

# Exalting Jesus Christ

## *"Hosanna to the Son of David!"*

### INTRODUCTION:

- I. Last week we took a close look at one of the most beautiful stories of sacrificial love in the New Testament – the story of Mary, the sister of Lazarus.
  - A. Anointing the head and feet of Jesus with oil of spikenard was without doubt the most extravagant gift anyone had given to Jesus.
    - 1. The price of the oil was equal to the annual income of the average working man – a year's salary.
      - a. And yet, Mary not only freely poured it out on the head and feet of Jesus, she demonstrated her great love and affection for Jesus by wiping his feet with her hair.
    - 2. On the evening when Mary showed such love and compassion toward Jesus, others had witnessed this extravagant gift.
      - a. In addition to the Lord's disciples who were present on that occasion, there was:
        - (1). Simon the Leper who had opened his house to Jesus.
        - (2). Martha, Mary's sister, who was busy serving those present.

(3). And Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, whom Jesus had raised from the dead just days earlier.

3. Try to imagine what it would have been like being present on that occasion – to actually be in the presence of Jesus and witnessing this beautiful gift of sacrificial love.
  4. Now try to imagine not only sitting at the dinner table with Jesus, but also sitting beside Lazarus – a living, breathing miracle.
- B. Immediately after the verses telling us about Mary anointing Jesus, we read of others who were present – but they were patiently waiting outside the home of Simon the Leper.
1. They had gathered there hoping to see two people:
    - a. **John 12:9** – *Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.*
    - b. Like fans of some superstar, people flocked to the small village of Bethany in hopes of catching a glimpse of Jesus and Lazarus.
    - c. They were awe-struck over the news that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, and they wanted to see this living, breathing miracle for themselves.
- C. But not everyone was excited about Lazarus being resurrected from the dead.

1. He was not only living proof of the power of Jesus, Lazarus was also living proof that Jesus was the Son of God – for no one could raise the dead except by the power of God.
  2. And so, we read:
    - a. **John 12:10-11** – *But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, 11 because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.*
    - b. The solution seemed simple enough. Kill Lazarus, and you not only destroy the evidence of Jesus' power and Godhood, you also cast doubts on the power of Jesus by sending Lazarus back to the tomb from which he came.
- II. Therefore, as we continue our series of studies through the gospel of John entitled, "Exalting Jesus Christ," we come to Sunday in the final week of the life of Jesus.
- A. Since the Jewish religious leaders were so intent on killing Lazarus and Jesus, you would think Jerusalem would be the last place Jesus would want to go.
1. However, it was time for Jesus to openly declare His Messiahship – to boldly and openly proclaim Himself as King of kings and Lord of lords.

2. Therefore, Jesus made the decision to go back to Jerusalem and enter the city in such a way that would send a shockwave through the ancient capital.
  - a. He would boldly and courageously enter the city of Jerusalem followed by an immense crowd of devout worshippers who would be shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David."
3. In doing this Jesus would not only proclaim Himself as King of kings and Lord of lords, He would willingly seal His fate by placing Himself in the hands of those who sought to kill Him.

**BODY:**

- I. As the scene opens we find ourselves in the city of Jerusalem at the time of the great Passover, the greatest of all Jewish celebrations.
  - A. This is when devout Jews would make whatever financial sacrifice they needed to journey to the city and make their annual sacrifice in the Temple and celebrate the Passover meal.
    1. For some, this journey would be a once-in-a-lifetime trip.
      - a. It would be the first and perhaps last trip they would ever make to the city of Jerusalem because they would be traveling from the farthest reaches of the Roman Empire.

2. These people would save for a lifetime to make just one trip to the holy city of David and the grand Temple to celebrate the most sacred of all Jewish feasts.
- B. Passover was celebrated in memory of the time when God miraculously delivered the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage.
1. In Exodus chapters 7 through 12 God had brought plague after plague upon Egypt and upon the house of Pharaoh to persuade him to release the Israelites from the bondage and to allow them to leave the land of Egypt.
  2. But it wasn't until the tenth plague – the death of the firstborn of both man and cattle in all the land – that Pharaoh was finally brought to his knees, and granted the children of Israel permission to leave Egypt. Pharaoh had lost his own son – the heir to the throne – in this awful event.
  3. However, on that night when God struck down the firstborn of all the land, Jehovah instituted a special observance to commemorate this terrible night.
    - a. The children of Israel were told to slay a lamb, spread the blood of the lamb on the lintel and doorposts of every house, and eat the sacrificed lamb while the Lord PASSED OVER the land of Egypt.

4. To the people of Israel, the Passover marked their deliverance from bondage in a foreign land, and the beginning of a journey toward the land of Canaan that would eventually end with establishment of the nation of Israel.
- II. Jesus intentionally chose the Passover as the time He would make His great step forward, and there are several reasons why.
- A. First, the city of Jerusalem would be filled to capacity with devout Jews from all throughout the Roman Empire.
    1. Josephus, the great Jewish historian who lived during this time, estimated that well over 2,700,000 Jews made the annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem.
      - a. That's 2,700,000 in addition to the normal population of Jerusalem that numbered several hundred thousand.
  - B. And second, this was also a time when religious devotion was at its highest.
    1. Those making this annual trip to Jerusalem had come for only one purpose – to worship Jehovah.
      - a. Therefore, there was no other time of year when so many people would be as deeply devoted to worshipping Jehovah as they would be on this occasion.

C. But, on the negative side, this was also a time when the worship of Jehovah had lost much of its real meaning and purpose – especially for the religious leaders of Israel.

1. In Matthew chapter 15 and Mark chapter 7, Jesus had an encounter with the scribes and Pharisees who charged His disciples with breaking the "traditions of the elders" for not washing their hands in a ceremonial way before they ate.
2. Jesus was quick to reply that these religious hypocrites were no different than their forefathers who lived 700 years earlier during the days of Isaiah the prophet.
3. In Isaiah chapter 29 God described just how far worship to Him had decayed by the time Isaiah the prophet came on the scene.
  - a. **Isaiah 29:13** – *Therefore the Lord said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men. . ."*
  - b. Other translations are even more descriptive of the emptiness of their worship to Jehovah.
    - (1). The **NIV** reads: *"Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men."*
    - (2). The **NASV** reads: *"Their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote."*

4. Sadly, nothing had changed in the 700 years between the days of Isaiah and the days of Jesus.
  - a. The TRUE meaning of worship to Jehovah – a worship that SHOULD have been out of a deep reverence and awe – had degenerated into nothing more than a perfunctory performance of ceremonial rites and traditions.
  - b. Worship to Jehovah had become mechanical. The ceremonial rites commanded by the Law of Moses were being performed automatically with little or no thought to the real meaning or purpose behind those rites.
  - c. They were no longer worshiping God *"in spirit and in truth."*
5. And it is THIS kind of mechanical, automatic worship, with little or no thought behind the act that threatens us today.
  - a. Like the scribes and Pharisees in the days of Jesus our worship can, and perhaps in some cases already has, become mechanical and automatic.
  - b. Jesus taught: **John 4:24** – *"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*
  - c. Therefore, we need to seriously and honestly ask ourselves if our worship to God is truly *"in spirit and in truth."*
    - (1). In other words, does our worship lack spirit – genuine heartfelt devotion?



(2). And then we need to ask ourselves if we have become so steeped in tradition that we become more concerned about the form of our worship than we are about the substance?

6. But the scribes and Pharisees weren't the only ones who were responsible for the worship of Jehovah losing its real meaning.

D. This was also a time when the priests and chief priests had reached the height of spiritual corruption. So, in a sense, the priests and chief priests shared an even greater responsibility for the religious decay in Israel.

1. About 750 years before the days of Jesus, the prophet Hosea charged the priests for having failed in their duties to properly teach the people.

a. In **Hosea 4:6-10**, the Lord said, *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. The more they increased, the more they sinned against Me; I will change their glory into shame. They eat up the sin of My people; they set their heart on their iniquity. And it shall be: like people, like priest.*

*So I will punish them for their ways, and reward them for their*

*deeds. For they shall eat, but not have enough; they shall commit harlotry, but not increase; because they have ceased obeying the LORD."*

2. The prophet lays the blame for the spiritual poverty of the children of Israel squarely in the lap of the priests, and said they had literally fed themselves on the sins of the people. The more the people sinned, the more they sacrificed to make atonement for their sins. And the more sacrifices that were made, the more the priests benefited – remember, the priests were entitled to the largest portion of a sacrificial animal as food.
3. In essence, the very ones whom God had entrusted with the responsibility of teaching righteousness were in fact encouraging sin so they could profit from the sins of the people.
4. When Jesus eventually made His triumphant entry into the city of Jerusalem, He would come face to face with the priests and chief priests, who, for the most part, were exactly like the priests of Hosea's day.
  - a. Jesus would severely rebuke the priests for their shameful conduct, and as a result, would be sent to the cross by the very men who were supposed to be the spiritual guides of the people.

5. Therefore, let's take a few minutes to follow Jesus as He makes His entry into Jerusalem.

III. Although the record of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is recorded in all four gospel accounts, let's focus our attention on just two – Matthew and John's record found in Matthew chapter 21 and John chapter 12.

A. Let's read these two accounts together.

1. **Matthew 21:1-7** – *Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. 3 And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."*  
*4 All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: 5 "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.'" 6 So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them.*
2. **John 12:12-19** – *The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,*

*13 took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' The King of Israel!" 14 Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: 15 "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt."*

*16 His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.*

3. **Matthew 21:8-11** – *And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!" 10 And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" 11 So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."*

4. **John 12:17-19** – *Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. 18 For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. 19 The Pharisees therefore*

*said among themselves, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!"*

- B. By this time, Jesus had already made many enemies among the scribes and Pharisees, the Sadducees, and even among the priests and chief priests.
  - 1. In fact, if you recall, it had been the resurrection of Lazarus that made these men absolutely determined to do away with Jesus.
    - a. If you recall, immediately following the resurrection of Lazarus we read: **John 11:45-48** – *Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. 46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. 47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. 48 If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."*
    - b. That's when Caiaphas provided a simple solution: **John 11:49-50** – *And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, 50 nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish."*

- c. If you recall, John adds: **John 11:53** – *Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.*
  - d. Then John concludes: **John 11:56-57** – *Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, "What do you think — that He will not come to the feast?" 57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him.*
2. Knowing that His life was in danger, we would naturally think a hunted man like Jesus would enter the city of Jerusalem unseen, and would keep to the back streets – if he came at all.
3. However, this is the very thing that Jesus did not do.
- a. It was His decision to enter Jerusalem in such a way that every eye would be focused on Him.
  - b. This decision was not some sudden impulse, it was a deliberate act. In fact, the event was even planned in advance.
  - c. We're told that Jesus had made arrangements in advance with some unnamed friend to supply Him with a donkey for His special entrance into Jerusalem.

IV. As Jesus came riding into Jerusalem on the donkey, He was followed by a huge crowd of people who were shouting praises to Jesus proclaiming Him as King.

A. Let's take a closer look at the meaning of the things the crowd was shouting on this occasion.

1. **Matthew 21:9** – *"Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!"*
2. **John 12:13** – *"Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' The King of Israel!"*
  - a. The word "*Hosanna*" literally means "*save, we pray.*"
  - b. But the people were also praising Jesus as the "*Son of David,*" and the One who "*comes in the name of the LORD!*" *The King of Israel!*"
  - c. These words clearly show they believed Jesus was the Messiah, the Redeemer and King of the nation of Israel.
  - d. And as they shouted these words of praise, they were laying down palm branches in His path – some were even laying down their cloaks.

B. The people had seen the miracles of Jesus, and they had heard His teaching.

1. They knew in their hearts that He was the Messiah who was finally making His way into Jerusalem.

2. They believed a new day had dawned in the history of Israel, and the Messiah would bring about sweeping change as He restored the nation to the glory it had enjoyed in the days of Saul, David and Solomon.
3. The only problem was that they thought Jesus was coming to be the kind of Messiah and King the Jews had been expecting for centuries.
  - a. Later, when Jesus is captured by the officers of the High Priest and eventually taken to Pilate for crucifixion, the hopes and dreams of the masses will be severely shaken.
  - b. The popular concept of the Messiah didn't allow for the Messiah to be arrested by His enemies, scourged, and eventually crucified.
  - c. Therefore, in a matter of just a few days, the very people who praised Jesus on His triumphant entry into Jerusalem would be the same people who would turn against Him and shout for His crucifixion.
- C. But, there is one very significant aspect of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem that we might miss unless we understand something of the culture of the day.
  1. When Jesus came into the city, He came in such a manner that openly proclaimed Him to be a King.



- a. This was not in anything He said, but in the way He entered the city.
- b. The prophet Zechariah prophesied of this very moment.
  - (1). **Zechariah 9:9** – *"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey."*
- 2. In the days of Jesus, when a king came in war, to do battle with his enemies and destroy them, he would always ride a horse.
  - a. For example, Jesus is portrayed in the book of Revelation **(Revelation 19:11-16)** as riding on a white horse followed by the armies of heaven bringing judgment against the nations that have persecuted His people.
- 3. However, when a king came to bring peace and reconciliation he would always ride a lowly donkey.
- D. When Jesus made His entry into Jerusalem He was making two very important statements – one of which the people fully understood, but the other, they missed completely.
  - 1. The first statement Jesus made was that He had come as the Messiah – the Son of David, the King of kings, and the One who comes in the name of the LORD.

2. But the second statement that was completely missed was that Jesus had not come as a King ready to make war or to lead the armies of heaven against Rome – He had come as the King of Peace and the Prince of Peace.
  3. Therefore, Jesus boldly, courageously and openly proclaimed Himself to be the promised Messiah, but just as boldly and openly proclaimed Himself to be the kind of Messiah who was bringing peace, and not war and conquest.
- E. However, as we said earlier, in just a few days Jesus would be rejected by the very people praising Him as their King.
1. Today they are shouting, *"Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' The King of Israel!"*
  2. But before the week comes to an end, they will be shouting, *"Crucify Him!. . . His blood be upon us and on our children."*
  3. Sadly, rejecting Jesus as Lord and Savior – as King of kings and Lord of lords – would not only seal their fate, but also the fate of the city of Jerusalem and the entire nation of Israel.
  4. Later, Jesus would weep over the terrible fate that awaited this once glorious city.
    - a. **Luke 19:41-44** – *Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now*

*they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."*

- b. Great suffering would come when Roman armies would level the city and slaughter its citizens in an effort to completely crush a Jewish rebellion.
- c. That day was less than 40 years away.

## CONCLUSION:

- I. In closing, there is a very important fact about this grand event that many of us may not have caught.
  - A. When Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem, Matthew says:
    - 1. **Matthew 21:10** – *"And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved..."*
    - 2. The Greek word for *"moved"* is the same word from which we get the English word "seismic" – a word used to describe an earthquake and the shockwaves that often follow.
    - 3. In other words, Matthew says the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem sent a shockwave through the city.

- a. There was no way anyone could miss the event.
- b. And the enemies of Jesus were shaken so badly that they were determined to see Jesus dead before the end of the week.

II. If you had been in the city of Jerusalem on that day, how would you have seen Jesus?

A. Would you have welcomed Him as the Messiah, the Savior and Redeemer, or would you have been among those who had completely rejected Him?

- 1. How would you have seen Jesus on that day?
- 2. The answer to that question may depend on how you see Jesus today.

- a. Is He your Savior and Redeemer – have you obeyed the gospel of Christ and given your life to Him completely – or have you rejected His offer of salvation and the redemption of your sins?

B. If you reject Him today, then it's fairly certain you would have rejected Him then.

- 1. Many of those who rejected Jesus in that day didn't know He was the Son of God until He had been resurrected from the dead. So at least they have an excuse. They just didn't know.

2. But you and I don't have that excuse – we can't claim that we don't know that Jesus is the Son of God. We do know.
3. So, here is your moment of decision.
  - a. You know Who Jesus is, and you know what you need to do to become a disciple of Christ and gain the remission of your sins – be baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins.
  - b. And if you've done that, but have denied the Lord along the way through your unfaithfulness, then you also know what you must do – be restored by repenting of your unfaithfulness and confess those sins to God.
4. Therefore, the question is now, "What will you do with Jesus?"