



# IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

**SERIES: JOHN (GOSPEL OF TRUTH)**

**LESSON: THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY: A REVELATION OF IDENTITY**

**JOHN 12:12-19**

**AUG. 29, 2021**

## MAIN POINT

---

There is an essential truth about Jesus' identity: He is the Messiah who fulfills God's promise of salvation. Depending on whether people look at Jesus with an eternal perspective or a fleshly perspective, the revelation of Jesus will result in differing responses.

## JOHN CONTEXT

---

Every lesson's purpose: "but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John 20:31

In John 12:12-24 we read about Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem five days before the Passover. The Passover was days away but there are already large crowds in Jerusalem arriving early for the occasion. The Passover was an important event in the history of Jewish people,

and it was an obligation to the Lord. God told Moses that if anyone did not keep the Passover, they would be cut off from the people because that person did not bring the Lord's offering at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin (Numbers 9:13).

On the day before Jesus went to Jerusalem, Jesus was in Bethany, a small town located 2 miles away. Jesus was visiting Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead. John records that many people were believing in Jesus because he raised Lazarus from the dead. As you could imagine, after witnessing the life-saving power, Lazarus, Mary, and Martha could not help but speak of Jesus the Savior. There were many travelers in Jerusalem who had heard, and they went to Bethany to hear the story for themselves.

## INTRODUCTION

---

Have you watched an episode of the Emmy winning TV series called Undercover Boss? The series ran for 10 years and each episode chronicled company executives leaving their corner offices and going undercover to work as a regular employee in the day-to-day operations of the company. In most cases the executive was the CEO or the owner of the company and they would perform jobs that were very humbling for their amount of education and success. One CEO was from Waste Management and he did trash pickup and sorting of recycling. One CEO was from Roto Rooter and went on a number of service calls to unclog residential plumbing. Going undercover was necessary for them not to be recognized as they sought to learn the nuances of the job as well as the perceptions of the valuable employees that worked for them. The weekly episode typically showed the executive in situations where they had to learn the challenges of the job as they performed physical labor or tried to master a skill necessary for their job. Often the executive discovered the challenges their employees faced due to working conditions or personal issues and they came to value the dedication and contribution to the company. The impactful part of the episode is how the CEOs would form relationships with their employees that they worked alongside and when the executive revealed their true identity, it resulted in sincere appreciation shown in the form of raises, bonuses, promotions, or scholarships for tuition to increase their education. The people who worked for the executives would sometimes make a comment to their undercover boss about their perception of the executives who didn't appreciate their work. These people were the most surprised when they understood how the corporate leaders humbled themselves in such a way and to learn that perception wasn't always reality.

In this lesson, we see Jesus, the Son of God whose identity is being revealed and the reaction of those around him. Here are four summary statements:

- Jesus' identity from an eternal perspective—Jesus is the Messiah.
- Jesus' identity from an eternal perspective—Jesus is the fulfillment of promise.
- Jesus' identity from a fleshly perspective—Jesus will meet my expectations.
- Jesus' identity from a fleshly perspective---Jesus is not the Lord of my life.

## **EXPLANATION // ...believe Jesus is the Christ...**

---

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 12:12-19

### **JESUS' IDENTITY FROM AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE—JESUS IS THE MESSIAH**

For those who were paying attention to what was happening around them, it was plain that Jesus was the Messiah. They couldn't miss it. Zachariah and Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, as well as the shepherds knew of birth of the Messiah through the angels all recognized Jesus as such. The wise men from the East came looking for the King who had been born because they had heard the prophecy where "a star shall come out of Jacob" (Num. 24:17). The Holy Spirit revealed the identity of the infant Jesus to Simeon and Anna at the Temple and to John the Baptist who upon seeing Jesus said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world." The disciples who first met Jesus told others that they have found the Messiah. Through Jesus' life and ministry, the counter-cultural teaching, and the power of God displayed as He healed people and cast out demons, people wondered if Jesus could be the Messiah. Jesus wasn't hiding his identity. He had conversations with his disciples about it and had heated confrontations with religious leaders about His identity claims. If there was any doubt about where His power came from, Jesus then raised Lazarus from the dead after he had been in the tomb four days. Only God had the power of life and Jesus, being one with the Father, told Mary and Martha that He was the resurrection and the life and had the power to bring their brother back to them. Jesus made good on his claim and Lazarus came out of the tomb. As the story of Lazarus spread, many people believed in Jesus as the Messiah.

When God has a message for us, he doesn't leave room for doubt as to the truth of the message. God's truth can be revealed through the Holy Spirit, heavenly messengers, creation, and people that He entrusts with His word by the Spirit. God's message to the Jews was that Jesus was the Christ, the one written about by prophets of old.

**If you have needed direction on matters in your life and you wanted to hear from God, how has God spoken to you? When you heard from God can you define your level of confidence and how it was possible to hear from God? (Only the Holy Spirit can give you the confidence that you heard God's truth.)**

**Do you think it could be possible to miss God's message to you? Why? (Not listening for the voice of God, focused on self, focused on the world)**

## JESUS' IDENTITY FROM AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE—JESUS IS THE FULFILLMENT OF PROMISE

Upon revelation of truth that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah, the Jews responded with celebration. They knew Jesus was coming to Jerusalem and took palm branches and gave Jesus a royal and triumphal entry as they shouted, "Hosanna!" The word *hosanna* is a term of exclamation and adoration that means "Oh, save!" They celebrated and proclaimed Jesus as the Davidic king. They quoted from Psalm 118:25-26: "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" Jesus himself confirmed his royal status by fulfilling prophecy as He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey's colt (Zechariah 9:9). Indeed, the promised Messiah had come, and the joy extended into the anticipation for what was to come from the Christ.

Excitement and joy are the typical emotions we feel when we have the chance to see someone famous. Jesus was famous but this is different. They had been waiting in hopeful expectation for the Savior to come. The entire Old Testament brought about the anticipation for the coming of this day. God had been faithful to keep His promise to Abraham and Sarah. God had been faithful to keep His promise to establish Israel in the Promised Land. God had been faithful to return the exiles from captivity. God would surely keep His promise to provide a Savior to redeem his people. For the Jews, it seemed like the wait was finally over. They knew that Jesus was the Messiah whom they had been waiting to save them and to usher in the new kingdom. It was a joyous day to celebrate that Jesus had come to the Holy City of Jerusalem.

**Do we have joy in our heart when we consider that God kept his promise and provided a Savior?**

**How do people see your joy? Is it more than an emotion? (Speak well of God to neighbors and friends, faithful attendance at worship, faithful tithing, serve enthusiastically in church ministries, life on mission to tell about the God who loved you and kept his promises)**

## JESUS' IDENTITY FROM A FLESHLY PERSPECTIVE—JESUS WILL MEET MY EXPECTATIONS

The people of Israel were hopeful that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Yet, through their interpretation of the Law and Prophets, they expected Jesus to be a *political* leader—someone who would intercede with God's favor to act on their behalf. Perhaps Isaiah 61:1 was influential to their political perspectives: "He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound." The

Jews knew that the Messiah was the King from the line of David, and they hoped that Jesus would redeem Israel and restore them from foreign occupation.

God had a fine reputation in the Old Testament for one who parts the water (Exodus 14) and makes the sun stand still (Joshua 10:12). The Jews who were celebrating the coming of Jesus were faithful to recognize God's power in Jesus and they believed God would meet their expectations of a redeemer that would solve their problems. Many studies have shown how expectations can influence our perceptions. Perhaps, their perception of what the Messiah would do clouded their understanding of what Jesus was teaching. Instead of seeking to learn what Jesus was saying about the Father and the fulfillment of His kingdom, they were seeking the fulfillment of their desires. When Jesus was arrested and put on trial, their view of Jesus changed because He was no longer meeting their expectations. We have all tasted the bitterness of expectations that didn't materialize.

There is one correct perspective of Jesus. Jesus is the Son of God and is in every way equal with God (John 10:30). He humbled himself to leave His home in glory to walk with us, to relate with us, and set an example for us as He lived in his flesh. He was tempted just as we are but did not give in to fleshly desires (Matt. 4:1-11). As He taught the truth of God, He raised the standard for living a life pleasing and acceptable to God. He demonstrated how to have an intimate relationship with God and with people. Being one with God, He demonstrated God's perfect character, showing compassion and perfect love for all people as He gave His life completely for them to be saved.

To some, Jesus was a great teacher. Yet, they do not devote their life to following Jesus (Luke 9:23) because they cannot put down their fleshly desires. Just like the Jews, we must be careful that we don't allow our fleshly desires to cloud our perception of who Jesus really is why He came.

**Are there things in your life that are keeping you from following Jesus completely?**

**Is there sin in your life that is keeping you from an intimate relationship with the Father? Do you think it is possible that there is a better life waiting for you, an abundant life that Jesus promised as you make Him the priority in your life?**

## JESUS' IDENTITY FROM A FLESHLY PERSPECTIVE—JESUS IS NOT THE LORD OF MY LIFE

Upon seeing the spectacle of the Triumphal Entry, Luke records how some of the Pharisees said to Jesus that he should rebuke his disciples for the celebration. Jesus answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out" (Luke 19:39-40). His time had come. The religious leaders were choosing to deny the truth of the Messiah.

One could question how the religious leaders, who had the most knowledge of God through the Law and Prophets could miss the truth of Jesus being the Messiah. Reading the accounts of the Sadducees and Pharisees in the Gospels, they knew of his many signs and miracles. Even with the knowledge of Jesus healing the lame, leprosy, blindness, casting out demons, and raising the dead to life, the power of God was not recognized. They were consumed with a greater concern – the world around them (their moral and political status.) John wrote that the Pharisees and the Sadducees were threatened by the idea that Jesus would be the Messiah and what it would mean for them. They feared they would lose their place of authority among the Jews if the frenzy of the people led to an attempted coup against the Romans (John 11:48).

The religious leaders in the Sanhedrin were unable to see the truth of Jesus and see the fulfillment of the prophecy through him. When presented with truth, these moral leaders decided it was better to kill a single man in order to save a nation (Jn. 11:50-53).

John the Baptist was the first to condemn them. When he saw the religious leaders coming to see him and his ministry, he called them a "brood of vipers" and warned them that "every tree that doesn't bear fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matt. 3:7-10).

Jesus who earned the right to sit at the right hand of the Father and to judge the nations had already pronounced judgment on the Pharisees:

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies... Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God. (John 8:44, 47).

Today, the Father of Lies, the devil himself is still influencing people by creating a distortion of the truth. Thus, people in the world today do not accept Jesus as coming from the Father. They might claim to have higher knowledge and understanding. Just as the Pharisees criticized Jesus in His ministry, Christians can be criticized for their views. As people are misled by the lies and deception of the world's view, believers have the ability to defend ourselves from the lies. To be protected we need to know truth and spend time in the word and to be open to the work of the Holy Spirit in our life so that truth can be revealed.

**Are there areas in our life where we struggle to accept God's truth?**

**Are there areas in our life where we need to defend God's truth?**

**Are we willing to let Jesus be Lord of all areas of our life, not just Sunday morning but Monday through Saturday?**

## **CONCLUSION**

---

For the Jews, it was better that Jesus came in the way that He did. As the Son of God, a member of the Trinity, he went "undercover" as a humble man so he could relate with us and demonstrate the possibility of a more intimate relationship with God. He shared the experience of life in the flesh and set the standard for righteous living. He revealed the heart of God as he taught truth in love. When we set our eyes on the Kingdom of God and the true, righteous King, when we focus on Jesus and set our hearts to a fulfilling relationship, when we crucify our fleshly desires and allow Jesus to lead us, then can we truly have abundant life.

## **PRAYER**

---

Close in prayer, asking God to press this truth that was studied.