

The Multitudes

John 12: 12-21

Who was present at Jesus Triumphant Entry on Palm Sunday?

1. The great multitude that had come to the feast of Passover (v. 12). They heard of Jesus and heard He was coming. They took branches of Palm trees and went out to meet Him as He began His descent from the towns on the Mount of Olives.
2. The people who were arriving with Jesus (v. 17). These people were there in Bethany when He raised Lazarus from the dead (Ch. 11). They bore witness to the miracle to the people already at the feast.
3. The Pharisees who did not believe (v. 19). Even they said unwittingly that the “whole world” was going after Jesus.
4. Certain Greeks (v. 20). These were Greeks who converted to the Jewish faith. They made it a practice to attend Jewish festivals, especially Passover. They wanted to see Jesus and have an audience with Him (v. 21).
5. His own twelve disciples (v. 16). They did not understand all that was going on, but they would understand it later.

The people of scripture are often revealed to us as either an example to follow or a warning to avoid. In this case, we are told that despite Jesus signs and His teachings, the people did not believe in Him (v. 37).

We're also told that they did not believe because they could not believe (v. 39). When people close their eyes and harden their hearts (v. 40), God will complete their blindness and hardness based on their rejection.

In every one of these groups there were some that believed (v. 42), but they did not confess Him openly due to the cost attached. Also, they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God (v. 43).

I Cor. 2:9 – 3:4

The passage above tells us the reason for the spiritual condition of the multitude. There are three levels of spiritual perception.

1. The Natural Man (v. 14)

These are the ones in the multitude. They cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, and cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned. This is why the multitudes could not believe, and why they cried out for Jesus to be crucified days later.

2. The Carnal Man (3: 1-3)

These were the people that came religiously to the feast each year and offer sacrifices. These would compare to “good church-going folks” today that are ruled by their old natures. They are also often self-righteous. They tend to get into strife and disagreements. It should be noted that there is a spectrum. Some are more carnal, and some are less.

3. The Spiritual Man (2:15-16)

These are the ones that Jesus reveals Himself to. It is important to note that they may not understand all things now (John 12:16) but the Holy Spirit guides them into all truth. The key is that their hearts are open to learn and follow Christ. There is also a spectrum in spiritual maturity.

How does a person grow from one category to the next? And how can they move forward in the spectrum of growth?

Humility - “I don’t know what I need to know, but I want to learn”

Faith – “I believe what God has said, though I don’t understand it all yet”
Obedience - “I will do what I do understand”