

Mark 11:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way.

Analysis

And many spread their garments in the way (πολλοὶ τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν ἔστρωσαν εἰς τὴν ὁδόν)—the crowd's spontaneous action mirrors 2 Kings 9:13, where people spread garments before Jehu at his coronation. By spreading their himatia (outer cloaks) on the road, the multitude performs a coronation gesture, acknowledging Jesus as King. This wasn't a small group but "many" (polloi, πολλοί), indicating widespread recognition of Jesus' messianic significance.

And others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way (ἄλλοι δὲ στιβάδας κόψαντες ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν)—John 12:13 specifies these were palm branches, symbol of Jewish nationalism and victory (1 Maccabees 13:51; 2 Maccabees 10:7). The Greek stibadas (στιβάδας) means leafy branches spread as a carpet. This action recalled the Feast of Tabernacles when worshipers waved branches and anticipated messianic deliverance. By spreading branches, the crowd declares Jesus to be the conquering King who will liberate Israel—their expectations, though sincere, misunderstood the nature of Jesus' kingdom and imminent "conquest" through crucifixion.

Historical Context

The Triumphal Entry occurred during Passover season, when Jerusalem's population exploded from about 50,000 to over 200,000 pilgrims. Many in the crowd were Galileans who had witnessed Jesus' miracles and heard His teaching. Others came because of Jesus' raising of Lazarus days earlier (John 12:17-18), an

astonishing miracle that had electrified Jerusalem. The crowd's use of palm branches had political overtones—palms symbolized Jewish independence and appeared on coins during the Maccabean revolt (165-63 BC). The crowd hoped Jesus would lead armed rebellion against Rome and restore David's throne. Within days, many of these same people would shout "Crucify him!" when Jesus failed to meet their expectations of military-political messiahship. The entry route—from Mount of Olives, down into Kidron Valley, up to the temple mount—retraced the path David fled during Absalom's rebellion (2 Samuel 15:30), now reversed as David's greater Son enters in triumph.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does the crowd's spreading of garments and palm branches reveal about their messianic expectations and understanding of Jesus' mission?
2. How does the contrast between the crowd's enthusiasm on Palm Sunday and their cries for crucifixion by Friday illustrate the danger of following Jesus with false expectations?
3. In what ways might contemporary Christians misunderstand Jesus' kingdom, expecting political power rather than cruciform love?

Interlinear Text

πολλοὶ δὲ τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν ἐστρώννουν εἰς τὴν
many **And** ^{G3588} **garments** ^{G846} **spread** **in** ^{G3588}
^{G4183} ^{G1161} ^{G2440} ^{G4766} ^{G1519}

ὁδόν· ἄλλοι δὲ στοιβάδας ἔκοπτον ἐκ τῶν δένδρων,
the way **others** **And** **branches** **cut down** **off** ^{G3588} **the trees**
^{G3598} ^{G243} ^{G1161} ^{G4746} ^{G2875} ^{G1537} ^{G1186}

καὶ ἐστρώννουν εἰς τὴν ὁδόν·
and **spread** **in** ^{G3588} **the way**
^{G2532} ^{G4766} ^{G1519} ^{G3598}

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