

Bible Study – Palm Sunday (Psalm 118:1-2,19-29 and Mark 11:1-11)

(In preparation for Sermon on 28th March 2021 by Colin Morrow)

Some background on Psalm 118...

Psalms 113 to 118 are called the "Great Hallel" - Hallel meaning praise (where we get Hallelujah from meaning "Praise the Lord").

So, the "Great Hallel" means "Great songs of Praise"

Psalm 118 has had a special place for Christian martyrs and leaders.

Martin Luther said: "This is my own beloved psalm. When emperors and kings, the wise and the learned, and even the saints could not aid me, this psalm proved a friend and helped me out of many great troubles"

Psalm 118 was intended to be sung in a processional, as worshippers journeyed towards Jerusalem to offer sacrifices and praises to God.

It has a personal application to King David's life (2 Samuel 6 - dancing before the Ark) and to Jesus' life (the first Palm Sunday)

Read Psalm 118:1-2 and 29

1. What do we learn about God's love?

God is always good and his love endures forever. God loves with an everlasting love; sometimes humans can't do that, because sinful natures get in the way.

2. What's Israel's response? And what should our response be?

Israel's response is "His (God's) love endures forever!"

Our response should be the same; we should realize that with God we have someone who loves with a true and lasting love. This should bring us great comfort!

And our response should be as in v29 - to give thanks to God because His love lasts forever.

God has shown His love to us in sending Jesus, to die for our sin and die our death, and grant us forgiveness; that love lasts into eternity, where we can live in the House of the Lord forever. For this, we should be eternally thankful!

Read Psalm 118:19-21

3. What is being described in these verses?

V19 - What is described is entering the gates (that David and Jesus) both did.

V20 - This is the gate of the Lord; that only the righteous may enter.

Jesus entered this gate on that 1st Palm Sunday, to glorify the Father and accomplish His divine purpose.

He not only entered through this gate. But He, Himself, is the gate.

As John 10:9 says: "I am the gate; whoever enters through Me will be saved" That's how we become righteous as we enter through the gate of Jesus.

As Jesus says in John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through Me"

As V21 says: "you have become my salvation" - Jesus is our salvation - and so we should give thanks to Him; that's really what the Psalm is about, giving thanks and praise to King Jesus.

Read Psalm 118:22-24

4. What is the **stone** referred to? Who does it apply to? (cf. Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:11; Acts 4:11; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:4, 7)

As King David was rejected by Israel, for a while, as their King; so too, King Jesus, The Christ (God's Chosen Anointed One) was rejected.

The Psalm describes this rejection in terms of a stone cast aside when building a house (a temple); the stone was seen as not being useful.

But the stone cast aside (Jesus) turns about to be the most important stone for the building. In building terms, the most important stone, is the chief cornerstone, which is laid first and because the foundational stone; from which all measurements are taken and from which the building proceeds.

In terms of Jesus, He is like the chief cornerstone of a spiritual building, called the Church (the universal spiritual body of believers). Without Jesus, the cornerstone, we have no foundation to build our lives and hope upon.

In Jesus' ministry, He referred to these verses as relating to Himself:

Matthew 21:42: Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"

Mark 12:10-11: Haven't you read this passage of Scripture: "'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"

The Apostle Peter also says the stone of Psalm 118 is referring to Jesus; in Acts 4:11:

Jesus is "'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.'

The Apostle Paul says in Ephesians 2:20 that the Church is: built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

The Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 2:4 describes Jesus as "The Living Stone" rejected by humans but chosen by God as precious to Him; and 1 Peter 2:7 says to those who believe, this Stone (Jesus) is precious; but to those who don't believe it is the stone from Psalm 118 that the builders rejected, even though it is the cornerstone (the most important stone to build our lives on)

Read Psalm 118:25-28

5. How do verses 25 and 26 relate to Palm Sunday? (cf. Matthew 21:9; Mark 11:9)

In v25 and 26 - the people cry out to the Lord - asking to be saved, to be successful - and there sing praises to the One who comes in the name of the Lord, to bring this salvation and victory.

At Palm Sunday, as Jesus rode into Jerusalem.

The crowd called out the same words in Matthew 21:9 and Mark 11: 9.

Remember, we have said many times the Old Testament is a shadow or prefiguring of Jesus. So, as we read the Old Testament, we should be looking to see how it relates to Jesus; and in this case it's very clear, as the New Testament quotes Psalm 118 on Palm Sunday.

6. What's the light referred to in verse 27? (cf. 1 Peter 2:9)

The light referred to is Jesus, the true light that gives light to everyone (John 1:9) and the light of the world which if people follow, they will never walk in darkness, but have the light of life (John 8:12).

7. What praise is given to God in verse 28?

It is personal praise; that God is "my" God; and this praise is lifted up to the highest place where God reigns.

Read Mark 11:1-11

8. Locate the places mentioned in verse 1 on the map.

See map

9. What did Jesus send the two disciples to do in verses 2 and 3? Why is this extraordinary?

Jesus knew ahead of time what that the donkey would be there and that no one had ever sat on the donkey.

10. What is the significance of the use of a *colt*?

Definition: A young male horse, less than four years old.

To come riding on a donkey colt as opposed to a mighty war horse, was to come in peace. Jesus didn't come as a mighty warrior king (like Saul or David) but as a suffering (though triumphant) servant king. This also showed humility.

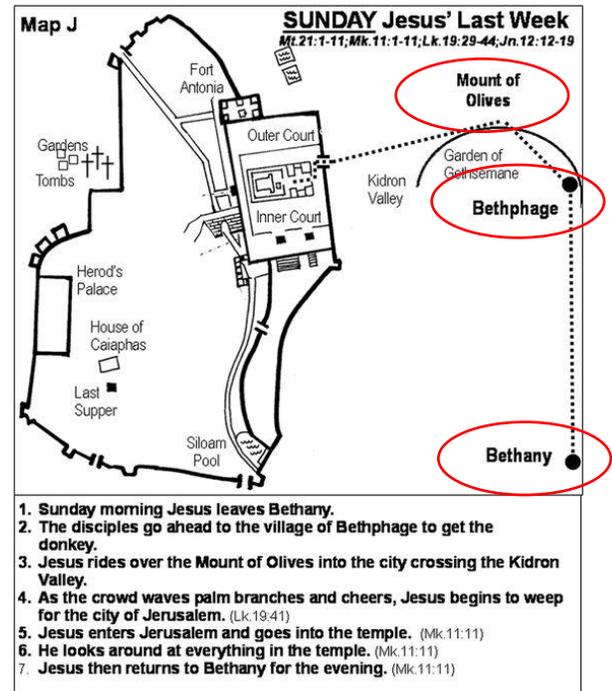
11. What is the significance of **no one having sat** on the colt?

Ordinarily a colt that had never been sat upon would be frisky to say the least. But it made no difference to Jesus that the colt had not been broken in. Jesus, as God and Creator, meant all creatures submitted to Him.

12. What's the significance of spreading clothes and branches in front of Jesus? (cf. 2 Kings 9:13)

Here Jesus is treated as He should be, with respect and honour. We would place a red carpet today. In 2 Kings 9:13 - when King Jehu was anointed King of Israel, the crowds placed cloaks before him, to honour him as King. That's what the people were doing here in Mark 11 for Jesus.

13. What did the crowd say as Jesus entered the city in verses 9 and 10? How does this relate to Psalm 118?



They shouted 'Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the coming kingdom of our Father, David.

These words echo Psalm 118; the people are rejoicing at the coming of their King.

14. What does **hosanna** mean?

Hosanna literally means "save us" or "save now"

Although, it has also become an expression of joy (like Hooray!) and praise and adoration.

15. What do you think the people wanted to be saved from?

The people were tired of the oppression of Roman Rule. They wanted to be saved from Roman rule and return to the heady days of King David's rule his own beloved Israel.

16. What do the people (and us) actually need saving from?

But there's another oppression we need to be saved from; it's the oppression of sin and rebellion that rules our hearts. Jesus came to save alright, but not in the way people thought. He came in peace not military style; He came to serve not to be served; And He came to lay down His life for His people, so they could be right with God.

17. What do we make of Jesus' courage here? (cf. John 11:57)

From John 11:57 we know that the Chief Priests and Pharisees were out to arrest Him.

Yet, we read in Luke 9:51: "As the time approached for Him to be taken up to Heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem"

18. Does verse 11 seem like a bit of an **anti-climax**? Yes/No/Maybe? Why? Why not?

Mark's account seems to end abruptly and it's like - well who is going to make Jesus King and how is He going to kick out the Romans; and where is His army?

19. **Ponder:** In less than a week's time - another crowd will be shouting out to Jesus saying "Crucify him! Crucify him!" (Luke 23:21). Why such a dramatic change from Palm Sunday?

There's not really a change. The crowds on Palm Sunday are mostly not the crowd crying out "crucify him!" a week later. Also, in Mark 15:11 we read "But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to release Barabbas instead". There's no way, the chief priests and Pharisees want Jesus released; He is threatening their authority by His amazing teaching and miracles. As the high priest Caiaphas says ironically to his colleagues in John 11: 50 "You do not realize that it is better for you that one man dies for the people than the whole nation perishes". Little did He realize that what he was saying was true, but for a totally different reason and of course, God's plan all along.

Read Revelation 7:9-10

20. What's happening here and how does it compare to the first Palm Sunday?

*John sees a gathering of a great multitude too many to count. They are standing before the Lamb (which is Jesus). They were wearing white robes (a symbol of purity - washed clean by the blood of the Lamb - and a symbol of priests [we are all priests 1 Peter 2:9]). They were holding palm branches. It's Palm Sunday on steroids! And the people's cry is similar to the 1st Palm Sunday - Salvation belongs to God, who sits on throne, and to the Lamb (Jesus).
This scene is a picture of victory - people saved!*

21. When does this event happen?

Just before the final judgment

22. How should we respond to King Jesus, this Palm Sunday and beyond?

Blessed is He (Jesus) who comes in the name of the Lord.

Thank You King Jesus for the Your precious free gift of Salvation!

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Mark 11:1-11**?

The Triumphant Victory of Jesus - He came in victory to save sinners.

The Love of God in sending King Jesus!

Finish in prayer: Thanking God that His love endures forever; and thanking God for His love in sending King Jesus, the Saviour of the World. Ask God, through His Spirit, to help us to be more diligent and heartfelt in our praise of Jesus, the King of Kings!