

## **Victorious**

John 12:12-19; Mark 11

April 15, 2025

Paul Cannings, D. Phil.

### **A. Last Lap (vs. 12-13):**

1. A large crowd who had come – This was the time of the Passover (the celebration of Israel’s release from Egypt), so the city grew from about 100,000 to possibly a million people. Christ, the blood on the door post (Israel’s departure from Egypt) to save the firstborn (Colossians 1:15), is the firstborn Son of God who will shed His blood for the world in fulfillment of God’s promise to Abram in Genesis 12:3.
  - a) There were three different groups in the crowd that day: (1) the Passover visitors from outside Judea (John 12:12, 18); (2) the local people who had witnessed the raising of Lazarus (John 12:17); and (3) the religious leaders who were greatly concerned about what Jesus might do at the feast (John 12:19). At each of the different feasts, the people were in keen expectation, wondering if Jesus would be there and what He would do. It looked as though Jesus was actually seeking to incite a revolution and establish Himself as King, but that was not what He had in mind.<sup>1</sup>
  - b) Jesus’ popularity soared after raising Lazarus from the dead. Interestingly, Christ says He is the resurrection, resurrected Lazarus on the way to His own resurrection, where He raises Himself (John 10:18).
2. Heard – The crowd was once and for all committed determinatively to pay attention with a full understanding of what Jesus had done and witness His entrance into Jerusalem.
  - a) Jesus said that His works speak of His abiding relationship with the Father (**John 14:8-12**). The crowds love Him for His works. There were so many works that even those who did not live in Jerusalem (those coming to the Passover) had heard about Him.
3. Jesus was coming into Jerusalem - Jesus Christ had decisively decided (Lev. 16:9-10; Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2) to make Himself enter into Jerusalem (Luke 9:22) in fulfillment of scripture. It was the right time (Gal. 4:4) and the last time He would enter in this manner.
  - a) The news of the great miraculous sign—Lazarus raised from the dead—spread through the city, and other groups surged out to meet Him. It was a day of great popular acclaim, but sadly the people had little spiritual perception.<sup>2</sup>
  - b) The name Jerusalem means “city of peace” or “foundation of peace”; and the people were hoping that Jesus would bring them the peace that they needed. However, He wept because He saw what lay ahead of the nation—war, suffering, destruction, and a scattered people. At His birth, the angels announced “peace on earth” (Luke 2:13–14); but in His ministry Jesus announced “war on earth” (Luke 12:51ff). It is significant that the crowds shouted “peace in heaven” (Luke 19:38), because that is the only place where there is peace today!<sup>3</sup>
4. Took the branches of the palm trees – The people actively, on their own initiative, were determined to do whatever was necessary to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [\*The Bible exposition commentary\*](#) (Vol. 1, p. 340). Victor Books.

<sup>2</sup> Blum, E. A. (1985). [\*John\*](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 317). Victor Books.

<sup>3</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [\*The Bible exposition commentary\*](#) (Vol. 1, pp. 340–341). Victor Books.

- a) The pilgrims welcomed Jesus, spread their garments before Him, and waved palm branches as symbols of peace and victory (Rev. 7:9). They quoted from Psalm 118:26, which is a messianic psalm; and they proclaimed Him the “King of Israel.” But while they were doing this, Jesus was weeping! (Luke 19:37–44)<sup>4</sup>
  - b) Those already present in Jerusalem typically welcomed pilgrims to the feast and strewed branches in their path. Palm branches were used at the Feast of Tabernacles but had to be brought from Jericho. They had been one of the nationalistic symbols of Judea since the days of the Maccabees, were consistently used to celebrate military victories and probably stirred some political messianic hopes among the people. “Hosanna” means “O save!”; both this and the next line of verse 9 come from Psalm 118:25–26. Psalms 113–118, called the Hallel, were regularly sung at Passover season, so these words were fresh in everyone’s mind.<sup>5</sup>
  - c) The palm tree served as a symbol of righteousness: “The righteous will flourish like a palm tree” (Ps. 92:12). In the Old Testament, palm branches are associated not with Passover but with the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:40). However, by the time of Jesus palm branches had already become a national (if not nationalistic) Jewish symbol (Josephus, *Ant.* 3.10.4 §245; 13.13.5 §372; cf. *Jub.* 16:31). Palm branches were a prominent feature at the rededication of the temple in Maccabean times (2 Macc. 10:7; 164 b.c.) and were also used to celebrate Simon’s victory over the Syrians (cf. 1 Macc. 13:51; 141 b.c.). Later, palms appear on the coins minted by the insurrectionists during the Jewish wars against Rome (a.d. 66–70 and 132–135) and even on Roman coins themselves. Apocalyptic end-time visions likewise feature date palms (Rev. 7:9; *T. Naph.* 5:4).<sup>6</sup>
5. Began to shout - The people continuously, with no plans to stop, kept screaming as loud as possible, “Hosanna”! The victorious mighty warrior who will deliver them from Rome.
- a) Thousands of Galilean pilgrims had come to the Passover, and they had seen many of His mighty works. Previously He had rejected the role of a political Messiah (6:15) but, they thought, perhaps now was the right moment. Jerusalem was the city of the great King and He was coming to it. Waving their palm branches, symbols of victory, the people were shouting (*ekraugazon*; cf. comments on 11:43) Hosanna! “Hosanna” in Hebrew means “Please save” or “Save now” (cf. Ps. 118:25). It came to be a shout of praise. Quoting Psalm 118:26, they ascribed messianic titles to Him: He who comes (lit., “the Coming One”; cf. John 11:27) and the King of Israel.<sup>7</sup>
6. Blessed is He who comes – Christ was so well spoken of that the people desired even more to have a relationship with God, confirming Christ as continuously coming in the name of the Lord.
- a) Matthew’s word applies to *character*; this to *repute*. The ascription of praise here is from Ps. 118:25, 26. This Psalm, according to Perowne, was composed originally for the first celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles after the completion of the sacred temple. The words of the twenty-fifth verse were sung during that feast, when the altar of burnt-offering was solemnly compassed; that is, once on each of the first six days of the feast, and seven times on the seventh day. This seventh day was called “the Great Hosanna,” and not only the prayers for the feast, but even the branches of trees, including the myrtles which were attached to the palm-branch, were called “Hosannas.”<sup>8</sup>
7. Name sake of the Lord – Christ’s life and service while on earth elevated his reputation among the people so that they realized He was functioning in the power and authority of God.

<sup>4</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 340). Victor Books.

<sup>5</sup> Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Jn 12:12–13). InterVarsity Press.

<sup>6</sup> Arnold, C. E. (2002). *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: John, Acts*. (Vol. 2, p. 122). Zondervan.

<sup>7</sup> Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 316–317). Victor Books.

<sup>8</sup> Vincent, M. R. (1887). *Word studies in the New Testament* (Vol. 2, pp. 216–217). Charles Scribner’s Sons.

8. Name sake of the Lord – Christ three years exposed that His coming for the Passover was unlike anyone else before Him because all He did resulted in God walking with Him. Israel's history with Elijah, Moses, and many others allowed the crowd to realize that Christ rises above them all and is, therefore, 'king of Israel.'
9. Finding a young donkey – The disciples, following Christ instructions, were very careful to find a young donkey (Mark 11).
  - a) The story is given in Mk 11:1-6. John is the only Evangelist who describes the animal as a young ass (*onarion*). Jesus' act fulfilled the prophetic word (Zech 9:9). The ass, better than the horse, symbolized the meek and peaceful character of the King of Israel. This in itself declared that Jesus' understanding of the event differed from that of the throng.<sup>9</sup>
  - b) A suitable choice, since the donkey was a lowly animal of peace (contrast the war-horse of v. 10) as well as a princely mount (Jdg. 10:4; 12:14; 2 Sa 16:2) before the horse came into common use. The royal mount used by David and his sons was the mule (2 Sam. 18:9; 1 Ki. 1:33).
  - c) By riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, Jesus announced He was Israel's King. This was the way King David and King Solomon had ridden into Jerusalem (2 Sam. 16:2; 1 Kgs. 1:38-40). They each rode a donkey into Jerusalem to show they were humble kings who desired to serve the people with love and wisdom. (Dr. Daniel S. Steffen; Professor of NT studies; DTS)
10. Sat on it, as it is written - Jesus sitting on the donkey was in obedience to what God had legislated for Him to do in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9.
11. Fear not – Even though Israel was under Roman rule that was abusive and oppressive, they had no reason to be intimidated or terrified because what was written a head of time was vividly portrayed before them. Jesus riding in on donkey should have been a vivid reminder that God will fulfill His Word.
12. Seated on a donkey colt – Christ seated on a donkey colt was a vivid portrayal that the Messiah had come, and even more in His death and resurrection, He was victorious. Our ultimate enemy, Satan, is defeated. No matter what Satan threw at Christ while on earth, not one piece of dirt stuck. He obeyed every law, whether civil, moral, or ceremonial, every trial and every destructive act of Satan. All He now had to do was to overcome death, for which, because of everything, He is the perfect sacrifice.

## B. Fulfilled (vs. 16):

1. These things the disciples did not understand at first – The eleven followers of Christ that remained after the resurrection, once and for all, by the influence of the Holy Spirit in their lives came, gained a full knowledge and complete understanding of all that took place on this day.
2. When Jesus was glorified - All that took place became vividly clear when Christ was exposed to the disciples in His perfect and most excellent nature.
  - a) Only when Jesus was glorified, only when the Spirit had come to instruct and bring the things of Christ to their remembrance (7:39; 14:26), did the disciples view this whole scene in the light of Scripture and the plan of God.<sup>10</sup>
3. They remembered that these things were written – The Holy Spirit blessed the disciples to recall all that was prescribed by God, in His Word, that must be fulfilled from the Holy Scriptures.

<sup>9</sup> Pfeiffer, C. F., & Harrison, E. F., eds. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Jn 12:14). Moody Press.

<sup>10</sup> Pfeiffer, C. F., & Harrison, E. F., eds. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Jn 12:14). Moody Press.

- a) The Holy Spirit would open their eyes to the meaning of the Old Testament Scriptures, Jesus' fulfillment of prophecy, and remind them of this and other messianic predictions (14:26; see also Luke 24:25–35, 44–48).<sup>11</sup>
4. They had done these things to Him - These things were initiated by those who, on their own free-will, decided to celebrate the powerful manifestations of God's nature manifested through Christ.

## C. Acknowledged (vs. 17-19):

1. The people who **were** with Him – There were many eyewitnesses who continually remained with Christ who, once and for all, heard Christ loudly call upon Lazarus to come back to life. They all knew that Lazarus remained in the grave for four days.
2. Raised him from the dead - They all were well aware that Lazarus was resurrected from being dead four days.
3. Affirm, testify – They will forever be eyewitnesses of this fact and can forever testify that this did take place.
4. For this reason also, the people went to meet Him – This miracle was so unmistakably supernatural Jesus was now, far above the accomplishments of anyone in any other spiritual leader in Israel's history. Along with every other miracle Christ did, the people became extremely hopeful for deliverance from Roman oppression and were determined to make Him their king.
5. They heard – There were so many eyewitnesses relying Lazarus's resurrection to the travels that came to the Passover they became convinced that Christ must become the King of Israel.
6. He had performed this sign – The travelers were completely convinced that Christ, without any help from anyone, supernaturally, by the power of God, brought Lazarus back from the grave.
7. The Pharisees said to one another – Just like immediately after Christ raised Lazarus from the dead (Luke 11:47-53), the Pharisees began to interpret what was taking place and communicate their jealousy and fears to one another.
8. You see – The Pharisees command each other's attention to continually, in an indifferent manner, carefully inspect all that was going taking place. They did not think this was good.
9. Look, the world has gone after Him – Pharisees demanded that all their leaders pay special attention to how all the people in Jerusalem had focused their attention on Christ.
  - a) The mass reception of Jesus made the plans of the Pharisees impossible. They "were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill Him. 'But not during the Feast,' they said, 'or the people may riot' " (Mark 14:1–2). Pessimistically they acknowledged, The whole world has gone after Him. Irony is again evident, for most of those people did not really believe in Jesus.<sup>12</sup>
  - b) The Pharisees bent on destroying all the good that Christ was doing. They wanted to kill Lazarus (12:9-11) and then Christ.
  - c) *Pharisees* – The Pharisees (Mk. 2:16; Lk. 5:17) were a legalistic and a separatistic group who strictly, but often hypocritically, kept the law of Moses and the unwritten "tradition of the elders" (15:2). The Sadducees (M. 12:18; Lk. 20:27; Ac. 4:1) were more worldly and politically minded and were theologically unorthodox-among other things denying the resurrection, angels and spirit (Ac 23:8).
10. Look, the world has gone after him – The worshippers accepted the truth, but those who spent all day studying the Word rejected the facts provided by the eyewitnesses. What Christ said earlier is now vividly demonstrated about the heart of the unbelieving Jewish leaders; "*You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.*" (John 5:39-40; NASU)

<sup>11</sup> Barton, B., Comfort, P., Osborne, G., Taylor, L. K., & Veerman, D. (2001). *Life Application New Testament Commentary* (p. 427). Tyndale.

<sup>12</sup> Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 317). Victor Books.

