

Week 27

God's Audible Voice

John 12

Last time we studied the event the Christian church celebrates as Palm Sunday. We said John gave the briefest description of this, and it is interesting to read the other gospel accounts for more detail. Don't ever think that because the writers described Palm Sunday differently there is error in the bible, NO, it is because each adds his perspective and by studying all the accounts we can get the full picture.

Matthew told us in 21:10-24 all the people were stirred by the events of Jesus entry into Jerusalem and asking Who He was. Matthew also told us that Jesus went to the temple threw out the moneychangers and merchants and then he told how the blind and lame came to in the Temple and were healed. However, Jesus was openly opposed by the Chief Priests (there was supposed to be only one chief priest a descendent of Aaron, but obviously there was more than one) and so He returned to Bethany.

Mark simply tells us Jesus went to the Temple and then left for Bethany. Mark is the gospel of expediency; he was a man of few words.

Dr. Luke was a man of amazing observation skills and attention to detail. Luke 19:41-48 tells us as He approached Jerusalem in all the shouting and praising God, Jesus was weeping. Why? He told us, it was because He knew what was coming, the terrible suffering, starvation and loss coming in just a few short years as Jerusalem fell for the last time in 70 AD. He said as He entered 'if only you had known the things that make for peace', what things? Accepting Jesus as their Messiah would have ushered peace into Jerusalem. But they had refused Him and now there was no chance because God had sovereignly hidden the truth from them. And isn't peace what has eluded Jerusalem for as long as you can remember? After entering Jerusalem Jesus went to the Temple and for the second time drove out those who were buying and selling. We discussed the first episode of Jesus cleansing the temple and said that all this commerce; buying and selling was happening in the court of the Gentiles making it impossible to worship there. Think about this; here was the place where

all who were not Jewish could come in and worship God. There were around 3 million people in Jerusalem at Passover. Don't you think some of these were "God fearers" as the Jews called the Gentiles who were believers? What a perversion of God's plan, because of the love of money.

I might add that the bible says when the Antichrist arrives on the scene with a treaty of peace for Jerusalem; they will believe him to be the Messiah and that he is bring them peace. Just think about all the ways Jewish people have tried to make peace in Jerusalem in the last 60 years since they became a nation again.

John 12:27

John did not record Jesus' agony in the Garden prior to His crucifixion but this verse tells how troubled He was as His hour approached. He was human enough to genuinely dread the suffering he knew was coming. But not only had He felt the burden of mankind's sin pressing in on Him. The weight of the guilt of the world imputed upon Him caused Him to be troubled. Friends, our sin was really laid on Him and carried by Him and His righteousness is really available for us.

John 12:28-29

Jesus knew His purpose on earth was to glorify the Father. Again this word "glorify" the Greek word "doxazo" here means to praise, to honor, to clothe with splendor, to cause the worth of someone to be acknowledged, to give correct opinion. Jesus gave us the correct opinion or image of God the Father.

The Father's voice was audible but not heard correctly by the crowd. It must have been very loud, think of thunder as some described it. Obviously John heard and understood what was said and Who said it. Even though there was not agreement on what happened they all knew there was some extraordinary noise that had occurred. There were two other times the voice from heaven was heard, at Jesus baptism (Matt 3:17) and at His transfiguration (Matt 17:5) On both previous occasions God had said, "This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased". What further proof do we need that Jesus is divine?

God said He had glorified His Name before, He had given His beloved Son in incarnation to the world and He would glorify His Name through the obedience of His Son. To see and know the Son would help us correctly identify the Father.

John 12:31-33

When Jesus talks about the ruler of this world He is referring to Satan. Up until the time of Jesus redeeming work the entire world was under Satan's dominion. Jesus is saying, "By My vicarious death as man's Redeemer on the cross, Satan will be dethroned from his dominion over mankind". The head of the serpent will be bruised as God had promised in the Garden of Eden, Genesis 3:15. Satan was not entirely kicked out of this world, as he will be when Jesus returns but the spell was broken, his uncontested power was diminished. Here Jesus is showing us the reality of Satan's power. You don't believe in Satan you say, are you going to call Jesus a liar? Satan is not a guy in red pajamas, he is real, Peter says he is like a roaring lion seeking to devour.

Jesus had come to ultimately destroy the works of Satan. That final work of Satan was death and when Jesus rose from the dead Satan and death were defeated. Jesus' victory secured the redemption of man's soul from the power of sin and the devil.

Jesus was lifted up on the cross as He had predicted at the beginning of His ministry. But also we know the cross had the effect on all mankind of drawing us to Jesus. Jesus is our sinless Substitute and the Sacrifice for our sins, and He is even now drawing men, women and children from every nation to believe on Him and be saved. This prophecy by Jesus has been being fulfilled for over 2000 years as He has drawn to Himself, like a magnet, people from all over the world. Have you ever felt the drawing power of Jesus on your heart and soul? I urge you, do not resist, come to Him.

John 12:34

Friends, Psalm 72:17 and other references say that the Messiah would live and reign forever. They could not understand why this One they were waving Palm branches for would talk about being lifted up, or dying. So they were saying is the Son of Man someone different from the Messiah?

Evidently they forgot Isaiah had said, "Messiah would be brought as a Lamb to slaughter" Isaiah 53:7 and Daniel 9:26 said the Messiah would be cut off. Friends, just as these were slow to see and believe Jesus and His first Advent, so now many find it difficult to believe He is coming again.

John 12:35-36

This is Jesus answer to their question; the Light I bring to you is soon going to be gone. Remember John told us in Chapter 1:3 and 4, "in Him was Life and that Life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it". The time for doing good in the world is short. Had they not seen and heard all His miracles and teachings, what more proof did they need? Friends are you using your talent and influence to share the truth of Who Jesus is and what He has done? Do you have a bible? Take time to read it. Walk in the light while it is here. Walk tells us of activity, there was no time then to be idle and indifferent there is no time now. Those who did not take the opportunity to walk in Jesus' light were soon not able to see Him anymore, He hid Himself from them.

And now there is a break between these events of verse 36 and verse 37.

John 12:37-38

We should never be surprised at the unbelief of those around us from what we hear from these people. Someone has said, "man's obstinate unbelief is one more indirect proof the Bible is true". It was not because Isaiah prophesied that they said this, we could say, by this unbelief the prophesy of Isaiah was fulfilled. These verses being the remarkable 53rd chapter of Isaiah and are saying nobody believes our report. The unbelief of the Jews was clearly foretold as well as the suffering of the Messiah.

Speaking of the "arm of the Lord" is referring to His power. This would be the same as saying, "To whom is the Lord's power in raising up a Redeemer as an atoning sacrifice revealed?" That is who has received the revelation of the Lord's power? The Jews did not believe Jesus was the Messiah and John comments that Isaiah had told us a long time ago the Jews would not believe. Isaiah said the persistent unbelief of Israel and their rejection of Jesus would be used to open the door to Gentiles.

John 12:39-41

Man lost the power to believe because he is under the power of his hard heart. This is like Jesus saying, "No man will come to me unless he is drawn". Friends, the truth is our hearts are too hard and our conscience is corrupted to the point where we have no ability to believe unless Jesus reveals Himself to us. But cry out to Him for help, ask Him for mercy and you will be drawn. I often use this scripture when praying for the lost in that I ask God to "open blind eyes and soften hard hearts that they can perceive the truth"

John 12:42-43

Just think about what John is saying here. These leaders had some kind of faith but they were afraid to say it because the Pharisees would expel them from the synagogue. They kept their faith private or secret. Do you think this pleases God? Do you keep your faith a secret because you are afraid of what people will say? Are you silent when you should speak up? I will confess that there have been times when I should have spoken up for Christ and I did not, I was just too cowardly to be honest and I am ashamed of that. I hate the thought that I would prefer the approval of other people rather or more than God's approval. But what else can you call it? Just like these Jewish people who didn't want to be ridiculed, laughed at or persecuted by their peers, they wanted praise instead so they went along with the crowd. Always a dangerous choice.

Pray for God to give you strength, doesn't He warn us all the time to be courageous? Don't wimp out when you get a chance to speak for your Savior.

Ask God to help you overcome your need for man's approval.

John 12:44-45

To say that He cried out means He shouted to get the attention of those present. I cannot explain this Oneness of Jesus with the Father, but He has said it and I believe it. If you want to know what God is like, study Jesus.

John 12:46

There are so many references to Light and Dark and the Kingdom of God and Satan's kingdom. Have you entered the light of God's kingdom? The

day I chose to believe over 30 years ago, I had an experience like never before or since; I had the sense of a light being turned on in my life, I was illuminated. The frightening thing is that I didn't know my life was dark until God turned on the light. Oh how grateful I am for the Light that Jesus brought into my life.

John 12:47-48

This is just what Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3. He did not come in His first Advent to judge the world but His mission was to faithfully give the words of God to all who will receive them and to give His life to ransom you and me. Jesus knows that all who reject His words are rejecting life. Jesus faithfully told us all God gave Him, not because Jesus is subordinate to God but because He coordinated His will to comply with the Father. Philippians 2:5-6 says that in all things Jesus was equal with God. To believe in Jesus is to believe in God. To reject Jesus is to reject God.

Friends, Jesus said there is a judgment and there is a last day. Whether you believe it or not, it is going to happen. Creation had a beginning and it will have an end, God the Father knows when that will be.

John 12:50

This is Jesus final appeal to accept the words he had spoken as coming from the Father, accept those words is to receive eternal life. Just think Jesus says that God has commanded eternal life for you, will you accept it?