

PASSION WEEK DEVOTIONS -- PALM SUNDAY



The Triumphal Entry

Jesus and his disciples had left Galilee and were traveling toward Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, the remembrance of the deliverance of the Jewish people from Egypt. While on the way, Jesus took his disciples aside and explained, for the third time, what would happen to him at Jerusalem.

In Luke 18:31-34 (ESV) we read:

“31 And taking the twelve, he said to them, ‘See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. 32 For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. 33 And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise.’ 34 But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.”

Prophecies from hundreds of years prior would be fulfilled during Passover. Jesus, God’s One and Only Son, would be severely mistreated and then put to death. He would be nailed to a cross and raised for all to see. Having been mocked and scourged, there he would die – not at all the kind of King that the people were expecting.

Finally, the entourage approaches Jerusalem on the Sunday before Passover, the Sunday we call Palm Sunday.

Matthew 21:1-11 (ESV) tells us:

“1 Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, ‘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.’ 4 This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, 5 ‘Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’ 6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. 8 Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!’ 10 And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, ‘Who is this?’ 11 And the crowds said, ‘This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.’”

Surely the time had come for the King of the Jews to be revealed, the One who had been written about in Sacred Scripture. The events of the day were unfolding just as the prophet had said. How wonderful to be present for such an exciting and joyous occasion!

At long last, Jerusalem would see the Deliverer for whom the entire nation awaited. Life under Roman rule was difficult, and the Jewish people yearned for relief. They wanted to be saved by the promised King, who would fight for them and abolish the tyranny of Rome. They wanted the freedom to rule themselves. On that Palm Sunday the crowds excitedly shouted “Hosanna” – “Save”. He who comes in the name of the Lord is here!

As we reflect on the happenings of that first Palm Sunday, I wonder what we today are expecting. **Who is it that we hope to see who will deliver us from the tyranny of our day?** The entire world is reeling. Our government seems to be out of control. We are facing an unprecedented time of a major health issue, with restrictions of stay-at-home orders and “social distancing”. People have lost lives, lost family members, lost jobs and income. We do not know when it will end. Some are anxious and fearful. Most are concerned. What will become of us?

We want deliverance from all of this. There is a deliverance more important, however. We need this deliverance that only Jesus, God’s Son, can provide – deliverance from our sin and selfish ways, deliverance from the spiritual death that results from sin. When Jesus went to Jerusalem those 2000 years ago, he went with one mission in mind. He went to die on that cross, to offer himself as the perfect sacrifice necessary to save us. He did not come to free the Jewish people from the tyranny of Rome. He went to free us all from the tyranny of sin. We are slaves to sin until Jesus sets us free.

Reflection Questions

- **Has Jesus set you free?**
- **Have you given your life and allegiance to the one who came “in the name of the Lord” – King Jesus?**

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