

PALM SUNDAY – THE KING OF PEACE

INTRODUCTION

READ the taunt in Isaiah 14

SUMMARIZE Isaiah 13-24

Isaiah goes through his map of the world and prophesies judgment on everyone. Everyone is wicked. Everyone is unrighteous and deserving. And so everyone is going to be destroyed, except for a small remnant of Israel.

When reading this, it can get disturbing and almost tiresome to endure. It just seems like God is really angry at everyone and going on a rant.

But we have to understand something:

When we say God is holy, this does not just mean that He is without sin. God is not in some heavenly container out there away from humanity and all of its sin. God is everywhere and everything belongs to Him. So everywhere there is sin, God is and God is holy. So God's holiness permeates everything.

Sin and evil must be fought against and ultimately destroyed. There is no such thing as unchallenged evil. There is no such thing as a sin that goes unpunished and unpaid for. Not one wicked thing will be overlooked, ignored, or excused.

The question is, how does God fight evil? How does God eradicate sin?

Here in Isaiah, and elsewhere in the OT God fights evil by the sword. God sovereignly releases wicked nations to be destroyed by other wicked nations. He also uses His people, Israel, to fight against wicked nations and defeat them despite their small size.

And we see that fighting evil is a bloody business and everyone deserves judgment.

This is made perfectly plain to see in Isaiah chapters 12-24. No one is left out. God will cleanse His creation, He will not overlook wickedness, He will not relent until His holiness is honored. To do anything less would make Him less than God.

FAST FORWARD TO PALM SUNDAY

Clearly this is not how things work today. I don't pick up a sword and go on a holy war against sinners by trying to kill them. This is not how sin is resisted any longer.

With Jesus came a change. God's holiness did not change, nor did the penalty for sin. But there was a massive paradigm shift in how evil and sin is eradicated in the earth.

And that is what brings us to Palm Sunday.

READ Like 19:28-44

Jesus rides in on a colt. This was commonly known as a symbolic act.

Kings would always ride into the city. They would either ride a war horse or a colt. Riding into the city on a stallion would show that they were either in a time of war, or the king was about to start a war.

Riding into the city on a colt or a donkey, demonstrated that they were in a time of peace, or that the king was seeking peace.

There is no record of Jesus ever riding a donkey or a colt. He was poor and walked every where. This is the only time when He did this. And He acquired the colt supernaturally.

All this adds up to mean that Jesus is making a very specific point here, and that point was more than simply trying to have his 5 seconds of fame before He was crucified.

THIS IS A PROPHETIC ACT

JESUS IS KING

First, Jesus is announcing that He is King. This all happened at the start of the big Passover feast when every Jew would have come from miles around. Because of this Herod and Pilate would have both come into town to represent Rome and to make sure that the Jews stayed calm and under control.

Not only were the Roman rulers in town, but all of the religious and political Somethings would have been in town. The people there would have seen several processions of muckety-mucks come through those same gates.

And so Jesus goes and gets a colt and rides it in not-so-subtly declaring that He is the King. It was humble and subversive all at the same time.

You see, if you want Jesus you have to receive Him as King. You have to take Him as Lord or you can't have Him. He is your ruler as much as He is your friend. While He is closer than a brother, He also reigns as your sovereign Lord. Jesus doesn't come and sneak in the back door of your heart asking you to accept Him into your heart.

No, Jesus comes riding in through the front gate declaring Himself king and Lord and the only way to keep Him out is to refuse Him as Lord and crucify Him on the cross. If you will not have Him as King, you cannot have Him.

JESUS IS THE KING OF PEACE

Secondly, Jesus is no longer making war He is making peace. He did not ride in on a war hoarse, He rode in on a colt.

The people in the streets that day would have known of Zechariah 9:9-10

READ Zechariah 9:9-10

Jesus is not being subtle here! He is openly declaring not only that He is King, but that He is the promised Messiah King that Zechariah and Isaiah prophesied would come.

But this is what they all missed about Jesus! They expected Jesus to come under the paradigm of Isaiah and the other prophets. They expected Jesus to come and deal out vengeance and justice on Rome and all the enemies of Israel. They expected a war horse and instead they got a colt.

Jesus is the one that got the sword, the vengeance, the justice, the wrath of God's holiness so that the Jew, and the Roman could be offered reconciliation with God. Jesus came to establish the Kingdom of God, a new kingdom that was open to anyone that would bow the knee to the King of Kings.

READ 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

But the people didn't want reconciliation, they wanted an overthrow.

The world wants peace too, but worldly peace is a temporary and superficial peace. It's temporary and superficial because it fails to deal with sin at its root. It attempts to use human might to bring peace and that will always fail to go deep enough or hold long enough.

JESUS WEEPS OVER JERUSALEM

At the end of the Luke account of this story, Jesus stops on his colt and looks at the temple and weeps. He weeps because the people did not recognize Him for what He was.

Just days later these same people would shout "crucify Him, crucify Him". They would reject the peace that He was offering because they would reject Him as King. And the result would be that they would be conquered once again in 70AD and not one stone of the temple would be left on another.

In fact, this moment of weeping was immediately followed by Jesus cleansing the temple and prophesying that very thing.

WE LIVE IN AN INCREASINGLY WICKED WORLD

We need to learn to fight evil the way Jesus did. Our weapons of warfare are not carnal, they are spiritual.

Our weapon is the weapon of Jesus – specifically, LOVE.

It's not love like the world sees it. It's not warm, fuzzy feelings, holding hands running through wildflowers singing songs of togetherness while drinking a Coke.

It's love that chooses death. It's love that comes at a bloody cost. It's love that lays down its life for a friend. It's costly, burdensome, and often thankless. It's love that loves despite rejection. It's love that doesn't stop loving when the love is not returned. It's a love that loves when no one can see it.

This is Christ-like love, and it is the only “sword” that we have been given with which to push back the darkness.

First, we love God with all that we have.

Second, we love our neighbor as ourselves – beginning with each other and flowing out to the world.

Want to cure poverty? LOVE

Want to a Biblical definition of marriage? LOVE

Want strong families? LOVE

Want healthy marriages? LOVE

Want to rescue sinners from Hell? LOVE

But don’t look to the world for your models of what Love is. Look to Jesus.

CONCLUSION

READ Revelation 7:9-17

There will come a day, and if you are a Christian then you will see it. You and I will bow with palm branches in our hands waving them in worship to Jesus. We will do it standing in a sea of people made up of every tribe, tongue, and nation. There will be no war, no battle lines, no sin, no temptation, no human categories and labels – just the people of God.

What we are working for here and now is that future reality.