

## Palm Sunday

Why do we observe Palm Sunday? Is it merely commemorative? Do we observe it simply to recall Jesus' entry into Jerusalem to mark the beginning of what we have come to call Holy Week? Are the hosannas we speak and sing just words that mimic the first Palm Sunday crowd?

The cry "hosanna" (see Psalm 118.25) is a plea in Hebrew meaning "save now!" It is a prayer, a prayer with real urgency. The salvation many in that first crowd were crying out for was a political liberation from Roman domination. They wanted to be free, to be sovereign. For them, the salvation the Messiah would bring would restore political sovereignty to Israel. They also believed it would usher in a period of unequalled material and spiritual blessing for God's chosen people.

But Jesus had another salvation planned, and no selfish prayers for any political and material salvation could deter Him from that which He came to provide. Simply put, Jesus did not come to meet either the crowd's expectations or ours. He came to meet our needs. The real enemy was not Romans or any other foreign rule, nor was it poverty or disease. The real enemy was sin. The bondage Jesus came to set men free from was sin, death, and Satan himself.

I've read that Jesus' final week began in triumph and ended in tragedy. That is simply not so. Yes, it involved Jesus' unwarranted betrayal and arrest. It involved unbridled physical, verbal, and emotional abuse. It involved a horrible crucifixion and most painful death. But it did not involve tragedy.

Jesus knew exactly what He was doing and was in complete control of every event that transpired that week, even the Cross. The only way to provide redemption from sin and release for the captives was to die. Jesus gave His life to give life to all. His resurrection on Easter Sunday proved the sufficiency of His payment.

The reason we celebrate Palm Sunday, the reason we raise our hosannas, is because Jesus entered Jerusalem that Palm Sunday to go to the Cross and to the tomb. His cry from the Cross, "It is finished!" is His answer to our hosannas!

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