

# Misunderstood Messiah

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ON THE NEXT DAY THE LARGE CROWD WHO HAD COME TO THE FEAST, WHEN THEY HEARD THAT JESUS WAS COMING TO JERUSALEM, TOOK THE BRANCHES OF THE PALM TREES AND WENT OUT TO MEET HIM, AND BEGAN TO SHOUT, “HOSANNA! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, EVEN THE KING OF ISRAEL.”

~JOHN 12:12-13 (NASB)

## 1) A Triumphal Entry

- A) Somewhere around two million pilgrims would be in/around Jerusalem for the Passover (Josephus, *The Wars Of The Jews*, 6.9.3 or 6.422-425). It was part of this crowd who “heard” about Jesus’ fame (John 12:12).
  
- B) Palm branches (usually associated with the lulabs of the Feast of Tabernacles) were waved by the crowd, recognizing Jesus as a liberating king of Israel (12:13).
  
- C) The crowd also shouts out, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel” (12:13). The people are “crying out” (shouting) in praise,

and attributing a Messianic title to Jesus Christ. The title comes from Psalm 118:26, and adds "king of Israel" as an affirmation of who they thought Jesus Christ was (12:13).

- D) Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, a royal animal which emphasized Jesus as king of peace and gentleness (12:14-15, cf. fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9).

## 2) The Disciples & Crowds Misunderstand Jesus

- A) The disciples don't understand the significance of the scene they were participating in (12:16) until after Jesus has died and been resurrected (cf. Luke 24:25-27, 45-48).
- B) The crowds and those who had seen the resurrection of Lazarus just a week earlier also misunderstand the significance of what Jesus is doing, and continue to spread word that the Messiah has come (12:17-18).
- C) The Pharisees, seeing that they are losing a grip on the masses, begin to panic in their recognition that "the world" is beginning to follow Jesus Christ (12:19).
- D) Remarkably, none of the groups who are present for Christ's "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem understand the purpose or significance of Christ's presence in their lives (12:12-19).

## Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) John 12:12-19 has several fulfillments of Old Testament prophecies about Jesus Christ. Why are these fulfillments important? What impact do the fulfillments have on you? How do the fulfillments effect your walk with Jesus Christ?
- B) It seems like Christ walked through the bulk of His life being misunderstood by everyone around Him. John 12:16 could be the life verse of the disciples! Do you find this same tendency in yourself? What are some things (in your past) that happened to you, where you couldn't perceive what Christ was doing? How did that situation "turn out?" How did Christ show you Himself through the event/situation?
- C) The word "Hosanna" (an Aramaic or Hebrew expression) was used in praise to God and meant "Save!" It was usually used in situations where something wonderful was realized or something with spiritual significance (relating to being liberated, or saved) was happening. It's a loose equivalent of saying "Thank God!" for the modern follower of Christ. What are some of the "Hosanna's" in your life? Where do you see Christ saving you, even when you can't see all of what He is doing?
- D) Let's get down and dirty... What are some tough situations in your life right now where you are having a difficult time seeing what Jesus Christ is up to? Share at least one situation where you are really struggling to understand what Jesus is doing, and what the outcome of the situation will be with those who are in your small group. No one in Jerusalem (except Jesus) was anticipating the result of the Passover week. In the same way, we probably do not anticipate what Christ will do next in our lives (although, as Hebrews 12:1-3 notes, I doubt it will result in crucifixion for you or me). Take time to pray for each other in these tough areas of our lives and take some extra time this week (if you don't do this already) to drop someone a note of encouragement, ping an encouraging e-mail, or contact someone with a supportive telephone call -- just to let them know you love & care for them!