

The King of Israel

Gospel of John, Part XXXX

John 12:12-36

Stuart W. Bryan

I. Clue (cf. 12:16, 27)

II. Who is this Son of Man?

A. He is the King of Israel (cf. Psalm 118)

“When the temple was rededicated during the Maccabean era, palms were used in the celebration (1 Macc. 13:51; 2 Macc 10:7)... During both major wars with Rome, reliefs of palms were stamped on the coins minted by the rebels. Thus this act of celebration [with palms] is by no means neutral. [The palm] symbolizes Israel's national hopes, now focused on Jesus, being hailed as he enters the city” (Bruner, 709).

Psalm 118 is one of the Hallel psalms (113-118) that were sung at Passover. It is a royal psalm that celebrates the entrance of the _____ of Israel into Jerusalem. It is a psalm that Jesus frequently applies to Himself and that contains these words:

Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, and I will praise the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord, through which the righteous shall enter. (19f)

So when Jesus approaches the city, the people go out to welcome Him and sing this psalm. Who is Jesus? He is the _____ of Israel! But though they identify Jesus correctly, they don't grasp the full significance of His identity. The prevailing understanding of the Messiah was that He would come to Israel, forcibly prevail over the Gentile nations, and rule forever from the earthly city of Jerusalem (cf. v. 34).

The Messiah's words in Psalm 118 formed part of their justification for this view: *“I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord has chastened me severely, but He has not given me over to death” (17-18).* The Messiah, they believed, would not endure death. The Bible says so. But they hadn't read all the clues and so they distorted this one.

B. He is the King of the Nations (cf. Zech 9:9-12)

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. ¹⁰ I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be ‘from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.’ ¹¹ “As for you also, Because of the blood of your covenant, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. ¹² Return to the stronghold, You prisoners of hope. Even today I declare That I will restore double to you. ¹³ For I have bent Judah, My bow, Fitted the bow with Ephraim, And raised up your sons, O Zion, Against your sons, O Greece, And made you like the sword of a mighty man.”

- I. Prologue: The Identity of the Son of God (1:1-18)
- II. Jesus Proven to be the Christ & the Son of God in His Public Ministry (1:19-12:50)
 - A. The Son of God Revealed (1:19-4:54)
 - B. The Son of God Rejected (5:1-12:36)
 - 1. Opposition in Jerusalem (5:1-47)
 - 2. Opposition in Galilee (6:1-71)
 - 3. Settled Opposition in Jerusalem (7:1-10:39)
 - 4. Belief across the Jordan (10:40-42)
 - 5. Hardened Opposition in Jerusalem (11:1-12:36)
 - 6. The hour has come (12:20-36)
 - C. Conclusion (12:37-50)
- III. Jesus Proven to be the Christ & the Son of God in His Passion and Resurrection (13:1-20:31)
- IV. Epilogue: The Future Mission of the Son of God (21)

1. Character of the King

2. Nature of His Rule

First, Zechariah proclaims that it will be a rule of _____. Israel's King will *cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; the battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations...* God will use His weaponless people to conquer the Greeks (v. 12).

Second, His reign is _____. *"He shall speak peace to all nations, His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth."* The Messiah shall bless, in the words of the Abrahamic covenant, *all the families of the earth.*

C. He is the Slain King (cf. Is 52:13-53:12)

John 12 is abuzz with excitement. But then Jesus puts a damper on the excitement. *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain."*

What Jesus is saying is that the worldwide progress of the Gospel, the universal nature of His rule, is dependent upon His death. The buzz and excitement will mean nothing, it will wither and die, unless the Son of Man dies.

So how could Jesus claim this? How did He know that the King of Israel, the Messiah, the Ruler of the Nations, must die? It is here that Jesus had read more carefully than His contemporaries. He hadn't just read the pleasant passages. He read them all including Isaiah's song of the Suffering Servant: *"Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be lifted up and extolled and be very high."* How shall He be lifted up? Through death (53:4-6):

Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

The Son of Man must give His life for His people. If He would do that, then would come the salvation of many, not just of Israel, but of all nations (53:11-12):

He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

III. Conclusion