

He said; **"Behold your King!"** (John 19: 14.) Pilate tried to reason with the mad mob by asking them, **"Shall I crucify your King?"** (vs. 15.). In connection with the crucifixion we read, **"And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross, and the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS"** (vs. 19). When the Jews wanted the title changed, Pilate refused to make any change (vs. 21, 22).

It is apparent from the dialogue between Jesus and Pilate that **Pilate believed Jesus to be their King** (John 18: 33-36, 37).

The sad thing about the Jewish people and people everywhere, even today, is that they do not understand the significance of the two comings of Jesus.

On that first Palm Sunday the King arrived as foretold according to Zechariah 9:9. It was part of his first coming to earth. It was to culminate in his death on the cross. Jesus rebuked his disciples for misunderstanding this. He referred to the leaders who killed John the Baptist and said; **"Those same people will make the Son of Man suffer"** (Matthew 17:12 NLT).

Later, after his resurrection, he said to his disciples; **"Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah must suffer and die and rise again from the dead on the third day. Now with my authority, take this message of repentance and forgiveness of sins to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem"** (Luke 24:46-47 NLT).

5. JESUS IS KING OVER DEATH

Jesus prophesied of his death and triumphant resurrection (Matt. 20: 19). Jesus was indeed raised from the tomb (Matt. 28: 5, 6, 7; Acts 13:29-30; 1Cor. 15:3-8). He is alive!

6. JESUS IS COMING AS KING

There's a second part to Zechariah's prophecy (Zech. 9: 10). It relates to the Second Coming

of Jesus to earth (Zech 14:4) to be the King of Kings, who will sit on David's throne in Jerusalem and reign over the nations of the earth (Matt. 19:28; 25:31-32; Rev. 5:10). The Bible and Jesus taught that he must 'suffer' at his first coming, then return later in all his glory as King of Kings at his Second Coming (Luke 24:25-26; 1Tim. 6:15; cp 1Peter 1:10-11).

Palm Sunday is a day of Celebration!

Truly the meaning of 'Hosanna' - 'Save us, O Lord' is a sinner's prayer. How wonderful that Jesus is our Saviour and King. As John said, **"We have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God"** (1John 4:15-16 NIV).

HOSANNA! Celebrate the King!

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Matthew 21:1-11 & John 12:12-18

One of the exciting things about Palm Sunday is reading again the Biblical account of Jesus riding into Jerusalem and the people crying out 'Hosanna'. It is such an interesting story!

The Passover feast was drawing near. Pilgrims from all over Palestine were coming to Jerusalem. Pilgrims from other parts of the Roman Empire were coming too.

Some of those pilgrims were coming this year with added expectation - Jesus was coming into Jerusalem. Perhaps they thought that this would be the time of declaration that many of them had been waiting for - the public disclosure and recognition of Jesus as the Messiah. Surely that would be a time of great joy for the Jews and terror for the Romans! (cf. Luke 24:19-21).

Feeding this expectant excitement was the recent news that Jesus had raised to life Lazarus of Bethany. Lazarus had been dead for four days (John 11: 41-44). The whole incident was well known to all the people of Bethany, and Bethany was close to the city. An event like this soon became common knowledge in Jerusalem as well (John 12:9-11).

A small crowd of pilgrims clustered around Jesus and his twelve disciples. As they drew near to the village of Bethpage, a small village close to Bethany, near the top of the Mount of Olives, Jesus asked two of his disciples to fetch a colt that they would find tethered with its mother near the entrance to the village. This may have been a surprise to disciples and crowd alike.

Surely a horse would be more fitting for the one coming as conqueror and king! But as he declared himself, Jesus was deliberately

fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9: 9-10 - "See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Mark and Luke tell us that the colt had never been ridden before. Matthew says that its mother was brought along too. It was a unique occasion, though not quite what the crowd had expected. But the crowd was excited.

As the pilgrims approached Jerusalem they began calling out, according to the usual practice, the words of what are known as the 'Hallel Psalms' - Psalms 113 to 118, which were sung at the Feast of Passover. With Jesus there, riding the colt, they could see an added significance to the traditional words.

"Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: "The Lord's right hand has done mighty things! The Lord's right hand is lifted high; the Lord's right hand has done mighty things!" (Ps. 118.15-16) Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter and give thanks to the Lord. (v. 19) The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. O Lord, save us; O Lord, grant us success. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you" (vv. 22-26).

The shout of "Hosanna!" simply comes from the Hebrew of v. 25 - "Save us, we pray!" It became a particular shout of the crowd, as they believed themselves to be at the great moment of fulfilment. The Old Testament words were so appropriate as they escorted Jesus into the holy city. "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Excitedly they cut down palm branches and spread their cloaks on the road. As the crowd entered Jerusalem, the whole city was thrown into an uproar.

A King was coming to town! People were asking, "Who is this?" Some of them were visitors,

of course. Up to this point, many had not heard of Jesus. They were told, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee." For some the question may have meant, "This Jesus whom we have heard about - even seen and heard - but who is he really?" "Is he really a King?"

The Bible teaches that Jesus is King

1. JESUS WAS PROPHESED AS KING

There are a number of prophecies that mention the fact Jesus would be King (2Sam. 7:12, 13; Psalm 2; Isa. 9: 6; Dan. 2: 44). Perhaps the most interesting prophecy regarding Jesus' kingship is found in Zechariah 6: 12, 13. (Jeremiah 23: 5, 6 make it plain that the "Branch" is Jesus.)

2. JESUS WAS BORN A KING

The angel Gabriel explained to Mary regarding the child she carried within her (Luke 1: 26-35), that he would be called the "Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (vs. 32, 33).

3. JESUS ENTERED JERUSALEM AS KING

This is the story of Palm Sunday. The OT prophets wrote over a 1000 years earlier that Jesus would come to his people as their King (Psa. 118:26; Zech. 9:9; cp. Luke 19:41- 44).

4. JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED AS KING

The climax of Jesus' life began when he was arrested and subjected to mock trials (John 18). Pilate presented Jesus to the Jews, who called for his trial and ultimate death by crucifixion.