

BREAK OF DAY

"FIRST LIGHT"

JOHN 12:12-19

This Week's Core Competency

Salvation by Grace – I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by his grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8, 9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—9 not by works, so that no one can boast.*

The Old Testament speaks of one to come who will save and who will rule. Given the benefit of hindsight, we know this one has already come to save and will come again to rule; his name is Jesus. Although the Old Testament does not name him, it does clearly identify him. Familiar titles it uses to refer to him include: "a shoot," "the Branch," "the Root of Jesse," "a sprout from David's line," and "my servant." These metaphors are used in passages that speak of him either saving or ruling. Read together, they clearly refer to one and the same person.

Isaiah 11 opens with these words, "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit" (v. 1). The prophet is referring to the descendant of David, Jesse's son, who will rule over Israel and the nations in accordance with God's promise (2Sa 7:11-16; Ps 89:3-4, 28-29). Isaiah goes on in chapter 11 to describe the character of this ruler and his rule. He tells us that "the Spirit of the LORD will rest on him" (v. 2), that "with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

– Isaiah 53:6

decisions for the poor of the earth" (v. 4), and that peace will mark his reign "for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea" (v. 9). Clearly, the prophet is describing one who comes to rule.

In Isaiah 52:13 the prophet conveys these words of the LORD, "See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted." On this verse one author writes, "Since the rest of the oracle [52:13-53:12] features his atoning death—*I AM* [the LORD] makes his life a guilt offering (53:10)—'he will be raised' must refer to his resurrection from the dead. His resurrection is then followed by his ascension ('lifted up') and glorification ('highly exalted')" (Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 889). Clearly, the prophet is describing one who comes to save. This conclusion is substantiated by the prophet's description of the vicarious suffering of the same one whom he calls "a tender shoot" (53:2). According to the prophet, the LORD made him a guilt offering (53:10) and laid on him the iniquity of us all (53:6). Obviously, "my servant" (52:13), "a tender shoot" (53:2), and "the Branch" (11:1) all refer to the same person.

Jeremiah 23:5 reveals that the "Branch" is "a King." There the prophet reports, "The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land." Along the same lines, he reports in 33:15, "In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land." The Messiah will certainly rule because God's promise to David is unconditional. "This is what the LORD says: 'if you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night no longer come at their appointed time, then my

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covenant with David my servant can be broken and David will no longer have a descendant to reign on his throne" (vv. 21, 22). Clearly, the prophet is describing one who comes to *rule*.

A final interesting reference to one who will come to save and rule is found in Zechariah 3:8, 9. There the LORD declares, "I am going to bring my servant, the Branch . . . and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day." This future cleansing is linked to the coming of a Sin-Remover who is given three messianic titles—"my servant," "the Branch," and "the stone." Commenting on these titles, one author explains, "As the Servant of the LORD, Christ is the One who comes to do the will of the Father (Isa. 42:1; 48:3-4; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11). As the Branch of David, Christ is the Davidic Descendant who will rise to power and glory out of the humiliation into which the line of David had fallen (Isa. 4:2; 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 6:12-13). As the Stone (cf. Ps 118:22; Matt. 21:42; I Peter 2:6) he will bring judgment on the Gentiles (Dan. 2:44-45) and be a stone of stumbling for unbelieving Israel (Rom. 9:31-33). But ultimately he will bring cleansing to Israel and remove the sin of this land in a single day. Some say this refers to the day of Christ's crucifixion, but it is more likely a reference to the day of His Second Advent when at the end of the future Tribulation period the merits of His death will be applied to believing Israel (Zech. 13:10)" (F. Duane Lindsey, "Zechariah," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 1554, 55).

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the crowd welcomed their king and rightly so. They were looking for one to come who would *save* and would *rule* just as the Old Testament had predicted. What they misunderstood was the order in which the prophecies regarding their Messiah would be fulfilled. They expected him to rule "at once" (Lk 19:11). They put the cart before the horse! Now we know that he came to *save* first, and he will come again to *rule*.

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

John 12:12-19

12 The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast 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 upon it, as it is written,

15 "Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt."

16 At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him.

17 Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. 18 Many people, because they had heard that he had given this miraculous sign, went out to meet him. 19 So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"

Cf., quoted passages

Psalm 118:26

26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you.

Zechariah 9:9

9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

* Underline "the next day" in v. 12.

* Bracket "crowd" in vv. 12, 17.

* Circle "the Feast" in v. 12.

* Circle "palm branches" in v. 13.

* Circle "Hosanna" in v. 13.

* Bracket "who comes in the name of the LORD!" in v.

13.

* Circle "Daughter of Zion" v. 15.

* Underline "after Jesus was glorified" in v. 16.

* Circle "these things" in v. 16.

* Box "so" indicating *result* in v. 19.

* Circle "the Pharisees" in v. 19.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Jesus entered Jerusalem on "the next day." What happened on the previous day?
2. Identify the "great crowd" mentioned in verse 12.
3. How would you describe the crowd's mood?
4. Explain the significance of the palm branches.
5. What do you infer from what the crowd was shouting?
6. Why does John quote Zechariah 9:9?
7. *What* did the disciples understand, and *when* did they understand it?
8. Identify the "crowd" mentioned in verse 17.
9. How does Lazarus figure in the story?
10. **Discussion:** *Compare* and *contrast* the crowds, the disciples, and the Pharisees.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

When you think of the triumphal entry, the first person you think of is Jesus, not Lazarus. In fact, you probably don't think of Lazarus at all. Nevertheless, he figures prominently in what happened. After he was raised from the dead, many who had seen what Jesus did put their faith in him. When the Pharisees heard about the miraculous sign, they reported it to the chief priests, and together they called a meeting of the Sanhedrin to determine what to do. In a nutshell, the council decided to kill Jesus because in their words, "If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation" (Jn 11:48). This happened little more than a week before the Passover and caused such a stir that many that went to Jerusalem ahead of time were on the lookout for Jesus.

John tells his readers: "When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up from the country to Jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing before the Passover. They kept looking for Jesus, and as they stood in the temple area they asked one another, 'What do you think? Isn't he coming to the Feast at all?' But the chief priests and Pharisees had given orders that if anyone found out where Jesus was, he should report it so that they might arrest him" (11:56).

Then six days before the Passover, a dinner was held in Jesus' honor in Lazarus' hometown. When those looking for Jesus in nearby Jerusalem heard about it, they went to Bethany hoping to catch a glimpse of the two of them (12:9). This resulted in the Sanhedrin adding Lazarus to its hit list because even more Jews were putting their faith in Jesus because of him (vv. 10, 11). When Jesus headed for Jerusalem the next day, Lazarus, the catalyst for all the excitement, was in the crowd traveling with him (v. 17), and as they traveled, those who had seen the miraculous sign continued to spread the word much to the chagrin of the Pharisees.

John's account of Jesus' triumphal entry gives his readers a number of reasons to believe. First,

there's the witness of the great crowd that went out from Jerusalem to meet him. They brought with them palm branches, symbols of the Jewish nation, to wave as they greeted the Messiah on whom their future rested. What's more, they went out shouting words to the effect, "Praise God! Here comes the King of Israel; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" This was no neutral encounter; it was an act of celebration that symbolized a nation's hopes now focused on Jesus whom its citizens hailed as he entered the city. Then there is the witness of the Old Testament. Jesus finds a young donkey and rides it into the city. The disciples missed the point of this at the time, but later, after Jesus' resurrection, the Holy Spirit showed them that this detail had been written about him long ago. The prophet Zechariah had predicted that Zion's Messiah would come riding on a donkey. So when John writes his Gospel after the fact, he looks back at that scene and says to his readers, "See, your king is coming—just like Zechariah said he would—seated on a donkey's colt" (v. 15). "This 'gentle [humble] king' is not a man of chariots and war horses, swords and bows (Zech. 9:10), but one who will bring peace to all nations. His gift is a gift of life, not conquest" (Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John*, 343). Finally, there's the witness of the crowd that was with Jesus when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead reverberating throughout the story, as well as the testimony of the many who believed in him because of it. This great sign confirmed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God so much so that it enabled John to turn the words of the Pharisees against them, "Look how the whole world has gone after him!"

The Message of the Passage

You have every reason to believe in Jesus since he raised Lazarus from the dead, was acclaimed by crowds to be the Messiah, and fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy of Zechariah.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 *living questions* to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your answers to the following *living questions*:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 12 **the next day** "If the anointing took place on the evening after Sabbath concluded, this event could be understood to have occurred on *Sunday* (that would suppose the next day were to be viewed by Roman time designations as the next morning and not by Jewish calculation as starting after sundown of the following day)" (Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12-21*, NAC, 40 italics added; cf. Burge, 340 and Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, NICNT, 581). An alternative view places Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Monday. "A few days before the final Passover, Jesus drew near to Jerusalem (John 11:55), arriving at Bethany six days before the Passover (John 12:1), namely the *Saturday* before the Passion Week. That evening, Jesus was anointed at Simon the leper's house (Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8). On the next day (*Sunday*), there was a great crowd that came to Bethany to see Jesus (John 12:1-9). The next day (John 12:12), *Monday*, was Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-40; John 12:12-19)" (Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, 91 italics added).

v. 12 **crowd** A number of crowds are mentioned by John. The "crowd of Jews" mentioned in verse 9 refers to a large number of Jews from Jerusalem (or possibly Judea) who went out to Bethany to see Lazarus and Jesus whom they heard had raised him from the dead. The "great crowd" mentioned in verse 12 refers to the large number of Jewish pilgrims, many from Galilee, who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover. The "crowd that was with him" mentioned in verse 17 refers to those who were traveling with Jesus. They "continued to spread the word" along the way bearing witness to the miraculous sign Jesus had given. "The festival times in Jerusalem attracted great crowds. Although Josephus, in seeking to impress Hellenistic readers, surely exaggerates in positing that the crowd at one of the Passover feasts prior to the fall of the Temple would have been in excess of an incredible two and a half million people, we can at least conclude that the gatherings must have been very large. Jeremias estimates that over a hundred thousand people, counting the Jerusalemites, could have easily participated in the Passover" (Borchert, 41).

v. 12 **the Feast** I.e., Passover (see v. 1; cf. Ex 12:1-30, 43-51; Lev 23:4-8; Nu 9:1-14; 28:16-25; Dt 16:1-8). "Old Testament law required Jews to come to Jerusalem for three pilgrimage festivals; Passover (the start of the Barley harvest), Pentecost (the end of the wheat harvest), and Tabernacles (the harvest of tree and vine). Each celebrated religious events in Israel's history (the Exodus, the giving of the law, and the desert wanderings)" (Burge, 340).

v. 13 **palm branches** "From the time of the Maccabees palms or palm-branches had been used as a national symbol . . . So well established was the use of the palm or palm-branch as a symbol for the Jewish nation that the Romans in their turn used it on the coins which they struck to celebrate the crushing of the Jewish revolts" (F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, 259).

v. 13 **"Hosanna!"** "Hosanna is an Aramaic expression that literally means, 'help, I pray,' or 'save, I pray.' By Jesus' time it had become a strictly liturgical formula of praise, however, and was used as an exclamation of praise to God" (the NET Bible, 26sn).

v. 13 **Blessed is he** "The multitude are proclaiming the blessedness of Jesus rather than praying that he might be blessed. 'He that cometh in the name of the Lord' is almost certainly John's meaning, though the Hebrew of Psalm 118:26 should probably be understood as 'Blessed in the name of the Lord is he that comes'. The expression here is a messianic title" (Morris, 585). "In the Midrash on Psalm 118 this line is understood messianically: the one who comes is the Messiah (*Midrash Tehillim* 244a; cf. SB 1. 150)" (D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC, 432).

v. 15 **coming** "When John says that the crowd 'went out to meet him,' this is a common expression used for cities meeting their triumphant, returning king. In a Jewish context 'Hosanna' was used to greet such incoming kings (2 Sam. 14:4; 2 Kings 6:26). In fact, Jewish culture understood these 'royal welcomes' so well that it adopted such forms commonly" (Burge, 341).

v. 15 **donkey's colt** "The ass was not normally used by a warlike person. It was the animal of a man of peace, a priest, a merchant or the like. It might also be used by a person of importance but in connection with peaceable purposes. A conqueror would ride into the city on a war horse, or perhaps march in on foot as the head of his troops. The ass speaks of peace" (Morris, 587).

v. 16 **not understand** "Later John tells us that when the Holy Spirit came He would lead believers into all the truth. In this verse he gives us an example of this. At first the disciples did not understand what these things meant, things which they themselves had done. It was only when Jesus was 'glorified' that they recalled these events and their significance" (587).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

There is a children's book written by Beth Moore called *A Parable about the King*. A young princess decided she didn't want to be a princess anymore. The ordinary children playing in the streets seemed much more appealing to her. One day she snuck out of the castle and began playing with them. Soon she was dirty and acting just like them. A crowd began to gather on the street. The children climbed a tree to see what the commotion was about. It was the King. The kids began to hurl spitballs at him. The princess was horrified. This was her father. The other children just laughed at her and told she was like them, fatherless. Sobbing, the princess ran home. Her father opened the door for her and she fell at his feet asking for forgiveness and claiming she didn't deserve to belong to him. She was just like the other children. He replied, "You may acted like them, but you are not one of them. You are mine, and you will never be happy until you accept both the privilege and responsibility that goes with belonging to me." The King who entered Jerusalem that day is our Father. We belong to Him. While sometimes we may not act like it, we are royalty by His grace. May we live out our identity this week as sons and daughters of the reigning King!

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read John 12:12-19

1. What did the crowds who gathered to see Jesus do when they saw Him?
2. Did the disciples immediately understand what was happening?
3. What did the Pharisees say?

What Do You Think

Look up Zechariah 9:9. This prophecy was written over 500 years before Jesus was born. Jesus fulfilled every prophecy written about Him. How does it make you feel to know that God had a plan to send Jesus from the beginning of time?

What R U Going To Do

Make a crown for everyone in your family. Have your family wear them at dinner one night to remind you that Jesus is our King!

Core Comp

Salvation by Grace - I believe that I become a child of God through faith in Jesus, not because of anything I do.

Memory Verse

Romans 10:9 - That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord", and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed *Scrolls* _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

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30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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