

The Donkey King

(A Study of the Gospel of John; Message #47)

John 12:12-19

- A. The Jews were waiting for their Superman. They called him “Messiah”
 - 1. Jesus (Messiah) is a prophet. When Jesus speaks, he speaks the words of God
 - 2. Jesus (Messiah) is a priest. He is the sacrifice - our Passover Lamb
 - 3. Jesus (Messiah) is a king. Messiah’s Kingship runs throughout Scripture
- B. Jesus coming to Jerusalem is no happen stance
 - 1. Jesus came to Jerusalem voluntarily for one purpose - to die
 - 2. Jesus came to Jerusalem voluntarily for one reason - because he loves us

THE INCIDENT

- A. A Galilean healer rides into town on a borrowed donkey
 - 1. If his purpose is war, the king comes on a horse; if the king comes in peace, he comes on a donkey
 - 2. Riding on a donkey, Jesus declares the kind of Messiah he’ll be
- B. This donkey rider will go to Golgotha and to carry the guilt of our sins

THE INTERPRETATION

- A. The Roman Soldiers see Jesus’ entry as a way to vent their frustrations
 - 1. They will mock this “king” by playing dress-up with him
 - 2. *“If I have to be miserable, everyone should be miserable!”*
- B. Roman Officers and the Governor see more in this donkey rider
 - 1. Pilate, will declare Jesus innocent - his kingdom is not of this world
 - 2. But Pilate’s vision flounders on his refusal to choose for this man
- C. The Country Jews saw Jesus as the King, David’s promised son
 - 1. They hated the Gentiles - they couldn't wait to declare Jesus King
 - “Hosanna! [i.e., O please save us now!] Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the King of Israel!”* (John 12:13; cf. Psalm 118:25-26)
 - 2. Jesus wants to be understood only as their crucified king
- D. The City Jews didn’t want to be saved by a no-name country boy from Galilee
 - 1. The Leaders in the City understood the claim this donkey King was making; they simply refused to believe him

- 2. The City leaders had no intention of giving up their power and exalted status

“It is better for you that one man die than that the whole nation perish” (John 11:50)

THE INVESTIGATION

- A. Truth is, no one really had an inkling of what Jesus was up to
 - “Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt”* (John 12:15)
 - “I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth”* (Zechariah 9:10)
- B. Christ’s Jerusalem entry still demands a response today
 - 1. Christians profess to be citizens of another kingdom: a truly peaceful kingdom that will ultimately swallow up all others
 - 2. Their mission is the “revolution” of cross-bought peace and the “terrorism” of disarming, love-filled grace and righteousness...
 - 3. To Christians who are hesitant to risk obedience, the donkey king levels a serious challenge: Choose: All in or all out?
- C. Forget the warhorse, Christ says; forget your illusions of grandeur
 - 1. John reminds us this donkey brought Jesus to the cross as surely as if it had actually taken him there on its back (cf. Mark 11:18)
 - 2. The old city of Jerusalem has eight gates...
 - a. The Eastern Gate is the gate tradition says Messiah will enter and set up his kingdom
 - b. John refers to the Sheep Gate (or Lion’s Gate) in John 5:2 where people brought their sheep for sacrifice
 - c. Imagine Jesus, the donkey King, the Lion of Judah, the Lamb of God, the one *“led like a lamb to the slaughter”* walking through this gate
 - 3. The donkey king opened the way for us to follow: to make his journey and ours triumphal - in the long run