

Tuesday

We can't be sure exactly when today's story happened. It occurred somewhere between the triumphant entry on Palm Sunday and the last supper on the evening of the following Thursday, so we have a window of about 4 days. For those who may follow Jesus there is no thought of his death, his arrest on Thursday night and crucifixion on Friday seem to come as an unexpected shock even to the apostles. For the Greek visitors, who I'd like us to focus on today, the sounds and sights of Palm Sunday, when Jesus rode into Jerusalem as a triumphant king and great crowds shouted "Hosanna in the highest, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Blessed is the KING OF ISRAEL" would have been ringing in their minds.



These Greeks had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, they were probably converts to the Jewish faith and like everyone else of that faith they would have been aware of and looking forward to the coming of the Messiah, the new king. Jerusalem would have been very busy and crowded as they went to try and meet Jesus (something many others would have been trying to do as well).

They wanted to find out if he was really the messiah they had been looking for, was he the new king? And, how far would his kingdom extend? Would it include them and where they lived?

- What kind of person would they have been hoping to meet?
- What question would you have wished to ask?
- What answers would you have been looking for?
- And, if he is going to be the new king, how is this going to happen?

As you read the passage, take a few moments to think about which questions you might like to ask.

Jesus Predicts His Death

²⁰Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." ²²Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

²³Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.

²⁷"Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name!"

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." ²⁹The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

³⁰Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." ³³He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

³⁴The crowd spoke up, "We have heard from the Law that the Messiah will remain forever, so how can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of Man'?"

³⁵Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. ³⁶Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light." When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.

John 12:20-36 New International Version (NIV)

Jesus's response is to talk about a kernel (a single grain) of wheat falling to the ground (dying) and then growing into a new plant with many grains ready for the harvest.

At first glance this may seem like a slightly random statement but in fact it is a carefully thought through answer to the questions that these Greeks should have been asking (though they may have been struggling to work out what to ask).

Jesus says, "yes I am your king and your Messiah". He will not bring the fullness of his kingdom on earth into being through the death of others but through his own death and resurrection. The kind of kings that they are meeting is unlike any other king, he is the servant king.

This answer was designed for their way of thinking.

Greek culture placed a great deal of emphasis and value on philosophy and intellect. It demanded a clearly structured way of thinking. The Greek way of thinking about God's and the interaction between the spiritual and physical realms needed to be structured.



Faith is a matter for both mind and heart. It may start in one or the other and different people may need to a greater emphasis on each at different times in their lives. These people needed to be able to engage their minds in their faith and Jesus was ready to meet them where they were. He is still ready to meet us where we are today.

Let's pray

Lord Jesus,
I recognise you as my king.
I'm sorry for all the times that my life
has not reflected your sovereignty,
And for those times when I have
looked for a king that does not match
your perfect image.
Please help me to love and follow
you with all that I am. Amen.



