

ROAD TO EASTER
THE HUMBLE KING

Tuesday, February 27

Reading: John 12:12-19

John 12:12 *The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem. **13** They took palm branches and went out to meet Him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!" **14** Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written: **15** "Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion; see, your King is coming, seated on a donkey's colt."*

While their leaders plotted Jesus' death, the pilgrims praised Him. By riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, Jesus was fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9. Passover was a time of high expectation for the coming of the Messiah. The crowds welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem with the words of Psalm 118:25-26. "Hosanna" means save now. The crowds anticipated the coming of the kingdom of God. They welcomed Jesus as their King. However, the other gospels tell us that while the people rejoiced, Jesus wept over their ultimate rejection (Luke 19:41ff). He was not the kind of king they wanted. The crowds were growing to such an extent that the Pharisees despaired of ever being able to arrest Jesus. It appears the "world has gone after Him!"

LESSON ONE: "Expectations." The crowds expected Messiah to be a conquering king riding in to destroy their enemies and set up his kingdom in Jerusalem. But this was not why Jesus had come at His first advent. He had come to die and conquer our spiritual enemies – sin, Satan, and death. Sometimes we too have warped expectations of who Jesus is and what we want Him to do. We want Him to do our will instead of praying "Your will be done." What do you expect from Jesus? Do these expectations line up with what Scripture tells us about who Jesus is and what He wants? How do you respond when Jesus fails to meet YOUR expectations?

LESSON TWO: "Riding on a Donkey." While we often call this "the Triumphal Entry" it was really nothing of the kind. Jesus was presenting Himself to Israel as their Messiah and ultimately they would reject Him. This was the reason He wept over the city. Jesus' actions brought many different reactions. The crowds hail Jesus as king (for now). The religious leaders hate Jesus even more because of His popularity. The disciples are confused about what it all means until after Jesus' resurrection. Zechariah 9:9 is the prophecy Jesus fulfilled on this day. It says the coming King "is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey." They were looking for a mighty warrior; He came as a humble Servant. They were looking for someone to kill their enemies; He came to die for their sins. Do you rejoice in the salvation this humble King has brought? How can you follow His example of humility and righteousness in the way you treat others?