

Spc149 – Palm Sunday Prophecies – Matthew 21:1-9

Pastor Dave Shepardson Calvary Chapel Nuevo / www.wordbymail.com

Open your Bibles. Title of the message, “Palm Sunday Prophecies.” We’re going to Matthew 21:1-9.

Today is traditionally known as Palm Sunday. It is traditional, probably more than Biblical. This is the day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem in the “Triumphal Entry” to begin his final week, “The Passion Week,” leading to the cross and the resurrection. This was the big day that started that final push to our salvation and to Jesus being the first fruits of the resurrection.

That Palm Sunday in which Jesus entered Jerusalem was the beginning of the Passover celebration. The Passover celebration is actually an eight day celebration of the sacrifice of the innocent lamb that was required to free the Jews from the bondage of Egypt and release them into the Promised Land, as told in Exodus Chapter 12. And this day was the beginning of that celebration.

In Exodus Chapter 12, each family on this day was to bring in a spotless lamb, a lamb without blemish, bring that lamb into their homes four days prior to sacrificing it (the way we count it’s five) and the lamb was to become “part of the family” you might say as it was to be loved and cared for inside the home. The reason God instructed that is so when that innocent lamb was slain, the family would understand the expense, the cost, the pain of the innocent lamb being slain to atone (or cover over) their sins.

And on the same day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday at the Triumphal Entry, is the same day the Passover Lambs were being brought into Jerusalem and into the Jewish families’ homes.

So notice this, it is a massive connection. As the Passover Lambs were being taken into (received, if you will) the homes as part of their family and waiting the four days formally until that lamb was to be sacrificed for the sins of the families on Friday, Jesus was being received into Jerusalem, into his home by the people in Jerusalem. And then on “Good Friday” the day that Jesus gave his life for your sins and mine, that is the same day – in fact it was afternoon of that day – when the lambs would be slaughtered for Passover.

Josephus, the historian, says that up to a quarter of a million lambs were sacrificed on that day in the Temple. Just think of that number. Their throats would be slit on the brazen altar and there was actually a trench dug for the blood to go down into the Kidron Valley.

And historians say that the blood could be seen as far as Bethlehem, six miles away, flowing out of the Temple as innocent lamb, after innocent lamb was being slain on what we call Good Friday, in the afternoon where *THE* Passover Lamb, Heaven's Passover Lamb, was also being slain – innocent though he was – he took the wrath of God in our place and died on the cross at the same time.

The significance is so massive, it's like God was saying – Don't miss this. Don't miss this. We've been slaughtering innocent lambs for 1500 years, or more, since the Exodus. But this Passover, the Passover in 33 AD, *this one* – Heaven's innocent Passover Lamb would be slain.

And so because God didn't want Israel to miss it, and because he doesn't want us to miss it, he layered prophecy after prophecy after prophecy on this Palm Sunday event and then fulfilled them one after another so that if we were to put a few of those together today we would say, "How could somebody miss God's Passover Lamb? How could somebody not see that Jesus was *THE* answer, that he was the Lamb that was slain for the sin of the world that God had been teaching his people about since Exodus Chapter 12?"

We call all those multi-layers of prophecy the Palm Sunday prophecies.

Let's pray. Lord, we're drawn to salvation because we realize the ugliness of our sin and we realize the greatness of your love and your mercy. But Lord, we pray that you would use these prophecies to convince, to convict, to encourage, to leave us in awe of your massive significance in fulfilled prophecy. To shout from heaven what you've done on our behalf, and in fact, the world's behalf, all of creation's behalf as the curse of sin was broken on that Passover, that Good Friday, that Resurrection Sunday. And show us, Lord how you stacked up the prophecies on top of one another as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on that Palm Sunday. Inspire us, Lord, through your Word we pray, in your name Jesus, amen.

We actually have a message you can get at wordbymail.com called "Christ in the Passover." It's a very, very cool message and when you listen to it or read it you'll say, "Wait a minute, that's the entire Gospel message in Exodus Chapter 12." Yeah! Yes, the Gospel message starts in Genesis 3:15 and it ends in Revelation 22. It's the same message throughout the entire Bible.

About six months prior to the Passover Luke 9:51 says this,

Luke 9:51 (ESV)

51 When the days drew near for him (Jesus) to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

One of the versions says ***He set his face as a flint to go to Jerusalem.***

It means he was “resolutely determined” to get to Jerusalem. At this time, as best we can tell, Jesus and the disciples were in the far northern Galilee, all the way possibly Caesarea Philippi, Mt. Hermon. It’s possible they were still up in that area and Jesus woke up one morning and said, “Boys, it’s time to go to Jerusalem.” Even though they were eighty miles or so away, Jesus knew he needed to go, because of everything that had to be done as he was moving there and he knew that there was a very specific, very exact day that they had to arrive on the Mt. of Olives to make their way into Jerusalem.

That day had been set by the Council of the Trinity in the throne room of heaven. It was an exact day. There was an exact hour and Jesus knew all along. He was setting everything up to get there right when he needed to be so that all these prophecies could be fulfilled so that we would say, “This is so supernatural, so miraculous. It had to be designed by God.”

And so if this was designed by God, so my salvation is designed by God. This was done so that all of Israel and us would have every possible chance to make the connection and believe.

Here’s how it all starts.

Matthew 21:1-3 (NLT)

1 As Jesus and the disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the town of Bethphage (near Bethany) on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them on ahead.

2 “Go into the village over there,” he said. “As soon as you enter it, you will see a donkey tied there, with its colt beside it. Untie them and bring them to me.

3 If anyone asks what you are doing, just say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will immediately let you take them.”

Bethphage is near Bethany, kind of on the southeast edge of the Mt. of Olives where they would come over the edge of the Mt. of Olives.

So after all that had been done since they left the far Northern Galilee (Caesarea Philippi) and all that they had done in Bethany at Mary and Martha’s house, where he raised Lazarus from the dead (which occurred just prior to this). Jesus and the disciples were making their way into Jerusalem... ultimately to the cross and the resurrection.

Remember Jesus delayed, in John 11, raising Lazarus from the dead because it was critical that Lazarus was raised in a timely manner to fit into these prophecies. You'll see that in a minute.

So after all that is done, they come upon Bethphage, Jesus says "go over there, see a man about a donkey and bring the donkey and it's colt to me."

A donkey is like a vehicle. It would be like you coming up to someone you don't know and saying, "Hey, umm, the Lord needs this car, so I'm going to take it." And them saying, "Well then, if the Lord needs it, go ahead."

And so the disciples go, they get the donkey and its colt – the colt is what Jesus really needed because he needed to make his way into Jerusalem at this exact day, in this exact way to set up all of these events to the cross and to the resurrection. Every detail has been pre-arranged but not just pre-arranged – pre-written. It's history written in advance. And so Jesus (having written that through the Holy Spirit) is now accomplishing it just as it's written.

In fact we learn in Mark 11:5-6 someone *did* ask.

Mark 11:5-6 (NLT)

5 As they were untying it, some bystanders demanded, "What are you doing, untying that colt?"

6 They said what Jesus had told them to say, and they were permitted to take it.

Continuing in Matthew 21:4-5.

Matthew 21:4-5 (NLT)

4This (the Donkey's colt) took place to fulfill the prophecy that said,

5 "Tell the people of Jerusalem, 'Look, your King is coming to you. He is humble, riding on a donkey - riding on a donkey's colt.' "

What is happening here is extremely and perfectly prophetic. And so Jesus is making sure that the prophecies are perfectly fulfilled. This prophecy is Zechariah 9:9, as your Bible will tell you in the footnote. It's a prophecy the Jews knew, especially the religious Jews.

Zechariah 9:9 (NLT)

9 Rejoice, O people of Zion! Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey— riding on a donkey's colt.

So Zechariah had told Jerusalem, when your King comes he will come riding on a colt of a donkey.

Sometimes we have to kind of look “between the lines” to see the point Jesus is making. But sometimes Jesus says, “I am going to make this *so* clear that you’re going to have to bury your head in the sand if you want to miss it.”

THAT is what is happening here. Jesus is making sure that every prophecy about this day is being perfectly fulfilled.

Continuing in Matthew 21:6-7.

Matthew 21:6-7 (NLT)

6 The two disciples did as Jesus commanded.

7 They brought the donkey and the colt to him and threw their garments over the colt, and he sat on it.

Sometimes people say why did he need two animals? Why did he need a donkey and a colt? Jesus needed the donkey so the colt would follow its mother.

To ride on a donkey was actually a symbol of peace, opposite to riding on a horse of war. A king would never ride a donkey. A king would ride a horse because a horse is an animal of war and victory. A donkey is a meek and humble animal. 700 years earlier Isaiah prophesied the Messiah would come as the Prince of Peace and on *this day* Jesus is making it perfectly clear *that is WHO he IS*.

And so the disciples laid their garments over the colt as a saddle and Jesus made his way to the one and only time that he allowed a public demonstration of who he truly was, because he was fulfilling the Palm Sunday Prophecies. How often do we read Jesus tell even the demons, “Don’t you tell anyone who I am, don’t you speak” and they didn’t really obey that well? And even the people he healed, he would say, “Don’t you go tell anybody, just go on your way” and the people didn’t obey him either. But he would be in groups, like when he fed the 5,000 and they wanted to make him king, and he slipped out of their way. Up until this day he wouldn’t allow the people to publically proclaim who he was.

But on this day, as the crowds continued to grow and grow and the people began shouting that *Jesus is their King* it absolutely drives the religious leaders to murder. Since the very beginning of the ministry of Jesus, he had been making sure that the religious leaders would get him on the cross when he needed to be. Jesus knew he was five days away from the cross and he knew exactly how to make sure the religious leaders got him there.

So when the Pharisee's saw what was happening, we read over in John 12:19,

John 12:19 (NLT)

19 Then the Pharisees said to each other, "There's nothing we can do. Look, everyone has gone after him!"

From the people's perspective the fame of Jesus had reached its absolute peak. They wanted Jesus to be the Messiah that they wanted. "Here comes the Messiah and we know that he's going to take over Jerusalem and he's going to run Rome out and he's going to be our military and our political king, and he's going to rule Jerusalem for us and everything is going to be just like we want it to be."

God help us ministers if we say that you should make Jesus your Lord because of what he is going to do for you *today*, because of what he is going to do for you in *this life*. This is the same mistake the Jews made in the Triumphal Entry when Jesus came in there.

Jerusalem was in an uproar about Jesus. Jesus had made sure of that by his recent actions, including raising Lazarus from the dead. And so all the people were gathering around Jesus to enter Jerusalem with him for the Passover celebration, because these crowds for *this moment* were hoping that Jesus was the Messiah that would overthrow Rome and rule Jerusalem on Israel's behalf.

The problem was they were wrong about *which* Triumphal Entry this one was. This was the first Triumphal Entry where Jesus came to be the Passover Lamb, and die on the cross, to take the sin of the world upon himself, pay the full payment required by the wrath of God so that we could be forgiven and be saved and so that we could live forever with him. *In the next* Triumphal Entry, through the same gate, Jesus absolutely will set up his reign in Jerusalem and he will overthrow the world's government.

But still, word spread fast, Jesus was coming and he is looking like a King and all the people were there playing their part in this great prophetic announcement.

Matthew 21:8 reads,

Matthew 21:8 (NLT)

8 Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

This was classic red carpet treatment for a King entering a city. And Jesus is allowing it all because it is all fulfilling layer upon layer of prophecy so that they could know, and we could know this is the Messiah.

The Gospel of John identifies the branches as palm branches which are symbolic of a king and also the Messiah, and it's where we get the term "Palm Sunday." And although the crowd didn't really understand and although it was short lived, according to God's perfect orchestration they were all shouting out the perfectly correct words.

Matthew 21:9 (NLT)

9 Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting, "Praise God (Literally - HOSANNA) for the Son of David! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise God in highest heaven!"

This is mostly from Psalm 118, part of the Hallel Psalms, that welcome in the Messiah. And so they are actually singing the Psalms and shouting the Psalms that are written to welcome the Messiah. And they *were* welcoming the Messiah, but they didn't understand what we can understand looking back in hindsight.

Hosanna means "save now" which is exactly what Jesus was coming to DO *just not in the way the people thought...* and this IS the Son of David (as they were shouting) and Jesus would rule on the throne of David in Jerusalem *just not when they thought he would...* And Jesus WAS the Messiah, the One come from God to SAVE his people *but eternally – not just temporarily.* The people had the words right. They didn't understand the *full plan.*

And so in four days these same people would still be shouting. Only then, instead of shouting, "***Hosanna to the Son of David***" they would be shouting, "***Crucify him – crucify him!***" because Jesus didn't turn out to be the Messiah *they* wanted him to be. But here, today, in the midst of the Palm Sunday Prophecies, this crowd makes it perfectly clear exactly *WHO* Jesus Christ IS, *fulfilling numerous Old Testament prophecies.*

And why on this particular day did Jesus allow this? Prior to this day Jesus had side stepped every attempt to make him King of Israel and a number of times in those situations, Jesus responded with these words, "***My HOUR has not yet come.***" But that was not some kind of spiritualized metaphor. There actually *was* an hour that had been

pre-determined in the throne room of heaven and it was an exact day that had been specifically prophesied and *that day* and *that hour* had come.

And so at this point we read in the parallel account in Luke,

Luke 19:39–40 (ESV)

39 And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” (for what they were crying out)

40 He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

Why was it so important that *this* specific day be announced either by the people OR by the rocks alongside the road? Because this is the hour that the prophets had been writing about for 700 years for sure, since Isaiah. This was the moment that history had to record that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to fulfill all of those prophecies. God had promised that Israel’s true King would come to them on *this exact day, in this exact way*.

Turn over to Daniel Chapter 9 and we’ll look quickly at it (but keep a marker here in Luke 19). I do this almost every Palm Sunday, but it is such an incredible prophetic connection. This is the famous 70 weeks of Daniel.

Daniel 9:25 (NLT)

25 Now listen and understand! Seven sets of seven (years) plus sixty-two sets of seven (That’s 69 Sets of 7 years) will pass from the time the command is given to rebuild Jerusalem until a ruler - the Anointed One (Messiah) comes . . .

When Daniel is writing – Israel is in captivity in Babylon and the Temple has been destroyed and it’s over 500 years before Christ.

So Daniel 9:25 says there will be a total of 69 sets of 7 years from the command given to rebuild the Temple to the actual day of the coming of the Messiah – ***The Anointed One*** when he rides into Jerusalem. And the command to rebuild the Temple is given to us in Nehemiah 2:1

Nehemiah 2:1 (NLT)

1 . . . in the month of Nisan, during the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes’ reign . . .

In our calendar, this precise dating of the command to rebuild the Temple would be March of 444 BC. This math is so exact that all they had to do was get a big calendar and hang it on the wall with a big pen on a string and then have a priestly family in charge of waking up every day and counting off one more day because using the Jewish calendar 69 sets of 7 years = 173,880 days. And so 173,880 days from the decree to rebuild the

Temple the Messiah would arrive in Jerusalem, and if they would have done that, they would have been getting close to their 173,880 days as March of 33 AD approached. And then there would have been 10 days and then 5 days and then 1 day and then on that very next day these events of Palm Sunday *happened*. The decree to rebuild Jerusalem was given in March of 444 BC and Jesus made his Triumphal Entry in March of 33 AD and with all the calendar adjustments figured in, that equals 69 sets of 7 years – *exactly!*

But... the Jewish leaders and for the most part, the Jewish people, *still missed it*. Because they didn't have "eyes to see." Because the only Messiah *they wanted* was the One who would do *what they wanted*. There are actually over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament that Jesus Christ fulfilled in his life, death and resurrection. But Israel – and far too many people today – *still miss it*.

Can we do one more Palm Sunday Prophecy while we're here in Daniel? In the very next verse Daniel 9:26 says,

Daniel 9:26 (NLT)

26 "After this period of sixty-two sets of seven (plus org 7 – 69 total), the Anointed One will be killed, appearing to have accomplished nothing (Jesus), and a ruler will arise whose armies will destroy the city and the Temple . . .

The ESV makes it clearer.

Daniel 9:26 (ESV)

26 . . . And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary . . .

The prince who is to come – is the Anti-Christ.

The people of the prince to come – are Rome

And Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD *exactly* as Daniel predicted 500 years earlier.

And if we'll turn back to the Palm Sunday account in Luke Chapter 19, Jesus is coming over the edge of the Mt. of Olives, and he stops on the way down, and he weeps over Jerusalem.

Luke 19:41–44 (NLT)

41 But as he came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to weep.

42 "How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes.

43 Before long your enemies will build ramparts against your walls and encircle you and close in on you from every side.

44 They will crush you into the ground, and your children with you. Your enemies will not leave a single stone in place, because you did not recognize it when God visited you.”

Jesus is repeating the same Palm Sunday Prophecy that Daniel wrote 500 years earlier and when Rome destroyed the Temple in 70 AD they did not leave one stone on top of another. And when we're there, we stand next to the huge pile of stones that were toppled off the Temple mount by the Romans that are still in a pile there today proving that this prophecy is true. Every stone they took apart because they burned the Temple and the gold ran in between the stones and so they dismantled the entire Temple, stone by stone to get the gold. And so not only did Daniel prophecy it, Jesus re-prophecies it in 33 AD, and it occurs in 70 AD and you can go stand there today.

Guys, there is no religious ideology or writing ever in the history of the world that compares – at any level – with the supernatural, prophetic and archeological evidence of the Bible. Period. It has no peer. Because God knows he is going to draw you to repentance because of his love for you, but he's given you unparalleled, absolute proof in every science there is that the Bible is accurate, just so you can have confidence. And that's where we're at here, today.

There are so many prophecies about every stage and every major event in the life of Jesus and the Palm Sunday Prophecies are some of the most important because they set up the most important week in the life of Jesus; the week when he will orchestrate his own death on the cross to pay for our sins in full and then *rise* from the dead on that resurrection Sunday morning conquering sin and death and the grave and offering the free gift of eternal life to *every* person who would put their full faith and trust in him.

The Palm Sunday Prophecies are incredible. But what is eternally *more* incredible is that we have the opportunity to have our sins forgiven and live with Jesus in heaven for eternity by simply receiving the free gift of salvation he offers and surrendering our lives to him.

Let's do that now.

Let's pray. *Lord, Jesus, we pray for our own hearts first. That we would recognize that eternity lasts forever. That these are the things that drive us now that we will live in the glory of forever. Lord we're dealing with eternally life and death choices. And we pray,*

Lord, that we would make them, and we pray that we would be used for others around us, to make the same choice.

And so, I just want to ask you to pray about Passion Week, and Good Friday and the Resurrection Celebration coming up. Where are you, where are you right now. Are you all in? A sacrificed consumed Christ follower? Or is Jesus a little compartment like a ticket to an amusement park you carry for when you have to go through the gate? And would you just address the Lord on that right now? And say,

“Lord, please fill me afresh and anew. Give me a desire this week to know you better. Lord, to spend time with you, to settle in the events of this week and of Good Friday and of Resurrection Sunday. Re-inspire me and fill me with your life.”

And maybe you never have received the Lord. And if so, it’s the same prayer just for the first time. Say, *“Lord, fill me with your life. Forgive me of my sin. Make this Resurrection Sunday my resurrection, Lord, that I would be born again to eternal life. Lord, we surrender to you as Lord, as our personal Lord. We thank you for your salvation. We thank you for your miraculous and supernatural Word. And we thank you, Lord, that you desire to use us, even this week, to inspire those around us to seek you, to seek you personally, to come to the cross personally to experience the new resurrected life, personally. We pray that you would solidify it in our own hearts and that you would use us to lead others to you. Thank you for this time. We thank you for the upcoming celebration. We thank you for our eternal life. Be glorified, Lord, in your name we pray, Jesus, amen.”*