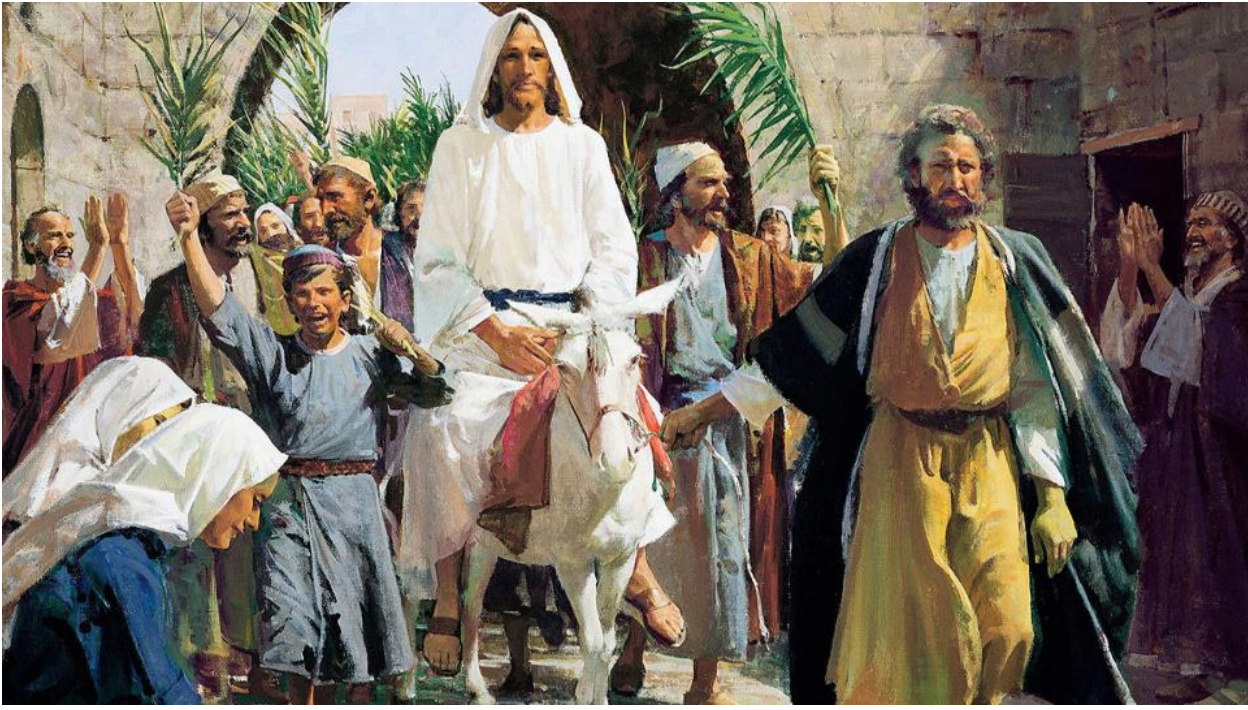


Ministry of Grace Church

Palm Sunday 2025 - Sermon Notes



Introduction

2000 years ago Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. This day has come to be known as “Palm Sunday,” probably because, as John tells us in his Gospel account, “... the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, ...” (John 12:12-13)” Palm branches are a symbol of victory and triumph and were often used in celebrations and processions. Also, according to John, they proclaimed, “Hosanna! blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord...” Hosanna is a proclamation meaning “Save us now!”

But, why? Why was there suddenly all the hubbub about this itinerant preacher? Yes, it’s true that he had performed a few miracles in the territory around Jerusalem. But others before Him had performed miracles. Why were they using accolades for him that were reserved for the coming King of Israel, their Messiah?

Perhaps they heard of the 5,000 people He had fed with 5 barley loaves and a few fish. If you’ve read through John’s gospel account, you may recall how the people reacted when he performed that particular miracle. Here’s what John said:

Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had done, they were saying, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.” So Jesus, knowing that they were going to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone. (John 6:14-15)

Perhaps, there were some devout Jews who knew their Scriptures. They had read of Daniel’s prophecies and they had calculated that their Messiah was due to arrive soon!

The Jewish people had been living for centuries under the thumbs of the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, and now the Romans. They had been oppressed. They had been taxed unmercifully. They had been

treated like the scum of the earth. And yet, their prophets had proclaimed to them that their Messiah would come. And when He did, there would be no end to the increase of His government or of peace. He would sit on the throne of David. He would establish His kingdom and uphold it with justice and righteousness, and it would last forever.

Messianic Prophecies

There are more than 300 prophecies in the Old Testament that talk about the coming Jewish Messiah. We are not going to go over all of them. We aren't even going to go over most of them. We will look at some of the most important ones, though, and we'll start with Zechariah, who talks about the Triumphal Entry.

Zechariah 9:9

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Make a loud shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is righteous and endowed with salvation, Lowly and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a pack animal.

Psalms 2:7-9

"I will surely tell of the decree of Yahweh: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth as Your possession. 'You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like a potter's vessel.'"

Psalms 118:22-26

The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone. This is from Yahweh; It is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which Yahweh has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it. O Yahweh, save! (Hosanna!) O Yahweh, succeed! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of Yahweh; We have blessed you from the house of Yahweh.

Isaiah 9:2-4, 6-7

The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in the land of the shadow of death, The light will shine on them. You shall multiply the nation, You shall make great their gladness; they will be glad in Your presence as with the gladness of harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For You shall shatter the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders, The rod of their taskmaster, as at the battle of Midian.

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of Yahweh of hosts will accomplish this.

Isaiah 61:1-2

The Spirit of Lord Yahweh is upon me because Yahweh has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim release to captives and freedom to prisoners, To proclaim the favorable year of Yahweh and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,

These prophecies had predicted a Messiah who would conquer the enemies, set them free, and bring in everlasting peace. But what about these other Messianic prophecies?

Daniel 9:25-25a

"So you are to know and have insight that from the going out of a word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be restored and rebuilt, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing ..."

Isaiah 53:1-12

Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no *stately* form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should desire Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our peace *fell* upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but Yahweh has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away; and as for His generation, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living, *that* for the transgression of my people, striking *was due* to Him? So His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death, because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth. But Yahweh was pleased to crush Him, putting *Him* to grief; if You would place His soul *as* a guilt offering, He will see *His* seed, He will prolong *His* days, and the good pleasure of Yahweh will succeed in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see *it and* be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, my Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will divide for Him a portion with the many, and He will divide the spoil with the strong; because He poured out His soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors.

But now, let's look again at what Zechariah said of the coming king (Messiah).

Zechariah 9:9

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Make a loud shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is righteous and endowed with salvation, lowly and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a pack animal.

New Testament descriptions of the Triumphal Entry

Perhaps, the people believed this was their Messiah and that's why they greeted Him as they did. But, he came in such a humble manner, could this really be their King? Here is how the four gospel writers described His triumphal entry into Jerusalem:

Triumphal Entry (Matthew)

And when they had approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied there and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to Me. "And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." And this took place in order that what was spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled, saying, "say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold your king is coming to you, lowly, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a pack animal.'" And the disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them, and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid their garments on them; and He sat on the garments. And most of the crowd spread their garments in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road. And the crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were crying out, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" And when He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, "Who is this?" And the crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee." (Matthew 21:1-11)

Triumphal Entry (Mark)

And as they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, and said to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. “And if anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ you say, ‘The Lord has need of it’; and immediately he will send it back here.” And they went away and found a colt tied at the door, outside in the street; and they untied it. And some of the bystanders were saying to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” And they spoke to them just as Jesus had told them, and they gave them permission. And they brought the colt to Jesus and put their garments on it; and He sat on it. And many spread their garments in the road, and others spread leafy branches, having cut them from the fields. And those who went in front and those who followed were shouting: “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!” (Mark 11:1-10)

Triumphal Entry (Luke)

And after He had said these things, He was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. And it happened that when He approached Bethphage and Bethany, near the mount called “of Olives,” He sent two of the disciples, saying, “Go into the village ahead of you; in which, as you enter, you will find a colt tied, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. “And if anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘Because the Lord has need of it.’” So when those who were sent departed, they found it just as He had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” And they said, “The Lord has need of it.” And they brought it to Jesus, and after they threw their garments on the colt, they put Jesus on it. And as He was going, they were spreading their garments on the road. Now as soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God, rejoicing with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, saying, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” (Luke 19:28-38)

Triumphal Entry (John)

On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and *began to* shout, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.” And Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, “Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.” These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him, and that they had done these things to Him. So the crowd, who was with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to bear witness *about Him*. For this reason also the crowd went and met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. (John 12:12-18)

What we know

We can tell from several facts that the Jews were expecting the Messiah to arrive at any moment. Let’s start with Daniel’s prophecy:

So you are to know and have insight that from the going out of a word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; (Daniel 9:25)

There were four Persian decrees in Daniel’s time regarding Jerusalem. Of the four decrees that could possibly be referred to by Daniel, only the last, the decree of Artaxerxes Longamanus (Nehemiah 2:5-9) was specifically to rebuild the city. This occurred in approximately 445 B.C.

The original Caldean text that this was translated from literally says, “seven sevens and sixty-two sevens.” It was commonly believed among first century Jews that this referred to “sevens of years” or “weeks of

years,” The Caldean year of Daniel’s day was 360 days long (12 months of 30 days each.) Because of that, there was an extra month added every five years or so. We would call this a “leap-month.” This is the same calendar that the first century Jews used.

Now, those of you who have always hated math, bear with me for a few minutes. 69 weeks of Caldean years is equal to 173,880 days, which equates to 476 of our solar years plus an additional 21 days. Taking 445 BC as the starting point, that brings us to the year AD 30 (note that there was no year 0, but years went from 2 BC to 1 BC to AD 1). Christ was approximately 30 years old when he began his ministry ([Luke 3:23](#)) and his ministry lasted for more than 3 years. This would lead to a date of approximately 4 B.C for His birth.

Why is it 4 years off? Doesn’t our calendar start with the year that Jesus was born? Well – No! In about AD 523 a monk by the name of Dionysius Exiguus (in English, this translates to Dennis the Little) calculated the date of Christ’s birth as 25 December 753 AUC (the 753rd year since the founding of Rome). Thus, having the year AD 1 begin on January 1, 754 AUC (the 754th year since the founding of Rome.). He apparently made an error in his calculations though, because we know that Jesus was born during the reign of King Herod the Great who died in the year 750 AUC (approximately 4 BC). By this reckoning, it would make the birth of Christ around 4 BC and the date of the crucifixion approximately AD 30.

Now, going back to Daniel’s prophecy and doing all the appropriate calculations (which I’ve done for you), we arrive at the date of approximately AD 30 as the year of “the arrival of Messiah the Prince.” The Jews of the first century, especially the religious leaders, had also done these calculations and were well aware that the arrival of their Messiah was imminent!

But, that’s not all! We have the witness of the Scriptures as well. In [Matthew 11:3](#) and in [Luke 7:19-20](#) we learn that John the Baptist was also expecting the Messiah. He even sent two of his own disciples to ask Jesus if He was the one they were waiting for. Also, after His resurrection, Jesus joined two disciples who were walking to the town of Emmaus. Here’s the conversation they had, as recorded Luke’s gospel account:

And He said to them, “What are these words that you are discussing with one another as you are walking?” And they stood still, looking sad. And one *of them*, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, “Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?” And He said to them, “What things?” And they said to Him, “The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a mighty prophet in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. “But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. ... ([Luke 24:17-21](#))

And – according to [Luke 19:11](#), the people listening to Jesus telling parables thought the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. These facts could easily explain why the crowds were waving palm branches and proclaiming, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” They believed that this was their Messiah!

So What?

Hopefully, this all makes sense to you. The people were excited because their long-awaited Messiah had finally come. And yet – a mere five days later the religious leaders (the ones who should have been most aware that this was, indeed, the Messiah) responded to Him this way:

Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. *Pilate* said to them, “Behold, the man!” So when the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out saying, “Crucify, crucify!” ... ([John 19:5-6a](#))

Then, when Pilate had found no reason for condemnation of Jesus, he wanted to release Him, but the crowd would not let him:

And answering again, Pilate was saying to them, “Then what shall I do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?” And they shouted again, “Crucify Him!” But Pilate was saying to them, “Why? What evil did He do?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify Him!” (Mark 15:12-14)

It's easy for us to sit here in our comfortable 21st century homes to be critical of the Jewish people. One minute they were proclaiming to their king, “Hosanna, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” And a mere 5 days later they were shouting “Crucify him!” In their religious zeal, they proclaimed what the sacred Scriptures had taught them. But – having become embroiled again in the world system, listening to their own selfish desires and the words of those around them, they rejected the very one whom they claimed as their King.

Before we get too harsh on these 1st century Jews, are we not guilty of the same duplicity at times? After spending an hour with our brothers and sisters being bathed by the Word, singing praises to the God who saved us by His grace, do we sometimes go out into the world and blend-in as if we belonged there? Does our everyday language reflect the fact that “we are supposed to be in the world but not of the world?”

Finally, consider this. The Jews who proclaimed, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord,” believed Jesus to be their Messiah, but --- they expected Him to immediately destroy the Romans and set the Jews free. They had unreal expectations and when their expectations were not met, they shouted, “Crucify Him!”

Do we have unreal expectations of our Lord? Are we disappointed because He has not done for us what we wanted and expected Him to do? Are we willing to let God do things His own way and in His own time?

Now Consider This:

When Caesar entered Rome after defeating his enemies, he entered the city with a victory parade. This was a grand procession celebrating the military victory and Caesar's glory. The parade started outside the city at the Porta Triumphalis, then proceeded through the Campus Martius and Via Sacra to the Temple of Jupiter. It included musicians, entertainers, and various groups of people and objects, including prisoners of war and the spoils of victory. The victorious Caesar was in a four-horse chariot, dressed in purple and adorned with symbols of victory. The triumphal entrance was a grand celebration of military prowess and the glory of Rome. It was a self-glorifying event for Caesar's ego.

When Napoleon entered Paris after his military victories, it involved a parade with large numbers of captured soldiers along with their artillery. The parade began at the Arc de Triomphe, which Napoleon had constructed for this very purpose. It was accompanied by music, cheering crowds, and sometimes even torchlight processions, creating a festive atmosphere. The parades served as a way to reinforce Napoleon's authority and to solidify his position as emperor.

But Jesus ended up being a disappointment to the people. Why? Because He was not what they expected or what they wanted. After all, He was not the conquering Messiah they wanted Him to be, but He WAS the lowly Servant The Father wanted Him to be! So, let me ask you, are you okay with letting God do things His way and in His time? Or -- are you still trying to be a Christian, on your own terms.

Let's pray.