

## Faith to Praise Him in 2010

### John 12:9-36

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 3-27-2010

## Introduction

I love the Scriptures related to Palm Sunday because they show so clearly that Jesus was approaching the cross as a triumphant victor, not a tragic victim. He laid down His life and He took it up again. Palm Sunday highlights His kingship. In fact, when you read the statements of Jesus in these last few chapters of John, you get the distinct impression that He saw Himself as winning the battle. It didn't matter how dark things may have appeared around Him, He was driven by God's predestined plan of triumph, not by the hopeless prognostications of those around him. I think Palm Sunday gives us a message of hope for our own troubled times. And there is plenty to be troubled about, isn't there?

Last weekend Kathy and I went to the Liberty Day conference to advertize both the Providential History Festival and Biblical Blueprints in Illinois. And out in the hallway there were some people who were very discouraged over how bad things are spiritually in America. Much of the church is apostate, liberalism is increasing, liberties are being taken away month by month, the constitution is blatantly ignored, Biblical law is not even understood by Christians, let alone by politicians – on and on. There is much to be discouraged about.

And Paul Jehle (who was in that group) agreed, but he also told the group, "Let me give you some reasons why we can praise God even though things are bad." He said, first, I praise God that Obama won instead of McCain. And when people were taken aback and asked why, he said that Obama has been a tremendous blessing to America because he is so *aggressively* anti-Biblical and so *aggressively* destroying our constitution that even the dullest of Americans beginning to wake up. That might not have happened if McCain had won. We might be going over the same cliff, but going more slowly.

Second, he said that we can praise God that the Health Care bill has been pushed through so quickly. He said that in one sense that is horrible, and scary, and some of these things may very well destroy our nation. But in another sense, it shows God's sovereign hand at work. This insane drive to push things through come hell or high water has made 35 states (and I

© Copyright 2010 by Phillip G. Kayser. Permission is granted to all readers to download, print, and distribute on paper or electronically any Sermons, provided that each reprint bear this copyright notice, current address, and telephone number, and provided that all such reproductions are distributed to the public without charge. They may not be sold or issued in book form, CD-ROM form, or microfiche without prior permission.

Phillip G. Kayser • Dominion Covenant Church • 307.N 41st Ave. Omaha, NE 68131 • 402.934.3300

understand now it is up to 38) so upset that they have passed tenth amendment resolutions, Wyoming's including penalties and jail time for Federal agents. In fact, these states have filed lawsuits. And for the first time in our lifetime, the states as a whole are beginning to educate themselves on interposition. In fact, we may very well get a mass movement of interposition. And this is leading people to realize that we need a higher law to justify interposition, which is making people open to studying Biblical law. Twenty years ago most Americans wouldn't have had any idea about what interposition was. But that is changing thanks to Obama.

For example, he told us about this 600 acre ranch in Nevada that is training sheriffs and police officers not only in how to use weapons effectively, but in first amendment philosophy and how to encourage the arming and training of the citizenry. And it's popular with some police officers because in some states the gun control laws are so stringent that police officers can't even train in a decent range. And so they are going to this acreage. And the people running the acreage have been wining and dining liberal media and exposing them to these sheriffs and to this training. And as a result, many of these media celebrities have stopped writing against gun ownership. He said that none of that would have happened if it hadn't been for Obama, Pelosie, and the brazen arrogance of both Republican and Democratic liberals. He told us not to get too excited about that, because until the church wakes up, this will only be a token movement. But it is giving opportunities for education.

But he said that we can thank God thirdly that many Christians are beginning to wake up and are beginning to understand the Biblical and constitutional issues for the first time in their lifetime. He has been amazed at the number of people who want to be discipled and who want to study biblical law. He said that there is an accelerating interest in Biblical law.

He said we can be thankful fourthly, that some Christians in influential positions are beginning to study good materials and are changing. For example, some of you were pretty discouraged over Chuck Norris' support of Huckabee in the last election. And you were wondering how he could overlook so much socialism in that candidate. But he told us the story of how Chuck Norris has recently been discipled into a more Biblical worldview and has embraced a strict constitutionalism, and actually likes Ron Paul. It was a case of meeting the right person at the right time. The actor, Kirk Cameron has been recently discipled into a more Biblical understanding of politics, and both of these men are having a huge impact on their fans.

I won't go on, but he kept sharing story after story of why God's judgment is beginning to wake people up and has the potential of turning things around. Only God knows what will result. And I can guarantee you that apart from a deep-seated repentance on the part of the church, there won't be a relenting of judgment. But frequently God's judgments are redemptive. That's why theologians call them redemptive judgments.

Well, by the time he was finished, this group still had a realistic picture of the horrible idolatry and sin that must be confronted in America, but they had a renewed respect for God's power to change things if He so ordains. And I really believe that is the purpose of Palm Sunday. It is to keep people from trusting in the fickleness of politics and the opinions of the populace, but at the same time it is intended to make everyone aware that Jesus is destined to triumph over all enemies and to be acknowledged by all as King of kings and Lord of lords.

I think that you would have to admit that from a human perspective, chapter 12 is one of those times when praise and thanksgiving seems a little out of place. The timing is tense. The apostasy is great. Danger is everywhere. In the previous chapter, verse 7, when Jesus said, **“Let us go to Judea again.” The disciples said to Him, ‘Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?’**” When He says, “Yes.” They say, **“Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”** So that gives a bit of a feel for what they are sensing all around them. Evil seems to be triumphing.

And there are other things that bring sadness. The Pharisees not only conspired to kill Jesus, but in verse 10, they conspired to kill Lazarus as well. Lazarus' resurrection is an embarrassment to their viewpoint, and like some politicians today, they decide to squash the evidence rather than to submit to the evidence. It is a deliberate trampling of the truth into the mud. They can't refute the fact that Lazarus had been raised from the dead after stinking for days, so what do they do? They get rid of the evidence. There is a lot to be discouraged about, and yet verses 12-19 indicate that Palm Sunday is pre-eminently a day of praise, singing and thanksgiving. When the Pharisees wanted to keep the kids from singing, Jesus said, **“I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.”** What is there about these events that demands such praise? Well, there are at least four things:

- I. Palm Sunday Is Christ's Promise To Bring Blessing To The Whole World (Praise God!)

A. The Jews Who Welcome Christ Are Predominantly Pilgrims From Around The World (v. 12)

John's first reason for rejoicing is eschatology: the doctrine of the future. And eschatology is written all over this chapter. Let me give you a quick listing of some of the hints of the worldwide triumph of the Gospel.

First, most of the crowd in verse 12 was made up of Jewish pilgrims from around the world. Josephus tells us that huge crowds of pilgrims came from every nation in the world and converged upon Jerusalem at Passover time, numbering between 2.5 and 5 million visitors. What an awesome picture this would have been of people from every nation singing praises to the King of Israel. I'd get excited! But that was just a tiny foretaste of God's worldwide purposes for Christ's kingdom.

B. Prophecy Ties Palm Sunday With A World-Wide Kingdom (v. 15 with Zech. 9:9-10)

A second testimony of God's worldwide blessing can be seen in verse 15. Jesus knows why He is sitting on that donkey, but John makes it explicit to his readers. This is a fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9-10, which predicted that even though Israel would be punished, the Gospel would successfully go to the whole world. Let me read you the whole passage from the Old Testament. It says, **“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. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem [this is speaking of God's War against Jerusalem]; the battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.”** That's the theme verse for our church – He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of earth. That's an eschatology of hope.

Now it may not have looked like Christ would triumph over the Pharisees and bring peace to the end of the world, but by faith they could believe it, and praise Him because of it. Bojidar shared with us two weeks ago that even in Europe, the graveyard of missionaries, there are exciting things happening. He spoke of the spiritual hunger for answers to life's problems, one conference bringing 400,000 people to attend.

C. The Pharisees Fear That They Have Lost The World To Christ (v. 19)

A third proof that Christ was entering Palm Sunday with a confidence in His victory, is that verse 19 shows fear of Christ. **“The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, ‘You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!’”** Despite all their

strategies to put an end to this movement, it wasn't working. John does not include that comment by accident. **“Look, the world has gone after Him!”** It's a foretaste of things to come. Though the humanism of the Pharisees looked unstoppable to many, John by the eye of faith could see that it was really the world that was being conquered.

Do you have Christ's faith, or are you ready to give up because things are so bad? I have an audiotape that was given to me by a friend who joined the American Humanist Association. He just joined to be a spy, and he had the tape recorder under his jacket. And it's fascinating. In that tape the speaker outlined their strategy for neutralizing Christianity. And I found it so humorous that they were scared to death of Reconstructionists like us. The speaker said that he had never been concerned about the Moral Majority, and rightly predicted that it would eventually peter out. They weren't too worried about broad evangelicalism, because they said that evangelicalism was already so compromised that they were not a threat. He knew that evangelicalism's pessimism concerning the future would keep the church from long-term efforts to overthrow their plans. But the bulk of the speech was highlighting the most dangerous group in America. And guess who their most dangerous group was. It was a small group of people called Reconstructionists. And you might laugh at that because we seem like such a tiny minority. But he considered us to be a threat for four reasons:

First, we had early American history on our side. And I find that a fascinating admission. When you look at the laws of virtually every New England colony and later of those states, and you realize that these guys were hard core Reconstructionists. They applied the Bible to politics. So the lecturer warned them that Reconstructionists had American history to bank on.

Second, he warned the audience that Reconstructionists were strangely unapologetic about any portion of the Bible. It mystified him. You bring up slavery and they don't apologize for it. They say, “Yeah. It's a better penalty than prison. It retrains the criminal in responsibility.” If you bring up the execution of kids in the Old Testament, the Reconstructionists say, “Oh yeah. That's a perfect answer to gang violence.” His point was that they couldn't embarrass us by quoting Old Testament law. They were used to embarrassing other evangelicals by asking questions like that. “Oh, so you believe in executing homosexuals.” They knew that these tactics would put your average evangelical to silence. But Reconstructionists would say, “Amen! Next question?” So they were a bit frustrated that they couldn't embarrass us with the Bible like they do everybody else. We embrace the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible.

He said that the third thing that made us dangerous is that we have an eschatology that gave us persevering enthusiasm because we believe that we are destined to win. They said that anyone who has that viewpoint will never give up. He said that postmillennialists were dangerous.

And fourth, he said that we were dangerous because we were actually applying the Bible to every discipline of life, and not just treating it as a theoretical concept. The tape said that unless Reconstructionism was vilified and destroyed in the media, the courts, in the church, and every other forum that they had access to, that we had the capability of turning the nation around and undoing everything they had done in the last hundred years. And what was so humorous to me was that they were scared to death of us (a tiny minority), and we Christians are scared to death of them. It's a matter of perspective. And Christ's perspective was, "It doesn't matter how grim things might look folks, we've got reason to praise God for His future victory." Amen?

D. Greeks Come To Christ (vs. 20-22)

Nor is it accidental that in the very next verse John gives a little tid-bit of information that might otherwise have been lost. Verses 20-22 give a fourth hint of this worldwide intention of the cross. It says, "**Now there were certain Greeks [interesting! There were certain Greeks] among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, 'Sir we wish to see Jesus.'**" In a very real sense the world was going after Jesus. Here were Gentiles who wanted to see Jesus. And what began then continues to grow to this day with official estimates of evangelical Christians numbering somewhere between one billion and one and a half billion people. Is that not reason to praise God? Yes there is persecution, and yes there is sadness, just as there was sadness on that first Palm Sunday, but it should never shut our eyes to the worldwide victory of the Lord.

E. The Time Has Approached For Christ To Be Glorified (v. 23-33)

John continues to spin out this theme in the remaining verses. He speaks of Jesus' glory in verses 23-33. Verse 23: "**But Jesus answer them, saying, 'The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.'**" The hour of Christ's glory has not been postponed, as so many Christians think. Christ does not separate His sufferings by 2000 years from His glory. His glory was entered into because of His sufferings. 1Peter 1:11 speaks of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. The glory of Christ is being exalted more and more in the world. We call this an eschatology of victory. If the whole church would embrace this eschatology,

it would have faith to expect great things from God and to attempt great things for Him. You can tell that I get excited about this.

F. Much Grain Will Be Harvested (v. 24,32)

In verse 24 Christ gives a sixth reason in the face of death why there is much to praise God. And that is that much grain will be harvested. It is through dying that He brings in the great harvest. **“Most assuredly I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.”** And much grain is what Christ promises for the future. Verse 32 says, **“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.’ This He said, signifying by what death He would die.”** The eschatology of John 12 was designed to stir up faith and encourage people to be a praising people even in the midst of difficulty. What does Romans 8 say? It says that not even tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword can keep the church from being more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

G. Father Promises That Christ Will Be Glorified (v. 28)

In verse 28, even the *Father* speaks with a thunderous voice from heaven saying, **“I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.”** God the Father is backing up His Son.

H. Satan’s Defeat Is Declared & The World Is Captured From Him (v. 31)

Eighth, Satan’s total defeat is also prophesied in verse 31. **“Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”** We have to get it into our heads that God brings triumph out of the jaws of defeat; He manifests His strength in our weakness. It’s a good thing that the situation in America is spiraling out of control. We don’t want humanism to be blessed. And this increasing judgment will force Christians to start looking for a supernatural repentance such as happened at Nineveh, and a supernatural restoration. But the point of this verse is that Jesus does not begin the reversal of history at the Second Coming. He begins to cast Satan out of his territories starting at the cross. It was through Christ’s death and resurrection that He brought life and immortality to light. The cross of Jesus Christ is all the power we need to conquer Satan. It guaranteed Satan’s defeat and it guaranteed the capture of the world from his hands. And that same blood of Christ continues to be used by Christ’s people to overcome Satan today. It says in Revelation 12 that God’s people *resisted* the dragon, **“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony...”**

Now here’s the problem. Most Christians in America no longer believe that God judges in history. Thus they no longer use the imprecatory

psalms, and they no longer ask for God's judgments. They no longer believe in Deuteronomy 28 blessings and cursings. They relegate all such things to either the Old Testament or to the Second Coming. No wonder we don't have victories – we aren't using His tools.

The reason the church of the first few centuries won victory after victory was because they took this verse seriously. They took Christ's judgments seriously. They took nation discipling seriously. They took spiritual warfare seriously. They *really* believed that greater is he who is in us than he who is in the world. You read Athanasius's descriptions of the triumphal march of the church, the terror of demons, and you begin to realize that the church took Christ's present victory very seriously, which means that they understood Palm Sunday. Let me give you a tiny snippet of insight into the constant judgments that Jesus brought against Roman emperors and magistrates because the church took the imprecatory psalms seriously. Certainly there was persecution; but there were also judgments. In his commentary on the Psalms, W.S. Plumer said,

“It is easy for God to destroy His foes... Behold Pharaoh, his wise men, his hosts and his horses, ploughing and plunging, and sinking like lead in the Red Sea... Of thirty Roman Emperors, governors of provinces and others high in office, who distinguished themselves by their zeal and bitterness in persecuting the early Christians, one became speedily deranged after some atrocious cruelty, one was slain by his own son, one became blind, the eyes of one started out of his head, one was drowned, one was strangled, one died in a miserable captivity, one fell dead in a manner that will not bear recital, one died of so loathsome a disease that several of his physicians were put to death because they could not abide the stench that filled his room, two committed suicide, a third attempted it, but had to call for help to finish the work, five were assassinated by their own people or servants, five others died the most miserable and excruciating deaths, several of them having an untold complication of diseases, and eight were killed in battle or after being taken prisoners. Among these was Julian the apostate. In the days of his prosperity he is said to have pointed his dagger to heaven defying the Son of God, whom he commonly called the Galilean. But when he was wounded in battle, he saw that all was over with him, and he gathered up his clotted blood, and threw it into the air, exclaiming, ‘Thou hast conquered, O thou Galilean.’ Voltaire has told us of the agonies of Charles IX of France, which drove the blood through the pores of the skin of that miserable monarch, after his cruelties and treachery to the Huguenots

When Jesus says, “**Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out**”, he is saying that judgments come in history. That means that there is no reason why we cannot come into agreement with Christ's prayers against His and our enemies as they are recorded for us in the Psalms. There is no reason why the enemies of Christ in America cannot face the same types of supernatural judgments if we will start asking God to judge them. There is no reason to let the humanists have victory if the church will once again take seriously the promises and statements of these verses. So to repeat again, verse 31 says, “**Now is the**



**judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”** Do you believe that?

I. Drawing All Peoples To Himself (v. 32)

But there is one more hint of a victorious eschatology. And that is the statement in verse 32: **“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.”** When Christ rode into Jerusalem as King, it wasn't an empty gesture. With that royal entrance comes predictions of a complete conquest of the world. This is the joy set before Him that enabled Him to endure the cross. And this is the joy that God's Word sets before us to help us to endure the opposition. People don't like to suffer and die for a Vietnam type of a war where winning is not an option. But that is the hopeless eschatology of so many Christians – winning is not an option for them. People have suffered and died willingly and joyfully for causes that were good and were victorious. But we want to know that our sufferings are not in vain. And so Paul's promise in 1 Corinthians 15 is **“be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”** This is the incredible vision for the future that can give us reason to rejoice and praise. And I have spent most of my time on this first point because this is a point that is being vigorously denied in even Reformed churches.

If you are a pessimillennialist; if you are expecting defeat at the hands of the humanists, then you are not able to fully enter into the rejoicing that is found on Palm Sunday. You may be able to rejoice in points II, III and IV (praise God). But point I should not be neglected. Christ is reigning now! He has already ridden into Jerusalem as the Prince of Peace and we are not waiting for Him to ride into Jerusalem at some future time. Praise God for the victory! Praise God for Paul's promise that the God of peace would crush Satan under their feet shortly! And He did exactly that in Rome as Rome crumbled to the Gospel. Praise God for Christ's promise that He will build His church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it – which means that those gates will be broken down and smashed to smithereens! That's the essence of that promise in Matthew. Praise God that we have a future and a hope! Amen? Without hope it is tough to praise God. But our God is the God of all hope.

II. God Is In Total Control of History - references to the timing of all these events in vv1,7,12,23,27, etc.

A second anchor for faith that enables us to praise God in even the most difficult of circumstances is the doctrine of predestination and God's total control over every phase of history. It's what gives meaning to history.

One of the things that you will find all through the Gospels is the word “must” or “needed” or “necessary.” Those are all translations of the Greek word *dei*, and theologians speak of the divine *dei* as being God’s destiny that controlled every hour of Christ’s time. **He needed to go through Samaria** says John 4:4. Luke 13:33 says, **“Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.”** Mark 8:31 says, **“He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.”** One of the things that you will notice all through the Passion Week is the preoccupation with the details of timing. Verse 1 speaks of six days before Passover; several verses speak of the plot to put Jesus to death either before the Passover or after it. And Mark 14:2 explains why. It says that the Pharisees didn’t want a confrontation with Christ during the Passover. And you can see why. They didn’t want to risk a riot with five million Jews. But Jesus had to be crucified not only on exactly the right day, but also at exactly the right hour. Verse 27 speaks of the hour that He should be glorified and 13:1 speaks of the hour that He should leave the world. Everything about that week was perfectly timed. Let me just give you a few of the major events that were timed so perfectly.

The anointing with oil of verses 3 through 7 was on the very day when Passover lambs were marked out and consecrated for death. And if you look at verse 7 you will see that this anointing was for his burial. He was marked for death with that anointing at the very time that temple lambs were marked for death.

Those lambs were later taken from the fields of Bethlehem and herded through the streets of Jerusalem, not at this point to be slaughtered, but to be brought to the temple priests who would later slaughter them. That’s the day that Jesus goes to the temple and confronts the priests who will later slaughter Him. Josephus calculated the number of lambs that were herded through the streets in his day to be 256,500. And these 256,000 lambs were being moved through the streets of Jerusalem toward the temple on Palm Sunday as Jesus walked toward that same temple to cleanse it. And when you picture the Lamb of God walking in the midst of those 256,000 lambs, it gives added meaning to the emotion in Christ’s words when he talks about his death in John 12 while walking there. He was fulfilling prophecy in perfect synchronization with the festival rituals.

We will skip over some events, but there is significance to the timing when Christ was nailed to the cross, as well as the darkness from noon to

three o'clock, the three hours of darkness. I've talked about some of those things in another sermon. They show God's marvelous sovereign control. Those were the three hours when preparations would have been made to slaughter all the lambs. God made such preparation in the temple absolutely impossible with the three hours of darkness because He was the true and the final Passover Lamb, and it would have been inappropriate to allow any competition. It must have been a frustrating thing in the temple to have the lights go out with a thick darkness at the very hour when they needed to prepare the lambs. God wanted men's attention focused on what was happening at Calvary.

At the moment that temple lambs would have been slain (if they could have been), Christ died. At the moment that priests would have entered the Holy Place, the earthquake came and the temple veil was torn from top to bottom. And so all of the people who would have been trapped where they had gathered at the temple, because it was too dark to go home, would have noticed as soon as the lights came on that they could see into the Holy of Holies for the first time.

I'll skip over some events and just mention the resurrection, which occurred on the festival of Firstfruits. You have Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, and then 50 days later, but still tied thematically in, is Pentecost. Firstfruits was the day when a token harvest of grain was offered up to the Lord as a symbol of the resurrection of Christ and the saints with Him. But preparation for that began the evening before Jesus was crucified. The elders went out and marked the spot that was to be harvested by binding together the standing grain with a rope. The Jewish scholar, Edersheim, points out that that was the night that Jesus was bound by the elders of Israel. Guess where the grain was bound? Outside Jerusalem over the brook Kidron. Guess where Jesus was bound? Outside Jerusalem over the brook Kidron in a Garden called Gethsemane, which would have bordered the very field where the grain was symbolically bound. So the grain was bound on the evening that Jesus was bound.

Guess when the grain was cut down? It was the next evening when Christ was taken off the cross.

And Edersheim points out that the basket of grain would be carried away from that spot at the very time and close to the spot when and where Christ was carried to His tomb.

And the grain stayed in that omer basket for three days and three nights just as Christ stayed in the tomb.

And on the same day that it was taken out, beaten, purified and offered up to the Lord, Jesus in a glorified body rose from the grave, and many Old Testament saints with Him. They were part of that firstfruits resurrection. There are all kinds of neat parallels that are found in God's Old Testament festivals.

And all of those things show that this was no accident. This was no tragedy. This was something planned from the foundation of the world, and nothing in the world would be able to stop it. The Pharisees tried. They tried. Mark 14:2 says, **“After two days it was the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put Him to death. But they said, ‘Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people.’”** They didn't want it during the feast, yet their hand was forced, and the day and the hour that Christ's whole life was being prepared for happened according to plan.

And let me tell you that we can still rejoice that God's perfect plan that worked in, around, and even through the sinful actions and hate of His enemies back then can continue to work in, around and even through the actions of His enemies now. We can trust the Lord's timing, and we can trust His total control of History. He is, after all, the Lord of History. And if you doubt it, read the book of Esther sometime. It is a glorious testimony to God's ability to make even the wrath of man to praise Him. And I started this sermon by sharing some of the ways in which the wrath of evil men in Washington is praising Him. It's true that things got worse in Esther before they got better, but that was because the church was carnal and sold under sin. God used His enemies to bring such stress into the lives of the backslidden Jews that they came to repentance and God brought victory out of ashes. Praise Jesus! Palm Sunday has a message of hope.

### III. Christ Was Actually Willing To Be Our King Despite Our Rebellion & Ignorance (Praise God!)

#### A. Christ Implies It

1. The Donkey Was The Animal Of Choice For A King's Peaceful Entry (Judges 10:4; 12:14; 2 Sam. 16:2; cf. mules in 2 Sam. 13:29; 18:9; 1 King. 1:33,34)

The third major reason why we ought to praise Him is because Jesus offered peace by riding on a donkey and didn't bring judgment for another forty years. In other words, He was willing to be their King despite their rebellion and ignorance. And He is willing to be our King if we will repent.

In light of our failures, this is amazing. Think about it in light of how God dealt with people in the past. When Moses came down from mount Sinai and found that Israel had sinned against God again, God said, **“I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.”** He’s testing Moses. Will you bail from My plan? God was offering to wipe them off the face of the map, and Moses interceded for them. But consider God’s reasons for wanting to destroy them in the wilderness. Are they any different than us? They thought Moses was not coming down and they gave up waiting for God. How often have we abandoned our calling because we are tired of waiting for God? God could rightly wipe us out, yet Jesus, the second Moses, intercedes on our behalf and He is willing to rule over us. Praise God.

God wanted to wipe out Israel because of their stubbornness and their grumbling. What makes Christ want to continue to be our king when we do the same thing? They were ignorant of God’s clear teaching, and how many of us are slow of heart and slow to study the Scriptures? Verse 16 says, **“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.”**

The incredible love of Christ can be seen in His willingness to rule over us. I mean, think of Moses. Moses didn't want Israel wiped out, but he didn't want to rule over them either. At one point he complained to God, **“Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that you put the burden of these people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land you promised on oath to their forefathers? Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, ‘Give us meat to eat!’ I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how you are going to treat me, put me to death right now - if I have found favor in your eyes - and do not let me face my own ruin.”** Aren't you glad that Jesus didn't take that option? Aren't you glad that Jesus doesn't see you as a burden too heavy to bear?

When you examine your hearts and realize the depths of depravity that we have it is an amazing thing that Christ would want to be our king. Yet there He is, willing to receive the title, “King of Israel” in verse 13, and riding a donkey in verse 14. The donkey was the animal that kings rode for their coronation. It was a symbol of peace. If Christ had come in on a

stallion it would have been a symbol of war. And indeed in Revelation Christ is pictured as riding a stallion when He destroys apostate Israel. But here he comes with peace to those who deserve warfare. In fact, the three prophecies that are alluded to by John all deal with Christ's forgiveness and salvation. Great reason to praise Him!

2. Jerusalem Was The Capitol Of The World (Lam. 2:15),  
The City Of The Great King (Ps. 48:2), The Throne Of  
Jehovah (Jer. 3:17)

B. Prophecy Declares That Christ Will Rule Over These Sinners  
(vs. 13 ("King of Israel"), 15 ("Fear not...Behold your King...")  
with Psalm 118:25-26; Is. 62:11; Zech. 9:9-10)

If you are ever depressed and need reason for joy, meditate on the fact that you aren't a burden to the Lord. Rejoice in the fact that He is willing to rule over the likes of us; He cares for us; He rejoices over His people. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Praise be to Your name, Father! Thank you Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

IV. Christ Was Actually Willing To Die For Us Despite Our Rebellion & Ignorance (Praise God!)

A. Both Passages Quoted In John Tie The Triumphal Entry In  
With The Crucifixion

1. Psalm 118:27 "Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns  
of the altar. You are My God."

A last anchor for our faith is this King's love for us. He loved us so much that He was willing to die for us. And so it is a sacrificial rule. And this passage speaks of that great, great sacrifice that He was willing to make. Speaking of Christ's first coming, Psalm 118 says, "**Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD;** [If you look at verse 13 you will recognize that this Psalm was being sung by the pilgrims in praise of Jesus. But the Psalm goes on to say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD"] **we have blessed you from the house of the LORD. The LORD is God, and He has given us light; bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar. You are my God, and I will praise You; You are my God, I will exalt You. Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.**" Psalm 118 wants the time that this Lamb was taken and tied to the horns of the altar to be a time of rejoicing. And it is a time of rejoicing because it speaks of God's incredible mercy and love. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Christ so loved the world that He died to save it. And He will save it. There is coming a time when all rebels will be cast out and this will be a world in which dwells

righteousness. So His sacrifice will accomplish all that it came to accomplish.

2. Zech. 9:11 - "Because of the blood of your covenant, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit."

Another passage which prophesied Palm Sunday and is quoted in verse 15 is Zechariah 9:9. Zechariah 9 records Jesus coming on the colt of a donkey into Jerusalem and then says, "**As for you also, because of the blood of the covenant, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. Return to the stronghold, you prisoners of hope. Even today I declare that I will restore double to you.**" Christ's atonement; His sacrifice was what was being celebrated unwittingly by these people crying out these Scriptures of praise. But when you think about it, this is one of the highest reasons why any Christian should be able to be a praising people. No matter how bad your life is, it is better than being in hell - what this passage calls the waterless pit. No matter how bad our lives are, we can praise God for at least that.

### **Conclusion**

If you go through life with little reason to praise God, you may want to walk your way backwards through those four points. You may want to ask yourself if you are saved. Every believer has a reason to praise God. And if you are not yet a believer, think of what a miserable existence you will have in hell, eternally separated from His presence. You will not be able to say that you had no opportunity to trust in Jesus. God will point to this very message and say, "You heard the Gospel, but you failed to embrace it. Depart from Me." You see, Jesus came to give His life a ransom for many. Who were we ransomed from? It wasn't from Satan. It was from the justice of an angry God. Zechariah 9 makes it clear that we were prisoners of God condemned to hell, but rescued by His mercy. And all it takes is an unconditional surrender to Jesus Christ, believing that He paid the penalty for your sins and casting your sins upon Him and receiving His righteousness for yourself. That's the heart of the Gospel.

But if you *are* a believer and *still see no reason to praise God*, then you might consider that the problem may be one of the other three points. It may be that you are resisting His rule in your life. That leads to misery, not joy. Satan wants us to believe that doing things our way will make us happy, but it does not. Total submission to Christ's Kingship is the way to full joy.

Or it may be that you lack a trust in Romans 8:28 – that all things work together for good to those who love God. If He could control every detail of the worst sin in history – the crucifixion, you can trust Him to take the evil that people do against you, and work it together for your good. A

trust in His predestinating sovereignty can enable you to have faith to praise Him in even those difficult circumstances.

Or it may be that you lack the first point - a positive vision for the future. God's promises for our personal future are great. He says, "**If God is for us, who can be against us?**" That gives you a personal eschatology. He says, "**For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.**" He promises, "**He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.**" Do you believe God's eschatology for your individual life? His promises mean that your future is bright.

But God's promises for the world are also bright. He promises, "**Of the increase of His kingdom and of peace there will be no end.**" That gives you realism and faith. It gives realism because there will always be some evil that Christ needs to keep conquering. So He isn't promising a Pauliana type of optimism. He is realistic. But those promises also give you faith to expect great things from God and to attempt great things for God. May we find these four anchors for faith to be great reason to praise God today. Amen.



**Faith to Praise Him in 2010**

John 12:9-36

Intro:

What are some evidences of God's working in the face of appalling apostasy in America?

I. First Reason to Praise Jesus: **Eschatology**. Jesus rules over the future. Palm Sunday was Christ's promise to bring blessing to the whole world through His death, resurrection, and ascension.

A. The Jews that welcomed Jesus were predominantly pilgrims from around the world (v. 12)

B. Which prophecy ties the donkey (v. 15) with the promise of worldwide conquest of Christ's kingdom?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 9:9-10

C. What do the Pharisees fear Christ will gain (v. 19)? The \_\_\_\_\_. What group of Christians is the American Humanist Association most afraid of today? R \_\_\_\_\_. What are some reasons one humanist leader said that they are a danger to humanism?

1. American history is \_\_\_\_\_.

2. They don't apologize for \_\_\_\_\_.

3. They have an \_\_\_\_\_ that gives "enthusiasm."

4. \_\_\_\_\_

What did this humanist recommend that other humanists do to these consistent Christians?

How is this parallel to what the Pharisees wanted to do?

D. What nationality comes to Jesus in verses 20-22? \_\_\_\_\_

E. Christ promised that the time was approaching for Him to be g \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 23-33)

F. What encouraging thing happens after grain dies (v. 24)? \_\_\_\_\_

G. What promise does the Father give (v. 28)? \_\_\_\_\_

H. What happens to prince Satan in verse 31? \_\_\_\_\_

1. What did the early church do on the basis of this promise? They prayed for j \_\_\_\_\_.

2. How did God respond in the lives of various emperors and rulers?

I. How many people groups will be drawn to Christ as a result of His death (v. 32)? \_\_\_\_\_

II. The Second Reason to Praise Jesus: **Providence**. Jesus controls every detail of history (vv. 1,7,12,23,27, 4:4; Luke 13:33; Mark 8:31; 14:2; etc)

Give a few examples of God's providence of the tiniest details of Christ's passion week.

Can you trust His providence in the details of our modern living?

III. The Third Reason to Praise Jesus: **Mercy**. Christ offers terms of peace and shows great patience in the face of appalling apostasy.

List three reasons why God had the right to wipe out the Israelites under Moses:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are we any different than they were?

What animal would a king come on to declare peace (Judges 10:4; 12:14; 2 Sam. 16:2; cf. mules in 2 Sam. 13:29; 18:9; 1 King. 1:33,34)? \_\_\_\_\_.

What animal would a king come on to declare war? \_\_\_\_\_.

What is implied about His relation to us?

Palm Sunday Scriptures that indicate God's rule: (vs. 13 ("King of Israel"), 15 ("Fear not...Behold your King...")) with

Psalm 118:25-26; Is. 62:11; Zech. 9:9-10.

IV. The Fourth Reason to Praise Jesus: **Sacrifice**. Christ Laid Down His Life For Us.

A. Read Matthew 26:2-5. What feast were the Pharisees trying to avoid any confrontation with Jesus?

\_\_\_\_\_ During what feast day did Jesus deliberately start a confrontation?

\_\_\_\_\_ Read Mark 14:2 and write down why it was imperative that Jesus be killed on that day. \_\_\_\_\_

B. He came on Sunday, Nisan 10, the time when more than 250,000 \_\_\_\_\_ were brought from Bethlehem to Jerusalem to be examined by the priests.

C. Both Old Testament Scriptures that the people quoted in John 12 show that Jesus wanted to die for His people.

Write down the references that show this:

1. Psalm \_\_\_\_\_

2. Zech. \_\_\_\_\_

How has this sermon changed your perspective about Palm Sunday?