

## Hosanna! But, How Are We Saved?

**John 12:12 ESV (Pg. 524)** The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. **13** So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” **14** And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, **15** “Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!”

- I. Today is Palm Sunday; a commemoration of the day that Christ entered Jerusalem, his eyes fixed on the cross. In 5 short days, he would be brutally and unjustly executed by a mob of angry Jews and indifferent Gentiles. Yet in 7 days, he would rise from death, conquering the final enemy and be crowned Lord of All. Next week we celebrate the resurrection, that most important of all events in human history.
  - A. Its often considered curious that on Palm Sunday, Jesus was greeted by an adoring crowd, waving palm branches and laying their garments out for the donkey upon which he rode to tread. But on Friday, the assembled crowd was shouting for Jesus’ crucifixion, charging him with blasphemy. Often preachers will use this irony as a cautionary tale about the shifting winds of public opinion!
    1. But there are many commentators that have concluded that we are not dealing with a fickle crowd, but with two different crowds of people. They come to this conclusion by a careful reading of the texts.
    2. For example, Luke says that it was “the whole multitude of his disciples (19:37)” who were rejoicing as he entered Jerusalem. John indicates that at least part of this crowd included those who had seen the resurrection of Lazarus, and continued to bear witness of that revelation of Christ’s power.
  - B. But whether or not they are the same crowd, or two different crowds, we mustn’t lose sight of the real reason for the events about to transpire during Jesus’ final week in Jerusalem. The reason the shouts of “hosanna” morphed into “crucify him” was the outworking of the **preordained** will of God.
    1. Some 600 years before that awful Friday afternoon, the prophet Isaiah predicted it using these disturbing words, “It **pleased the Lord** to bruise him, he has put him to grief (Isa. 53:10, NKJV).” Peter tells the crowd of thousands on the day of Pentecost that Christ was “delivered up” to be crucified by the “**definite plan** and **foreknowledge** of God.” (Acts 2:23)
    2. But for what reason? Why did it **please** God to crush his only begotten Son and put him to grief? Why did he **plan** this, “foreknowing” his murder?
      - a) Biblically, we know from many texts it wasn’t for some evil, crime or sin residing in Christ’s own heart or done by his hands. Immediately before Isaiah states that it pleased the Lord to crush him, he states, “he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.” (Isa. 53:9)
      - b) Although atheists, incapable of understanding spiritual things, love to lay the charge of “cosmic child abuse” at the feet of God, we also know that God was not being merely cruel; nor was he at all angry with Christ. Both at Christ’s baptism and at his transfiguration, the voice of God boomed from heaven declaring that Jesus was his “beloved” Son; and that with him he was “well-pleased”.

- C. Actually, God was keeping a promise and responding to a cry emanating from the hearts of men and women, boys and girls, since Adam and Eve were evicted from the Garden of Eden. The entirety of the Old Testament and the Gospels demonstrate that everyone had been crying out to God for the same thing. Deliverance. Rescue. **Salvation** from what we could not escape on our own.
- II. Now here is Jesus entering Jerusalem, mounted not on an awe-inspiring stallion, snorting and stomping the ground; no armor, no flags and banners telling of all his conquered enemies. Instead, he is robed as any peasant would be, riding a humble donkey. Yet he is greeted as the King that he truly was!
- A. Listen closely to exactly what his admirers are shouting! Over and over they shout a word you may not be that familiar with. The word is, “Hosanna!”
1. Hosanna is actually a Greek transliteration of a Hebrew word (“hoshiya na”) meaning, “Please save us, oh Lord!” It implies an urgent request for saving.
  2. This is a word that is found only 5 times in the New Testament. Every time it is found, it is being shouted by the crowd as Christ is entering Jerusalem (Matthew 21:9, 15; Mark 11:9-10; John 12:13).
  3. Moreover, Matthew quotes the people as saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” (a common title applied to Jesus, recognizing his rightful place as Israel’s King). Mark records them shouting, “Hosanna in the highest!” and John simply records them shouting “Hosanna!”.
    - a) To cry “Hosanna” is to express praise and joy, both that salvation is coming or that salvation has arrived!
    - b) To exclaim “Hosanna to the Son of David” is to acknowledge that without the King, that there is no salvation! Jonah, praying in the belly of the great fish, declared, “Salvation belongs to the Lord!” (Jonah 2:9).
    - c) To shout “Hosanna in the highest!” is to recognize that salvation is not of earthly design, but rather originates at the throne of God, high above us.
- B. This originally Hebrew word is found only a single time in the Old Testament. **Psalm 118:25 Save us, we pray (“hoshiya na”), O Lord! O Lord, we pray, give us success! 26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We bless you from the house of the Lord.**
- C. John Piper explains the interesting historical usage of this cool little word:
1. “The meaning changed over the years. In the psalm it was immediately followed by the exclamation: ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’ The cry for help, *hoshiya na*, was answered almost before it came out of the psalmist's mouth. And over the centuries the phrase *hoshiya na* stopped being a cry for help in the ordinary language of the Jews. Instead it became a shout of hope and exultation. It used to mean, ‘Save, please!’ But gradually, it came to mean, ‘Salvation! Salvation! Salvation has come!’”<sup>1</sup>
  2. He concludes that there two ways to cry “Hosanna”: As a cry for help and as an expression of gratitude that our salvation has finally arrived.
- D. Why is it not found deeper in the New Testament, though? After the story which four Gospels relate, such a cry becomes obsolete. Paul, James, Peter, John and Jude (the writers of the epistles) considered God’s saving, rescuing, and delivering

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/hosanna>

work to be a thing that was completed, and now needed only to be proclaimed to the waiting and ignorant world who had not yet heard.

III. I want to spend the remainder of our time together today considering what it means that salvation has come, that we are saved, and what Piper said about the two ways to shout “hosanna”.

A. Salvation is simultaneously the most vital and misunderstood teaching of the church today. Sometimes discussing it raises more questions such as, “How does one become saved?” or “What does one need to be saved from?” or “Why do I even need to be saved? Can’t I just be a good person?”

1. First, let’s answer the question: what is salvation? The late John Stott understands salvation bought by Christ the King in three distinct ways, writing, “...salvation itself, the salvation Christ gives to his people, is freedom from sin in all its ugly manifestations and liberation into a new life of service, until finally we attain “the glorious liberty of the children of God.”<sup>2</sup>

2. Let’s unpack this statement, and take a look at each one individually. Hopefully we’ll leave here with a greater appreciation and understanding of what it means to be saved.

a) You may see that salvation has farther-reaching, and all-encompassing implications for your life than you ever previously imagined. You will see how thoroughly Christ intends to save you!

b) **Hebrews 7:25 (ESV) Consequently, he is able to *save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.***

B. First, what does Stott mean when he says that salvation “is freedom from sin in all its ugly manifestations”?

1. What does the bible say the ugly manifestations of sin are?

a) Genesis 3 says that sin makes us subject to frustration. What we want will always be just out of our grasp. The man would work the ground for food, only to find weeds. The woman would desire her husband’s affection only to be dominated by him...and round and round we go!

b) Galatians 6 says that sin will result in our eventual destruction. We will plan and strategize, but Christ says even to those who appear to succeed, “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?” (Mark 8:36)

c) Sin results in separation from God, now and throughout eternity. **Isaiah 59:1-2 ESV** Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but ***your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you*** so that he does not hear.

d) Lastly, and most terribly, sin always results in death; spiritually, emotionally, and ultimately physically. Adam and Eve were told they would die in the very day they ate of the forbidden fruit (Genesis 2:17). Ezekiel (18:4) reminds us that “the soul that sins will die”. Paul says that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23)

(1) But when Christ died on the cross, he freed us from the curse of frustration, replacing it with fullness of genuine satisfaction (Psalms 16).

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<sup>2</sup> John Stott “Christian Mission in the Modern World”; Pg 107; IVP 1973

- (2) He removed from us the fear of impending destruction, promising those who believed in him eternal life (John 3).
  - (3) We no longer are separated from God, having been brought near by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:13).
  - (4) But most of all, he defeated our most intimidating and unconquerable enemy, death itself. So much so, that Paul mocks death in 1 Corinthians 15, saying, "Oh death, where is your victory? Where is your sting?"
2. How did Christ do it? By taking all of those "ugly manifestations" of sin, and the guilt incurred because of them on his own sinless body on the cross. The Son of God himself was murdered, and thereby satisfied God's righteous anger against all of the ungodliness that had been accrued by those who would now believe.
- a) Now when God looks at us he sees us fully, completely, thoroughly **justified!** No matter what is on my sinner's resume, Christ has wiped it clean. The Bible says that he will remember my lawless deeds "no more!"
    - (1) This means when I screw up, he doesn't "pull my file" and add another write up to my permanent record! I am now as righteous as Jesus because the righteousness I wear belongs to Christ!
    - (2) My righteous standing can never be affected by the devil or anyone else! It is why I say with confidence and gladness, "I **have been** saved!" (past tense). Here I cry out, "Hosanna! My Savior has arrived!"
- C. But (uh-oh!) there's a problem. Too often I find that sinful behavior is still my default setting. It is still all too easy to lie, lose my temper, or wallow in lust, gossip or unforgiveness. How can this be if I am fully, completely, and thoroughly justified as I said? It's because my salvation can't only be understood as a past tense reality wherein I **have been** saved, but a present reality wherein **I am being saved.**
- 1. Christ didn't die to start a religion, or make you behave, or simply to enable you to enjoy a glorious afterlife. His purpose was to make a brand new kind of people for his own possession and fellowship. His intention was for this state to begin now, and not only when we die or the world ends.
  - 2. This is what John Stott meant when he said that salvation is not only to be stated negatively, as in the freedom and deliverance **from** the power of sin; but also positively stated it is "liberation into a new life of service".
    - a) Because of this, although Jesus has already completely justified me, he is daily saving me from the ongoing ravages of my indwelling sin habits; my slavery to myself and my idolatrous desires. We call this process "sanctification". The Bible says that we are being transformed from one degree of glory to the next, and that this also, like our justification, is a work of the Spirit.
    - b) This is where obedience comes in. We get to cooperate with the Spirit's work of making us new by saying yes to Jesus.
      - (1) But don't confuse this obedience with the old law-keeping kind that we attempted and failed repeatedly before Christ found us. That obedience was driven by fear. We are now motivated by love for the Savior. As true believers, our hearts are compelled to please him.

- (2) Though I must pursue obedience because I love Christ, I must remember that my acceptance before God depends on what he has done in his death and resurrection, not what I am attempting to do
3. And this is what Stott means by “liberation to a new life of service”. By the Holy Spirit’s power, I do what I do, not because the law is breathing down my neck, but because since I have been set free from sin, I am **free to obey**.
    - a) The world often boasts of its freedom to blaspheme, fornicate, cheat and commit all kinds of dastardly deeds. But they do not realize that they are truly enslaved to themselves and to all of those self-destructive things.
    - b) True freedom is found only through grace, which (according to Titus 3:11-15) teaches us to say no to ungodliness and yes to God. We serve the Lord with gladness, and find great fulfillment in doing so.
  4. As I continue to struggle with what Hebrews calls, “besetting sin”, here too I can say. “Hosanna!”, meaning “Lord come quickly to save”. I have found him to be more willing to rescue me from my sin than I am to let it go.
- D. John Stott concludes his definition by saying that the end goal of our salvation is that we “finally we attain ‘the glorious liberty of the children of God.’”
1. **Romans 8:18 ESV (Pg. 550)** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. **19** For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. **20** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope **21** that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. **23** And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. **24** For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? **25** But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.
  2. Paul says “creation waits...(to)...be set free from it’s bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” He adds, “we ourselves... wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”
    - a) This is a reference to great day that we are all awaiting as the Lord’s church! It is a day when God’s great work of salvation will be completed in us. We have been saved because He has justified us by the cross of Christ. We are being saved as He sanctifies us through the ongoing work of the indwelling Holy Spirit. And we will be saved by God’s glorification on that day when even our bodies rise from the dead to fully submit to Christ’s saving power!
    - b) But it is about so much more than merely crawling out of some grave like a Christian zombie. Paul says we will be raised incorruptible and imperishable. No more aging. No more disease. No more emotional distress. But best of all...no more sin. 1 John 3:2 says that we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.
- E. This is the fullness of what Christ died to purchase: Justification (In your Spirit, you have been saved). Sanctification (In your soul, you are being saved). And

Glorification (In your body, you will be saved). Through it all we cry “Hosanna! Thank you, Lord, that your salvation has come! Hosanna! Lord come quickly to save us! Hosanna! Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!”

- IV. **1 Thessalonians 5:23 ESV** Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24** He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.