

S.O.H.L.

WEEKLY MINISTRY MEDITATIONS

Pronounced "Soul"

March 7, 2016

Events Leading to Easter (Pt. 1 of 4)

ZECHARIAH 9:9 NKJV – (9) Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.

Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter, is a celebration of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Some churches decorate with palms and distribute palm branches in memory of the greeting Jesus received from the pilgrims as He rode into Jerusalem.

It was a springtime Sunday around the year 30 A.D. The holy city of Jerusalem was crowded with pilgrims arriving for the annual Passover celebration. Jesus had spent many months traveling through the towns and villages of Palestine. He preached about the kingdom of God and healed the sick wherever He went. The time had come for Him to claim His title as the Messiah - the Savior that God had promised to the Jewish people. Jesus knew His mission was almost finished. As He traveled to Jerusalem with His disciples, Jesus warned them that He would soon be put to death, and after three days He would rise again. As they came near Jerusalem, Jesus told two of His disciples to go into a nearby village and bring a donkey that would be waiting there. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the donkey. Crowds of people spread their coats on the ground in front of Him. Some waved branches of palm trees, a sign of victory. The people shouted, "*Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord – the King of Israel!*"

Only a king would be greeted this way (**2 Kings 9:13**), and the people wanted Jesus to be their king. Most of the people did not understand what kind of king Jesus would be. They expected their Messiah to be a great political and military leader who would free them from the tyranny of the Roman Empire. But the kingdom of God is not of this world. It is a spiritual kingdom that is now growing in the hearts of people who put their faith and trust in God.

For the Jews, Jerusalem was the holy City of God. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, He fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy (**Zechariah 9:9-10**) and left little doubt that He was accepting the title of Messiah. Jesus was adored by the crowds of people who had come to Jerusalem for Passover. But there was harsh conflict between Jesus and Jerusalem's religious leaders. They clashed on issues of prayer, holiness, life after death and paying taxes to the Romans. Above all, they clashed on the issue of Jesus' authority from God. These conflicts led to Jesus being crucified less than a week after entering Jerusalem.

Jesus did some of His most important preaching during this final week. He spoke of His second coming and told parables of the kingdom of God. Most important, He told us that we must put our total trust in God, putting that trust into action with kindness for other people.

SCRIPTURE READING

JOHN 12:13

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Life without Jesus is like an unsharpened pencil. It has no point.