

## Palm Sunday

**Isaiah 9:2 ESV** The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. **3** You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. **4** For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. **5** For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. **6** For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. **7** Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

- I. Today is Palm Sunday. While I'm grateful for technology that allows us to meet together like this, this is the first time in 48 years I haven't gathered with the saints in person. Since we don't have the benefit of each other's comforting presence, it's vital we remember what Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem meant, and draw encouragement from it, especially in the uncertain days in which we find ourselves.
  - A. The Bible says after the Sabbath, Jesus was staying in Bethany, east of Jerusalem. He journeyed toward Jerusalem, they paused at another village, Bethphage, where Jesus sent two disciples ahead with specific instructions.
    1. **Matthew 21:2b ESV** "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. **3** If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once."
      - a) Only Matthew mentions two animals, a mother and its colt. Jesus rode the colt. Mark says the colt hadn't been ridden before. The mother was to keep the colt calm in the crowd that would meet them in Jerusalem.
      - b) Notice the authority of Jesus. "say, 'The Lord needs them'". **Psalms 24:1 ESV** "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof..." Everything belongs to Christ and must be surrendered for his purpose!
    2. Everything that happens on Palm Sunday is packed with prophetic fulfillment. Matthew and John reference **Zechariah 9:9 ESV** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
      - a) The verses following this passage in Zechariah are filled with implications of Christ's death and resurrection, speaking of his making peace while also bringing justice. It includes this stunning reference to Jesus' cross: **Zechariah 9:11 ESV** As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.
      - b) But this passage describes the coming Messianic King as powerful, bringing justice and peace, but also humble, riding in on a donkey!
  - B. On the surface, this doesn't make sense. Kings ride snorting stallions, or are pulled along in regal chariots. They are not humble, they are revered and feared.

But Christ comes riding into Jerusalem on the back of a young donkey, declaring with scriptural authority that he is the long-awaited messianic King.

1. He is both powerful and humble. Unlike foxes who have dens, and birds who have nests, Jesus had nowhere to lay his head, but he has commandeered a couple of donkeys! He would humble himself to death on a cross in just 5 days, but he enters the great city with shouts of praise, and people submissively spreading their coats before him and waving palm branches!
  2. The one who would be willingly put to death by the chief priests will the next day drive people out of the Temple with a whip! The One the people call the Son of David, heir to Jerusalem's throne would be crowned only with thorns.
- C. Jesus is a paradox. He is in charge, stumping religious honchos over and over, questioning **them**, even refusing to answer them. And yet, he will be led by them like a sheep to slaughter. How can he be both King and sacrificial Lamb?
1. The passage on Jesus' humility in Philippians 2 describes Christ's willingness to die on the cross. Because of this obedience, it says "**Therefore**, God has highly exalted him..." Exalted by his obedience to God!
  2. **John 17:4 ESV** I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. **5** And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.
- II. Isaiah 9, in its full context, explains all of this beautifully, looking forward to Messiah's reign and the deliverance he will bring, **(2)** "*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.*" Jesus said in **John 8:12b ESV** "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."
- A. The people of God would be punished for their idolatry and reduced to a mere remnant of their former strength, but when Messiah comes, they will say to him: **(3)** "*You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy.*"
1. This points to a fulfillment of the promise of God, that through Abraham's seed (Jesus) all the nations of the world would be blessed. Through Jesus, the people of God wouldn't be limited to only Jews, but would include gentiles from every nation who are called by God and believe in his Son.
  2. The result of this would be great joy for those now included in God's people! Isaiah gets specific in his prophesy to illustrate this: **(3b)** "*they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.*"
    - a) He says it is like when harvest time comes. All the labor to produce a crop is done, and the farmer happily enjoys the fruits of his labor.
    - b) He says is it like at the end of a war, when the soldiers can lay down their arms and divide the spoils they have taken from their vanquished enemy.
  3. The gospel proclaims all God demanded to be satisfied by Messiah's coming! The righteousness required by every point of the law has been perfectly fulfilled by Jesus; the punishment for our sins absorbed by him on the cross. This isn't time for work, it's time to rest, and rejoice in Christ!
- B. Isaiah describes the victory won for us in greater detail. **(4-5)** "*For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have*

*broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.”*

1. Isaiah looks back to the victory God won through Gideon in Judges 6-7 (“day of Midian”) This happened in an unlikely way, through impossible odds.
    - a) Is there a better way to describe the way the cross has brought us victory? How does the public execution of a man result in deliverance?
    - b) **1 Corinthians 1:22 ESV** For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, **23** but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, **24** but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
  2. Isaiah paints a picture of burdensome yokes, abusive staffs, and tortuous rods all being broken by God’s deliverance. This speaks of the end of the power of sin, of death, and of the devil. He says that the implements of our enemies attacks are “burned as fuel for the fire” - sickness, fear, depression - all of these hold no more lasting power over the redeemed of the Lord.
- III. How can all this be? What could possibly be the instrument of our freedom and triumph? **(6a)** *“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder”* We don’t usually dust this passage off until Christmas, but if you think the emphasis is just the child, you’re missing the point. The emphasis is properly placed on the child’s government. This child is a King!
- A. But he is not a king like the world has every seen before or since. No one else in all the future will be like him. **(6b)** *“His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*
1. “Wonderful Counselor” points to Jesus as the source of all wisdom. All truth begins with Jesus, and without him you cannot possibly know what is true.
  2. But he doesn’t just dispense advice. He is the “Mighty God”. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present, completely sovereign, absolutely holy.
  3. To be known as “Everlasting Father” doesn’t confuse him with the 1st person of the Trinity. Kings were often regarded as the “father” of their realm as the one who protects and provides. Jesus does this for his subjects perfectly.
  4. “Prince of Peace” describes the essence of his power and reign. He has brought us peace with God, something we cannot have without him, for sinners are the enemy of God! He has brought us peace with ourselves, as we are no longer under condemnation. We have peace to be able to walk in a world of trouble unshaken because he commands the winds and the seas.
- B. All of these wonderful titles tell you everything you need to know about his reign. But there’s more! Kings come and go, they live and die. But the Bible says, **(7)** *“Of the increase of his government and of peace **there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness **from this time forth and forevermore.**”***
1. Christ’s perfect reign and peace continue unbroken. It increases with every sinner who believes until one day, the angel will at last proclaim **Revelation 11:5b ESV** “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”

2. Jesus is the King. The crowds in Jerusalem did not fully understand what they were seeing, or what they were shouting as they cried out to Him.
  - a) “Hosanna” means “Save us, Oh Lord!” They were looking for a military leader who would run Rome out of the Holy Land. But Jesus’ eyes were on a much bigger prize - the souls of all his Father had given him from every nation, race, tribe and tongue who lived in every time and place.
  - b) When they said “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” they thought because of a few miracles, that Jesus might be God’s representative, not understanding that he was God himself, who would accomplish salvation for them in ways that were all-encompassing.
- IV. This message is not just about one more Palm Sunday. It’s pointing us to the fact that we are just like the crowds in Jerusalem. We often forget that Jesus is God, and that he is reigning now, even over coronavirus, the economy, your person fears, our government -all of it! Why do we forget? Because of what we see around us.
  - A. But Christ is not the humble sufferer on a donkey anymore. He is on a throne. Believe by faith today that he is reigning, that he holds all of this in his hand. Every wave of the ocean advances at his command. Viruses only act where he permits. His provision for his children is not limited by a paycheck or a supply chain. Job even proves that the devil only acts under his strictest authority!
  - B. Fear not! Be of good courage. Do not fear those (or that!) which can kill the body, but the One that can throw both body and soul into hell. Turn in full faith toward your Wonderful Counselor with your fear, to your Mighty God with your worship, To your Everlasting Father for your every provision and protection, and to the Prince of Peace for your comfort and assurance. He reigns!
- V. **Benediction: Romans 15:13 ESV** May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.