in those verses but basically the Bible is telling us that Jesus Christ is Lord and Creator. All things were created through Him, that includes you and me. All things were created for Him, that includes you and me.

In one of those great worship scenes that give us a glimpse behind the eternal curtain to see the glories of heaven the worshippers say, *You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.* Revelation 4:11

We're not here by us and for us. God created man in His own image. We didn't manufacture ourselves. And because God created us and we exist by His will God has every right to determine our purpose.

If you feel like you're kind of wandering through life with no meaning or purpose it's because you're trying to regulate the reason you're here. You're trying to find fulfillment in something or someone other than your Creator.

And while there might be temporary enjoyment or some happiness doing life our way, real deep seated satisfaction grows out of worshipping and serving our Creator.

Ever since Adam and Eve, there's been a constant tension between our created purpose, which is worshipping God, and our sinful priority, which is to worship ourselves.

Today is what we call Palm Sunday. It gets that name from the fact that Jesus of Nazareth rode in to Jerusalem 2000 years ago to present Himself as Israel's king.

Luke 19 page 929

When you read the gospels it's really obvious that Jesus knew why He was on earth.

The culmination was going to be His crucifixion outside of Jerusalem. By Luke 19 Jesus and His disciples begin the final leg of their journey. It's a distance of 18 miles to the city of Jerusalem and it's uphill all the way.

The date was the 10th of the Jewish month Nissan. The Jewish Passover was held on the 14th of Nissan.

The Jews had three major "pilgrimage" feasts. These were the three times a year when every Jewish male that was of age was required by Mosaic Law to travel to Jerusalem and worship the Lord (Exodus 23:17).

Those feasts are sometimes called by different names, but they are generally known as Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

Passover was a time of introspection, but it was also a time of celebration and so if they could afford it men would bring their families along.

This is the week of Passover. The city of Jerusalem is crowded with pilgrims who have traveled from all over the world to be here. Every inn is filled to capacity and even the open ground around the city is covered with tents of Jewish pilgrims who have come to join in the celebration.

The Mount of Olives is located just east of Jerusalem. It's part of a mountain chain that runs north to south. If you stand where the Jericho Road crosses the ridge, to the west is the city of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley, and just to the east are the towns of Bethphage and Bethany.

This is going to be the setting for what we're about to read.

Bethany is the town where Lazarus, Martha, and Mary lived. It's located about 2 miles east of Jerusalem on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives.

Luke tells us that Jesus "went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem." In other words, Jesus leads the way to his appointment with destiny. It doesn't somehow overtake him accidentally.

"Going up to Jerusalem" is literal, since Jerusalem is at a higher elevation than most of the towns of Palestine.

In fact, the road Jesus is traveling rises from 850 feet below sea level at Jericho, to

elevation of 2,500 feet above sea level at Jerusalem.

I. Our King Who Deserves All Worship Presented Himself In Humility

Read verses 28-35

Jesus would ride into the crowded streets of Jerusalem that day on a donkey.

Up until this point He had done thousands of miracles. John said in his gospel that he couldn't even write them all down there were so many. Jesus had healed the sick, cast out demons, even raised the dead. Everyone of those miracles was designed to substantiate the fact that He was Israel's long awaited Messiah.

Everyone of those miracles was stated to be messianic by the Old Testament prophets.

The prophet Isaiah had promised , *For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end,*

Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (Isaiah 9:6-7)

Micah had predicted that an eternal ruler would be born in Bethlehem. *But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.* (Micah 5:2)

Isaiah predicted that in the time of Messiah... *the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing.* (Isaiah 35:6)

Jesus performed the miracles, fulfilled messianic scriptures, and He accepted worship from people.

Jesus was clearly the second person of the trinity, God on earth.

Now think about this striking picture that's about to unfold here. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is about to enter the holy city. Jerusalem is the center of all biblical focus and prophecy. Jerusalem is the place where the king of Israel will sit on His messianic throne.

At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. (Jeremiah 3:17)

What an absolutely striking, crucial, powerful, awesome time this was. the Messiah was about to enter the city of David. And what does He do? He tells two of His disciples to go get him a donkey to ride in on.

The Bible says in John 12, *Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey's colt."* (John 12:14-15)

Not a white charger. Not a golden chariot. Not some noble steed. A donkey.

Can you really grab a hold of what's going on here? God entered our world in obscurity. God took on flesh in Jesus. God lived His life unnoticed by the entire world, except for a few followers.

Now He's going to make His grand entrance. This is it. This is the culmination. He's going to show Himself as king, and in He rides on a donkey!

Bible commentators are quick to point out that King Solomon, David's son, rode a mule. So they say donkeys were associated with kings in the minds of the Jewish people. I have to wonder about that since you never read about any other king riding a donkey.

The whole point of all this that Jesus does is humility and peace. Jesus is going to Jerusalem to present Himself as king. You'd think He'd ride in on a white horse with trumpets blaring and His entourage following. Instead He rides in on a donkey.

Horses are used in war. Donkey's are are used in peace.

I. Our King Who Deserves All Worship Presented Himself In Humility

II. Our Worship Of The King Can Be Tainted With Selfishness

Read verses 36-38

Excitement is obviously building for the people. Passover was a festival. It was an exciting time. Jesus' fame had spread. His miracles and His teachings had raised the expectations of the people that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah of Israel.

Everything that happens with the crowd and the disciples seems to be spontaneous from here on. People are exhilarated. They take off their loose outer robes and cover the donkey with them

They even hoist Jesus up on the donkey's back for the ride and walk along in a procession wearing their tunics. More people take their robes off and lay them on the ground.

Lenski, a German commentator writes: "So Jesus came to the top of the ridge where it dips down to the valley of the Kidron, a little creek which is dry in summer, just beyond which there rose the walls and the towers of the Holy City."

"As they reached the top of the ridge, a magnificent view of Jerusalem across the valley burst upon their sight. There stood the temple, its golden roof flashing in the sun. Back of it rose Zion hill, and the whole city in all its magnificence was spread before their eyes."

This whole crowd of Jesus' followers breaks into spontaneous rejoicing and praise for all the mighty works they had seen...

These people were from all over Israel. Many of them had seen Jesus' miracles including raising Lazarus from the dead which had happened only days before this in Bethany.

In the Gospel of John it says, *Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.* John 12:17-18

This was huge. In fact the Pharisees who were enemies of Jesus said, *Look, the world has gone after Him!* John 12:19 "Everybody is following this Jesus and they're ignoring us. The next thing is, the Romans will put a stop to all this and we'll lose our positions of power that we've negotiated with them."

On the surface it looked like Jesus was finally getting what He deserved. Finally the people were acknowledging Him.

In verse 38 The people quote from Psalm 118. The other Gospel writers include another statement they make: *Hosanna to the Son of David. Hosanna in the highest.*

The word "Hosanna" is actually a Hebrew word that means "save us."

There's no doubt about what's going on here. Jesus is being hailed as the long-expected Messiah-King of Israel.

Up to this point, Jesus hasn't allowed anyone to publicly call Him King or Messiah. When He healed the sick, He would often command them to keep quiet about it. When Peter made his great confession that Jesus is the Christ in Matthew 16 Jesus gave a strict order. Don't tell anyone.

But now everything changes as Jesus makes this triumphal entry. The final culmination of God's salvation plan is being played out.

This is what's going to aggravate the Jewish leadership to the point where they think they have to get rid of this troublemaker. Palm Sunday was the doorway to Good Friday.

If we would have been there it would have been hard not to have gotten caught up with the fervor. Everything looked like it was moving toward Jesus finally being crowned as king.

But there was one problem. He was their King. But, not the kind of king they were thinking of. The whole kingdom rule of the Messiah was future. It's still future. All down through Jewish history since the time of king David, God had promised a king would rule from David's throne. In II Samuel 7 God established what we call the Davidic covenant. He promised, *And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.* (Verse 16)

When Jesus was born the angel proclaimed, *He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.* Luke 1:32

When Jesus Christ returns in His Second coming, He'll set up His kingdom rule. There'll be a thousand years of peace as Jesus rules.

What the cheering crowd didn't understand was the order of things.

They cried Hosanna - Praise Jesus, the Son of David, praise Jesus, the Messiah, Praise Jesus, our deliverer, but they really didn't know who Jesus was.

As the crowd shouted, *Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest,* they were really crying out for Jesus to begin the revolution that would free them from Roman rule.

Now you can see why their attitude would change so quickly in the next few days. They fully believed that Jesus was their Messiah who would come to usher in a kingdom of freedom, peace and prosperity for the nation of Israel and that they'd be free from slavery and occupation of the Romans.

What kind of Messiah are you hoping for today? Here's why our worship can be so easily tainted with selfishness.

It's so easy to worship God when we think that God's making life go the way we want. It's easy to celebrate a God who does things our way.

Hold your place in Like and turn to John 6 Page 944

In John 6 we 're given the account of the feeding of the 5000. Jesus feeds them with 5 barley loaves and 2 small fish.

Read verse 14 This is the one!

Read verse 15 Why did they want Him as their king? Because they were all so spiritual they wanted to a savior? Jesus obviously knows.

Read verse 26 All they cared about was getting a free meal!

If we're not careful our worship will stop depending on who God is and start depending on how happy we are with how our life is going.

Jesus didn't ride in Jerusalem on the colt that day to signify that he would set up a kingdom of peace and prosperity. He was riding in as the suffering Messiah, the lamb of God who came to die for sin.

His provision for the deliverance of Israel wouldn't be acceptable to them. They didn't want a sacrifice for sin; they wanted a King. They didn't want a spiritual deliverer; they wanted an earthly deliverer. They didn't want a Messiah that would be a lamb led to the slaughter who would die on the cross for them; they wanted a Messiah that would lead them in battle and live for them as a conquering hero.

That's always the rub for us. We tend to focus only on what is visible to the eye, or that can be touched by our hand. Our vision is earthly and physical, not eternal and spiritual.

Most people, even those who call themselves Christians, are just as blind to what God

is doing in our day as those Jews were on that day.

Sure God has promised that He, *will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.* (Revelation 21:4)

Just like God had promised Israel that there would be a kingdom of peace.

It's just first things first. First the cross, and then the kingdom. First the sufferings of this present time, then the glory which shall follow.

I. Our King Who Deserves All Worship Presented Himself In Humility

II. Our Worship Of The King Can Be Tainted With Selfishness

III. We Can Miss Out On Our Opportunity To Worship The King

Back to Luke 19. Read verse 39

The sound is increasing. The enthusiasm is building with a carpet of clothing and branches on the road, with singing, and with rejoicing. People in the crowd are shouting out clearly messianic phrases:

"Hosanna to the Son of David! "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!"

Everyone seems excited. In fact, you might even describe the crowd as intoxicated with Messianic wonder and expectation. Everyone except the one group you'd expect to be excited. The Pharisees. How ironic that the guys who were the most knowledgeable in the Bible could not see the truth.

They said, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." In other words, "Only God deserves worship, and we don't believe that you are God. So stop those people from saying these things!"

Now, look at how Jesus responds... **Read vs 40**

In other words Jesus says, "You can try to quiet the crowd, but the praise will just keep on coming. Because even the rocks, in fact anyone with the intelligence of a rock, is smart enough to know who I am!"

What's happening? Remember, the Pharisees knew their scripture. They studied the Law and the Prophets intensely, and could quote scripture at length. They memorized whole books of the Bible.

They sought out a depth of intellectual understanding of God's word that exceeds most of us. We don't value memorization of scripture the way they did. We usually don't study and debate the deeper meaning of the difficult passages of the Bible like they did. They took God's word extremely seriously. In Deuteronomy 6 God commanded His people, *These words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.* (Deuteronomy 6:6-8)

The Pharisees tied leather boxes containing four passages of Scripture, (Exodus 13:2-10,11-17; 6:4-9,13-23) to their hands and foreheads (a practice that is still followed today by some orthodox Jews). No one valued the scripture more highly than the Pharisees.

But here's the rub. They missed the big picture. They could argue for hours about minute details in the Bible but they missed the overall theme.

The details aren't an end in themselves. They're the building blocks of something much bigger.

The Pharisees ended up knowing about God but most of them didn't know God personally. They didn't see how the Bible started in Genesis to point out their need of a redeemer. They didn't understand that God's law showed their total sinfulness.

They put their hope in their obedience to God's law rather than putting their hope in the God who gave the law. They figured they were right with God because they kept the religious rituals like Passover without understanding the spiritual truth that Passover was proclaiming.

Passover is about being redeemed with the blood of a spotless lamb. The law shows we need a redeemer. All of the Old Testament prophecies pointed to Jesus as that redeemer.

But they didn't get it. They were eyeball to eyeball with the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world and they're saying, *Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.* Tell them not to say, *Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!*

These Bible students missed the opportunity to worship the King. How sad is that? It's heartbreaking. But it's also deplorable.

Today is your opportunity to worship.

Why did Jesus enter Jerusalem like He did on Palm Sunday? The crucifixion, which we know to have been on the fourteenth of Nisan, occurred at Passover. Counting backward we find that Palm Sunday was the tenth of Nisan. And this is important, because it was on that day that the thousands of lambs that were to be sacrificed for the Passover were taken up to Jerusalem and kept for three days in the homes of those who were to eat them as commanded by the law of Moses in Exodus 12.

It was as these lambs were taken up to Jerusalem that Jesus entered the city openly. Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us that one year a census was taken of the number of lambs slain for Passover and that the figure was 256,500.

In other words, with numbers that large, lambs must literally have been driven up to Jerusalem throughout the entire day. Can you see this picture? When Jesus entered the city He must have been surrounded by lambs.

Four days later, at the time the lambs were killed, Jesus Himself was killed. He was the ultimate Passover lamb. On the basis of His blood the Judgement of God passes over all who place their trust in Him.

So I would ask you this morning, the most important question of Palm Sunday: Is Jesus Christ your Passover? Have you received Him as your Savior? He didn't come the first time as a conquering king like the crowd in Jerusalem expected on Palm Sunday. A king to drive out the Romans. Instead he came as a sacrificial lamb.

The King who deserves all worship presented Himself in humility but the people's worship was tainted with selfishness and the pharisees completely missed out on their opportunity to worship the King.

We are here by God and for God. We're created to worship Him. He's not only our creator, He's our redeemer.

Are you worshipping Him by first, putting your faith in Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and then giving Him the honor that He's due?

Here's what the Bible says about our pattern of worship. Does your response to King Jesus follow the biblical pattern?

Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name. Oh come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth. All nations whom You have made shall come and worship

before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name.

(Selected verses from the Psalms)

Don't make the rocks cry out this morning. Worship our Lord in the beauty of holiness.
Worship our creator and savior, Jesus Christ.