

HIS

Final Days
AND
Triumph

JEFF NEVILLE

© 2022 Jeffrey NeVille

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form whatsoever, whether by graphic, visual, electronic, film, microfilm, tape recording, or any other means, without prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief passages embodied in critical reviews and articles.

This is not an official publication of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The opinions and views expressed herein belong solely to the author and do not necessarily represent the opinions or views of Cedar Fort, Inc. Permission for the use of sources, graphics, and photos is also solely the responsibility of the author.

ISBN 13: 978-1-4621-4111-1

Published by CFI, an imprint of Cedar Fort, Inc.

2373 W. 700 S., Springville, UT, 84663

Distributed by Cedar Fort, Inc., www.cedarfort.com

Library of Congress Control Number: 2021949115

Cover design by Courtney Proby

Cover design © 2022 Cedar Fort, Inc.

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed on acid-free paper

CONTENTS

[Preface](#)

[Chapter 1: Palm Sunday](#)

[Chapter 2: The Final Passover and Last Supper](#)

[Chapter 3: Gethsemane](#)

[Chapter 4: The Meaning of His Suffering](#)

[Chapter 5: Leaving Gethsemane: THE BETRAYAL](#)

[Chapter 6: From the Illegal Trials to the Cross](#)

[Chapter 7: The Cross of Calvary](#)

[Chapter 8: The Aftermath of the Crucifixion](#)

[Chapter 9: The Ultimate triumph](#)

[Appendix](#)

CHAPTER 1

PALM SUNDAY

Six days before His death, Jesus left His beloved town of Bethany and descended the Mount of Olives. He stopped at the village Bethphage to mount a donkey. He then triumphantly entered into the city of Jerusalem and into the temple courtyard to jubilant shouts of “Hosanna,” with people waving palm branches.

Why the use of palm branches? Since the Hasmonaean period, the waving of branches has been a symbol of Jewish patriotism and triumph over foreign oppressors. Bruce R. McConkie taught, “The palm branch is the symbol of joy and triumph.”¹

As the Savior entered the city, the people shouted, “Hosanna!” The word *hosanna* means “save us, we beseech thee!” or “save us now!” Similar shouts of hosanna to the Lord have occurred throughout history.² Gospel scholar Truman G. Madsen explained, “Anciently, crying ‘Hosanna!’ with palm branches raised up was, in effect, a two-way reaching. On the one hand it was a plea: ‘O, save us’—a plea for redemption. On the other hand—as it was in the hearts of those who welcomed Jesus triumphantly into Jerusalem—it was a plea that he enter, that he come; it was an invitation that Christ accept and visit his holy house.”³ We should note that Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into the city ended with Him going into the temple, His house, the house that saves.

Matthew wrote: “A very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, *Hosanna to the Son of David*: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest” (Matthew 21:8–9; emphasis added). The people did not just shout “hosanna” but shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David.” The phrase “Son of David” is a royal and messianic title that the people were familiar with. They were declaring Christ to be their long-awaited Messiah.

As Jesus entered the Holy City on Palm Sunday, He deliberately chose to ride a donkey. Riding a horse would have symbolized strength, war, and an attempt to conquer. If Jesus had ridden a horse into the Holy City, His actions could have appeared to the Roman soldiers to be a symbol of opposition and aggression against the Roman occupiers. It may have triggered bloodshed.

Riding a donkey was a sign of humility and peace. However, there is more to the interpretation than just peace. In 1 Kings, David instructed his servants, “Cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule and bring him down to Gihon” (1 Kings 1:33). David had Solomon purposely ride upon his mule in front of all the people. James E. Talmage explained, “The ass has been designated in literature as the ancient symbol of Jewish royalty.”⁴

Anciently donkeys were often the conveyance of Old Testament kings and were especially used by King David. Thomas Wayment wrote, “In ancient Israel following the

introduction of kingship in about 1000 BC and continuing until the Babylonian exile in 586 BC the Israelites celebrated an annual re-enthronement ritual of their king. Among the many rituals that constituted this re-enthronement ceremony, the king rode into the holy city on a donkey and was crowned again as the legal and just king of the land.”⁵ To ride upon white asses or ass-colts was the privilege of persons of high rank, princes, judges, and prophets. The scriptures point out that the donkey on which Jesus rode had never been ridden before, a further sign of royalty.

As Jesus entered the city on a donkey He attested to all of the Jews that He was their rightful king. It was a bold statement of royalty that the vast majority of the people understood. A prophecy from the Old Testament provides a prophetic backdrop for the Triumphal Entry: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy *King* cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon a colt” (Zechariah 9:9; emphasis added). Many watching Jesus enter Jerusalem would have called this verse of scripture to mind.

The Savior’s entrance into Jerusalem was therefore no ordinary entrance. It suggested the fulfillment of the prophecy that Israel would once again have a king like David and that this future king would usher in a new dispensation of peace. Up to this point in His ministry Jesus had never made any personal claims to kingship. Earlier, when He appeared at Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus went into the Temple of Herod and spoke publicly of Himself in Messianic terms (see John 7:14–39). It was the role of the king to read the law and speak from the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus may have been seen here by some as usurping a royal prerogative under Jewish law. However, a specific public claim of that royalty waited until the day of the Triumphal Entry. Jesus had now formally declared Himself to be a king.

John records, “When they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem [they] took palm trees, and went forth to meet him and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the *King of Israel*” (John 12:12–13; emphasis added). The people understood the Savior’s actions and in agreement proclaimed Him to be their King. Whether the Jews believed that the future king was also to be the Messiah is a matter of debate, but Jesus and many of His followers had now openly declared both.

In preparation for the Passover, Jerusalem was overflowing with people. Great crowds had gathered to welcome Jesus as the Messiah and King of Israel. “The record suggests that the composition of this huge crowd was mostly made of the Savior’s own constituency. Here were the hundreds he had healed, along with their neighbors, and friends.”⁶

John gives us another reason for the crowds gathering to see Jesus: “The people therefore that [were] with him when he called Lazarus from the dead bare record. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle” (John 12:17–18). Hundreds had gathered and come based on faith because they had heard that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. Up to this point, it was the greatest miracle in His ministry. The people may have been stirred by what Jesus might do next.

As mentioned, the crowds shouted, “Hosanna,” which means, “save us now.” The people may have wanted immediate action. The Jews of the first century believed that the Messiah would physically save them from their political oppressors by military conquest. Maimonides, a famous early authority on Judaism (1135–1204 A.D.), summarized the

teachings of the rabbis concerning the Messiah: “If there arise a king of the house of David **who . . . fights** the battles of the Lord, then one may properly assume that he is the Messiah.”⁷

Perhaps on Palm Sunday the Jews expected Jesus to proceed directly to the Roman headquarters, the Antonia Fortress, and physically expel the occupiers and reestablish the kingdom of Israel. It appears that even His disciples, who had been warned that this was to be the beginning of the end, were, for the moment, carried away by the tide of enthusiasm. However, instead of going to the Antonia fortress Jesus proceeded to the temple.⁸

Of the Triumphal Entry Dieter F. Uchtdorf observed, “Perhaps [even] the disciples thought this was a turning point—the moment when the Jewish world would finally recognize Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah. But the Savior understood that many of the shouts of praise and acclamation would be temporary.”⁹ Hosanna, “save us now.” Jesus had come to save them from something far greater than their political oppressors. He had come to save them from sin, Satan, hell, and death. The events soon to follow in Gethsemane, Golgotha, and at the Garden Tomb would signal the greatest Independence Day, the greatest day of liberation and saving in all history.

As the Triumphal Entry proceeded and the people were rendering Messianic honors and proclaiming Jesus to be the King of Israel, “the Pharisees therefore said among themselves, perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? the world is gone after him” (John 12:19). The Pharisees, unable to check the surging enthusiasm of the multitudes, unable to silence the joyous acclamations, made their way through the throngs until they reached Jesus. “And some of the Pharisees . . . said unto him, Master rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out” (Luke 19:39–40). Within a few days, immediately following the death of Jesus the stones would indeed cry out in agony.

Jesus accepted the acclamations that He was their long-anticipated Messiah and King. The time had come to publicly proclaim both. The Triumphal Entry was in essence a move that clarified the identity of both those who opposed Jesus and those who believed in Him. Such a clear and bold declaration sent His enemies into a maddened frenzy. His entry into the city revealed that Jesus was more popular and had far more followers than His enemies ever imagined. Jesus’ popularity in Galilee now extended into Jerusalem and was even making inroads into the Jewish hierarchy. John wrote, “Among the chief rulers also many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him [why?], lest they should be put out of the synagogue” (John 12:42). While some of the rulers were afraid to make their belief known, many in the crowd were not.

Among the crowds that gathered during that last week, many questioned whether Jesus would appear publicly in Jerusalem during the feast. The plan of the Jewish hierarchy to take Jesus into custody was no secret. After Lazarus was raised from the dead, the Jewish leaders concluded they had to act. From that moment on, they were conspiring to get Christ out of the way.

The courage displayed during the Triumphal Entry by many of the followers of Jesus stood as an obstacle that His enemies now faced in removing Him. Because of the pro-Jesus crowds, the enemies of Jesus, particularly the Jewish hierarchy, could no longer oppose Him openly. It became abundantly clear that Jesus would have to be taken by stealth. They now had to work quickly, secretly, and illegally to isolate, arrest, and kill

Him before His followers could muster a defense. In the Gospels, the Jewish leaders are shown to be fearful that arresting Jesus would cause a disturbance. They would have to take Jesus at night, subtly, using a guide who could report His whereabouts before His supporters could gather. The plot to kill Jesus was finalized by the Jewish leaders on Wednesday, just three days following Psalm Sunday with Judas agreeing to betray Jesus. The Triumphal Entry of Jesus had hastened the process that would result in His death.

In ancient Rome, a sign was attached to each cross indicating the criminal charges for which a person was being crucified. What was the inscription on the Savior's cross? "Jesus, The King of the Jews." Jesus was formally condemned for claiming to be the King of the Jews, not for declaring Himself to be the Jewish Messiah or even Jehovah.

The Triumphal Entry appears to have been the final tipping point for the enemies of Jesus, the act that would push them over the edge. Ironically, what some have taken to be only a humble act of submission, by riding in on a donkey, was also a bold move on the part of Jesus. Through this act, He publicly testified of His own mission as the long-awaited Messiah and true King of Israel.

Despite the joyful reception Jesus received at the Triumphal Entry, within a few days the crowds would demand His death. Maybe, some of their initial enthusiasm had faded when Jesus did not come as the physical, political deliverer they had long hoped for. We should also note that it is very possible that the people in the crowd that welcomed and embraced the Savior at the Triumphal Entry were different from the crowd a few days later that called for His death. The crowds calling for Jesus' death were led and inspired by the Jewish leaders, the enemies of Jesus. Perhaps because of the secrecy and speed of the arrest, and the illegality of the trials, the supporters of Jesus did not have sufficient time to gather in large numbers. Let's give His followers the benefit of the doubt.

The Triumphal Entry marked a glorious moment in Christ's ministry. But with due respect to the adoring crowd, this was a very little parade compared to what the Master deserved and would soon deserve. The Triumphant Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday was, in truth, but a prelude to the greatest day of triumph ever to be, just a few days distant.

ENDNOTES

1. Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*. Vol. 3 (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 495.
2. The Hosanna Shout was performed during the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. When the resurrected Savior appeared to the Nephites at the Bountiful temple, the shout was given. It appears the shout memorialized the pre-earthly council in heaven, when all the sons and daughters of God shouted for joy. John Taylor said, "Indeed the shout was . . . older than the everlasting hills . . . aye, older than the earth. . . . For was not this the shout which shook the heavens before the foundations of the earth were laid, when, 'the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?'" (B. H. Roberts, *The Life of John Taylor*, 366.) The shout was also performed after the closing prayer of the Kirtland Temple dedication and all temple dedications since.
3. Truman G. Madsen, *The Temple: Where Heaven Meets Earth* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008), 110.
4. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1915/1982), 480.
5. Thomas A. Wayment, "The Triumphal Entry," *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ*, vol. 2 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006), 402.
6. W. Cleon Skousen, *Days of the Living Christ* (Ensign Publishing Co., 1992/2018), 431.
7. Gershom Gerhard Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (Schocken Books, 1971), 28.
8. The Joseph Smith Translation of Mark reads, "And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple.

And when he had looked round about upon all things, and *blessed the disciples*, the eventide was come; and he went out unto Bethany with the twelve” (JST, Mark 11:11; emphasis added). The significance of the Joseph Smith Translation is that Jesus blessed His disciples. They were most likely blessed against the day when Jerusalem would be destroyed. Two days later during the Olivet Discourse Jesus discussed with His disciples the impending abomination of desolation that was coming, future scenes of death, and destruction that caused Jesus to weep (see Matthew 24:12).

In 66 A.D., the Jews, believing that the Messiah would come and battle for them, revolted against the Romans. In 70 A.D., the Roman legions under Titus laid siege on Jerusalem. During the fighting the Jewish rebels took refuge within the walls of Jerusalem. The famine and hunger that followed was so severe that some resorted to cannibalism. Any Jew caught trying to escape the city was crucified in front of the walls of the city for all to see. Eventually the entire city was destroyed, the temple was burned to the ground and leveled, and all of Jerusalem was plowed as a field. Over 1,100,000 Jews were slaughtered, and 97,000 were taken captive. In all, the Romans destroyed 987 towns in Palestine and slew 580,000 men, while still larger numbers perished through starvation, disease, and fire. Jesus, having foreseen all of this, wept on at least two occasions for His people.

9. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Way of the Disciple,” April 2009 general conference.

You've Just Finished your Free Sample

Enjoyed the preview?

Buy: <http://www.ebooks2go.com>