

Triumphant and Victorious

***Key Verse: "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 21:9***

***Selected Scriptures:
Zechariah 9:9;
Matthew 21:1-11***

IT WAS NEAR THE END OF our Lord's ministry that he was to present himself as Israel's Messiah, which had been prophesied by the holy prophets. The Israelites knew that God had promised an everlasting kingdom to be established under the rule of David's seed. (II Sam. 7:13-16; Ps. 132:11; Isa. 9:6,7; 16:5) As a result of these promises, and in harmony with time features given to the Prophet Daniel (Dan. 9:24-27), many among the people realized the time had come for the arrival of their Messiah. However, they looked for a mighty warrior like

David, not the son of a carpenter who preached love and humility.

Jesus had not proclaimed himself to be the Messiah, but never denied the fact when others made the claim for him. Before his birth, Mary had been told by the angel Gabriel, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." (Luke 1:32) Yet Jesus himself never claimed to have received the throne of his

father David. When Jesus asked his disciples who they thought he was, Peter answered, “Thou art the Christ [Hebrew: *Messiah*], the Son of the living God,” to which Jesus responded, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”—Matt. 16:15-17

Knowing the hearts of God’s chosen people, Israel, Jesus had to literally fulfill all of the prophecies related to the coming of their Messiah, lest they later claim they were not allowed to recognize him. Therefore, he made arrangements to enter into Jerusalem on the 10th of Nisan, a detail which his faithful disciples later understood to signify that he was the antitypical lamb of the Passover. He had a donkey provided so he could ride upon it into the city, not because he was tired, but because it was traditional for kings of Israel to ride this animal to their coronations (I Kings 1:33-35), and it would also fulfill the prophetic words of Zechariah.—Zech. 9:9

Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem was viewed by the people of Israel as the long-awaited arrival of their Messiah. Commentators have estimated that a million or more people may have been in attendance, so the cries of “Hosanna to the Son of David” must have been deafening. Branches of palms were strewn before him, symbolizing victory and honor. Garments were also laid before him as they celebrated Messiah’s arrival. Knowing their hearts were hardened, however, and not in harmony with God’s plans, Jesus “beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.”—Luke 19:41,42

This “triumphant” entrance had a very different meaning to Jesus and his Heavenly Father. They knew that rather than assume a throne as the prophets had declared, this day showed the fact that Jesus would soon die on the cross to redeem Adam and become a ransom for all. ■