

'Hail the Conquering King of Peace'
The Palm Sunday Paradox: (Matthew 21:1 – 17)

A paradox is when truth emerges from a situation that seems full of contradictions. In this sense, the events of the first 'Easter week' are paradoxical. This event began on 'Palm Sunday' with Jesus riding peacefully into Jerusalem on a donkey as the crowds shouted 'Hosanna!'¹ But things took an abrupt turn when Jesus boldly entered the temple and began overturning the tables of the money changers. By the end of this week the crowds were shouting 'Crucify him!'² It's worth reflecting on the fact that Luke's version of these events portray Jesus weeping over Jerusalem just before entering the city because he knew that the people were blind to God's peace plan that was about to unfold before them (Luke 19:41 – 42). So what is it that God wants us to see and understand as we study these important events?

1. Read Matthew 21:1 – 5. Why do you think Jesus acted so intentionally and methodically to bring to fulfilment the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 – 10?
2. Read Matthew 21:6 – 10. How did the disciples (unknowingly³) fulfil of the prophecies of Psalm 118:25 – 27 as Christ entered Jerusalem?
3. Read Matthew 21:12 – 14. Why did Jesus' act so violently in the temple after his humble entrance and glorious welcome into Jerusalem?
4. Read Matthew 21:14 – 14. Can you explain the very different reactions to Jesus from the children and the needy, on one hand, and the religious leaders, on the other?
5. According to Luke 19:41 – 42, what didn't the people (as a whole) understand about Jesus' peace/salvation plan?
6. Explain Christ's offer of peace and salvation to you. What does his peace and salvation mean to you?

¹ This is a Hebrew word meaning 'Save!' or 'Saviour!' It's also an exclamation of Messianic praise.

² Matthew 27:22 - 23

³ According to John's account of these events (John 12:14 – 16) the disciples were unaware that they were fulfilling this Messianic Psalm.