

Palm Sunday 2026

Matthew 21:1-11

When they were near Jerusalem and had come in sight of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go to the village facing you, *and* you will immediately find a tethered donkey and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you *are* to say, 'The Master needs them and will send them back directly.' This took place to fulfil the prophecy:

Say to the daughter of Zion: Look, your king comes to you; He is humble, he rides on a donkey and *on* a colt, the foal of the beast of burden.

So the disciples went out and did as Jesus had told them. They brought the donkey and the **colt**, then they laid their cloaks on their backs and he sat on them. Great crowds of people spread their cloaks on the road, while others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in his path. The crowds who went in front of him and those who followed were all shouting:

'*Hosanna* to the Son of David! Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord! *Hosanna* in the highest heavens!' And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was *in* turmoil. 'Who is *this*?' people asked, and the crowds answered, 'This *is* the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.'

Reflection on the Gospel

In Jewish *tradition* spreading clothing before a dignitary was a symbol of submission and palm branches engaged as tokens of victory. Some First Century Jewish coins also had palm leaf engravings with the inscription, "The Redemption of Zion", giving expression to the

long-held hope that the Jewish people would be led to victory over Rome.

In this context Jesus' selection of a donkey was by no means incidental. Throughout the Old Testament the donkey *is* presented as the appropriate mount for those who come on a mission of peace, e.g. Samuel, Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi.

Here Jesus leaves us with a striking image. The Kingdom of God will not be advanced through military force, strategic power plays or bloody conquests. Earthly glory and worldly greatness have *no* place in this kingdom. Rather simplicity of life and a trusting in God's providence is called for.

Reflection Questions:

1. *As we enter Holy Week this year will we welcome Jesus as our Messiah? Will we call upon His reign in the face of all the wars in the Middle East ?*
2. *How we each respond to our brothers and sisters at this time by our generosity, prayer and support will mark our role as true disciples.*
3. *How shall we profess our faith in Christ this Holy week? Holding the cross can we pray for the sick and all who care for them? Deliver us from evil Lord for thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory. Amen.*

