

Mark 11:1-10

Palm Sunday; March 28, 2021

After the war-torn years of the judges, King Saul, and King David, Israel finally began to enjoy the “rest” God had promised. One of King David’s greatest desires had been to build a temple for God. Even though David was Israel’s most godly king, God did not want David to build the temple. The house of God’s peace was not to be built by a warrior king. Therefore, the job fell to the one who was not known for his military prowess, but for his godly wisdom, King Solomon, the son of David.

When Solomon finished building the temple, God gave the people this promise: “I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there. **“As for you, if you walk before me faithfully with integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father when I said, ‘You shall never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel.’”** (1 Kings 9)

Fast forward about 500 years, God’s house was not being used as a house of worship to God anymore. They had failed to **“walk before me faithfully.”** So, God was going to leave his temple. The prophet Ezekiel describes this in one of his visions from God. **“The glory of the Lord went up from within the city and stopped above the mountain east of it.”** (Ezekiel 11:23) God’s presence leaves the temple and goes up to the Mount of Olives on the east side of the city. The Babylonians would come and take many of the Jews off into captivity and destroy the temple. But God would let Ezekiel see a “temple” where his glory would once again be restored. Ezekiel later writes: **“Then the man brought me to the gate facing east, and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east.”** (Ezekiel 43:1-2) The Glory of God would once again come back to God’s people from the Mount of Olives when the Messiah would come and begin his ruling on the throne of David once again.

Fast forward another 500 years, and you see Jesus coming into to Jerusalem over the Mount of Olives and into Jerusalem. **“As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’”** Could you say that Jesus was the fulfillment of that vision of Ezekiel on that first Palm Sunday? In some ways, yes; but not in a way that the people were expecting. Yes, Jesus is God in the flesh. Yes, the Glory of God is returning to the temple.

What does Jesus find in the temple? He finds a temple being defiled. What is one of the things that Jesus does during the week? He drives out of the temple the money changers, the animals and the people were defiling God’s house. There were people waiting for someone to come and once again restore the Glory of God and restore the temple. They were waiting for someone to come and sit on David’s throne and restore Israel back to the glory it once had under David.

But Jesus did not come to restore the Glory to the nation of Israel and to the temple in the way that people were expecting. He had not come to rebuild the temple as people were expecting, because Jesus is the temple. Remember when Jesus said: **“Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” But the temple he had spoken of was his body.**” (John 2:19, 21) The temple that God had promised was going to be the temple of the Messiah and the living stones, the Church, being built on that body. Jesus was talking about a different temple than they were expecting. But it does help us understand why the people may have responded to Jesus the way they did on that first Palm Sunday.

As Jesus came into Jerusalem, he came in riding on a donkey. As King David was nearing the end of his life, he had Solomon pronounced as the next king of Israel. David says to the priest: **“Take your lord’s servants with you and have Solomon my son mount my own mule and take him down to Gihon. Then you are to go up with him, and he is to come and sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah.”** Now compare with what David says about his son, and what God had earlier told Solomon about

another Son of David: **“If you do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father when I said, ‘You shall never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel.’”** You can start seeing the connection.

But the king that the people were expecting was not the King that came into Jerusalem in our text. Zechariah described the King that God was sending to his people in our first lesson for this morning. **“Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”** He’s lowly not because of the animal that he is riding, he’s lowly because he has placed himself under the will of his heavenly Father. This is a king who is coming into Jerusalem to establish a kingdom that is much greater than any earthly kingdom. He is going to do that through the cross. He’s coming to bring salvation to this world.

It is through that death on the cross that Jesus will come to sit on the throne of David forever. Even though some of the people may not have understood that, the words that they were shouting were true. **“Hosanna!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!”** Hosanna means *“Save us.” “Save us, Jesus!”* That’s exactly what Jesus had come to do.

That’s why we can rejoice on Palm Sunday. Jesus is coming as the king. He is coming as the fulfillment as the prophecy of God. He’s coming to rule on the throne of David forever. **“See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”** Amen.