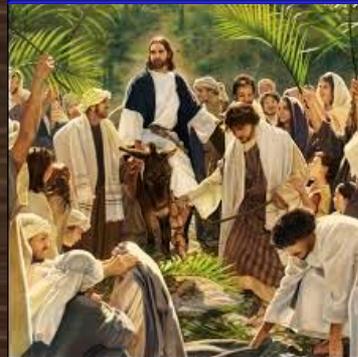


"Is The World Any Different Today?"

In America, government officials are sworn into their positions, promising to uphold the office and the laws of the land. We become dismayed because over time so many of them break their vows. Governments promise that their money is good; banks, that their customers' savings are safe, stockbrokers, that their counsel is sound; and insurance companies, that their policyholders will receive their due. These assurances fail all too often in bankruptcy or fraud. After enduring a number of these failures or observing others experience them, we become skeptical, perhaps even cynical. Our hope, however, is in Christ alone and a government whose promises are absolutely faithful because it is impossible for Him to lie.

The people of today's world are not much different than the people who were crying out, "**Hosanna, Hosanna!**" when Jesus rode into Jerusalem. The world is looking for peace, end to war, end to poverty, and an end to government oppression and the list can go on and on. The world is placing their hopes in what man can do which is a false hope. True hope is placing our hopes on Christ Who is the foundation of truth and righteous. **Our hopes do not lie in our courage, intelligence, or even the finest of human qualities but in God's promises.** He assures us in Hebrews 13:5, "**I will never leave you nor forsake you.**" We may not be in a physical danger—threatened by religious martyrdom, imprisonment, disease, or great loss of income—but we face spiritual dangers. With its manifold temptations and distractions, the world is constantly pressing in on us to turn us out of the way. **Our human nature inclines us not to see things from God's perspective.** Our pride seduces us. Our passions, tempers, and other weaknesses trip us up, causing failure and despair. **Hope acts as an anchor for our lives.** Even as an anchor keeps a ship from drifting onto the rocks, hope keeps us from idly drifting to our spiritual destruction. **Hope keeps us safe.** It is a major stabilizing force for the whole of life because it has hold of something that does not move despite the tempests around us. **Our hope is anchored in Jesus Christ, Who as High Priest has entered in our behalf into the heavenly Holy of Holies beyond the veil.** Though His blood justifies us, His life saves us. Because He lives, intercedes for us, and watches over our lives to bring us into the Father's Kingdom, we have hope. Hope motivates, and its primary function is to enable us to endure. We know that our wonderful goal is sure because our hope is in God, Who is absolute and all-powerful. If we are to be saved, the means to fulfill this must come from God. The relationship established through God's calling, Christ's sacrifice, and our making of the New Covenant with Him provides that means. Now we must do all we can to fulfill our part of the relationship. **Jesus is coming back on day not as Lamb but as the Lion of Judah and He shall reign forever and ever! This is our blessed hope!**

"What Is The Significance Of The Triumphal Entry?"



The triumphal entry is that of Jesus coming into Jerusalem on what we know as Palm Sunday, the Sunday before the crucifixion (John 12:1, 12). The story of the Triumphal Entry is one of the few incidents in the life of Jesus which appears in all four Gospel accounts (Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-40; John 12:12-19). Putting the four accounts together, it becomes clear that the Triumphal Entry was a significant

event, not only to the people of Jesus' day, but to Christians throughout history. We celebrate Palm Sunday to remember that momentous occasion. On that day, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a borrowed donkey's colt, one that had never been ridden before. The disciples spread their cloaks on the donkey for Jesus to sit on, and the multitudes came out to welcome Him, laying before Him their cloaks and the branches of palm trees. The people hailed and praised Him as the "**King Who comes in the Name of the Lord**" as He rode to the temple, where He taught the people, healed them, and drove out the money-changers and merchants who had made His Father's house a "**den of robbers**" (Mark 11:17). **Jesus' purpose in riding into Jerusalem was to make public His claim to be their Messiah and King of Israel in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.** Matthew says that the King coming on the foal of a donkey was an exact fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, "**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.**" Jesus rides into His capital city as a conquering King and is hailed by the people as such, in the manner of the day. **The streets of Jerusalem, the royal city, are open to Him, and like a king He ascends to His palace, not a temporal palace but the spiritual palace that is the temple, because His is a spiritual kingdom. He receives the worship and praise of the people because only He deserves it.** No longer does He tell His disciples to be quiet about Him (Matthew 12:16, 16:20) but to shout His praises and worship Him openly. The spreading of cloaks was an act of homage for royalty; "**Then hurriedly they all took their cloaks and spread them for him on the bare steps; and they blew the trumpet, and proclaimed, 'Jehu is king.'**" (2 Kings 9:13). Jesus was openly declaring to the people that He was their King and the Messiah they had been waiting for.



Unfortunately, the praise the people lavished on Jesus was not because they recognized Him as their Savior from sin. They welcomed Him out of their desire for a messianic deliverer, someone who would lead them in a revolt against Rome. **There were many who, though they did not believe in Christ as Savior, nevertheless hoped**

that perhaps He would be to them a great temporal deliverer. These are the ones who hailed Him as King with their many hosannas, recognizing Him as the Son of David who came in the name of the Lord. But when He failed in their expectations, when He refused to lead them in a massive revolt against the Roman occupiers, the crowds quickly turned on Him. **Hope Derailed**

What can cause our hope to go sour? Often, we hope in the wrong things. It's so easy to place our hope in the wrong things. It's so easy to place our hope in this material world -- what we can see, taste, touch, and feel. These things are controllable to us. But God says **His kingdom is not of this world** (John 18:36). In fact, the things of this world do not provide a firm foundation for our lives (Colossians 2:8). Within just a few days, their hosannas would change to cries of **"Crucify Him!"** (Luke 23:20-21). Those who hailed Him as a hero would soon reject and abandon Him.

The Jews Were Hoping For The Lion Of Judah



The hope of the Jews at the time was misplaced and not scriptural. They expected the Lion of Judah to rule and reign but instead they got a Sacrificial Lamb. The disciples did not make the connection with the passage from Matthew 20:18,19 at the time: **"See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the**

Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death; then they will hand Him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified; and on the third day He will be raised." At first His disciples did not understand all this. At the time they were caught up in the swirl of events and did not really understand what was going on. From what we know of them elsewhere, they probably shared the nationalistic hopes of the crowd. The disciples and the crowd thought they were honoring Jesus, and they were. But they did not really understand the true meaning of what was happening nor even what they were saying. They did not put the events of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and the Scripture together, so they did not grasp what was taking place.

The prophecy was fulfilled in every particular, and it was indeed a time of rejoicing, as Jerusalem welcomed their King. Unfortunately, the celebration was not to last. The crowds looked for a Messiah Who would rescue them politically and free them nationally, but Jesus had come to save them spiritually. **First things first, and mankind's primary need is spiritual, not political, cultural, or national salvation.**



Even as the coatless multitudes waved the palm branches and shouted for joy, they missed the true reason for Jesus' presence. They could neither see nor understand the cross. That's why, **"as Jesus approached Jerusalem and saw the city, He wept over it and said, 'If you, even**

you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies . . . will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you" (Luke 19:41–47). It is a tragic thing to see the Savior but not recognize Him for Who He is. The crowds who were crying out **"Hosanna!"** on Palm Sunday were crying out **"Crucify Him!"** later that week (Matthew 27:22–23).

Hope-Wishful Thinking Verses Hope with Expectation

Most people understand hope as wishful thinking, as in **"I hope something will happen."** This is not what the Bible means by hope. The biblical definition of **"hope"** is **"confident expectation."** Hope is a firm assurance regarding things that are unclear and unknown (Romans 8:24-25; **"For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."** (Hebrews 11:1; **"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."**

Hope Is A Weapon of Defense

Hope is not an offensive weapon but a defense; it is a motivator to protect us from losing sight of the glorious end of God's purpose. Why? The only thing that can really defeat and destroy us is for us to give up. Jesus says in His Olivet prophecy, **"But he who endures to the end shall be saved"** (Matthew 24:13). Hope's fruit is not just an optimistic and positive outlook but also the drive to persevere, to endure come what may, to propel one forward. Only the hopeful will do this. The hopeless will give up.