

John 12:12–19

The Arrival of the King

John 12:12–19

¹² The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

¹³ took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out:

“Hosanna!

‘Blessed is *He who comes in the name of the Lord!*
The King of Israel!’”

¹⁴ Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:

¹⁵ *“Fear not, daughter of Zion;
Behold, your King is coming,
Sitting on a donkey’s colt.”*

¹⁶ His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and *that* they had done these things to Him.

¹⁷ Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness.

¹⁸ For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.

¹⁹ The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, “You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!”

Matt. 21:1–9; Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:29–38

Introduction

More than a century ago, speaking to the then-largest congregation in all Christendom, Charles Spurgeon said, “I believe that it is anti-Christian and unholy for any Christian to live with the object of accumulating wealth.”

Over the years, the message being preached in some of the largest churches now in the world has changed—indeed, a new gospel is being taught to many congregations today.

This message has been ascribed many name, such as the “name it and claim it” gospel, the “blab it and grab it” gospel, the “health and wealth” gospel, the “prosperity gospel,” and “positive confession theology.”

No matter what name is used, the essence of this message is the same. Simply put, this “prosperity gospel” teaches that God wants believers to be physically healthy, materially wealthy, and personally happy.

Listen to the words of Robert Tilton, one of its best-known spokesmen:

“I believe that it is the will of God for all to prosper because I see it in the Word, not because it has worked mightily for someone else. I do not put my eyes on men, but on God who gives me the power to get wealth.” Teachers of the prosperity gospel encourage their followers to pray for and even demand material flourishing from God.

Five Theological Errors

Russell Woodbridge and I wrote a book titled [*Health, Wealth, and Happiness: Has the Prosperity Gospel Overshadowed the Gospel of Christ?*](#) (Kregel, 2010)

1. The Abrahamic covenant is a means to material entitlement.

As Kenneth Copeland wrote in his 1974 book *The Laws of Prosperity*, “Since God’s covenant has been established and prosperity is a provision of this covenant, you need to realize that prosperity belongs to you now!”

2. Jesus's atonement extends to the "sin" of material poverty.

This seems to be an accurate observation in light of Copeland's statement that "the basic principle of the Christian life is to know that God put our sin, sickness, disease, sorrow, grief, *and poverty* on Jesus at Calvary." This misunderstanding of the scope of the atonement stems from two errors prosperity gospel proponents make.

First, many who espouse prosperity theology have a fundamental misconception of the life of Jesus. For example, teacher John Avanzini proclaimed on a TBN program, Jesus had "a nice house," "a big house," "Jesus was handling big money," and he even "wore designer clothes."

3. *Christians give in order to gain material compensation from God.*

Robert Tilton referred to as the "Law of Compensation." According to this law—purportedly based on [Mark 10:30](#)—Christians should give generously to others because when they do, God gives back more in return. This, in turn, leads to a cycle of ever-increasing prosperity.

As Gloria Copeland put it in her 2012 book, *God's Will is Prosperity*, "Give \$10 and receive \$1,000; give \$1,000 and

receive \$100,000. . . . In short, [Mark 10:30](#) is a very good deal.”

Baptist call it prove the tithe day

4. Faith is a self-generated spiritual force that leads to prosperity.

According to prosperity theology, faith is not a God-granted, God-centered act of the will. Rather, it is a humanly wrought spiritual force, directed at God.

5. Prayer is a tool to force God to grant prosperity.

Prosperity gospel preachers often note we “have not because we ask not” ([James 4:2](#)). They encourage us to pray for personal success in all areas of life.

As [Creflo Dollar](#) writes, “When we pray, believing that we have already received what we are praying, God has no choice but to make our prayers come to pass. . . . It is a key to getting results as a Christian.”

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Sadly, this kind of teaching and mentality has permeated the evangelical world.

The True Gospel of the Sacrifice of Christ to atone for our sin, so that we do not have experience the wrath of God has been replaced with a: Self Centered, Egocentric, Narcissistic, Self promoting, man centered Gospel to satisfy the Lust of Flesh.

It is not a saving Gospel, it is as Damming Gospel. It will send your soul to Hell.

Some would say, that that is the extreme. But I say the even in the more conservative Churches we have been affected by the slow erosion of an Arminian Gospel, that promote man as central to the cause of Salvation.

It pictures a Powerless God who has done all he can to save you and now he sits on the edge of his semi sovereign throne hoping that maybe you will respond to the Gospel.

That is not a God centered Gospel, It is a weak man centered faulty Gospel that as Charles Spurgeon said, "Is not the gospel at all"

Review

John 12:1–11 (NKJV)

12 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. ² There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one

of those who sat at the table with Him. ³ Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

⁴ But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, ⁵ "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" ⁶ This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

⁷ But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. ⁸ For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

⁹ Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, ¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus

Lesson

I. The Proclamation of the King

II. The Prophecy of the King

III. The Power of the King

IV. The Predominance of the King

I. The Proclamation of the King

12 The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

13 took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out:

“Hosanna!

‘Blessed is *He who comes in the name of the Lord!*’

The King of Israel!”

12 **The next day** a great multitude that had come to the feast

The next day was Monday morning, the day after the supper at Bethany (12:1–11). During the night, Judas had met with the chief priests and agreed to betray Jesus to them (Matt. 26:14–16). But Jesus was not at the mercy of His enemies’ plots;

He remained in absolute control of the circumstances. The divinely ordained time had come for Him to die (v. 23; cf. 13:1), but He would do so on His own terms. The Jewish leaders, fearful of how the large, volatile crowds in Jerusalem might react, wanted to put Jesus to death, but not during the Passover celebration (Matt. 26:3–5; cf. Luke 22:2). Their plan was to seize and execute Him after the feast was over and the people dispersed.

But regardless of His enemies' desires, the Lord would die at the precise time foreordained in God's eternal plan (cf. 10:17–18; 19:10–11; Acts 2:23; 4:27–28; Gal. 4:4–5);

John 10:17–18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. ...

John 19:10–11 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Then Pilate said to Him, “Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?”

¹¹ Jesus answered, “You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above....

Acts 2:23 (NKJV)

²³ Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

Acts 4:27–28 (NKJV)

²⁷ “For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.

Galatians 4:4–5 (NKJV)

⁴ But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Fittingly, Jesus would be the Lamb of God sacrificed on the same day that the Passover lambs were being sacrificed, because He is “Christ our Passover” sacrifice (1 Cor. 5:7).

“In the first place, we ought to remember Christ’s design, which was, that he came to Jerusalem of his own accord, to offer himself to die; for it was necessary that his

death should be voluntary, because the wrath of God could be appeased only by a sacrifice of obedience.”

Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). *Commentary on the Gospel according to John* (Vol. 2, p. 16). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Therefore Jesus prepared to publicly enter Jerusalem to force the issue of His death. He knew that the accolades of the crowds would infuriate the Jewish leaders, and make them all the more desperate to kill Him.

As always, God would use the foolishness and wickedness of evil men to accomplish His own purposes (cf. Gen. 50:20; Ps. 76:10; Acts 4:26–28).

Up to this point, the Lord did not allow His enemies to take His life. Hence He had avoided provoking unnecessary public confrontations with the hostile Jewish authorities. When “the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him ... Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there” (Matt. 12:14–15; cf. 8:4; 16:20; John 4:1–3; 7:1; 11:53–54). When confrontations did occur and His enemies sought to kill Him, He evaded them. The people of His hometown of Nazareth wanted to throw Him off a cliff, but Jesus “[passed] through their midst, [and] went His way” (Luke 4:30). On

another occasion, enraged at His claim to be God (John 8:58), the hostile Jews “picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple” (v. 59; cf. 10:39). Jesus’ commanding presence also prevented His enemies from seizing Him before the predetermined time (John 7:44–46).

The exact day that the Lord chose to enter Jerusalem fulfilled one of the most remarkable prophecies of the Old Testament, Daniel’s prophecy of the seventy weeks

(Dan. 9:24–26).

²⁴“Seventy weeks are determined
 For your people and for your holy city,
 To finish the transgression,
 To make an end of sins,
 To make reconciliation for iniquity,
 To bring in everlasting righteousness,
 To seal up vision and prophecy,
 And to anoint the Most Holy.

²⁵“Know therefore and understand,
That from the going forth of the command
 To restore and build Jerusalem
 Until Messiah the Prince,
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two
 weeks;

The street shall be built again, and the wall,
Even in troublesome times.

²⁶“And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
And the people of the prince who is to come
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it *shall be* with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are
determined.

Through Daniel, the Lord predicted that the time from Artaxerxes' decree ordering the rebuilding of the temple (in 445 b.c.) until the coming of the Messiah would be “seven weeks and sixty-two weeks” (Dan. 9:25; cf. Neh. 2:6), that is, 69 weeks total. The literal translation is “seven sevens and sixty-two sevens,” seven being a common designation for a week. In the context of the passage, the idea is 69 weeks of years, or 69 times 7 years, which comes to a total of 483 Jewish years (which consisted of 360 days each, as was common in the ancient world). Several different systems of reckoning have endeavored to determine the chronology of the 483 years after Artaxerxes' decree, putting the date at either a.d. 30, 32, or 33, depending

on the actual decree date and the complex calculations through those years. Of these explanations, the most detailed are

**Sir Robert Anderson's *The Coming Prince*
and Harold Hoehner's *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ.***

Based on all of the historical data, it is best to understand the triumphal entry as taking place on 9 Nisan, a.d. 30. But even the other dates offered by these authors (a.d. 32 or 33) leave one thing remaining undeniably clear: whatever may be the precise chronology, Jesus Christ is the only possible fulfillment of Daniel's prophetic timetable.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). *John 12-21* (pp. 14-15). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Sir Robert Anderson calculated 483 years at 360 days per year (Jewish Calendar) and came up with 173,880 days. Start counting March 14; 445 B.C.; count out 173,880 days you come to April 6; 32 AD; five days before the execution of Jesus.

12 The next day a **great** multitude that had come to the feast

ὁ ὄχλος **πολύς**

great

polus: much, many

Original Word: πολύς, πολλή, πολύ

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: polus

Phonetic Spelling: (pol-oos')

Definition: much, many

4183 polýs – many (high in number); multitudinous, plenteous, "much"; "great" in amount (extent).

4183 /polýs ("much in number") emphasizes the quantity involved.

4183 (polýs) "signifies 'many, numerous'; . . . with the article it is said of a multitude as being numerous" (Vine, Unger, White, NT, 113,114) – i.e. great in amount.

12 The next day a great multitude

that had come to the feast

Aorist Active Participle

erchomai: to come, go

Original Word: ἔρχομαι

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: erchomai

Phonetic Spelling: (er'-khom-ahee)

Definition: to come, go

Usage: I come, go.

This is a particular Crowd, not the normal occupants of Jerusalem. This is the Crowd that has arrived for the Passover week.

When the Lord left Bethany, He was accompanied by part of the "large crowd of the Jews" (v. 9) who had come there to see Him and Lazarus (v. 17)

John 12:9 (NKJV)

⁹ Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.

. They would soon be joined by others of **the large crowd** of pilgrims **who had come to** Jerusalem for **the feast** (Passover). **When they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem**, they came pouring out of the city to meet Him.

The two great tides of people, fueled by the resurrection of Lazarus, flowed together to form a massive throng that escorted Jesus into Jerusalem. (The accounts of the triumphal entry in the Synoptic Gospels also suggest that there were two crowds that converged around Jesus [Matt. 21:9; Mark 11:9].)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (p. 15). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Matthew 21:9 (NKJV)

⁹ Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out,....

Mark 11:9 (NKJV)

⁹ Then those who went before and those who followed cried out,....

(some histories estimate that there were 250,000 lambs slaughtered during passover which could mean

there may have been as many as 2 million people there for the Passover feast)

Josephus (*Bel.* vi. 422–425) describes one Passover, just before the Jewish War (ad 66–70), when 2,700,000 people took part, not counting the defiled and the foreigners who were present in the city

Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 431). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

13 took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out:

“Hosanna!
‘Blessed is *He who comes in the name of the Lord!*
The King of Israel!”

13 took branches of palm trees

There was little difficulty obtaining *palm branches*: date palms were plentiful around Jerusalem, and still grow there. But there is nothing in the Old Testament that prescribes palm branches at Passover, whereas the people were commanded to take ‘palm fronds ... and rejoice before the Lord your God’ at the Feast of Tabernacles

Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (pp. 431–432). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

From about two centuries earlier, palm branches had already become a national (not to say nationalist) symbol. When Simon the Maccabee drove the Syrian forces out of the Jerusalem citadel he was fêted with music and the waving of palm branches (*cf.* 1 Macc. 13:51, 141 BC), which had also been prominent at the rededication of the temple (2 Macc. 10:7, 164 BC). Apocalyptic visions of the end utilize palm branches (*Testament of Naphtali* 5). Palms appear on the coins struck by the insurgents during the Jewish wars against Rome (ad 66–70, 132–135); indeed, the use of the palm as a symbol for Judea was sufficiently well established that the coins struck by the Romans to celebrate their victory also sported it. In short, waving of palm branches was no longer restrictively associated with Tabernacles. In this instance, it may well have signaled nationalist hope that a messianic liberator was arriving on the scene (*cf.* 6:14–15).

Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 432). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

Perhaps many in the crowd had that incident in mind as they waved their palm branches. Maybe, they hoped, Jesus would prove to be the great messianic King and military conqueror who would liberate them from the yoke of Rome and establish the promises to Abraham and David (Gen. 12:1–3; 2 Sam. 7:1–16).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). *John 12–21* (p. 16). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Revelation 7:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with **palm branches in their hands**, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

13 took branches of palm trees
and went out to meet Him, and
cried out:

“Hosanna!

‘Blessed is *He who comes in the name of the Lord!*’

The King of Israel!”

“Hosanna!

Hosanna, a term of acclamation or praise, transliterates a Hebrew word that literally means, “Help, I pray,” or “Save now, I pray” (cf. Ps. 118:25 nkjv). It was a term with which every Jew was familiar, since it came from the group of Psalms known as the Hallel

(Pss. 113–18). The Hallel was sung each morning by the temple choir during the major Jewish festivals.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (p. 16). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

The crowd also cried,

‘Blessed is *He who comes in the name of the Lord!*
quoting Psalm 118:26

The King of Israel!”

By using that phrase, the people affirmed their hope that Jesus was the Messiah they were expecting. That belief was further expressed by their hailing Him as **the King of Israel** (cf. v. 15; 1:49; 19:15, 19). Matthew records that the crowd also called Jesus the “Son of David” (Matt. 21:9, 15; 22:42), another messianic title. MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (p. 16). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

In the past, the Lord had refused to be hailed as the king and military conqueror the people were sure the Messiah would be. In fact, He had dispersed the crowd that sought to make Him king

John 6:14–15 (NKJV)

14 Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.”

15 Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

But this time He accepted their acclamation, sending them into a frenzy of excitement. Finally, they thought, He was accepting the role they wanted Him to take, that of a political and military deliverer. But Jesus accepted their praise on His terms.

As the one who came to save (Matt. 1:21), the one who came in the name of the Lord (John 5:43), and the rightful King of Israel (Matt. 27:11; John 1:49), He was entitled to the crowd’s praise

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (p. 16). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Matthew records (Matt. 21:15).

that when Jesus reached Jerusalem and entered the temple,

“the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He had done, and the children who were shouting in the temple, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David,’ [and] they became indignant and said to Him, ‘Do You hear what these children are saying?’ ” (Matt. 21:15).

The Lord replied by affirming His right to that praise: “Yes; have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies You have prepared praise for Yourself’?” (v. 16).

Luke 19:37–44 (NKJV)

³⁷ Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen,
³⁸ saying:

“ ‘Blessed is *the King who comes in the name of the Lord!*’

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

³⁹ And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.”

⁴⁰ But He answered and said to them, “**I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.**”

But far from being elated by the joyous cries of the giddy multitude, Jesus was grieved by the people’s superficial attitude toward Him. He knew that many who were hailing Him as the Messiah that day would cry for His death the following Friday.

Luke 19:41–44 (NKJV)

⁴¹ Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, ⁴² saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things *that make for your peace!* But now they are hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, ⁴⁴ and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

II. The Prophecy of the King

14 Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:

15 *“Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey’s colt.”*

16 His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified,

then they remembered that these things were written about Him and *that* they had done these things to Him.

14 Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:

14 **Then** Jesus, when He had found a young donkey

de: but, and, now, (a connective or adversative particle)

Original Word: δέ

Part of Speech: Conjunction

Transliteration: de

Phonetic Spelling: (deh)

Definition: but, and, now, (a connective or adversative particle)

Usage: a weak adversative particle, generally placed second in its clause; but, on the other hand, and.

1161 dé (a conjunction) – **moreover, indeed now** . . . , on top of this . . . , next . . .

The “Then” is not there to express a chronological time.

The Synoptic Gospels describe how **Jesus** found the **young donkey**

Matthew 21:1–7 (NKJV)

21 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, **2** saying to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her.

Loose *them* and bring *them* to Me.

Luke 19:30 adds on which no one has ever sat.

3 And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of them,’ and immediately he will send them.”

6 So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. **7** They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set *Him* on them.

Luke 19:35 adds (NKJV)

And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him.

The disciples did as Jesus had commanded, and returned with a colt and its mother, which may have been brought along to help keep the colt docile (Matt.

21:6–7). Unsure of which animal the Lord intended to ride, they laid their coats on both of them (Matt. 21:7). Then after Jesus indicated that He would ride the colt, they helped Him to mount it (Luke 19:35).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). *John 12-21* (p. 17). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

14 Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; **as it is written:**

15 *“Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey’s colt.”*

The Lord’s choice of a mount was a purposeful, conscious fulfillment of

Zechariah 9:9:

(NKJV)

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.

“**Fear not**, (the words **fear not** were added from Isa. 40:9)

9Lift up your voice with strength,
Lift *it* up, be not afraid;
Say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!”

daughter of Zion (a reference to Jerusalem [cf. 2 Kings 19:21; Isa. 10:32; Zech. 9:9] and by extension the whole nation); **behold, your king is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.**”

It is not to be thought that there is any suggestion of *humility* in riding upon an ass. On the contrary, the ass and the mule were the animals used in peace by great persons for their progresses, as the horse was used in war. The sons of the judges rode upon asses (Judg. 10:4, 12:14); so did Ahithophel (2 Sam. 17:23); so did Mephibosheth, Saul’s son, when he went to Jerusalem to meet David (2 Sam. 19:26); cf. Judg. 5:10. Indeed Zech. 9:10 shows plainly that the prophecy was specially of One coming *in peace*.

Bernard, J. H. (1929). [*A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to St. John*](#). (A. H. McNeile, Ed.) (p. 426). New York: C. Scribner’ Sons.

1

Jesus’ riding into the city on **a young donkey** was a sign of peace (cf. comments on Matt. 21:2, which speaks of Jesus riding on a donkey *and* a colt). He did

not ride a war horse or carry a sword or wear a crown. Nor did He ride in a wheeled vehicle, as did many kings

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). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

By choosing to ride a donkey, however, Jesus entered Jerusalem as the humble (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5) Prince of Peace.

The symbolism of His humiliation and peace was lost on the crowd, however, who continued to proclaim Jesus as the conquering King all the way into the city (cf. Matt. 21:15).

As Leon Morris observes, “The meaning of the happenings of the life of Jesus are not open for every unregenerate man to see. They are revealed only by the Holy Spirit of God”

(*The Gospel According to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979], 587–88).
MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12–21](#) (pp. 17–18). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

If Jesus had been the conquering warrior the people were hoping for, a war horse would have been a more appropriate mount (cf. Rev. 19:11).

Only when He returns the second time in judgment will Jesus ride the white horse of the conqueror (Rev. 19:11).

Revelation 19:11–16 (NKJV)

¹¹ Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵ Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

16 His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and *that* they had done these things to Him.

The people in the crowd were not the only ones who failed to grasp the significance of what was happening. John's parenthetical note (cf. 2:22) indicates that even the **disciples did not understand** the meaning of the triumphal entry at the time; they could not comprehend that at His first advent Jesus came not as conqueror but as Savior. Even after the resurrection, the disciples still asked hopefully, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

It was not until the coming of the Holy Spirit after **Jesus was glorified** (cf. John 7:39) that the disciples **remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him**. As Jesus had promised the Twelve, "The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you" (John 14:26).

"When He, the Spirit of truth, comes," the Lord added, "He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come" (16:13).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (p. 18). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

III. The Power of the King

17 Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness.

18 For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.

As noted in the discussion of 12:12–13, some **people** accompanied Jesus from Bethany, while others came out from Jerusalem to meet Him. The two groups coalesced into a huge crowd that escorted Jesus into the city.

Their enthusiastic witness to **the people who went out from Jerusalem and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign**, amplified the powerful effect of the miracle to the masses coming for Passover (11:45; cf. 5:36; 10:38).

John 5:36 (NKJV)

³⁶ **But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.**

John 10:38 (NKJV)

38 **but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father *is* in Me, and I in Him.”**

John 11:45 (NKJV)

⁴⁵ Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him.

John’s note that the **people** flocked to Jesus **because they heard that He had** raised Lazarus from the dead reveals the superficial nature of their faith.

Their desire was that Jesus would accept the role of political ruler and military deliverer that they expected of the Messiah (cf. John 6:14–15; 12:13).

They probably reasoned that since He had the power to raise to life one who had been dead for four days, He could surely use that power to free them from the yoke of Roman oppression. As was the case with so many other crowds that followed Jesus (cf. 2:23–25; 6:2, 14–15, 26, 60, 66; 12:42–43), this one consisted chiefly of thrill seekers.

By the end of the week, when it became obvious that Jesus was not going to be the political Messiah they expected, the people followed the lead of the Pharisees and other leaders in rejecting Him. Many of

the same voices that shouted “Hosanna” at the triumphal entry must have screamed “Crucify Him” MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (p. 23). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

IV. The Predominance of the King

19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, “You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!”

The **Pharisees**, meanwhile, looked on the tumultuous scene with increasing frustration and alarm. It seemed to them that events were spiraling dangerously out of control; if Jesus led this rabid crowd in an armed revolt against the Romans, all would be lost. (Unlike the Sadducees, the Pharisees refused to compromise with the Romans. But unlike the Zealots, they did not physically assault them.) Further, they had ordered that anyone knowing Jesus’ whereabouts was to tell them so they could arrest Him (11:57). Ironically, there, in plain sight, was the very one they wanted

desperately to seize, surrounded by thousands of people.

But instead of turning Jesus over to the authorities, the crowds were loudly hailing Him as the Messiah. Afraid of the crowd's reaction if they arrested Jesus openly, the Pharisees could only look on in frustration and dismay. Not surprisingly, they lashed out at **one another**, saying, "**You see that you are not doing any good.**" Confronted with Jesus' incredible popularity, in spite of their best efforts to silence Him, they began to blame each other. They would have been wiser, as the eminent rabbi Gamaliel would later advise the Sanhedrin, to not have been "found fighting against God" (Acts 5:39), who overrules the plans of men to accomplish His purposes (cf. Gen. 50:20; 1 Kings 12:15; Jer. 10:23; Dan. 4:25–35).

The Pharisees' exclamation, "**Look, the world has gone after Him,**" expresses the depth of their consternation. The statement is hyperbole; the term **world** refers to people in general, not everyone in particular (cf. v. 47; 1:29; 3:17; 4:42; 14:22; 17:9, 21; 18:20; 21:25; Acts 17:6; 19:27).

As with Caiaphas's prophecy (11:49–52), John probably intended the Pharisees' statement to be understood as an unwitting prediction of the gospel's spread throughout the world (Matt. 24:14; 26:13; 28:19–20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). Eventually they succeeded in turning the people against Jesus with

such hostility as to demand His execution in an act of final rejection by the nation.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (p. 24). Chicago, IL: Moody Publisher

Jesus was a King like no other. Instead of the pomp and circumstance associated with earthly kings, He was meek and lowly (Matt. 11:29); instead of defeating His enemies by force, He conquered them by dying (Heb. 2:14; cf. Eph. 1:19–22; Col. 2:15). But though He was despised and rejected at His first advent (Isa. 53:3), Jesus Christ will one day return as the all-conquering King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:11–16), who will shatter His enemies and destroy them with a fierce and final judgment (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 19:15). Just as He perfectly fulfilled all of the Old Testament prophecies regarding His first coming, so He will also come again in exactly the manner foretold by the Scriptures.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2008). [John 12-21](#) (p. 18). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.