

When Expectations Collide

John 12:12-26

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was the turning point in his ministry. Prior to this event, much of Jesus' ministry was public. After this event, his ministry will primarily be a private one. On this day, Jesus initiates a public appearance to fulfill Scripture, reveal his impending death, and stir people to action. It was a day when Jesus confronted the expectations of people. ***Jesus is the King who confronts us with a choice as to who he is.***

Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem occurs the day after Mary anointed Jesus at a dinner party in Bethany (John 12:1-11). She understood that Jesus was going to die and she was anointing him beforehand for burial.

As he began his journey to Jerusalem, Jesus was accompanied by people who were present at the raising of Lazarus (John 11). There were those in Jerusalem who heard about the miracle and came out to meet Jesus. There were others who were in the city for the Passover feast. Estimates of the crowd range from 120,000 to Josephus' estimate of 2.5 million. Whatever the number, the people started crying, "Hosanna!" or literally, "Save now!" The words of the crowd, "Hosanna" and "Blessed" were taken from Psalm 118:25-26. They were part of the Hallel, sung during the Passover Feast. The people hoped Jesus was coming as a conquering general to drive out the Romans.

Jesus is presented as the King of Israel, fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies (12-15). He entered as a humble servant, riding on a donkey. In so doing, he fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9.

The crowd included at least five distinct types of people who respond to Jesus in different ways.

The **Confused** did not understand what it all meant (16). It would be sometime later after Jesus' resurrection before the disciples would fully understand the significance of what took place.

The **Consumers** wanted another miracle (17-18). Many people wanted another entertaining experience. They were curious to see what Jesus might do next.

The **Legalists** were upset that Jesus was so popular, especially when he did not play by their rules (19). The religious leaders were rigid in thinking that worship could only be done their way.

The **Seekers** wanted to see Jesus (20-22). Some god-fearing Greeks approached Philip first and then Andrew about getting an audience with Jesus. This demonstrated the time had arrived for Jesus to die for the sins of the world, not just the Jews.

The **Followers** discovered they had to die to self (23-26). Jesus explained the ultimate cost of discipleship. To follow Jesus we must die to our own self-interests. Jesus promised eternal life and heaven to those who made that choice.

As you consider these events, which group do you identify with?

- Are you Confused—not understanding what it all means?
- Are you a Consumer—wanting something from God; waiting for the next big thing?
- Are you a Legalist—opposed to Jesus because he does not follow your rules or meet your expectations?
- Are you a Seeker—wanting to see Jesus and know him better?
- Are you a Follower—have you died to self and are serving the King?

Jesus is the King who confronts us with a choice as to who he is. Which group do you identify with?