

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Mark 11:1-11 | Hosanna: God Save Us
Sunday March 24, 2024

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Mark 11.
- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.
- Notes are in the foyer. Take them home with you.

INTRODUCTION:

Today is Palm Sunday, and next week is Easter—more appropriately, Resurrection Sunday.

Because of these two essential dates in church history, we'll take a break from our verse-by-verse study in the Gospel of Matthew for the next two weeks.

Question: What exactly is Palm Sunday, and why do we celebrate it today?

To understand Palm Sunday (and Resurrection Sunday), we need to know a little church history.

Let me provide a brief background...

In the first century, the entire nation of Israel celebrated a festival called, Passover, once per year.

Passover is a celebration and a reminder of how Yahweh God rescued the Jews from slavery while in Egypt.

It's a fascinating story called the Exodus.

And the reason the celebration is called “Passover” is because God literally *passed over* the homes of everyone in Egypt one fateful night.

All those who smeared animals' blood over their front door were given life; those who didn't have blood smeared on their front door experienced death.

If there was no blood on the door, the Lord struck down every firstborn son as a result of disobedience and sin.

Fast forward to the first century, and Palm Sunday is a precursor to the Passover celebration.

For us today, Palm Sunday is simply the Sunday before Resurrection Sunday.

However, the importance of what took place on this day nearly two thousand years ago in Jerusalem is anything but simple.

What took place on this day is paradoxical.

It's both comforting and tragic, beautiful and awful, holy and profane—all at the same time.

This day was prophesied from the OT.

God promised that this day would come some 500 years before Jesus of Nazareth was born.

Palm Sunday is the day we celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem one week before His death and resurrection.

That's why one week from today, we'll celebrate Resurrection Sunday.

Half of Mark and John's Gospels are dedicated to what happened between Palm Sunday and Resurrection Sunday.

Nearly 1/3 of both Matthew and Luke write about this week.

Palm Sunday introduces what's known as Holy Week.

Meaning that this entire week is to be celebrated because it's holy—its set apart—it's different.

This week has been celebrated throughout all of Christendom regardless of denomination.

Holy Week focuses on the Passion of Jesus Christ.

Holy Week or Passion Week is named because of the passion/determination with which Jesus Christ willingly went to the cross to pay for the sins of people who believe in the Gospel.

The Gospel is this...

For the next two weeks, we take both an awesome and awful look at the last week of Jesus' life.

Please stand for the reading/honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 11:1-11

Mark 11:1— When they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples.

Mark 11:2— and told them, "Go into the village ahead of you. As soon as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it.

Mark 11:3— If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here right away.'"

Mark 11:4— So they went and found a colt outside in the street, tied by a door. They untied it,

Mark 11:5— and some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?"

Mark 11:6— They answered them just as Jesus had said; so they let them go.

Mark 11:7— They brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and he sat on it.

Mark 11:8— Many people spread their clothes on the road, and others spread leafy branches cut from the fields.

Mark 11:9— Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted: Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!,

Mark 11:10— Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! **Hosanna** in the highest heaven!

Mark 11:11— He went into Jerusalem and into the temple. After looking around at everything, since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

These are the very words from God for us this morning.

PRAY:

Rejoice, O people of Zion!

Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem!

Look, your king is coming to you.

He is righteous and victorious,

yet he is humble, riding on a donkey—

riding on a donkey's colt. (Zech 9:9 NLT)

EXEGESIS:

Mark 11:1— *When they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples.*

This narrative starts with the names of two villages and a mountain.

The other synoptic Gospels (Matthew and Luke) state the same thing.

Why is that an important detail?

Because it's factual information—these are real places and communities in the first century.

Bethphage means "house of unripe figs."

The exact location of Bethphage is yet to be found.

However, archaeologists do know that it was on the road going east from Jerusalem towards Jericho.

Bethany was also located on the eastern side of the Mount of Olives.

Bethany, which means "house of dates / house of sorrow."

Bethany was only about two miles from Jerusalem, which is probably where Jesus and His Disciples stayed this week. (cf. John 11:18).

Bethany is also where Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha, lived.

Mark 11:1— *When they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany near the Mount of Olives,*

The Mount of Olives is a mountain— so it sits 300 feet above Jerusalem.

It offers a beautiful view of the city, especially of the temple.
So, we have the location of our narrative.

Let's talk about timing.

It's important to note that today's story happens on a Monday.

In the OT, the Jews selected their Passover lambs for sacrifice on a specific date.

Per Exodus 12:2-6, this was done on the tenth day of the first month (Nisan) and then sacrificed on the fourteenth day.

The tenth day of the first month falls on a Monday.

Here's the significance...

While all the Jews were busy selecting their unblemished, spotless, perfect lamb to be sacrificed for the temporary covering of their sins—

Jesus enters Jerusalem on that same Monday. Why?

Because the Heavenly Father has also chosen His perfect, unblemished, spotless, sinless Son—to be sacrificed for the total and absolute forgiveness of sin.

John 1:29— ...John (the Baptizer) saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Question: Why didn't the sacrifice of animals take away sin?

The nation of Israel celebrated Passover for fourteen hundred years.

The celebration was only a band aid.
Why did it only temporarily cover sin?

Answer: Since it was man who sinned—man must pay for those sins.

Hebrews 10:4—For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

So it must be a man

At the same time, it can't be just any man—it must be a perfect man who has never sinned.

That's why the lambs had to be unblemished—they pointed to Jesus as the ^{Lamb}~~Lord~~ of God.

Mark 11:1— When they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany near the Mount of Olives,

The Mount of Olives sits three hundred feet above Jerusalem.

There is a special significance to that.

It goes back to the OT book of Ezekiel.

God gave Ezekiel a vision.

Ezekiel 10:18—Then the glory of the Lord moved away from the threshold of the temple and stopped above the cherubim.

Picture what's happening - God has left His people.

Ezekiel 10:19—The cherubim lifted their wings and ascended from the earth right before my eyes... The glory of the God of Israel was above them, and it stopped at the entrance to the eastern gate of the Lord's house.

This is one of the most devastating passages in the OT.

The temple was seen, almost in a literal sense, the dwelling place of God.

It was the meeting place between heaven and earth.

Which means leaving them alone.

So, for the Jews to even consider God leaving the temple was shocking and disastrous.

Ezekiel saw this vision when Jerusalem was being destroyed by Babylon because of their rebellion against God.

However, Ezekiel also prophesied that one day that God's glory would return to the temple—precisely from the same direction in which He had left.

Why is this so important? Stay tuned!

Mark 11:2— Jesus told them, "Go into the village ahead of you. As soon as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it."

I don't know about you, but these instructions by Jesus sound strange.

Is Jesus telling His Disciples to steal a donkey?!

No, Jesus was consciously and explicitly fulfilling OT prophecy from Zechariah.

So Jesus sends two unnamed disciples to get a colt—which is a young donkey.

Notice how precise this prophecy is fulfilled in our passage today.

Zechariah 9:9— Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!

-tender name

Shout in triumph, Daughter Jerusalem!

Look, your King is coming to you;

he is righteous and victorious,

humble and riding on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

The foal of a donkey is a baby donkey—less than one-year-old.

Riding a donkey (contrary to what we think today) was the sign of a king back in the reign of King David.

By Jesus riding this donkey into Jerusalem—Jesus identified Himself with the royal line of King David—which fulfills more prophecy.

After David, kings switched from donkeys to horses, and the donkey was eventually considered unworthy of a king.

All that to say this... Jesus' choice of the donkey not only told the whole world who he was—the promised King from the prophet Zechariah.

But it also revealed Jesus' character—humble.

Mark 11:2— As soon as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there,

Notice this little detail from Jesus.

Jesus reassured His disciples that they wouldn't look for this colt all day.

No, this is not a long search—Jesus guaranteed that.

Why? Because Jesus is God.

Mark 11:2— As soon as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one has ever sat.

That's an interesting detail, isn't it?

The details are supernatural in this narrative

Why is it essential that no one has ever sat on this donkey?

Because these colts were only used for sacred purposes in King David's day.

Something else is significant...horses and donkeys had to be broken in to ride them—which obviously means somebody needs to sit on them.

However, in Jewish culture, no one was allowed to ride the king's horse or donkey.

Only the king could ride and break them in.

History shows us that most kings in the ancient world, like Alexander the Great, rode on beautiful horses.

King Solomon rode into Jerusalem one time with over 20,000 horses.

These horses were not just any kind of horse.

There were no finer horses than in Solomon's Kingdom.

They were fit and beautiful and trained.

Josephus, a Jewish historian, tells us...

The riders on these horses were young men of perfect age, fit, and trained.

They were taller than most men and had long heads of hair.

Their hair was sprinkled with gold dust so that the sun's reflection sparkled in their hair.

King Solomon, dressed in white, rode in his chariot in the middle of these men.

These men wore armor and armed with bows and arrows.

Others were dressed in purple—lots of pomp and circumstance in this parade.

That's how Solomon entered the city of Jerusalem.

But not the King of kings.

Mark 11:3— If anyone says to you, "Why are you doing this?" say, "The Lord needs it and will send it back here right away."

The first six verses of this narrative demonstrate Jesus' precise foreknowledge and sovereignty over events.

Even this question contains subtle details of how Jesus is God.

Here's what I mean...

Throughout world history, the kings in ancient times had the prerogative to seize animals.

That's what King Jesus is doing here.

Verse three hints at Jesus' kingly role—hidden in the most mundane task.

In other words, "Tell them that the Sovereign One, the King of the Jews, requires this donkey."

Jesus was famous, and His authority was most definitely recognized in Bethphage and Bethany.

So, let's see how this story plays out.

Mark 11:4— So they went and found a colt outside in the street, tied by a door. They untied it,

Mark 11:5— and some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?"

Mark 11:6— They answered them just as Jesus had said; so they let them go.

What are the chances of all that happening just like Jesus said?

Why does Mark's Gospel spend so much time talking about this seemingly silly baby donkey?

Answer: To present Jesus as King AND Lord.

It happened exactly as Jesus said it would.

Mark 11:7— They brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and he (Jesus) sat on it.

The Disciples make a temporary saddle for Jesus.

When Jesus mounts this donkey, He does something He has never done.

Jesus now lets the disciples know that He was purposely going public as King.

Jesus has never done anything like this before.

He has never promoted public demonstration, drawing attention to Himself.

The crowds have always come to Him.

As we read through the gospels, Jesus repeatedly withdrew from the crowds.

But— not today!

Mark 11:8— Many people spread their clothes on the road, and others spread leafy branches cut from the fields.

We don't know how many people are in this crowd, but if we look in the rearview mirror, we can make an educated guess.

Two million Jews made this trip to Jerusalem each year to celebrate Passover.

That's bigger than Phoenix!

In addition -

- Jesus also healed a blind beggar in Mark chapter ten...
- Luke's Gospel tells us about the conversion of a tax collector named Zaccheus...
- John's Gospel tells us about Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead...

All of these events fed the crowd's excitement as they walked to Jerusalem.

In fact, John's Gospel says...

John 12:17 NLT—Many in the crowd had seen Jesus call Lazarus from the tomb, raising him from the dead, and they were telling others about it.

John 12:18 NLT—That was the reason so many went out to meet him—because they had heard about this miraculous sign.

Jesus performed countless miracles before that, but when He resurrected Lazarus from the dead, everybody wanted to see Him.

So, it's estimated that this crowd around Jesus was one hundred thousand people strong.

Mark 11:8— Many people spread their clothes on the road.

Why are people placing their clothes on the road so the colt can walk on them?

It's equivalent to laying out the red carpet for a king.

It also symbolized their submission to Jesus as their king.

Now, the submission didn't last long because next week the same crowd kill Jesus.

A similar thing happened when Jehu was named king.

↳ w/ people placing clothes in the ground.

2 Kings 9:13—Each man quickly took his garment and put it under Jehu on the bare steps., They blew the trumpet and proclaimed, "Jehu is king!"

Not only did the crowd put their clothes on the ground for Jesus, but also palm branches.

Mark 11:8— and others spread leafy branches cut from the fields.

These branches symbolized Jewish victory.

By waving branches, the people salute and hail Jesus as King and Messiah.

Mark 11:9— Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted: Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

"Hosanna" literally means "God save us."

Hosanna is a prayer or a shout for joy.

The crowd is shouting...

Psalm 118:26—He who comes in the name of the Lord is blessed.

This psalm was used as part of the Passover ceremony.

Mark 11:10— Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! **Hosanna** in the highest heaven!

"David" refers to King David because Jesus comes from David's family tree.

Luke's Gospel reveals some emotions of Jesus as He approaches Jerusalem...

Luke 19:41— As he approached and saw the city, he wept for it,

Luke 19:42— saying, "If you knew this day what would bring peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.

Luke 19:43— For the days will come on you when your enemies will build a barricade around you, surround you, and hem you in on every side.

Jesus is referring to the destruction of the Temple that will take place in about 40 years.

Luke 19:44— They will crush you and your children among you to the ground, and they will not leave one stone on another in your midst, because you did not recognize the time when God visited you."

Why?

Matthew's Gospel proves that the crowd didn't recognize Jesus as God..

Matthew 21:10— When he (Jesus) entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in an uproar, saying, "Who is this?"

Matthew 21:11— The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

Notice the title that the crowd gave Jesus—prophet.

Not king...not God.

— final destination

Mark 11:11— He went into Jerusalem and into the temple. After looking around at everything, since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

So, verse eleven seems to be disappointing.

What happened to the crowd?

This was supposed to be the moment for Jesus to be crowned King!

He just spent hours riding a donkey with a hundred thousand people celebrating... and when He finally gets to the temple...nothing?

King Charles was coronated nearly a year ago—and that came with a bunch of pomp and circumstance—yet nothing for the King of kings.

What's going on in verse 11?

Jesus' arrival at the Temple sets the stage for what will happen the next day.


When Jesus gets to the Temple, He's not acting like a tourist.

Jesus & the Disciples are not taking selfies.
He is inspecting His Temple.

He's taking a survey of how it's being used.

And He doesn't like what He sees, so Jesus takes care of business the next morning by throwing out all the pop-up stores and money changers out.

Back to verse one.

 **Mark 11:1**—When they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany near the Mount of Olives, he ~~sent~~ *sent* two of his ~~disciples~~ *disciples*

Now remember, the prophet Ezekiel saw God's glory leave the eastern side of Temple and move toward the Mount of Olives five hundred years earlier.

Also remember the Ezekiel prophesied that God's glory would come back to the temple.

Ezekiel 10:18—Then the glory of the Lord moved away from the threshold of the temple and stopped above the cherubim.

Ezekiel 10:19—The glory of the God of Israel was above them, and it stopped at the entrance to the eastern gate of the Lord's house.

At the end of his book, Ezekiel writes...

Ezekiel 43:1—He led me to the gate, the one that faces east,

Ezekiel 43:2—and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east.

The Mount of Olives is where Jesus started this journey on this first Palm Sunday.

Bethany and Bethphage are both on the east side of the mountain.

So guess who is riding from the east into Jerusalem?! —Jesus!

So when Jesus entered the Temple on that Monday evening, the glory of God returned!!!

That's why we celebrate Palm Sunday—God is back with His people.

God made good on His promise—just as He always does.

Jesus told the Scribes and Pharisees...

Matthew 12:6— I tell you that something greater than the temple is here.

John 2:19—Jesus answered, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days.”

Jesus was talking about Himself and yet they didn’t understand.

The King of glory was back in His temple. And yet, no one knew it.

PREACH:

The reason we celebrate Palm Sunday is because God the Father fulfilled His promise.

He provided God the Son—God Himself entered the temple that day as the perfect man and Messiah! *Savior? High Priest? King!*

Lift up your heads, you gates!

Rise up, ancient doors!

Then the King of glory will come in. (Psalm 24:7)

Who is this King of glory?

The Lord, strong and mighty, (Psalm 24:8)

Open the gates of righteousness for me;

I will enter through them

and give thanks to the Lord.

²⁰ This is the Lord’s gate;

the righteous will enter through it.

²¹ I will give thanks to you

because you have answered me

and have become my salvation. (Psalm 118:19-21)

And because God provided His Son on this Palm Sunday to be our salvation—

We too can joyfully shout, ***“Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”***

Hosanna—God Save Us!

And He did—and He continues to save us from ourselves and this world we live in temporarily.

Palm Sunday is a beautiful reminder that God keeps His promises.

Just look at the details in today’s amazing story!

- donkey!
- which direction
the temple!
- God leaves? enters

Palm Sunday is also a reminder that if you’re a Believer—that God is in the details of your life too—*regardless of your circumstances.*

God is in the details—even when we don’t feel Him.

God is in the details—even when we can’t hear Him.

God is in the details — even when we can’t see Him.

I don’t pretend to know the pain that your in.

Because we all have our stuff...

Some of us are dealing with unbearable physical pain—

Others of us are dealing with relationships and family issues that bring us to tears just thinking about them—

Some of us are fearful of our future—not sure how God will provide—because the older we get the harder it is to take care of ourselves.

Some of us are so lonely—where the depression in our lives is unbearable at times.

And the reminder for us on this Palm Sunday is that regardless of our circumstances—

God has proved His love for us on the cross and by the power of His resurrection.

And next Sunday, we'll come, gather and celebrate together—Resurrection Sunday.



PRAY:

LORD'S SUPPER:

BENEDICTION:

*“May the Lord bless you and protect you;
may the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
may the Lord look with favor on you
and give you peace.” ’ (Num. 6:24-26)*

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Palm-Sunday.html>