



THE HOUR OF GOD'S VISITATION

The incident of the triumphant entry of Jesus to Jerusalem quoted in Chapter 12 of John is a telling case of losing sight of the presence of God in the midst of many religious activities. It is pertinent that the Holy Spirit records this incident in all the other gospels, as if to emphasize the point.

Jesus made a triumphant entry into Jerusalem riding on the back of an ass's colt followed by the disciples and several others. In all probability, the path He took to enter Jerusalem, passed by the entrance to the Temple, where many religious men had gathered for worship! As the Lord rode by the way of the Temple, the Scribes and Pharisees, occupied with their own religious activities, could not have but noticed Him passing by, riding upon a colt, in a triumphant procession.

"On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt." (John 12:12-15)

Perhaps the religious men inside the Temple heard all the shouting and the tumultuous cries of the followers outside the Temple gates. One can well imagine how much this would have upset those religious men! They were still inside the Temple but what was going on outside the Temple walls appeared to trouble them! They were



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Luke 19:44

"...because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

disturbed when they heard the cries of the people and saw the procession. It disturbed their religious programs inside the temple. They heard cries of “Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna to the King”, which would have surely raised their ire. Perhaps some of the Pharisees ran out of the Temple and shouted at the people, “You are disturbing us. We are praying inside the Temple and all you can think of is to praise this man Jesus, who is riding a donkey!”

And some of the legal pundits would have surely added, “Don’t you know that we are praying for the Messiah to come. Your shouts and your uncalled for proclamations are disturbing our prayers. We are praying what the prophets have told us to pray for — for the Messiah to come to Israel. All you are doing is to trouble us! You are interrupting our important intercessions for the sake of Israel.”

They were praying for the Messiah to come, but had missed the hour of their visitation. The Messiah was walking by that way, but they missed Him! He was there in their midst, but they missed Him. The Messiah went past the door of the temple but they wanted to pray for Him rather than meet Him. He was in the town but they missed Him! That was the tragedy. While they were obeying the Prophets and praying for the Messiah, the true Prophet, the Messiah, passed under their window but they failed to see Him. While they were talking about Him and praying for Him to come, they missed meeting Him outside the doors of their Temple because He did not come in the manner they had expected. What we see is that *the Consolation of Israel* bypassed the religious world! He went with the poor, the weak, the hungry and the humble. Jesus bypassed the religious, the proud, and the self-righteous. He left those who were trying to work out the things of God theologically, doctrinally and ecclesiastically, with neatness and preciseness. He sided instead with simple believers who trusted upon Him.

Beloved, it is time for the entertainment filled Church to repent from its activities and programs. Today’s tragedy is that the Church has lost the presence of God from their midst. The word for God’s people in this hour is to repent and turn to the Lord. **Many churches and people think that their programs and activities are a sign of their progress in God.** Beloved, as far as God is concerned, programs can never be a sign of spiritual progress. God is far more concerned with His Son. What we need is His presence. Our cry therefore, should be for the fullness of Him in our lives, whatever it may take to come into His presence. The decision and step we need to take at this juncture of our lives is to prepare ourselves for more

of His presence. We need to say, “Lord, I must have you.” Beloved, He wants to come to us for we are His people. He wants to come in His own terms and not ours! We have to be willing to come to Him on His own terms, whatever be the cost and the pain.

Beloved, let us just calmly reflect, that in Jerusalem, on that day, while religious people were inside the Temple praying for Him to come, He — the very one they prayed for — walked past the door of their Temple and worse still the *insiders* missed meeting Him, while there were some *outsiders* who availed of the privilege to walk beside Him, in His presence! The insiders, the proud, the self-righteous, the self-satisfied ones, were the ones who were left out, while the outsiders, the weak, the humble, the poor, were those who experienced His gracious presence. What a tragedy! Beloved, we need to be very careful that we do nothing that would cause us to miss the Lord and His manifest Presence. The Lord desires to manifest Himself to His people in this hour. Let us, therefore, be those who partake of this opportunity to meet Him.

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