

“Peculiar Procession”

1. Proclamation (Read Mat. 21:1-11)
2. Prophecy (Read Zech. 9:9-11)
3. Palms (Jn. 12:13)
 - a. Palms symbolized victory in the ancient world. In fact, the Maccabees used them in the rededication of the Temple and minted coins picturing palm trees w/ the inscription “For the redemption of Zion.”
 - b. Long before the first Temple, Israel celebrated the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles when they would set up temporary tents, some of which largely consisted of palm fronds. Also they would intertwine the fronds with other foliage to make “lulabs” to wave and shake during the feast. It was a celebration of victory and deliverance (see Lev. 23:33-44).
 - c. What is more is that they would sing Ps. 118 (esp. vv. 25-26) while waving/shaking their assembled ‘lulabs’ in celebration.
4. Psalms (118 & 24 subsequently)
 - a. As just mentioned, in the Feast of Booths, Israel would have a convocation (procession) of celebration where the High Priest would take a golden vase and dip it into the pool of Siloam and take it to the “horn of the altar.” This water symbolized the “water from the wells of salvation” (Isa. 12:3 also note Zech. 9:11 re: liberation from the ‘waterless pit’). In fact Isaiah’s psalm echoes (or vice versa) those which were sung during the procession.
 - b. But even before His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus applied the shadow of the ceremony to the substance of His sacrifice (Jn. 7:37-38).
 - c. Ps. 118 was chanted in part by those who welcomed Jesus as He entered Jerusalem on what we now call “Palm Sunday.”
 - d. Jesus’ triumphal entry was met with palms and praise as they sung praise to Him as the Deliverer! Let us see what more the Psalms reveal about this peculiar procession.
5. Procession (Pss. 24; 118)
 - a. Both Pss. 24 and 118 were seen as victorious processions. What is interesting is that they also reveal a march to the King but also accomplished by the King. The “King of glory” v. 8 is who accomplishes “righteousness” vv. 4-5 and thus is earned access to “YHWH of Hosts! [who] is the King of glory! Vv. 9-10).
 - b. In fact, there are more paradoxes revealed in Ps. 118 e.g.:
 - i. Humility and Royalty (5-9, 18, 22) cf. Jesus riding in as King yet on a donkey.
 - ii. Reception and Rejection (19-22) cf. triumphal entry and crucifixion.
 - iii. Victory and Chastening (10-14, 18) cf. Eph. 4:8; Col. 2:13-15).
 - c. Ps. 24 is about a victory procession where the gates of the city are instructed to fling open wide for her King. The gates are personified as rejoicing. Ps. 118 is also a procession which leads up to the gates and then through them up to the altar, ending there in praise for the LORD’s salvation, goodness, and mercy – which lasts forever due to His victory.
 - d. In Ps. 118, we can see:
 - i. (1-4) Praise for YHWH for His goodness and mercy (righteousness and compassion).
 - ii. (5-7) The LORD’s answer to a call of distress.
 - iii. (8-14) Victory in the name (12) i.e. via trusting YHWH.
 - iv. (15-16) Strength of the LORD.
 - v. (17-18) Overcoming death.
 - vi. (19-21) Entrance into the Righteous gates.
 - vii. (22-25) Using the rejected Cornerstone to save.
 - viii. (26-29) Access to the altar with praise. →

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6. Pervasive

- a. When we include the reading of Ps. 117, we see how it fits right into the big picture.
- b. It is a far bigger picture than the Jews imagined – even though it was right there in front of them. This two versed psalm has a big point and it is the scope of which Jesus’ mission aimed viz. the four corners of the world. It was for every tongue, tribe, people, and nation that Jesus flung open wide the gates of righteousness! We see this Psalm fulfilled in Rev. 7:9-10, where again palm branches are seen in the worship – where the procession concludes not at the altar but at the throne of God!
- c. God had always intended for Israel to be His light unto the nations, a blessing to all families, urging them to repent, and commanding His people to care for the foreigner. See Isaiah’s “light unto the Gentiles or ‘islands,’ God’s covenant with Abraham, Jonah’s mission, Rahab’s reward, etc.
- d. Consider also Exod. 12:48-49; 1 Kings 8:41-43 and Acts 15:8, 11 re: same terms of salvation for everyone! God is no respecter of persons!
- e. Ephesians 2 is a beautiful picture of how God has brought all peoples near via the Cross. Imagine how the Jews in their Feasts would have to stop short of the altar.
 - i. The Holy of Holies was off limits save once a year for the High Priest.
 - ii. The sanctuary was reserved for the priests.
 - iii. The inner court for male Jews.
 - iv. Then the court of the Women.
 - v. The outermost court was for Gentile converts.
- f. Imagine the Gentiles and women joining the Jews – nay, the priests – nay, the Holy of Holies!
- g. Read Ps. 24:3-5. Only the King of Glory himself did such for us because we could never...

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When the crowds welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem (on ‘Palm Sunday), they rightly praised Him with a Psalm of triumph, goodness, and mercy (viz. Ps. 118). What they did not anticipate was a week of internal conflict, intense debate, warnings of judgment, culminating in a horrific execution of Jesus. But the same Psalm they had sung on Sunday would find its fulfillment on Friday. The Psalm predicts distress, death (albeit somewhat cryptic vv. 17-18), as well as victory. Ironically, the victory is won through death and the victor was rejected by His own. And the victory was infinitely greater than the political/social liberation of a nation of ethnic Jews – it was a victory of salvation from, through, and to righteousness; for every living soul! And the result is to take us to the inconceivable supreme majestic pinnacle. “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me it is high, I cannot attain it” (Ps. 139:6)!