

Lent 6 – Palm Sunday - Matthew chapter 21, verses 1 – 11:-

I have chosen the reading from the Gospel of Matthew because it asks the vital question of Palm Sunday. Verse 10 - “*Who is this?*” How will you reply?

Verses 1 – 3:- Notice the importance of Jerusalem. The centrality of ‘Mount Moriah’ goes back as far as the time of Abraham and the ‘Binding of Isaac’ see Genesis chapter 22, verses 1 – 14. The Temple Mount, now occupied by the al-Aqsa Mosque is a sacred site for Jews, Muslims and Christians. The Lord Jesus Christ knew that he was destined to die at Jerusalem and foretells the events of Palm Sunday, see Luke chapter 13, verses 33 – 35.

In verse 2 notice that Matthew includes the mother of the “colt”. This does fulfil literally the prophecy in Zechariah chapter 9, verse 9. Maybe Matthew was just ‘doubling up’ numbers for emphasis or more likely he knew about the stubbornness of donkeys! If the colt was unbroken (Mark chapter 11, verse 2 and Luke chapter 19, verse 30) it would make sense for the disciples to take the mother as well, meaning that the colt would then go with her giving no trouble!

Remember that the Lord Jesus is the one in whom “*all things were created, in heaven and on earth.*” (Colossians chapter 1, verse 16). He is Lord of nature and the unbroken colt would recognise its master.

Verses 6 – 11:- The ‘Red carpet’ has always been a sign of welcome for dignitaries! The laying down of garments under the feet of the ruler was ancient practice – see 2 Kings chapter 9, verse 13. The shouts of the crowd employ phrases from Psalm 118, verses 25 and 26. “*Hosanna*” means ‘Save now!’.

Note that up to this point the Lord Jesus had shunned all public displays although confessing Messiahship to individuals – see Matthew chapter 16, verses 13 – 20. On this first Palm Sunday he made careful preparations for an unmistakable presentation of himself to the nation. It was a time of ‘crisis’; a choice between the Lord’s Messiah and the worldly rulers! Remember the reply of the chief priests (the Establishment) to the question by Pilate - “*We have no king but Caesar.*” (John chapter 19, verse 15). The question in verse 10 demands the answer! “***This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee***”

“*Crown him, crown him! Prophet and Priest and King!*”

Prophet	Foretold from the time of Moses, see Deuteronomy chapter 18, verse 15. Expected by the people, see John chapter 1, verse 21 and John chapter 6, verse 14.
Priest	See Hebrews chapter 4, verse 14 to chapter 5, verse 10.
King	See John chapter 18, verses 33 – 38.

*Praise him, praise him! Jesus our blessed redeemer!
Sing, O earth, his wonderful love proclaim!
Hail him, hail him! Highest archangels in glory!
Strength and honour give to his holy name!
Like a shepherd, Jesus will guard his children,
In his arms he carries them all day long.
Praise him! Praise him! Tell of his excellent greatness.
Praise him! Praise him! Ever in joyful song.*

*Praise him, praise him! Jesus our blessed redeemer!
For our sins he suffered and bled and died.
He our rock, our hope of eternal salvation,
Hail him, hail him! Jesus the crucified.
Sound his praises, Jesus who bore our sorrows,
Love unbounded, wonderful, deep and strong.
Praise him! Praise him! Tell of his excellent greatness.
Praise him! Praise him! Ever in joyful song.*

*Praise him, praise him! Jesus our blessed redeemer!
Heav’nly portals loud with hosannas ring!
Jesus, Saviour, reigneth for ever and ever!
Crown him, crown him! Prophet and Priest and King!
Christ is coming, over the world victorious,
Pow’r and glory unto the Lord belong.
Praise him! Praise him! Tell of his excellent greatness.
Praise him! Praise him! Ever in joyful song!*

Fanny Crosby 1869