

Palm Sunday

What Is the Meaning of Palm Sunday and why do we Celebrate it?



Perhaps your church has children wave palm branches down the aisles of the congregation.

Or maybe they use burn palm branches from year's past to create crosses on foreheads during Ash Wednesday.

No matter what the case, many Christians celebrate a holy event known as Palm Sunday.

This event commemorates when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, right before his death.

Although the people cried “Save us, now” and greeted him with anxious expectation, by Friday, they would crucify him.

And a week after he enters Jerusalem, he resurrects.

In this bible study, we’ll explore what Palm Sunday means and why we celebrate it.

What Is the Meaning of Palm Sunday?

The various Gospels hold accounts of what happened on Palm Sunday. Let’s take a look at Matthew’s account.

Matthew 21:1-11:

“As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her.

Untie them and bring them to me.

If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet “Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”

The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them.

They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on.

A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

*"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"
"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"*

*Hosanna, in Greek, is an exclamation of adoration or praise
(Strong's Concordance #G5614).*

*It is recorded only five times in six KJV New Testament verses
(Matthew 21:9, 15, Mark 11:9 -10, John 12:13):*

Matthew 21:9 King James Version

9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

Matthew 21:15 King James Version

15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were sore displeased,



Mark 11:9-10 King James Version

9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:

10 Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

John 12:13 King James Version

13 Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

*Hosanna derives its origin and meaning from the Hebrew phrase translated as "save now" as is found in **Psalm 118**.*

Psalm 118 King James Version

118 O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever.

2 Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.

3 Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.

4 Let them now that fear the Lord say, that his mercy endureth for ever.

5 I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place.

6 The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?

7 The Lord taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.

8 It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

9 It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.

10 All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.

11 They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them.

12 They compassed me about like bees: they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the Lord I will destroy them.

13 Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the Lord helped me.

14 The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.

16 The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.

17 I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.

18 The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord:

20 This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter.

21 I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

23 This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

24 This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

25 **Save now**, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, **send now** prosperity.

26 Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.

27 God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.

28 Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.

29 O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.



When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"

The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Palm Sunday remembers when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, as foretold in a prophecy found in the Old Testament in Isaiah and Zechariah.

The people wanted an insurrectionist to topple Rome.

Jesus did come to defeat an enemy, but not the one they had in mind.

Instead, he came to defeat the enemy of sin that ensnares every man and woman.

What is another meaning of Palm Sunday?

"Palm Sunday was the first day of Holy Week leading up to the Jewish holiday of Passover.

Jesus rode on a donkey through the town of Jerusalem on His way to conquer death and bring us life through His sacrifice on the cross."

Jesus served as our sacrificial Passover lamb when they led him to his death the Friday of that week.

What Do Palm Branches Represent?



So why did the people wave palm branches and place them at the feet of Jesus' colt?

No doubt in Palestine, where Jesus ministered, they had plenty of palm trees scattered throughout the land.

But do these trees mean anything in particular?

According to Easton's Bible Dictionary, the branches and trees actually have a significant meaning.

People didn't just grab whatever leaves they could find for no reason.

Palm branches are a symbol of victory:

Revelation 7:9 NIV:

The Great Multitude in White Robes

9 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

"Rising with slender stems 40 or 50, at times even 80, feet aloft, its only branches, the feathery, snow-like, pale-green fronds from 6 to 12 feet long, bending from its top, the palm attracts the eye wherever it is seen."

The whole land of Palestine was called by the Greeks and Romans Phoenicia, i.e., " the land of palms."

The Jewish people wanted victory, victory over the Romans who had invaded their land.

Jesus did come to enact a victory, but not quite the one they had in mind.

When we use palm branches in our services, we can remember how Jesus had conquered death in order for us to have a chance to have salvation through him.

How Do Christians Celebrate Palm Sunday Traditionally?



So how do Christians celebrate this holiday?

It depends on which church you attend.

Both Protestant and Catholic churches celebrate Palm Sunday.

Some may put up a few decorative palm branches while most churches you attend on Palm Sunday will dedicate the sermon to discussing Jesus' triumphal entry.

Others may have children wave palm branches down the aisles, sometimes singing a song that has the word "Hosanna!" the same phrase used by the Israelite people when Jesus entered Jerusalem.

Many of us, this year, also find ourselves at home watching Livestream services.

This article has some great ideas for how to celebrate Palm Sunday at home.

Reading the story of Palm Sunday aloud, or in private, is an intimate way to draw close to God and celebrate.

Meg Bucher shares - "Jesus' fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures on Palm Sunday is recorded in all four New Testament Gospel Accounts:

Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:28-44, and John 12:12-19:

Matthew 21:1-11 New International Version

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

21 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples,

2 saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me.

3 If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away."

4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

5

“Say to Daughter Zion,
‘See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”^[a]

6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them.

7 They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on.

8 A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

9 The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

“Hosanna^[b] to the Son of David!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”^[c]

“Hosanna^[d] in the highest heaven!”

10 When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?”

11 The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Mark 11:1-11 New International Version

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

11 As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples,

2 saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.

3 If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’”

4 They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it,

5 some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?”

6 They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go.

7 When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it.

8 Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields.

9 Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

“Hosanna!^[a]”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”^[b]

10

“Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!”

“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

Luke 19:28-44 New International Version

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

28 After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

29 As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them,

30 “Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.

31 If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

32 Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them.

33 As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

34 They replied, “The Lord needs it.”

35 They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it.

36 As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

37 When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

38

“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”^[a]

“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”

40 “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

41 As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it

42 and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.

43 The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side.

44 They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”

John 12:12-19 New International Version

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

12 The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem.

13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting,

“Hosanna!^[a]”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”^[b]

“Blessed is the king of Israel!”

14 Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written:

15

“Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion;
see, your king is coming,
seated on a donkey’s colt.”^[c]

16 At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

17 Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word.

18 Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him.

19 So the Pharisees said to one another, “See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!”



We can draw close to God by reading the truth of His Word.

Scripture promises, where two or more are gathered, He is with them!

Scripture also says, when we seek Him with all of our hearts, we will find Him.

God is ... *close!*

When Jesus rode into the city on Palm Sunday, He was God the Son coming close to us.

Because of His sacrifice, He remains with every believer through the Holy Spirit."

No matter how you celebrate, many Christians join in praise of Jesus on this day by using palm branches or reading from the

passages of the Triumphal Entry, to recognize and celebrate Palm Sunday.

When Is Palm Sunday?

Palm Sunday always falls a week before Easter Sunday (or Resurrection Sunday).

For this year, it falls on March 29, 2026.

A Palm Sunday Prayer for Joyful Worship



Thank You, Father, for the life You have given us to live.

For the sun rising to start another day, and the reminders of Your creation surrounding us.

When we witness a beautiful mark of Your creative hand, let us recall that Christ was with You, too, when the world began and the sound of Your voice.

He eventually came to earth, and watched the same sunrise we now see.

He looked into the stars in the sky, and now looks down upon us, prayerfully, with love.

With grateful hearts we praise You, God, for who You are and who we are in You.

Let the Peace of Christ's Palm Sunday entrance remain in our memories.

When we are fearful and anxious, help us to recall the Peace in which Jesus rode into the city, so soon after to be crucified.

God our Father, help us to act in grace and peace in the face of fear, both known and unknown, knowing You are incredibly close.

In Jesus' Name, *Amen*

Prayer for Holy Week

O Father, most merciful, in the beginning you created us, and by the passion of your only Son you created us anew.

Work in us now, both to will and to do what pleases you.

Since we are weak and can do no good thing by ourselves, grant us your grace and heavenly blessing, that in whatever work we engage we may do all to your honor and glory.

Keep us from sin and empower us daily to do good works, that as long as we live in the body we may always perform service to you.

After our departure give us pardon of all our sins, and receive us to eternal life; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

forever and ever. Amen.

Source: St. Anselm, 11th century

How do we obtain the Forgiveness of our Sins?



How do we get right with God, regardless of our individual sins?

Just say this Prayer and all of your sins will be forgotten, and you will have Eternal life, with Christ Jesus, in Heaven:

Lord Jesus, I repent of all my sins, and I ask you to come into my life and be my Lord and Savior.

Friends, if you prayed that prayer, I believe that you are born again, and you have ever lasting life, get in a good bible teaching church, and may you keep growing, in the Lord, and may HE use you to help save many souls for His Kingdom !

In, Jesus Mighty Name!
Rev. Jesus Del Rio, Ed