TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Bobby Rader /Opening Prayer by: Robert Ward

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#590 Jesus Is All the World to Me
#837 I Need Thee Every Hour

Scripture Reading by: Joseph Girard
#509 I Will Sing the Wondrous Story
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#678 More About Jesus
Sermon: "The Meaning of the Cross"
Isaiah 53:3-6

#904 Have You Been to Jesus?
#738 Take the Name of Jesus with You

Closing Prayer by: Andre Jones

Tonight is our
2nd Sunday Evening
Service Project

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

April 10, 2022

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

All Hail the King

Most of us probably do not know much about the intertestamental period. During this era, the Jewish people were dominated by one foreign power after another. First it was Alexander the Great, who conquered the Persian Empire, including Judea, along with everything else between Greece and India. But Alexander's untimely death at only 32, with no successor, left his empire in disarray. Ultimately, it was divided among his generals, who fought a series of wars against each other, striving for supremacy. When the dust settled, Palestine lay on the frontier of two successor kingdoms: the Ptolemies, based in Egypt, and the Seleucids, based in Antioch in Syria.

The Ptolemies ruled over Palestine for roughly a century, successfully fending off multiple Seleucid attempts to wrest it from their control. But finally the Seleucids took possession of it at the turn of the 2nd century BC. Of course, this did not end the conflict between those two kingdoms. Some 30 years later, in 169 BC, the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes was planning a campaign against the Ptolemies in Egypt. To help finance it, he plundered the Temple in Jerusalem with the help of the sympathetic High Priest.

Things went badly for Antiochus in Egypt. Just when it seemed he would be victorious, the Romans intervened and forced him to withdraw in humiliation. Rumors of his defeat reached Jerusalem, along with a report that he had died. The more traditional Jews then tried to take advantage of the power vacuum, rising up to drive out the High Priest and seize control.

But Antiochus had not died, and was in a foul mood after his disgrace in Egypt. He interpreted this as an act of rebellion, and he exacted vengeance, breaking down the walls of Jerusalem and building a new fortress to dominate the city. But worst of all were his decrees against Judaism: the Scriptures were to be destroyed; the Sabbath and holidays were no longer to be observed; dietary laws were abolished; circumcision was forbidden; and a new altar was erected across the altar of burnt offering, and pigs were sacrificed there.

A revolt soon broke out under a priest named Judah Maccabee "the hammer." Judah was a successful guerilla leader who finally took Jerusalem, cleansed the temple, and reinstituted proper sacrifice. When he entered the city to liberate it, he was greeted by its inhabitants praising God and waving palm branches to welcome him.

That background is important because it helps us understand what takes place when Jesus makes his Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem: it explains the Jewish desire for deliverance (Judah's kingdom did not endure, but gave way to Rome), and why he was greeted the way he was. Imagine the sense of anticipation hanging in the air as faithful pilgrims make their way to the city to celebrate Passover, the great moment of God's liberation of his people. The excited crowds believe that God is doing that again: at long last, the King is coming to claim his throne.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Joe Edd Stifflemire is taking chemo treatments.

Ka'Leisha Jones has been having health problems and will see a specialist on April 14th.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Harold & Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Frank & Tina Garcia, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Gary Nielsen, Virginia Cole

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meeting this Monday, Apr. 11th at 5:30 p.m.

Primetimers will be having a potluck dinner on Tuesday, Apr. 12th at 6:00 p.m. A signup sheet is on the bulletin board.

We will have a fellowship meal on Wednesday, Apr. 20th at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Thursday, April 21st at 8:00 a.m.

A brown box has been placed in the foyer for suggestions as to Deacons.

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Ken Coleman	Daniel Balch	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Danny Balch	
Don Taylor		
Robert Ward		

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

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The preparations that Jesus makes for his entrance only heightens that sense. On the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives, he tells two disciples, *Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'* **(Mk 11:2-3).** Colt could refer to a young horse too, but Matthew and especially John make clear it was a donkey: over 500 years before, Zechariah prophesied Messiah would enter the city just that way as the Gospel accounts remind us **(Zech 9:9)**

Thus, all eyes were focused on Jesus as he mounted the donkey to ride into the city. Since it had never been ridden, there is no saddle; his followers fashion one with their cloaks. Not only did they spread them on the animal, they exuberantly flung them across the road. And they waved palm branches, giving him the same sort of red carpet treatment extended to Judah Maccabee. Everyone in the crowd repeatedly shouted *Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!* **(Mk 11:9-10)** This is the moment when Jesus is intentionally, visibly proclaimed as King!

The crowds are on the right track, but they do not understand the nature of his kingdom. At the end of the story, Jesus goes into the Temple and inspects it. He does nothing at the time, but it foreshadows what is coming: the next day he will render his judgment against the Temple and its establishment. Over the next several days, he will consistently subvert expectations of what Messiah should be until the point that many of those who hailed him would cry at the end of the week *Crucify him!* They were looking for a conqueror to overthrow the Romans; Jesus came, as Zechariah said, to proclaim peace to the nations They were looking for a proud chieftain riding on his warhorse; Jesus came humble and mounted on a donkey. They were looking for someone to Lord over them, to wield power like the world; Jesus came not to be served, but to serve. Jesus is unlike any king who ever lived—unlike Alexander, or the Maccabees, or Caesar. He comes not to kill but to die. And so they rejected him.

But Jesus was and is King. He reigns now. And that means he demands our loyalty. Are we willing to give it? Many in the crowd (and even among the apostles) that day were self-centered and misguided in their belief in him. They were longing for a kingdom that would exalt Israel as a political power over Rome. But can't we do that same thing in a sense? Do we ask what Jesus can do for me?

Others in the crowd were fickle and wavering. Some would openly cry out for his death at his arrest and trial. The disciples will flee at the first sign of trouble, and Peter will even deny three times that he knows Jesus! It's easy to say you believe in Jesus during the Triumphal Entry. It's a lot harder in the shadow of the cross. Are we willing to be faithful during those difficult times?

If we would truly follow Jesus, then our lives are not our own. Are we ready to obey his orders, even when they confound us? Are we willing to serve him as our Lord, even to the point of death? Much of the religious world has domesticated faith to be a self-help program—Jesus is fine as long as he meets my needs. But he demands more than that. Are we willing to give him our allegiance?

Bryant Perkins