

The Triumphal Entry: (Palm Sunday)

Introduction:

All around Europe there are Triumph arches indicating some military victory. The Romans built many. But there was no triumphal arch in Jerusalem on the day that Jesus came to town, but plenty of action.

John tells us that this event took place six days before Passover which would immediately follow Jesus' death.

John also tells that on his way to Jerusalem Jesus stopped for a dinner hosted in Jesus' honour in Bethany by his friends Lazarus, Mary & Martha at which Mary anointed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume in preparation for Jesus' burial.

Luke records the way in which a colt was found upon which Jesus would enter the city with people spreading their cloaks on the road. John adds the information about the Palm branches being spread on the road as well.

THE BARE FACTS:

Jesus rode a young donkey into town which he'd previously organised to be borrowed for the occasion.

Jesus' disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen. The group were Jesus' wider circle of followers, not just the twelve. They were shouting praises from Psalm 118.

John adds that "the crowds" were shouting out as well.

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Matthew records that *the entire city was in an uproar as he entered*. “*Who is this?*” *people asked*. *And the crowds replied “It’s Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee”*.

Not everyone was happy! Some of the Pharisees in the crowd told Jesus to rebuke his disciples for attributing the words of the Psalm to Jesus, accusing them of blasphemy! *Jesus replied: “I tell you, if they keep quiet the stones will cry out.”*

WHAT DID IT ALL MEAN?

The Jewish people were waiting for a Saviour long promised through the Old Testament Prophets, one who they mistakenly thought, would lead them in victory over their foreign (Roman) invaders.

They’d seen Jesus’ miracles and heard his teaching. When they saw him riding into the city on the eve of the Passover on a young donkey, they realised that this was fulfilling the promises of God as to how the Messiah would enter the city.

Both Matthew and John tell us that the crowds knew the words of Zechariah 9:9: *Do not be afraid O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt*.

DIFFERENT RESPONSES:

People respond to different events in a variety of ways. So it was on this occasion:

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John explains that the Disciples didn't have a clue what was happening at the time! (John 12:16) However, afterwards they realised that the Prophets had spoken about Jesus.

The crowds went wild with their excited shouting of praises to God. Later people were to shout for Jesus' death!

The Pharisees who wanted to kill Jesus were stumped, as everyone had gone after Him. (John 12:19)

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THIS EVENT?

God had everything in control. He'd spoken through the Prophets over a period of hundreds of years looking forward to this very day. Jesus knew that he was on his way to die and deliberately caused the Prophecies to be fulfilled.

Jesus had not yet been killed by those plotting for his death as Scripture had to be fulfilled. There were those who saw in Jesus' miracles and teaching that Jesus was indeed the long promised Messiah. God helped the Disciples who'd been slow on the uptake to understand after Jesus had been raised from the dead & ascended into Heaven.

God still has everything in control even though at times we may not think so.

The Easter event reminds us of God's great rescue plan. He longs for men, women & children to turn back to God & be 'saved'. We are the instruments through whom God can work in the hearts of those who are not yet Christians, to help them come to know the Lord, as we open our mouths & give witness, invite people to consider the claims of Christ upon their lives & live a life before them which is consistent with what we claim to believe.

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Conclusion:

As we commence Easter week, let's prayerfully consider the facts as they are clearly spelt out in the Bible. Let's also consider our own response to God's great provision of Jesus, the only Saviour. Let's prayerfully consider how we might encourage others to become Christians and join us.