

Zechariah 9:9 says, *“See, your King comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”*

Many things about Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem clearly pointed to Him being the Messiah King! Some of them were: a) He rode a donkey which symbolized royalty (1 Kings 1:33); b) Cloaks were spread out on the ground which was a means of paying praise to royalty (2 Kings 9:13); c) Palm branches were waved and then spread on the road. (Revelation 7:9).

Sadly, with all the signs around them, the people didn’t seem to get it! As a result, Jesus wept over Jerusalem and referred prophetically to its future destruction. He also spoke the painful and prophetic words, saying “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace – but now it is hidden from your eyes ... because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.” (Luke 19:42-44) I wonder whether it’s the same with mankind today. All the signs around us indicate the coming of the Lord. Are we recognizing God’s timing in the world today? Are we preparing for His coming? Unfortunately, when it involves the coming of the Lord and God’s timing in the affairs of the world, most people seem to find it difficult to understand or believe what’s happening! It is time to look up to the Lord, our Savior, Redeemer, and the coming King. We should be looking for the upptaker more than the undertaker! Let us not allow a God moment to be turned into a negative situation. On this Palm Sunday, let us ensure that we give praise to our Messiah, allow our temples to be cleansed, and know and understand God’s timing today!

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The Reflection on the Triumphant Entry of Jesus

Luke 19:28-48

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Let me tell you a story about a plainly dressed man who went into a church in the Netherlands one Sunday. He took a seat near the pulpit. Soon, a woman came along and curtly told the man that he was seated in her seat. She then asked him to leave the seat. The man apologized and apparently moved away to another pew, from where he took part in the service. When the service ended, a friend of the woman came over and asked her if she knew whom she had ordered out of her seat. The woman replied casually that she didn’t know who it was. To her great dismay, she was informed, “It was King Oscar of Sweden!”

Many people turn what could be a life-changing moment into a possible negative situation because of bad choices. How often do we hear statements such as, “You blew it,” or, “How could you mess it up like that?” At other times, when some special opportunity seems to be opening up for us, someone or something comes along to spoil the party! COVID-19 has been shaking the foundation of our society, culture, and economy. Many people are suffering and dying from the coronavirus, many healthcare workers are working hard to care for those in need, many others have lost their jobs and closed their businesses, and most of us are almost homebound due to the “Stay-At-Home” order. Like the words, “take a break when you fall,” if we cannot avoid this situation, we may think positively and use this unexpected situation into more positive ways, such as having more family time, reading more books, learning new hobbies, etc.

Today is Palm Sunday, which signifies the triumphant entry of the Lord Jesus into Jerusalem. It was a day of celebration, and the celebratory spirit was ringing in the air. However, in the midst of

the joy and celebration, I would like to reflect on several issues that arose at the time when Jesus came into Jerusalem.

First, there were some people unwilling to praise Jesus (Luke 19:39). As mentioned before, this was a day of much celebration and joy. As Jesus rode in, a very large crowd had gathered to give Him a rousing welcome. They were praising Him by shouting, *“Hosanna, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”* (Matt. 21:9). We see praise arising to the Lord as follows: *“The people joyfully praised God in loud voices for the miracles they had seen”* (Luke 19:37). *“The children praised Him in the temple shouting, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’”* (Matt. 21:15-16).

However, in the midst of all this praise, there was a group of people (religious leaders) who were unwilling to praise the Lord (Luke 19:39; Matt. 21:15). Not only were they unwilling to praise Jesus, but they also tried to stop the children from doing so (Matt. 21:15-16)! Right now, maybe for some reason you are going through some challenge or struggle and you are unable or unwilling to praise the Lord this Palm Sunday. Even so, I would like to encourage you to open your heart in praise to the Lord, because Palm Sunday is a day of praise! It is the day of the Messiah! The Bible speaks about receiving, *“a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair”* (Isa. 61:3). So, let us raise our voice and sing *“Hosanna”* right now. Whatever our circumstances, let us allow praise to rise up in our hearts to the Lord.

Second, the temple had to be cleansed (Luke 19:45). The temple was the center of Jewish worship. It possibly had a majestic appearance. It should have been the most precious place for God’s people. However, as Jesus walked in and looked around, His heart was broken. The hallowed place of worship had been turned into a marketplace by corrupt vendors! (Matthew 21:12; Mark 11:15-16).

Imagine the feelings that were going through the heart of Jesus. Finally, He cleaned up the temple, saying *“My house will be called a house of prayer”* (Matt. 21:13).

We need to give proper reverence to the presence of God in the sanctuary or premises where we gather to worship Him. Freedom in worship should not mean that we do anything that is irreverent to God’s beautiful presence. The Bible says our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). If so, it’s good to ask ourselves whether the temple of the Holy Spirit needs cleansing in any areas. In fact, this might be a good moment to allow the Holy Spirit to search our hearts and reveal anything that needs to be cleansed.

As I told you before, COVID-19 has changed our life style. We must clean our hands as often as we can for at least 20 seconds, and wear masks when we go to public places like grocery stores or the bank. Many experts say masks are not effective in preventing the COVID-19 to spread. But I think it is a white lie to get masks to medical professionals. The mask aids in decreasing the virus spread by infected individuals and decreasing new infections by uninfected individuals. The mask prevents airborne virus particles being inhaled from the outside. The mask puts a physical barrier between potentially contaminated hands and passages to one's lungs. Therefore, protect yourself and wear a mask.

We can cleanse our hands with soaps or sanitizers and protect ourselves with masks. We can detoxify and cleanse our inner body systems with some medications. But, how can we cleanse our sins? It’s only the blood of Jesus that can cleanse our sins! 1 John 1:9 says, *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

Third, the people didn’t recognize God’s time (Luke 19:44). Biblical prophecy was being fulfilled right before their eyes. Isaiah 62:11 says, *“Say to the Daughter of Zion, ‘See, your Savior comes!’”*