

Theme: From the palm-waving crowds of Israel to the Greek God-fearers seeking an audience with Jesus, Palm Sunday reveals that Jesus is not merely the King of Israel but the King of all nations whose cross will draw every people, tribe, and tongue into His eternal kingdom.

I. Intro - Dominion!

- A. Tom Holland's influential book
- B. The cover is Jesus on the Cross - how is this dominion?
- C. Palm Sunday - Jesus, the King of the Nations

II. Jesus, The King of Israel

A. Jesus comes to Jerusalem

The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to **Jerusalem**. Jn 12:12

1. Jesus is arriving to Jerusalem, Israel's major city

2. Jerusalem is the City of God and His King

But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by **Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King**. Matthew 5:34-35

- a. Jerusalem was the capital of David's Kingdom
- b. But it is the City of God and His Messiah, the King

3. The King is coming to His City - how will it respond?

B. Many Jews receive Jesus as the Messianic King

1. A large crowd meets and accompanies Jesus

The next day the **large crowd** that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.

¹⁷The **crowd** that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. ¹⁸ The reason why the **crowd** went to meet him was that they heard he

had done this sign. ¹⁹ So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, **the world has gone after him**." John 12:12, 17-19

- a. John stresses the large crowd - 3x
- b. It includes people just arriving from Bethany, and those who have already been in Jerusalem who come out to meet Jesus.
- c. The Pharisees hyperbolically say "the world."
- d. A huge crowd is stirred and joyfully welcomes Jesus

2. The crowd receives Jesus as the Messianic King

So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" John 12:13

- a. This is the origin of the name "Palm Sunday"
- b. Palm branches had been a national symbol for Israel for over 2 centuries
 - 1. In 164, they were prominent in the rededication of the Temple after Antiochus defiled it.
 - 2. In 141, they were used to greet Simon the Maccabee when he drove the Syrian's out of Jerusalem
 - 3. Inter-testamental writings related palm branches with the Messiah

c. Hosanna - from Hebrew for O LORD save!

d. Quoting from Psalm 118:25-26

Save us, we pray, **O Lord!** O Lord, we pray, give us success! ²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We bless you from the house of the Lord. Psalm 118:25-26

- 1. Originally used to greet pilgrims coming to Jerusalem for a festival.

2. In the Midrash (interpretation) of the Psalm, it was used to refer to the Messiah!
3. Here they are using it to refer to Jesus as the Messiah!

e. Even the King of Israel (v13)

1. This was not in Psalm 118:25-26!
2. They are saying that Jesus is the One Who comes in the Name of the Lord - the Messiah!

3. The crowd is hailing Jesus as the Messiah, who will drive out the Romans from Jerusalem and set up the Kingdom and rule from Jerusalem!

4. Jesus shows He is a different type of King!

And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, ¹⁵ "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" John 12:14-15

- a. This King will not arrive on a regal war horse but on a young donkey!
- b. This was in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, which stressed that the King would arrive in humility and gentleness, not power to crush!

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Zechariah 9:9

1. The King would come to Jerusalem to bring salvation
2. He would arrive on a young donkey, not a war horse!
3. This is a different type of King, bringing a different type of salvation!
4. Jesus will explain this more below.

C. The religious leaders reject Jesus as the Messianic King

1. The chief priests decided to kill Jesus & Lazarus
So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, ¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus. John 12:10-11
 - a. They had already decided to kill Jesus (John 11:45-57)
 - b. Even Lazarus had to be killed because Jesus' miracle of raising him from the dead was causing many to become disciples!
2. The Pharisees also rejected Jesus as the Messiah
So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him." John 12:19
 - a. They are exasperated with the crowd's reception of Jesus!
 - b. They were already plotting with the Chief priests (John 11:45-57)
 - c. They will constantly oppose Jesus in the coming week, attempting to trap and outwit Him.
3. Thus, though many of the regular Jews recognized and received Jesus as the Messiah, the religious leaders rejected Him and wanted to kill Him.

III. Jesus, the King of the Nations

A. Gentiles come to Jesus!

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. ²¹ So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²² Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. John 12:20-22

1. Greeks - referred to any non-Jews who spoke Greek

2. These were probably “God-fearers” - Gentiles who were attracted to Yahweh but did not fully convert.
3. They go to Philip, who goes to Andrew - and then they go to Jesus.
4. The Messiah, the King of the Jews, is drawing people from other nations!

B. Jesus’ amazing and unexpected response

1. Jesus’ amazing response

And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” John 12:23

- a. The hour has finally arrived - I will be glorified!
- b. Jesus is alluding to Daniel 7:13-14

“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a **son of man**, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And **to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.** Daniel 7:13-14

 1. Jesus says the “Son of Man” is being glorified.
 2. Daniel said the Son of Man would be glorified and people from all nations would come to be part of His Kingdom!
- c. This is no small event - the New Covenant Kingdom is being ushered in, and it will be filled with people from every nation!

2. Jesus’ surprising response

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. John 12:24

- a. Why would He say this right at that moment?

- b. The way the Kingdom will expand and draw in the Gentiles is by the death of Jesus!
- c. Like a seed, His death will bring great fruit!

C. Jesus will be glorified - by the Cross!

“Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³ He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. John 12:31-33

1. Jesus is speaking of His crucifixion - “lifted up”
2. But the Cross, His lowest moment, will be the means of glory!
 - a. The Cross is the path to Kingship!
 1. This has been the constant message of Jesus since Peter’s confession!
 2. He just stated it again in John 12:23-24 - like a grain of wheat, He must die to bear fruit!
 - b. The Cross will defeat Satan!
 1. Jesus’ crucifixion will appear to be His defeat and the victory of Satan, but it will actually be the reverse!
 2. Satan and the world thought the Cross was the judgment of Jesus, but it was actually their own judgment!
 3. At the Cross, Jesus broke Satan’s power and set His prisoners free!
 4. What a great reversal and paradox is the Cross!
 - c. The Cross will draw people from all nations to Jesus
 1. These Gentiles are just the first of a great group!
 2. Far from being the end of Jesus’ work, the Cross will magnify it until people from all nations will be drawn to Jesus!

- D. No wonder Jesus had such a reaction to the approach of this small group of Gentiles!

IV. Applying the Word

A. Jesus is the King of the Nations!

1. Daniel had prophesied this 600 years before!
2. Jesus confirmed that Jew and Gentile would come to Him and be part of His nation, the Church!
3. On Palm Sunday, He was received as the King of Israel, and the firstfruits of Gentiles came to Him, too!
4. Each Palm Sunday, Christians around the world make the announcement “Jesus is King of All”!
5. We see this in reality as people from every nation turn to Jesus - He is the King of the Nations!
6. Don't be like the Pharisees and Chief Priests and reject His Kingship - be like those who embraced it on that day!

B. The Glory of the Cross

1. What a strange confluence: the Crown & the Cross!
2. But Jesus spoke of this over and over again!
3. The Cross is the path to His Kingship!
 - a. He rejected Satan's temptation to try another path to receive the worship of the nations (Matthew 4)
 - b. He taught this after Peter's great confession!
4. There are two key reasons for this:
 - a. This is the only way to save us from our sins!

1. Unfortunately, our sins have separated us from God.
2. Jesus the King took the Cross so that we might receive the crown of the Kingdom!
3. Traditionally, the palm branches from Palm Sunday are burned, and the ashes are saved to be used on Ash Wednesday, for we fall far short of our Hosannas!

b. This is the way Jesus is glorified!

1. The Cross is not only the path to glory - the Cross is Jesus' glory!
2. John wants us to see that Jesus reigns from the Cross!
3. On the Cross, Jesus is lifted high and draws all people to Himself!
4. The Cross may look weak and foolish to this world, but it is the power and wisdom of God!
5. Oh, the glory of the Cross!

C. The Table of the King

Encountering Jesus the King of the Nations

John 12:9-33

March 29, 2026 (Palm Sunday)

Communion

Psalm 67

Teaching keywords: Christology; Kingdom of God; Israel; Cross; Lent and Easter

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, ² that His ways may be known on earth, His salvation among all nations. ³ May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you. ⁴ May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth. ⁵ May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you. ⁶ Then the land will yield its harvest, and God, our God, will bless us. ⁷ God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear him. (Psalm 67)

HAVE EVERYONE STAND FOR READING OF THE TEXT

When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, ¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

¹² The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³ So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"

¹⁴ And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, ¹⁵ "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" ¹⁶ His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.

¹⁷ The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. ¹⁸ The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. ¹⁹ So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him."

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. ²¹ So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²² Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

²³ And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

²⁷ "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." ²⁹ The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him."

³⁰ Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not mine. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." ³³ He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. John 12:9-33 ESV