

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

John 12:12-50

Key Verses: 12:23,24

"Jesus replied, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.'"

In other gospels Jesus predicted his suffering, death on the cross and resurrection many times. Mark 8:31 says, "He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again." Mark 9:31 repeats the prediction of his death. Jesus again repeats the prediction of his death in Mark 10:33,34. Thus he prepared his disciples' minds and hearts to watch his suffering and death, and finally, his glorious resurrection. But in John's gospel, without any prediction of his death, Jesus made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem. However, his entry into Jerusalem includes and explains the prediction of his suffering, death and resurrection. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is a most exquisite and astounding event which gives us hope of the eternal victory won by our [Lord Jesus Christ](#). It also depicts the total annihilation of the power of sin and death, and the [complete](#) defeat of Satan's warfare. In this part of John's gospel, we learn that we must also enter Jerusalem to conquer the fortress of Satan every day. May God bless us to understand the spiritual meaning of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

First, "Hosanna!" (12-13) The [next](#) day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem (12). As we know, all the males in Israel went up to Jerusalem to observe the Passover Feast. The crowd there heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They were overjoyed to see their good shepherd Jesus. And they were waiting for Jesus' arrival. Soon they spotted Jesus. They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!" (13)

Here we must think about the word "Hosanna." "Hosanna" means in Hebrew, "save us." Psalm 118:25,26 says, "O Lord, save us; O Lord, grant us success. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you." Zechariah 9:9 says, "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." These are beautiful quotations concerning the emergence of the Messiah; they express waiting for his coming in deep yearning. When the crowd of people shouted, they took palm branches and spread them out and covered the road with them as the expression of their respect for the King's coming. The crowd of people were very happy, thinking that they were welcoming the promised Messiah. They were really happy that the King saves them from their oppression under the Roman yoke. He also saves them from the poverty and agonies of life. Ultimately, he saves them

from their torment of sin. They were happy even to see Jesus who saves them. So they shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!" This had been prophesied and was fulfilled at this moment. This part also tells us how much people are waiting for the Messiah King to save them from their sins. We exert all our time and energy every day to save our skin. But we cannot save ourselves from our sinful nature. We cannot save ourselves from our arrogant minds. We cannot save ourselves from our sins. We are sweating and toiling in sins. But Jesus is our King who saves us from our sins. "Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel!"

Second, Jesus riding on a colt (14-15). Look at verses 14-15. "Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written, 'Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt.'" It looks indeed humiliating for Jesus to enter riding on a colt. A colt is a baby donkey. At that time, children of a rich family would ride on colts. Jesus riding on a colt must have looked comical. A huge crowd of people who came to the Feast might have said, "What a sight! Jesus of Nazareth is riding on a colt." But to our surprise, the huge crowd of people saw his entering into Jerusalem riding on a colt as a divine act. They shouted in verse 13, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!"

Our Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords. More than that, he is the Son of God Almighty. But his riding on a colt as he enters Jerusalem was to fulfill what is written in the Scriptures. More significantly, his riding on a colt for his Jerusalem entry is the expression that he is a humble King. In this world, only where humble people live is there no quarreling. If only humble people lived in this world, there would be no doggy-doggy fighting among family members. If the United States of America were humble enough, she could feed all the hungry people in many corners of the world and give them rest. But there are not many humble people. Even renowned humble people have their hidden arrogance and intolerance. But our Lord Jesus is humble. Jesus is God who made the world. Without him nothing was made that has been made. He is the Creator God. But he entered Jerusalem riding on a colt. Jesus is our source of comfort because he is our humble King.

Jesus is also our King of peace. Jesus riding on a donkey to enter Jerusalem reveals him as the King of peace. For example, commonly after conquest, kings and army generals in the ancient time made their triumphant entry into conquered cities riding on white and black stallions to express their power and glory and honor, and at the same time, to threaten the people, demanding submission to their authority. In the past, kings and army generals had triumphal entries into the city every year so as to amaze people and subjugate them to themselves. But Jesus, who is the Son of God Almighty, rode on a donkey. Nobody was surprised by his appearance on a colt; rather, they felt peace. As we know well, people of the world want to enjoy many kinds of fun. They even commit many crimes to please themselves. Some people travel around the world with the money they earned in their lifetimes. Some people retire at an early age and live in a house with a dog or cat. Many people are weary and tired. All these people want rest; in other words, they want peace. So in the Bible many false prophets appeared and said repeatedly, "Peace! Peace!" when there was no peace. All humankind

wants sound sleep. All humankind wants peace in their lifetime. But the world is like a stormy sea. Everybody seems to be swimming in the ocean. Swimming is very hectic. A swimmer never experiences peace. So John quoted Zechariah 9:9. It says, "Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt." Here, "Daughter of Zion" is a nickname for the people of Israel. Jesus seated on a donkey represents the King of peace. Jesus used this verse so that they would not be afraid to see the Messiah, who is the King of peace, seated on a donkey's colt.

Let's see about his disciples. Verse 16 says, "At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him." At that time, the disciples saw Jesus but did not have spiritual eyes to see Jesus riding on a colt, entering into Jerusalem. They were embarrassed and wondered about the event. But later the disciples understood the meaning of his entry into Jerusalem on a colt when Jesus died on the cross and rose again. They came to know that Jesus is the humble King who saves his people and that Jesus is the King of peace for his fearful people.

There was a crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead. They continued to spread the word about Jesus. Many people, because they had heard that he had given this miraculous sign, ran out to meet Jesus. So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!" (19) Here we see the contrast between ordinary people and political people. Ordinary people want to see Jesus the King of peace. But the Pharisees were afraid of Jesus, saying that the whole world had gone after him. Actually, a crowd of people went to him, then the Pharisees felt that the whole world had gone after him. Their way of thinking expressed their great fear of the King of peace.

Our Lord's entry into Jerusalem has deep spiritual meaning in it. We call Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on a colt "Jesus' triumphal entry." Why do we call it the "triumphal entry" when he entered into Jerusalem on a colt? It is because Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was to destroy the fortress of Satan. Once, Jerusalem was the City of God. But it turned out to be a fortress of Satan. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was the expression of destroying the power of sin and death through his crucifixion and resurrection. Only Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection destroy the power of sin and death and save people from the hand of Satan.

Third, Jesus predicts his death (20-26). It is amazing that the gospel of Jesus had already spread to the Greek world. The gorgeous and intelligent Greek people came to Jesus. They might have been converts to Christianity. They might have been pilgrims to the Jerusalem temple. Some of them approached Philip, who looked like a Greek philosopher. They said, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus" (21). But the gorgeous-looking Philip had no faith to bring these Greeks to Jesus. So he went to Andrew, a man of faith, and asked him to take them to Jesus. Andrew and Philip took them to Jesus. Then Jesus said in verse 23, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." In this verse, "hour" refers to the hour of Jesus' crucifixion. The word "glory" has a Biblical meaning. "Glory" means "revealing." God revealed his love to

the world through his Son Jesus. God revealed his glory through his Son's death on the cross and his resurrection. So humanly speaking, "glory" is his death on the cross. Jesus accepted that his death on the cross is his glory, as well as glory to God. Here we learn that Jesus is the Son of God. In order to understand the word "glory," we first must think about two more words. First is "justification." We are all sinners. We cannot justify our sins through our self-righteousness or well-written dissertations. Only Jesus justifies us through his holy blood shed on the cross. Those who are justified are just baby Christians. The other word is "sanctification." Jesus prayed for his disciples, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (17:17). As a baby must grow in stature and wisdom, a Christian also must grow every day until he can be a man of God. "Sanctification" is spiritual growth. Those who have grown enough are willing to live for the glory of God. We call this "glorification." I talked about justification, sanctification and glorification. When Jesus said, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified," he indicated that the time of his suffering and death and resurrection was approaching. Jesus thought of his death as the moment of revealing God's glory to the whole world, just as the rising sun shines brightly, dispelling the darkness. Jesus wanted to reveal God's love by saving the world through his death and resurrection (7:30,39; 8:20; 12:16; 13:31).

Jesus spoke to his disciples concerning his glorification. But Jesus knew that Greeks, who did not have a Jewish background, did not understand what he said. So he taught them the meaning of his death and resurrection through a philosophical expression. Look at verse 24. "I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." This verse tells us a universal truth. It is also a self-evident truth that even a little child knows. Here Jesus compares himself to a kernel of wheat. Suppose kernels of wheat do not die. Then there will be no harvest of wheat. Suppose a seed of a pumpkin does not die. Then there will be no pumpkin flower nor pumpkin. Suppose no seeds die. Then people on the earth will die of starvation. Therefore, we must know that dying is the prerequisite of a new life. We must apply the principle of a kernel of wheat in our daily lives. Those who deny their desire for enough sleep and study hard, can get good grades. Those who keep their purity by denying their sinful desires can experience the joy of marriage and a honeymoon.

It is a life principle that a kernel of wheat has life in it. The main purpose of life is to bear much fruit. Therefore, a kernel of wheat must die and produce a huge amount of wheat. God made man to be fruitful. Genesis 1:28 says, "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'" Therefore, in light of the principle of the kernel of wheat, we must decide to die and bear much fruit. Otherwise, we will remain as a single kernel of wheat. Later, it will be ruined by fungus and eaten by worms.

It is very sorry that there are two kinds of people. Look at verse 25. "The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." First is the person who loves the world only. Even if they live luxuriously in the

world, they cannot escape the power of sin and Satan. But those who live in Christ as a kernel of wheat bear much fruit. In UBF, those who have dedicated themselves to God have lost their time and money and the joy of family gatherings. But they are all blessed. Here, a kernel of wheat is Jesus' teaching to the Greeks concerning his death and resurrection. But we ourselves must also master the principle of the kernel of wheat, die and have eternal life. It is important to know how to master the principle of the kernel of wheat. Jesus' expression, "to hate his life" explains how we can master the principle of the kernel of wheat. "To hate his life" doesn't mean to contract influenza or a kind of headache to reduce one's lifespan. It means that we must fight the spiritual battle to deny our sinful nature. We must overcome our daydreaming and concentrate on our study until we faint. We must give our time and money to teach the Bible one-to-one to our sheep. Those who have not mastered the principle of the kernel of wheat look powerless and old compared to their ages. But those who have mastered the principle of the kernel of wheat and live accordingly look like young tiger cubs or eagles in the air. They run but never get tired. They study, staying up all night, but never are sleepy. Those who have mastered the principle of the kernel of wheat can come to know the glorious death and resurrection of Jesus. Those who have mastered the principle of the kernel of wheat can glorify God and be nice husbands and wives. It applies even to children.

Verse 26 tells us the glorious reward for those who follow Jesus' example. It says, "Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me." Whoever wants to save his life must follow Jesus' way of life, which is revealed in a kernel of wheat that falls to the ground and dies. As Jesus suffered much, we also must suffer much in this selfish world. But Jesus says, "...where I am, my servant also will be." Those who follow Jesus' way of life will be in paradise with Jesus. They will reign with Jesus forever (2 Ti 2:12a). Jesus was despised and rejected by the world. But God Almighty made him King of kings and Lord of lords. Likewise, God honors those who follow the example of Jesus. We must obtain this honor. This is the endurance of the saints.

Fourth, Jesus' heart's desire (27-31). Look at verses 27 and 28a. "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!" Jesus' heart's desire was to glorify God's name. It reminds us of the first phrase of the Lord's prayer: "Our Father...hallowed be your name...." Here we can see Jesus' manhood. Jesus wanted to get out of suffering and death. But his greater desire was to reveal God's glory. In his anguish Jesus cried out for help, but each time he ended his crying by saying, "Father, glorify your name!" (28a) Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again" (28b). God accepted his crying out. We need this kind of crying out. The crowd who heard the voice from heaven did not know what was going on (29).

Look at verses 30,31. "Jesus said, 'This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.'" In this verse, "the prince of this world" is Satan, who has controlled the precious children of God with his power of death. He would be destroyed through Jesus' death on the

cross. God's love, which crucified Jesus because of man's sin, defeated Satan's hatred. At the same time, through Jesus' death on the cross, judgment was declared on the evil world. The world that crucified Jesus would be condemned for the crime of rebellion against God Almighty. Satan's mission was over when Jesus was killed on the cross; by this Satan became like an unemployeed because he has lost his job. Satan is now depending on public aid until the final judgment comes.

Fifth, Jesus wants to draw all men to himself through his death (32-34). Look at verse 32. "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." This verse sums up verses 23-36. This verse also teaches us that he dies as a kernel of wheat so that he may draw all people to himself and to God. This verse reminds us of John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." In this case Jesus is like a shepherd who left 99 sheep in the open field and went to look for one lost sheep. Jesus does not want even one sinner to perish, unrepentant. He wants to draw them all to his glorious kingdom. Jesus urges them to come to the light before the darkness overtakes them. "Then Jesus told them, 'You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you'" (35).

Jesus had done all the miraculous signs in their presence. Still, they would not believe in him. So Jesus was sorry and quoted Isaiah 53:1. It says, "Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" This verse tells us that God stretched his arm to save his people even though they didn't deserve it. It was the great love of God. But people didn't believe in him. So Jesus was sorry that they did not accept the love of God, and he quoted Isaiah 6:10 to say that their eyes were blinded and their hearts were closed. But Jesus was willing to heal them. It was wonderful that still there were some leaders of the Jewish people who believed in Jesus (42). But most of them did not believe.

At this time let's remember how Jesus entered into Jerusalem. He entered into Jerusalem riding on a colt. He is the King of peace and he is the King of salvation by destroying the fortress of Satan. May you enter the fortress of Jerusalem every day and be a triumphant general in Jesus.