

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019

# Palm Sunday

Red



The Readings here depart from the set Readings, owing to their length. They are: Isaiah 50:4-9a, or Philippians 2:5-11, and Mark Chapter 14:1-72, Chapter 15:1-47, or Mark 15:1-39 [40-47].

## Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, who in your tender love towards the human race sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross: grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

## Zechariah 9:9-12 English Standard Version (ESV)

### The Coming King of Zion

9 <sup>9</sup>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.

<sup>10</sup> I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

<sup>11</sup> As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. <sup>12</sup> Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.

**COMMENT:** Christians readily recognise this passage as the model for Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem in all four Gospels. Matthew and John actually quoted part of it in their records of that event. (Matthew 21:5; John 12:15) Undoubtedly, it originated as a hopeful prophetic oracle with messianic implications based on Israel's sacred covenant with The LORD. The prophecy may have modelled Solomon's entry into Jerusalem on the King's mule to be made king (1 Kings 1:38-40). The passage comes from what scholars designate as an anonymous appendix attached to the earlier chapters 1-8 of Zechariah. Modern scholarship places the prophecies of Zechariah in the early Persian period, soon after the return from the Babylonian exile (539 BC). Some Scholars place chapters 9-14 much later, but different opinions have claimed precedence for an exact date. One of the stronger claims dates it in the time of Alexander and his conquests in the late 4<sup>th</sup> Century. Verse 13 of this 9<sup>th</sup> chapter refers

distinctly to Greece in the English versions. The first part of chapter from which this reading has been separated refers to many of Israel's neighbouring city states which are under threat of invasion or already captured from an overwhelming military power. This brief passage and subsequent verses defends Jerusalem as having The LORD's protection. Ultimately The LORD will triumph as earlier prophets like Amos, Isaiah and Ezekiel prophesied. The passage also has similarities to the so-called "Enthronement" Psalms 43, 93, 96-99. The king, however, is the messianic monarch anointed by The LORD to whom Israel looked for deliverance in such desperate times.

## **Mark 11:1-11** English Standard Version (ESV)

### **The Triumphal Entry**

11 <sup>1</sup> Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus<sup>[a]</sup> sent two of his disciples <sup>2</sup> and said to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. <sup>3</sup> If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'" <sup>4</sup> And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. <sup>5</sup> And some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" <sup>6</sup> And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. <sup>7</sup> And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. <sup>8</sup> And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. <sup>9</sup> And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! <sup>10</sup> Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!" <sup>11</sup> And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

**Footnotes:** a. Greek *he*

**COMMENT:** One cannot help but wonder if Mark included this section of scripture with a touch of irony. Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem began the final ascent to the cross. Hailed as the Messiah, he would soon be the victim of the fickle crowds' hateful cries, "Crucify him!" Behind this event is the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9; "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." Which may also have in its mind the entry of the boy King Solomon riding on the King's mule to be crowned at Gihon in Jerusalem – 1 Kings 1:38-40; "So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David's mule and brought him to Gihon. There Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon. Then they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, "Long live King Solomon!" And all the people went up after him, playing on pipes, and rejoicing with great joy, so that the earth was split by their noise."

**Psalm 31:10-19** *Miserere Mei* Grail Psalter

**℟ Save me in your love, O Lord.**

<sup>10</sup> Have mercy on me, O Lord,  
for I am in distress.  
Tears have wasted my eyes,  
my throat and my heart. ℟

<sup>11</sup> For my life is spent with sorrow  
and my years with sighs.  
Affliction has broken down my strength  
and my bones waste away. ℟

<sup>12</sup> In the face of all my foes  
I am a reproach,  
an object of scorn to my neighbours  
and of fear to my friends. ℟

Those who see me in the street  
run far away from me.

<sup>13</sup> I am like a dead man, forgotten,  
like a thing thrown away. ℟

<sup>14</sup> I have heard the slander of the crowd,  
fear is all around me,  
as they plot together against me,  
as they plan to take my life. ℟

<sup>15</sup> But as for me, I trust in you, Lord;  
I say: "You are my God.

<sup>16</sup> My life is in your hands, deliver me  
from the hands of those who hate me. ℟

<sup>17</sup> Let your face shine on your servant.  
Save me in your love.

<sup>18</sup> Let me not be put to shame for I call you,  
let the wicked be shamed! ℟

Let them be silenced in the grave,

<sup>19</sup> let lying lips be dumb,  
that speak haughtily against the just  
with pride and contempt." ℟

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.**

**COMMENT:** This psalm may have begun as an individual hymn of thanksgiving, but quickly became a congregational hymn for celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles. One of the six psalms of the Hallel (Psalms 113-118), pilgrims sang it

as they approached the temple on this and other high holidays. It is yet another of the Psalms given a messianic interpretation by the Apostolic Church. Several New Testament passages alluded to it. The person who originally sang this hymn (the “I” of the text) may have been the king, but it soon was reinterpreted as the personification of the nation and sung antiphonally with several parties singing allotted parts. The “gates of righteousness” (verse 19) referred to the massive gates at the entrance of the temple precincts representing the holy presence of the LORD at the centre of the nation. The words would have been sung by the priest at the head of the procession of pilgrims. The day of rejoicing in verse 24 is the day of the festival, but which one is not identified. This may well be the Feast of Tabernacles, for in verse 27 the festal procession to decorate “the horns of the altar” probably best fits with that festival. The horns were protrusions at each corner of the altar possibly created for just such a decorative purpose or on which the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled (cf. Leviticus 4:7). Verses 28 and 29 give what appears to be a double ending to the psalm. More likely, verse 28 is the original ending for the individual hymn of thanksgiving, while verse 29 is the ending to the congregation hymn. Alternatively, the first is sung by the celebrant priest while the second is the antiphony sung by the congregation.

### **Blessing of Palms**

Almighty God, we pray *may* you bless these branches and make them holy. Today we joyfully acclaim Jesus our Messiah and King. May we reach one day the happiness of the new and everlasting Jerusalem by faithfully following him who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **Short Preface**

And now we give you thanks because, for our salvation, he was obedient even to death on the cross. The tree of shame was made the tree of glory; and where life was lost, there life has been restored.

### **Post Communion**

Lord Jesus Christ, you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant, and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation: give us the mind to follow you and to proclaim you as Lord and King, to the glory of God the Father. **Amen**

### **Solemn Blessing**

May the Father, who so loved the world that he gave his only Son, bring you by faith to his eternal life. **Amen.**

May Christ, who accepted the cup of sacrifice in obedience to the Father’s will, keep you steadfast as you walk with him the way of his cross. **Amen.**

May the Spirit, who strengthens us to suffer with Christ that we may share his glory, set your minds on life and peace. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**