

WILDERNESS: PALM SUNDAY

March 29, 2026

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Matthew 21:1-11

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, just say this, "The Lord needs them." And he will send them immediately.* ⁴This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, ⁵ 'Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'

⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸A very large crowd* spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

'Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

¹⁰When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, 'Who is this?' ¹¹The crowds were saying, 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.'

REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase, or image stands out to you?
2. What memories do you have of watching or being in a parade? What was the purpose of the parade?
3. What do you think was the purpose of Jesus' parade into Jerusalem?

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4. Jesus enters Jerusalem to great expectation. The Messiah was thought to be the one who would liberate the Israelite people from their captivity (to Rome). The Messiah would expel the foreign armies, restore the Davidic throne, and bring relief to suffering people.

- a. Does Jesus do this? Why or why not?
- b. How does the image of Jesus on a donkey contrast with the expectations of a powerful military ruler?

5. Holy week begins with Palm Sunday and concludes with the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus (called "Good Friday"). The shouts of "Hosanna!" on Palm Sunday becomes something very different by week's end.

- a. Why might people resist and work against the ministry and message of Jesus?
- b. Look at verse 10 and how the city of Jerusalem was "in turmoil." Why might the Roman authorities want to make an example of Jesus with public execution?

6. People were expecting God to do big things through Jesus. What big things might people

still long for God to do and make possible in today's world? What big things are you hoping for God to do and make possible?