

Palm Sunday Study Notes

Q.1 Imagine you are a Jew living at the time of Jesus. Your land is occupied by the Romans. You live in fear of being soldiers robbing you on your way home from your work. You hate the collaborators who work as tax collectors. You remember that God has promised to send a Messiah and cling to this hope. Tell one another how you would hope the Messiah would transform your land and your life.

Read Zechariah 9:9-12

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!

Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!

See, your king comes to you,

righteous and victorious,

lowly and riding on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

¹⁰ I will take away the chariots from Ephraim

and the warhorses from Jerusalem,

and the battle bow will be broken.

He will proclaim peace to the nations.

His rule will extend from sea to sea

and from the River to the ends of the earth.

¹¹ As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you,

I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit.

¹² Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope;

even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you.

Now read Matthew 21:1-11

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away."

⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

⁵ "Say to Daughter Zion,

'See, your king comes to you,

gentle and riding on a donkey,

and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. ⁸ A

very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

"Hosanna to the Son of David!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

¹⁰ When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"

¹¹ The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Q.2 Why would your heart leap at the sight of Jesus – this miracle worker from Nazareth – riding towards Jerusalem on a donkey? What might you hope would happen next?

Q.3 As you picture Jesus approaching Jerusalem and the Temple, in what ways is he:

- The Greatest Prophet?
- The Perfect Priest?
- The Perfect King?
- The Perfect Sacrifice?

Q.4 In the Old Testament, people threw their robes in front of Jehu, whom God had appointed king to bring an end to the reign of the prophet-killing House of Ahab and his wife, Jezebel. Throwing down their cloaks was likely a sign that they recognised his authority and were ready to follow him and fight for him. What does Jesus ask from us today? How can we follow him with all of our lives without holding anything back?

Q.5 Read Matthew 21:12-13

¹² Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. ¹³ "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it 'a den of robbers.'"

When Jesus came to the Temple he was appalled at what he found there. The Bible describes believers as God's Temple, saying that his Spirit dwells within us (1 Corinthians 3:16). How might Jesus want to clean up our lives? What changes might he want to make to our lifestyles, how we spend our time and money and how we practice our faith?

Read Revelation 7:9-12

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice:

"Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb."

¹¹ All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying:

"Amen!
Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks and honour
and power and strength
be to our God for ever and ever.
Amen!"

We might wish that we could travel back to the days of Jesus's ministry and see him enter Jerusalem but one day we will seem come in glory. The above passage from Revelation shows what awaits those who pass through the days of tribulation. They will get to hold palm branches and praise the victorious Jesus.

Q.6 How does this vision give hope to persecuted Christians today?

Take a moment together to praise Jesus and to remember that all of our lives are advancing to the moment when we will see him face to face.