

STORY

Palm Sunday - Matthew - 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:28-40, John 12:12-19

TEACHER PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, I am mindful how Your Son, our Savior, came in great humility to suffer and die for my sins, so I come to You now in great humility, asking You to guide me as I teach Your lambs Your Word. Unless Your mighty hand directs me I know that I cannot lead these children aright. I pray therefore that You would give me full measure of Your Holy Spirit that He may work through the Word in the hearts of Your little lambs. It is indeed a joy and a privilege to bring Your holy Word to Your children, knowing that You will accomplish great things in them through that Word. Thank You, dear Father. Amen.

VOCABULARY

Bethphage – (BETH-fa-gee) A small town on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho (east of Jerusalem). No trace of the city remains today.

"The Prophet" – A phrase used often in the New Testament which can refer to any Old Testament prophet. Here it is a reference to the Prophet Zechariah.

Zion – The name of the southwestern hill of Jerusalem where David built a fortress and his own house. Zion later was used to refer to Jerusalem and its inhabitants, and still later to signify all of God's people (the Christian Church).

Hosanna – Means "Save!" "Save, I pray" or "Save now." It is a Hebrew or Aramaic expression that came to be used as an exclamation of praise or honor.

OUTER AIM

Lower - Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey.

Upper - Jesus entered Jerusalem in humility.

INNER AIM

Lower - Jesus is our Savior, and we will worship Him.

Upper - Jesus, the Son of God, came as a humble servant to save all mankind.

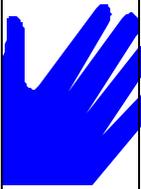
BACKGROUND

(Rupprecht Bible History References Vol. 2, pp. 299-309)

This account is used both in Advent and in Lent. In Advent it is used to point ahead to Jesus' Second Coming, and in Lent as the beginning of Holy Week. All four Gospels record the account, which tells us something of its importance. We find here a fulfillment of two Old Testament prophecies: Psalm 24:7-10 and Zechariah 9:9. (Consider reading these prophecies at the beginning of the lesson, asking the students to see if they can tell how they were fulfilled as the events of Palm Sunday progressed.)

v. 1-3

- ▶ Jesus traveled to Jerusalem knowing full well that He would die there. (Matthew 16:21) This is further evidence that neither Satan nor humans could take Jesus' life from Him, but He could lay it down willingly. (John 10:18)
- ▶ Jesus here demonstrated that, although He set aside the *full* use of his divine powers, He was still true God, able by His divine power to know of the donkey and know that the owners would allow his disciples to take it.



v. 4-6

- ▶ No matter how seemingly insignificant, Jesus did not leave even one prophecy unfulfilled. Here He fulfilled what was earlier spoken by the Prophet Zechariah.
- ▶ The choice of a donkey rather than a nobler mode of transportation is significant.
- ▶ When Jesus came the first time He came as our humble Savior.
- ▶ He came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. (Mat. 20:28)
- ▶ The next time He comes will not be in humility but in power and great glory.
- ▶ With the shouts of praise from the people we are given a brief glimpse of that future glory.
- ▶ See the definition above for "Zion." "Daughter of Zion" probably referred specifically to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but in a symbolic, spiritual way the words apply to all believers of all time, for Jesus rode into Jerusalem to save each one of us.
- ▶ v. 7-8
- ▶ These cut palm branches give the day its name.
- ▶ The spreading of palm branches and garments on the road was a greeting reserved for the arrival of conquering heroes, especially kings.
- ▶ What a strange procession we see here, as many of those who worshiped Jesus as king on Palm Sunday were probably among those later calling for his crucifixion.
- ▶ The scribes and Pharisees had hoped that Jesus would come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, but they hadn't counted on this kind of reception by the people.
- ▶ They were powerless to stop it. Had the people not cried out, the very stones would have. (Luke 19:40)

v. 9

- ▶ Imagine the scene as "a very great multitude" sang out the praises of their King!
- ▶ Yet this is as nothing compared to the celebration of all the faithful on the Last Day, when Jesus returns in pure, unrestrained power and glory.
- ▶ Like the word *hallelujah*, *hosanna* came to represent more than just its literal meaning in the minds of the people.
- ▶ It came to be used as an expression of joy; "praise the Lord!" It had clear implications to the Promised Messiah, who alone could save.
- ▶ "*Hosanna in the highest*" was roughly equivalent to "May our shout of praise resound also in heaven."
- ▶ So also we sing "All Glory Be to God on High!" (TLH 237)

v. 10-11

- ▶ The commotion stirred the entire city to ask what was happening and what it meant.
- ▶ Since Jesus entered during the Passover, there were many more Jews in Jerusalem than usual.
- ▶ One census during the reign of Emperor Nero reckoned the number of Jews in Jerusalem during the Passover at 2,700,000.

STUDENT PRAYER

Dear Jesus, on Palm Sunday You demonstrated to me just what kind of Savior-King You are. Although as true God You possessed all the power of heaven and earth, You set aside the full use of that power and became my humble servant-Savior. Thank You for coming to earth to take away my sins. Because You humbled Yourself and willingly went to Jerusalem to die for my sins, now I never have to fear death or hell. Please give me the same kind of humble, loving spirit that You had while on earth. I look forward to the day when You return again with all Your divine power clearly seen by all. Please keep me safe until that day, and please come quickly. Amen.

PRESENTATION

A harmony of the four Gospel accounts of this story has been prepared. This can be read in class, or the teacher can tell the story, or both.

ACTIVITY TWO

Photocopy the palm leaf on page 4 onto green paper (or have the students color the leaf provided) and cut out one for each student (or have them cut out the leaves). Have the children lay the leaves on the floor pretending Jesus is coming. They can say:

Hosanna! Hosanna! All the people sing.

Hosanna! Hosanna! For Christ the Lord is King.

APPLICATIONS

1. Note the self-discipline and the determination of Jesus to walk the path to the cross. He went to Jerusalem knowing that there Hewould have to pay for the sins of the world – a punishment that made physical crucifixion seem easy. Discuss with your students how they would feel and what they would do if they could see into the future and could know ahead of time when and how they would die. (if they had even one guilty sin they had not given over to God for His forgiveness)
2. Discuss the difference between stealing and borrowing. When does borrowing become stealing? Did Jesus tell his disciples to steal the donkey? Answer: Jesus is special in thatHecan read hearts. He also knew that someone would give the disciples permission to borrow the donkey. Jesus, who could read hearts, would have known that the owner wouldn't object to lending his animal. We cannot read hearts; therefore we will want to always ask permission before we borrow something. In this case it was a great honor to supply the Son of God with the donkey.
3. When the Jews received Jesus as their king, they shouted the word, "*Hosanna!*" This word, as noted above, means "*Save now.*" The people saw Jesus as a Savior, but most of them thought ofHimas some sort of earthly savior – a "bread king." When they shouted "*Hosanna,*" they might well have been thinking of Jesus as a king that would deliver them from Roman oppression. What Bible words or phrases do we use today without really thinking about what they mean? (Answer: Hallelujah, Praise the Lord, sanctification, justification, atonement, Thy kingdom come, etc.) We want to always strive for the meaning in Bible terms and truths.
4. What does it mean that Jesus is our king? (Answer: ThatHerules over us, not by force but with the faith and love worked in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. When we pray "Thy kingdom come" in the Lord's Prayer, we are praying that Jesus would establish and strengthen his rulership in our hearts.)
5. Palm Sunday can be seen as the day on which the Jews picked Jesus to be their king. This happened on the 10th of Nisan. It is no mere coincidence that this was the day on which the Jews annually selected their Passover lamb, which was then sacrificed five days later (after sunset on Thursday and therefore technically regarded as Friday by the Jews). Jesus was the Passover Lamb of God, sacrificed on Good Friday for the sins of the world.

PASSAGES

If time permits it would be beneficial to take time to explain and apply the following passages to the events of Palm Sunday. You are encouraged to choose one for memory work.

Lower

Matthew 21:5 - "Behold, Your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey."

Matthew 21:9 - "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!"

1 Peter 5:5 - "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Middle any of the above and...

Matthew 24:30 - All the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Matthew 26:64 - I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.

Upper any of the above and...

Hebrews 12:2 - Look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Psalms 24:9-10 - Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory.

HYMN CHOICES

"All Glory, Laud, and Honor" (TLH #160:1, 3-4)

"Ride On, Ride On, in Majesty" (TLH #162:1, 4-5)

"Great God What Do I See and Hear?" (TLH #604:1,4)