



Palm Sunday / Holy Week 2024

The Week That Changed Everything!

Palm Sunday begins Holy Week, an opportunity for us to remember the last week of Jesus' earthly ministry that led to His crucifixion and Resurrection. The incredible events that took place in Jerusalem that week changed the course of history, and our destiny, forever!

Discuss with your group -

- *Have you, or someone you know, ever see a celebrity in person? Maybe you were at a gathering, concert, or sporting event when it happened. What was the response of the people around you?*
- *Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem for the Passover Feast on Palm Sunday would have had the feel of a celebrity sighting, but accompanied with many expectations of what Jesus would possibly do. What do you imagine it was like to be camped out with other pilgrims in the olive groves on the Mount of Olives that day that Jesus arrived?*

Watch the Video, then read and discuss...

The Maccabees and palm branches:

- **The story of palm branches waved in celebration of the Maccabean victory over the Greek army is found in 1 Maccabees 13:41-51, as well as 2 Maccabees chapter 10 (found in the Apocrypha) -**
 - *In light of the story of the palm branches, the defeat of the Greeks, and the cleansing of the Temple (celebrated at Hanukkah), what expectations do you think the crowds had on Palm Sunday at Jesus' arrival? Does this context change how we read the story?*
- **Read John 12:12-23 - Jesus' entry of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday**
 - *In light of the context, it's interesting that John notes that some Greeks were seeking to meet Jesus. What do you think John includes this detail?*
- **Read Luke 19:28-46 - Luke's account of Jesus' entry includes other details, including weeping over the city when He realized they were hoping for an uprising against the Romans.**
 - *This story challenges the desire for earthly power versus letting God work in His timing while pursuing peace. How does this speak to us today?*
 - *Like the Maccabees, Jesus cleanses the Temple - but how is it different?*
- **Read Zechariah 9:9-12a - This passage prophetically describes Jesus arriving in peace, which we now understand was His First Coming..**
 - *Zechariah chapter 14 describes the Second Coming of the Messiah, this time in battle against the spiritual and earthly enemies of God.*
 - *This is a prophetic vision foreshadowing Revelation 19:11-16, when Christ returns leading the armies of Heaven.*
 - *This same army has appeared once before! Read Luke 2:13-14 - what announcement did they make? How does this relate to Jesus' statement about peace on Palm Sunday?*
 - *As we understand this fuller context, we realize that Palm Sunday is an important fulfillment of Jesus' mission of peace in His First Coming that also reminds us that He will return to do battle against God's enemies!*

Holy Week Readings:

Several Psalms are an important part of worship during the Feast of Passover. Here are some to read throughout Holy Week to prepare your heart to worship our Risen Lord!

Monday: The *Psalms of Ascent* were sung by Jewish pilgrims as they made their way to Jerusalem for the feast. Imagine Jesus and His followers singing as they made their way to the Temple each day - *Psalms 121 & 122*

Tuesday: *Psalms of Ascent 124 & 125*

Wednesday: *Psalms of Ascent 130 & 133*

Thursday: The day of the Passover sacrifice. Jesus eats the Last Supper with His disciples in the evening. The first *Hallel* Psalms sung during the Passover Week are *Psalms 113 & 114*

Friday: The day of the Crucifixion. Read the *Hallel Psalm 116* and the *Prayer of the Dying - Psalm 22*

Saturday: Jesus in the tomb, and releasing captives from Sheol / Hades - Read the *Great Hallel Psalm 118*

Who Can You Invite?

Sunday, Resurrection Morning.
Resurrection Weekend services are a great opportunity to invite family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, teammates, etc. Share who you hope to invite and pray for opportunities!