

BIBLE STORY: PALM SUNDAY

Matthew 21:1-11

Central Thoughts

- Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to begin the Feast of the Passover because He was the true Passover Lamb
- All the events of His suffering and death unfolded according to the Scriptures.
- His entry into Jerusalem upon a donkey proclaimed Him to be the humble Messiah and Redeemer who would begin His reign as King by dying for His people.
- The multitudes confessed Jesus to be the LORD as they sang the song of the Passover: “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!”

Discussion Questions

What is the city of Jerusalem noted for?

It was the capital city of the Jews in which the temple was built. It is sometimes called the City of David, Zion, the City of the Great King, or the Holy City. Many of the prophets were persecuted and martyred there.

Why did Jesus send two disciples to a village opposite them to find a donkey and a donkey’s colt?

So that He could ride into Jerusalem upon them in fulfillment of the Scriptures (Zech. 9:9)

Who is the “daughter of Zion”?

All who were waiting for the Redeemer of Israel

What did Jesus’ riding into Jerusalem in this way proclaim?

That He was the Christ, the King, who had come in lowliness to save His people from their sins

What did people in the ancient world do to pay homage to their king?

They called him their lord, cried out to him for mercy, and laid their garments or palm branches along his path.

What do the disciples confess by laying their clothes upon the donkeys for Jesus to sit upon?

That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

What do the multitudes confess by spreading their garments and palm branches upon the road into Jerusalem?

That Jesus is their Messiah, the Christ.

When were palm branches used for celebration in the Old Testament?

The Feast of Tabernacles, which celebrated the goodness of the Lord and His deliverance of Israel from Egypt when He “tabernacle among them” as they dwelt in tents in the wilderness.

What is this day called in the church year?

Palm Sunday or the Sunday of the Passion

What week does this day begin?

Holy Week

What happens on Friday of Holy Week?

Jesus is crucified, showing Himself to be the true Passover Lamb and King of the Jews

What did the multitudes cry out as Jesus rode into Jerusalem?

“Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

Where did this song come from?

Psalms 118:25-26. Psalm 118 is one of the psalms that was traditionally prayed at the celebration of the Passover. When they used this psalm they were confessing their faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus, the true Passover Lamb, was entering Jerusalem to redeem us by the shedding of His blood upon the altar of the cross for us.

When do we sing this song in the liturgy?

In the Divine Service during the liturgy of Holy Communion. It signifies that the "Holy of Holies" is open to us through the New Testament in His blood that is distributed to us in the Holy Communion. As Jesus came into Jerusalem in lowliness to suffer and die upon the cross, so He comes among us in the lowliness of bread and wine to give us His true body and blood in the Divine Service for our salvation.

What is this song called?

The Sanctus

What does "hosanna" mean?

"LORD, save us now!"

What are they confessing by calling Jesus the "Son of David"?

That He is the Messiah, the Christ, their King.

What was the reaction of the entire city of Jerusalem to Jesus' Triumphal Entry?

Everyone was moved to ask, "Who is this?"

How did the multitude of believers respond to this question?

They confessed, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."

Did everyone believe in Jesus on Palm Sunday?

No, but the entire population was aware of Jesus and recognized that thousands of people were following Him and singing His praises.

Meditation on the Bible Story

The Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday begins Holy Week, which will culminate in our Lord's death and resurrection. He enters Jerusalem in lowliness, riding on a donkey and on a colt, the foal of a donkey, in fulfillment of the Scriptures. This very event and everything that transpired according to the Scriptures testified to Jesus as the promised Messiah. The Old Testament worship at the Temple in Jerusalem, with all its sacrifices for sin, would be fulfilled in Jesus' death upon the cross. He is the true Passover Lamb, as the multitudes sang, and by the shedding of His blood He will redeem the world from sin and death and inaugurate His reign as the true and eternal King of Israel. The multitudes believe Him to be the Messiah, the Son of David, and hail Him with the song of the Passover: "Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest!" They celebrate their King's entry into the Holy City by raising palm branches in His honor in a celebration reminiscent of the Feast of Tabernacles, which commemorated the Lord's redemption of Israel from slavery in Egypt. But they do not yet realize how He will accomplish their salvation. He must suffer and die for the sins of the world. By His suffering and death He conquers sin, death, and the power of the devil and wins salvation for all sinners.

Prayer on the Bible Story

Most merciful God, as the people of Jerusalem, with palms in their hands, gathered to greet Your dearly beloved Son when He came into His Holy City, grant that we may ever hail Him as our King and, when He comes again, may go forth to meet Him with trusting and steadfast hearts and follow Him in the way that leads to eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



Jesus Enters Jerusalem
Matthew 21:1-11