

Palm Sunday

Matthew 21:1-17

The Return of the King

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Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

--Jesus

Matthew 28:18

Back Ground for Passage:

1. Jesus' Triumphal Entry to Jerusalem likely happened on a Sunday morning, March 29, 33AD.
2. This day is celebrated as Palm Sunday and is the first day of Holy Week, the last week of Jesus' life before his crucifixion and resurrection.
3. Jesus has been hidden and quiet about his Messianic identity up to now, revealing himself explicitly only to his disciples.
4. This day represents Jesus' public statement that he is indeed claiming to be the Messiah for both Israel and for the world.
5. The donkey Jesus rides in on holds several elements of significance
 - a. It fulfills Zechariah 9:9. A Messianic prophecy predicting the return of a king in the line of David.
 - b. It represents Jesus' posture of humility and peace. As the prophecy foretells, "See, your king comes to you, *gentle* and riding on a donkey"
6. The leafy branches people lay out on the ground, referred to in verse 8, is only specifically identified as palm branches in John 12:13.
7. Palm fronds:
 - a. were widely used in the ancient near east to honor royalty, and to celebrate victory.
 - b. Solomon in particular used the image of palm trees to decorate the walls and doors of the temple.
 - c. While Leviticus 23:40 depicts the Israelites using Palm fronds to wave in celebration during the Feast of Tabernacles.
 - d. Revelation 7:9 depicts the multitude surrounding the throne of God and the Lamb worshipping while holding palm fronds in their hands.

Main Idea: When Jesus rides in on a donkey, he is signaling to the crowd that their long awaited king and Messiah has finally come.

Jesus claims and uses authority in a way that surprises, excites and threatens people in Jerusalem.

Jesus claims and uses authority in a few specific ways:

1. **TO LAY CLAIM OVER OUR POSSESSIONS:** In vs 2 Jesus sends his disciples to lay claim over someone's donkey and colt for his special purpose.
2. **TO DRIVE OUT THE DISTRACTIONS TO OUR LIFE OF PRAYER AND WORSHIP:** In vs 12 Jesus "drove out" all who were buying and selling there and declared, "My house will be called a house of prayer..."
3. **TO HEAL OUR DEEPEST HURTS:** In vs 14 Jesus healed the lame and the blind at the temple. Jesus uses his authority to heal our pain, not to inflict pain.
4. **TO INSPIRE OUR TOTAL ALLEGIANCE AND WORSHIP:** Jesus uses his authority to inspire an allegiance and worship that no other human being could ever appropriately receive. In vs 16, he responds to the indignant religious leaders by quoting Psalm 8, and declaring he is worthy of receiving the praise normally only appropriate for God.

Jesus uses his authority to serve, bless, renew, strengthen, save, heal, protect and cleanse our lives.

Discussion Questions:

1. When has someone used authority in your life in a way that frustrated, annoyed, offended or hurt you?
2. When have you experienced Jesus claim authority in your life?
3. When have you resisted his claim to authority?
4. When have you surrendered to his claim to authority?

The Big Question:

In what way is Jesus calling you to surrender to his authority today?