

REGAL REDEMPTION

Text: John 19:1-24

Today is commonly known as Palm Sunday, when the church celebrates our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. In John 12:12-21, John records the event. The palm tree branches that had been used in the celebration of the Feast of the Tabernacles were saved to use as brooms. During the time lapse, the leaves opened up to provide the ability to sweep the Jewish houses clean in preparation for the Passover. As they raised these branches into the air they were asking the Savior to "clean house" on this Passover, in other words, deliver them from the oppression of the Romans, hypocrisy of the Pharisees and unbelief of the Sadducees. Jesus was riding on the transportation of the day (the donkey) that signified a prince who came, not to declare war, but to proclaim peace. Even the Gentiles were now realizing they too could be partaker of a revolution that could and would change the world as they cried out, "...Sir, we would see Jesus" (John 12:21c). The crowds thronging to see Jesus provoked the Pharisees to say, "... Behold, the world is gone after Him" (John 12:19c). It is hard to believe as we read these words "Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified" (Matthew 27:22) in less than one week after the crowd had cried, "...Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the LORD" (John 12:13c).

Let us move four days beyond the Triumphant Entry and examine the "royal" treatment this King of Israel was given.

I. THE CONSECRATION

There was no consecrating anointing oil over the Head of this Monarch. John 19:1 says, "Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him." In Latin, the root words for "scourge" mean to "flay the flesh." I have read that the Roman garrison in Jerusalem was composed of the Roman 10th Legion. These soldiers were not generally Roman citizens, but mercenaries from Thrace. They were known as the most brutal of all the Roman Legions. Specialists in the Legion were assigned to carry out punishments and executions for the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. They excelled at their jobs. For the Legionnaires administering the lashes, this was not only their job but also sport. This is shown by the mocking of Jesus as he was scourged. Each soldier administering lashes would try to out-do the others in ripping skin and causing pain. Eusebius of Caesarea recounts with vivid, horrible detail a scene of scourging. He says, "For they say that the bystanders were struck with amazement when they saw them lacerated with scourges even to the innermost veins and arteries, so that the hidden inward parts of the body, both their bowels and their members, were exposed to view" (Ecclesiastical History, Book 4, chap. 15).

The Bible says, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). In the prophecy of the crucifixion event, Psalm 22:6 records Jesus speaking first person: "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." In light of the context, the use of the word "worm" is most significant. Dr. Henry Morris says the type worm mentioned here is the Scarlet Worm. He goes on to say, "The life cycle of that worm is something like this: when the mother worm was ready to give birth to the baby worms, she would find the trunk of a tree, a post or a stick somewhere and then she would plant her body in that wood and she would implant her body so firmly in it that she could never leave it again. And then the young would be brought forth and the mother's body would provide protection for the babies as long as they needed before they could get out and take care of themselves. Then the mother would die, and in the process, the scarlet fluid would stain her body and the body of the young and the tree and so on. The Lord Jesus said, 'I am like that scarlet worm.'" After a period of three days, the blood becomes a gel and is scraped off the tree and used for dye. It was this little worm that provided dye for the scarlet fabrics of the Temple.

As I see the initial bloodletting of our Lord, I am reminded that Christ was crushed for us so that we may be clothed in the royal garment of His righteousness. "...And without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22b).

II. THE CROWN JEWELS

John 19: 2 - 4 says, "And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him." He's a King; let's give him His crown! So we gave Him a crown of thorns. He's a King; let's give Him His robe! So we gave Him the purple robe of mockery. He's a King; let's give Him His scepter! So we gave Him the reed of a farce.

III. THE CORONATION

In John 19:4-24, we see our Lord presented to us as the King. The most worthy Pontiff who ever lived, the King of Kings, is given the most despicable treatment. He's a King; let's give Him His throne! So we gave Him the cross. Christ is now ready for the coronation that man at his worst gives to God who came to us offering us our best possible life.

A. The King's Innocence

No less than seven times we observe in the Scriptures Pilate affirms the innocence of our Lord. He does so in John 19: 4 and 6, but also in John 18:38; Matthew 27:24; Luke 23:4; Luke 23:14; and Luke 23:22.

B. The King's Presentation

Pilate cries out, “Ecce Homo!” In English, “Behold the Man!” The response? “Crucify Him; crucify Him.” (John 19:5, 6, 15). The Jews understand the claim of Jesus’ Deity in John 19:7. We also see this verification in Matthew 26:63-66, John 5:18; and John 10:33. Perhaps the strongest claim of Jesus to His own Deity is found in John 8:56-59. When Pilate heard this accusation, he was terrified (John 19:8). In John 19:9, Pilate demands where is Jesus from. And the silence of our Lord mystifies Pilate as he continues his dialogue by attempting to convince Jesus that he (Pilate) had the power to release Him.

In John 19:11, we see Christ is Sovereign even in the midst of this most horrendous trial. Pilate now never deviates from his belief that before him is a true King as seen in John 19:12-15 and John 19:19-22.

C. The King’s Throne

In John 19:16, the Bible records that Christ was “led” to the crucifixion (Isaiah 53:7,8; Acts 8:32). There was no forcing or wrestling. It is not the Hill of Zion that our King is coming to (Psalm 2:6); it is the Hill of Calvary or Golgotha, the place of a skull or death (John 19:17).

D. The King’s Court

This court is found between two thieves (John 19:18; Isaiah 53:12).

E. The King’s Name

In the formal naming of monarchs, the full name and realm are given, such as in the dedication of our Authorized Version of the Bible: “James, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith.” How ironic with all the hullabaloo surrounding the trials and crucifixion, we see Pilate makes the formal declaration for all time and eternity: “This is JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS” (John 19:19; Matthew 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38). This was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin and would not be changed (John 19:20-23).

IV. THE CAPITULATION

In John 19:23, 24, this unique fulfillment of prophecy from Psalm 22:18 says much about what is going to take place. Our Lord lays aside His kingly robe, revealing He is now about to officiate in the office of His Priesthood (Exodus 28:31, 32; Exodus 39:22, 23; Hebrews 9:3-14; Hebrews 10:19, 20).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.