

who placed their cloaks on the road before Jesus were hailing him as the king of Israel, just as the Israelites had done for centuries before. So what about the palm branches?

Palm branches were a sign of the Jewish nation. In fact, they were a common decoration and even appeared on some coins. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem happened at the beginning of Passover week, which celebrated the Israelites' deliverance from Egyptian slavery, so that was already in the air. In addition to that, about two hundred years before Jesus rode into Jerusalem, a Jewish family called the Maccabees, along with their followers, defeated the Syrian leader Antiochus Epiphanes who famously sacrificed a pig in the temple. To celebrate the victory, everyone cut palm branches down and marched around Jerusalem. So, the palm branches, along with the cloaks, along with the timing of Passover, all make it clear that the people who welcomed Jesus believed he was the new Davidic king whom, they hoped, would deliver them from their most recent enemy, Rome. And so, they shouted, *"Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"*

## King Jesus

All of this brings up the question of what the people understood and what they misunderstood. Israel's history as it related to kings was rocky at best. In 1 Samuel 8, we read that the prophet had become old and his sons did not follow the Lord. Verses 4-5 says, *"So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, 'You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.'" Samuel was upset and so prayed to the Lord. God responds in verse seven by saying, "It is not you they have rejected,*

*but they have rejected me as their king."* The people wanted a king who would save them just like all of the other nations had, forgetting that God was their king, and not just any king, but a perfect and faithful king.

Seeing what Jesus had done, the people had already tried to make him king. In John 6, Jesus fed about five thousand men, not counting women and children. After seeing that miracle, verses 14-15 say, *"After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, 'Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.'" Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself."* Jesus rejected their idea of what it meant to be king. In fact, after this miracle, the crowd chased Jesus down. In verse 26, Jesus says to them, *"I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill."*

## Conclusion

Where does that leave us this morning? First, as we often hear, the Jews of Jesus' day misunderstood what kind of king Jesus would be. He would, in fact, be a Davidic king, but he would not defeat the Romans, as they had hoped. Instead, Jesus would defeat sin, the devil, and all of the powers of hell. The final enemy to be destroyed would be death itself, which would be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14). Jesus didn't come to be just another Israelite king, who saved them from just another world power. Jesus was the king, who came to save them from sin and death, which was the source of all of the darkness they experienced in the world, including in their own hearts. That leads us to our second point.

Second, we don't set the terms for Jesus' kingship over our lives. Let me put that another way. We don't select Jesus as our king so that he can do for us what we want him to. We scoff at the multitudes who wanted to make Jesus king so that they could have their fill of bread and fish. But I wonder sometimes just how different we are or would be if we were hungry. We scoff at the multitudes who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem so that he could deliver them from Roman occupation. However, it's worth asking ourselves if we don't fall prey to the same trap or would if we weren't free. In fact, the truth is that we are free but still want Jesus to help our candidate. We want Jesus to support our party. We want Jesus to take our side on various social issues. We want Jesus to give us the power and influence we think we deserve. In short, we want Jesus on a horse, not a colt. We sometimes think Jesus is here for us, not that we're here for him. Jesus is king, which means he sets his own agenda and establishes his own kingdom.

Third, Jesus is the king of kings and will one day come back again on a horse and he will judge his enemies. What's more, Jesus says that Psalm 118:26 will once again be quoted by his people who will then be ready to receive him as king. In Matthew 23, Jesus mourns over the rebellion of Jerusalem. In verses 37-39, he says, *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"*



**March 28, 2021**

**Pastor Jared Stoner**



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## Easter 2021 #4

March 28, 2021

Pastor Jared Stoner

Good morning! It's great to have all of you join us, whether in person or online. Next Sunday is Easter Sunday and we're looking forward to a great celebration together. Of course, that means that today is Palm Sunday, the day we celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. As in previous weeks, we'll use a few Scriptures to better understand the significance of this part of the story. This morning, we're going to start with Psalm 118:19-29.

### Hosanna

**Psalm 118:19–29** says, <sup>19</sup>*Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.* <sup>20</sup>*This is the gate of the LORD through which the righteous may enter.* <sup>21</sup>*I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.* <sup>22</sup>*The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone;* <sup>23</sup>*the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.* <sup>24</sup>*This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.* <sup>25</sup>*O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success.* <sup>26</sup>*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you.* <sup>27</sup>*The LORD is God, and he has made his light shine upon us. With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar.* <sup>28</sup>*You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God, and I will exalt you.* <sup>29</sup>*Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.*

Psalm 118 celebrates an unspecified occasion

where God's people joyfully celebrated his deliverance. They enter into Jerusalem in a festive procession, going through the gates into the temple to worship the Lord. Although we don't know the specific incident that gave rise to this Psalm, it was later used at the Feast of Tabernacles and Passover. In the west, we don't typically have festive processions anymore. However, our brothers and sisters from the east know what this looks like. Trust me, they know how to process with joy and celebration.

Verses 25 says, <sup>25</sup>*O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success.* <sup>26</sup>*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.* In Hebrew, the phrase "save us" is the word that when transliterated into Greek is Hosanna. In fact, verses 14-15 attest to God's salvation when they say, <sup>14</sup>*The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.* <sup>15</sup>*Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: "The LORD'S right hand has done mighty things!"* In Psalm 118, the Israelites look back to the salvation God had provided and then turn to the future and pray that he would once again save his people.

Verse 26 then says, <sup>26</sup>*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.* At the beginning of Psalm 118, the king recounts how all the nations had surrounded him and swarmed him like bees, but with the Lord's help he had cut them off. As God's anointed king, he led his people to victory, but not by his own strength, but by the name of the Lord. Of course, when we read these verses, we can't help but think of how they're used in the New Testament, specifically as Jesus entered Jerusalem. With that, let's turn to Mark 11:1-11.

### Jesus Is King

Mark 11:1–11 says, <sup>1</sup>*As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples,* <sup>2</sup>*saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.* <sup>3</sup>*If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'"* <sup>4</sup>*They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it,* <sup>5</sup>*some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?"* <sup>6</sup>*They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go.* <sup>7</sup>*When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it.* <sup>8</sup>*Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields.* <sup>9</sup>*Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!"* <sup>10</sup>*"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"* <sup>11</sup>*"Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"* <sup>12</sup>*"Hosanna in the highest!"* <sup>13</sup>*Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple.*

At the end of Mark 10, Jesus heals the blind man called Bartimaeus. From there, Jesus and his disciples head to Jerusalem, stopping at Bethphage and Bethany on the eastern side of the Mount of Olives, which is east of Jerusalem. Jesus sent two disciples to the village ahead and told them they would find a colt tied up and that they were to untie it and bring it back. In the event that people wondered why two complete strangers were taking a colt that didn't belong to them, they were to say that the Lord needs it, but will return it shortly. Sure enough, people asked them what they were doing and they responded as Jesus had instructed and the people let them go.

In verse seven, the disciples put their cloaks over the donkey and Jesus sat on it and began to ride into Jerusalem. Verse eight tells us that as he rode along the road, people placed their cloaks on the road in front of him, while others cut and waved palm branches. All of them together shouted the words of Psalm 118, *"Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"* Let's talk about that for a minute. What's with the colt? What's with the cloaks? What's with the palm branches? Let's start with the colt.

### Colts, Cloaks, and Palm Branches

Jesus rode in on a colt to fulfill the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9, which says, *"Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."* The Israelite kings rode horses in times of war and colts in times of peace. In Zechariah 9:9, Israel's savior is pictured as their king, who comes to them in righteousness and gentleness. Now let's talk about the cloaks.

Why would people put their cloaks on the road in front of the colt on which Jesus rode? In 2Kings, the prophet Elisha chose one of the prophets with him and told him to go to Ramoth Gilead and anoint Jehu king over Israel. When his companions asked him about his conversation with the prophet, he finally told the truth and said, <sup>12</sup>*Here's what he told me: 'This is what the LORD says: I anoint you king over Israel.'* <sup>13</sup>*They hurried and took their cloaks and spread them under him on the bare steps. Then they blew the trumpet and shouted, "Jehu is king!"* So, the people