

⁹ Now a great many of the Jews knew that [Jesus] 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. 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!"

Text: John 12:9-19 A 4-13-25 Passion History #6 Psalm 102 Responsive Psalm: 72
Hymns: 160, 162, 151 (1-4), 151 (5-7)

JESUS CAME TO SAVE US FROM OUR SINS

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

It sure would be nice if all those in authority had the best interests in mind of the people they're supposed to serve. It sure would be nice if everyone got along and we had lasting earthly peace. Sadly, because everyone is sinful, and we live in a sinful world, we're never going to have lasting earthly peace. But, as we're reminded in our text, we have something so much better.

The chapter before our text is the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. Mary and Martha wanted Jesus to heal their brother, Lazarus, who was deathly sick. But Jesus waited to come to Lazarus until He knew Lazarus had died. Jesus said, "*This sickness is ... for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it*" (Jn. 11:4). After Lazarus had been dead, Jesus brought him back to life again, healthy and well. Not only were Mary, Martha, and everyone there overjoyed, they were also in awe of Jesus. As Jesus had told Martha, "*I am the resurrection and the life.*" (Jn. 11:25)

A little while after that was the Passover. Jews came from all around, even from far away, to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. We're told, "*Now a great many of the Jews knew that [Jesus] was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. ... Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.*" There were many who witnessed Jesus' raising of Lazarus. They spread that amazing news. Very many wanted to see Jesus and Lazarus.

We're told that the people literally "*kept on bearing witness*" about Jesus. Sometimes we get discouraged when we try to talk to people about God and invite people to come to church, and they're not interested. Don't give up. There will be some who will listen. God makes sure that there always are. Keep telling people about Jesus. Through His power and the power of His Word, He will bring some to believe in Him and be saved.

Many people were coming to believe in Jesus for raising Lazarus from the dead (Jn. 11:45). We're told, "*But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.*" In sharp contrast to the Jews who wanted to see Jesus and Lazarus, many of the Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus and Lazarus!

How could Jesus' enemies be so blind? How could they be so hard hearted? They believed Jesus was only a man. They hated Jesus for saying He is the Son of God. They thought Jesus was blaspheming, and deserved to die for it. In spite of all His gracious words and wonderful miracles, they refused to think that they were wrong about Him.

It's not our fault if people won't listen to us when we tell them about God and His Word, and invite them to church. Jesus Himself experienced indifference, rejection, animosity, and even hatred. He tells us, "*If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My Word, they will keep yours also*" (Jn 15:18-20). Like Jesus, we keep spreading His Word. Many won't listen. But, by the grace of God, like you and me, some will listen, and believe.

We're told, "*The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him....*" When the people who had gathered together in Jerusalem heard that Jesus was coming, they gave Him 'the red carpet treatment.' From our text and from other Gospel accounts, we know that they cut down palm branches and laid them and even their coats on the dirt road. We're told, "*Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it....*" The people let the donkey Jesus was riding walk on their coats and palm branches as a sign of deep reverence for Jesus.

They cried out, "*Hosanna!*" which means, "*Help, Lord!*" "*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! The King of Israel!*" With these words they expressed their belief in Jesus as the promised Messiah. Jesus showed that He is not only Israel's king but our heavenly King by calmly riding the donkey, which Mark informs us no one had sat on before, through the excited crowd (Mk. 11:2). Jesus accepted their reverence and praise because He truly is the promised Messiah and Savior of the world.

Over five hundred years before Jesus was born the Old Testament prophet Zechariah had prophesied, "*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*" (Zech. 9:9). That is exactly what Jesus did. There are hundreds of prophecies

in the Old Testament about the Messiah. When we compare them with Jesus we see that every one of them is fulfilled in Him. Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah and Savior of the world.

We're told, *"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."* At first the disciples believed what most of the Jews believed about the Messiah: He would be a great earthly leader who would free them from the Romans and make them an independent, prosperous nation like they were under King David. They believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah. But they had some very confused ideas about the Messiah. Jesus had to undo their considerable confusion and show them what He had really come to do as the Messiah.

One word that we find a number of times in the Bible that's used to describe God is *"longsuffering."* The Lord is very *"longsuffering"* – very patient – with us. As Jesus patiently, lovingly taught His disciples, so He patiently, lovingly teaches us. Through His Word, the Lord helps us to grow in our understanding and faith. As we keep hearing and studying God's Word, it keeps opening up to us more and more all our lives.

Peter had confessed what he and the other disciples believed about Jesus: *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"* (Mt. 16:16). Jesus told him, *"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven"* (Mt. 16:17). How blessed we are that God has given us faith in Him! Of all God's blessings to us in life, the greatest is our salvation in Jesus. (Lk. 10:42)

Jesus brought the disciples to see that as the Messiah He came to bring them, and us, so much more than earthly peace. Jesus came to bring peace between God and us. John says, *"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation"* (or *"atoning sacrifice"*) *"for our sins"* (1 Jn. 4:10). After Jesus rose from the dead *"He opened [the disciples'] understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures"* (Lk. 24:45). Jesus let the disciples understand that as the Messiah He had come to save them from their sins. Jesus has done the same for you and me. We believe and know that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died on the cross and rose again. By faith in Jesus our sins are forgiven, we are saved, and we are going to heaven! *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* (Jn. 3:16)

It sure would be nice if all those in authority had the best interests in mind of the people they're supposed to serve. It sure would be nice if everyone got along and we had lasting earthly peace. Sadly, because everyone is sinful, and we live in a sinful world, we're never going to have lasting earthly peace. But we have something so much better. By faith in Jesus we have His forgiveness and help and presence and blessings in life. And by faith in Jesus we'll have perfect peace forever in heaven! Amen.