

(12) The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!”

(14) And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, “Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!” His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about Him and had been done to Him.

(17) The crowd that had been with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet Him was that they heard He had done this sign. So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him.”

(20) Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

Think on these things:

- 1) Today’s passage is celebrated in the Church as Palm Sunday. The crowd got their branches from palm trees, but not coconut palm trees as we might think in America. Can you name the kind of tree in Israel from which they would gather palm branches? It produces a common sweet found in the Middle East to this day.

The palm branches came from Date Palm trees. Dates are used for sugar production in the Middle East, as well as eaten straight from the trees.

- 2) The prophecy of Israel’s King arriving on a donkey comes from Zechariah 9:9. Looking up that verse, what are His characteristics? What gift does He bestow on the people?

Characteristics? **The King will be righteous and humble (lowly).**

Gift? **The King will bestow the gift of salvation (i.e., deliverance and/or eternal life).**

- 3) Passover is linked to an observance known by another name, i.e., Passover is Day 1, followed by this other observance across the next 7 days (Leviticus 23:5-6). Look up Deuteronomy 16:1-8 and 16-17. What is the other name and observance that connects to the Passover Feast (Mark 14:1)? What is special about Passover and this other observance (Deuteronomy 16:16-17)?

Other Observance? **The Feast of Unleavened Bread.**

What is special? **This is one of the three annual feasts with ‘mandatory’ attendance for Jewish men (i.e., traveling to Jerusalem to observe). They were not allowed to report empty-handed; each was required to bring an offering (tithe) appropriate to the Lord’s blessing.**

NOTE: Ancient "Abib" is the first month of the Hebrew year (Exodus 12:1-2 and Deuteronomy 16:1), known today as "Nisan." It generally aligns with March or April in the Gregorian calendar used by the rest of the world. Thus, the Jewish Exodus out of Egypt began in early Spring.

- 4) John records that the disciples did not fully understand the significance of Jesus' Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem, but figured it out later (v.16). While clearly this was a special day for Jesus, what else was going on that caused the crowd that day to swell even larger (vs.17-18)? Do you think you could make a similar "contribution" that might encourage others to join you in church?

Those who were present the day Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead were there proclaiming it to any in the crowd willing to listen, as they pointed him out among those following Jesus. (The next point is personal, but the focus is, "Are we enthusiastic enough about our faith and our church family to encourage others to come through our personal witness.")

- 5) What did the Pharisees come to realize (v.19)?

Look! The world has gone after Him...!

- 6) Why do you think the Greeks approached Philip to gain an audience with Jesus? Did they get to see Him?

Why? 'Philip' is a Greek name. They probably felt more comfortable asking for his help to get them presented to Jesus.

Get an audience with Him? **Perhaps not.... John only records that they asked, not that they actually met. It was a hectic day, to be sure, but maybe they gained an audience after everything returned to normal in the city.**

- 7) What truths do we learn from these 4 topics Jesus covered at the end of our passage?

The Son of Man's "hour" – **Jesus' "hour" had finally come (i.e., the time for His atoning death)**

Grain of wheat – **It must fall upon the earth and die before it is able to bear fruit.**

This life – **If I love the here-and-now more than the future, I jeopardize my eternity. If I hate this present life, there is an eternal future available to me. Paul describes Christian believers as 'pilgrims' in this world (Heb 11:13) whose true citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:20).**

Being a follower – **Serve Jesus, follow Him, "be" with Him, and, in turn, be blessed/honored by the Father.**

- 8) What is the teaching of the grain of wheat about?

The (coming) death and resurrection of Jesus.

People and situations I want to pray for this week: