

Pentwater Bible Church

Palm Sunday
March 28, 2021



Jesus Enters Jerusalem by Benjamin Robert Haydon Cir 1814-1820

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JESUS AVOIDS THE PEOPLE DECLARING HIM KING

The significance of what we have come to call Palm Sunday cannot be overestimated as a major prophetic event in the Bible. This is the day, a week before the Passover which was the day our Lord Jesus was crucified. It is one day that was prophecied in the Scripture that would be fulfilled by the Messiah Himself.

During His ministry many times, the common people sought to declare Him their king. He avoided it on all those occasions except the one we call Palm Sunday. After the miracle of feeding of the five thousand with a young man's five loaves and two fishes, many realized that He was the King Messiah that was prophecied to come in their Jewish Scriptures (our Old Testament)

John 6:11-15

¹¹ And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. ¹² When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. ¹³ Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. ¹⁴ Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. ¹⁵ When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone (KJV).

JESUS ARRIVES AT THE APPOINTED TIME AND THE PEOPLE DECLARE HIM KING

Jesus knew that His arrival on this one particular day was so important and prophecied in Scripture He was not going to let the people make Him their King until the exact time that was given the Scripture had arrived. He had arranged all things pertaining to His arrival in Jerusalem in order to cause the Scriptures which He wrote to be fulfilled exactly as they were given. None of the prophecied aspects of His arrival would be omitted or the timing of His arrival be off the prophecy. He would enter Jerusalem exactly the date when the Scriptures prophecied.

Matthew 21:1-11

And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, ² saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. ³ And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. ⁴ All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, ⁵ Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. ⁶ And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, ⁷ and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. ⁸ And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. ⁹ And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. ¹⁰ And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? ¹¹ And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee (KJV).

Just as Matthew chronicles that Palm Sunday of Passover week in Jerusalem “*All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.*” As the text says they shouted the word of Psalm 118:26, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.* The word hosanna is a Hebrew word taken from Psalm 118:25 which is *hoseeah* or save us, deliver us. Any worldly king would have arrived on majestic horses pulling golden chariots adorned with precious decorations of earthly value. This King was not prideful or of this earth (John 18:36). He created it but He was not of it (John 1:10). Where was this arrival prophesied in Scripture? How did the people know that this was their king, and that this was the day for Him to make His arrival?

THE MESSIAH WILL COME AND TRULY CONQUER

In the beginning of the ninth chapter of the book of Zechariah we see a description of Alexander the Great the Macedonian conqueror who came to Jerusalem to conquer it but did not as the priests welcomed him in and showed him their Scriptures prophesying his arrival. After this discussion in Zechariah 9:1–8 of Alexander, Zechariah begins to provide God’s prophecy about the coming of King Messiah on the earth and describe the day we call Palm Sunday. This is the day when Jesus was recognized as Messiah the King. The next verse, verse 9, is one of the most significant Messianic passages in the entire Bible. Both Jewish and Christian commentaries interpret it this way. Judaism views it as the basis for a single royal messianic appearance, whereas the New Testament and Christianity see it as a prophecy of the triumphal entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem on the Sunday before His crucifixion (Matthew 21:5; John 12:15).

God makes a clear distinction in this verse where He appears as a very different conqueror compared to Alexander. The date of this prophecy is approximately 487 B.C., about 519 years before it happened (A.D. 32). While Alexander's swift and aggressive nature brought some measure of peace to the Jews it will not be until the Lord Jesus comes for the second time that there will be true peace on earth. The genuine King of Israel has strength, which is not dependent on chariots and horses (Psalm 20:7). He is the creator and sustainer of the universe. It is salvation that He brings, not only to Israel, but also to all the nations.

Zechariah 9:9a

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee." (ASV, 1901)

The First Advent is heralded with exuberance by the use of words such as "rejoice greatly", "shout" and "behold". The phrase "the daughter of Zion" makes reference to the entire population that is personified by a single female. It comes from an expression of referring to a city or a country affectionately as "her" and the designation of Hebrew names for cities have an assigned female gender. The joy expressed here as God Himself writes through Zechariah and declares that He is coming to Jerusalem to fulfill all the prophecies regarding His first coming (Genesis 3:15, 49:10; Isaiah 7:14, 53:3; Deuteronomy 18:15; Daniel 9:26). Consider how comforting this prophecy is in contrast to the fear and trembling that Alexander's armies created in Israel before he met with the High Priest and they read to him from the book of Daniel. This is THE occasion of immense spiritual significance as the announcement of the long-awaited Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14 "God With Us!") is made.

In this verse He is given the title of "king." Jesus would not allow a crowd to declare him "king" after performing a miracle or significant action. He would slip away from the crowds before they could do this. The Hebrew words for Messiah the King are *Mashiach Nagid*. In Daniel 9:25 *nagid* gets translated as "the prince". In I Samuel 13:14 it is translated as "king" when David was crowned. Jesus allowed the multitudes to praise Him as their King on the Sunday before His crucifixion (Palm Sunday). The apostle Matthew affirms this as fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9.

Zechariah 9:9b

"He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass." (ASV, 1901)

Four of His characteristics are listed in this verse.

1. HE IS "JUST" OR RIGHTEOUS.

In Scripture righteousness is one of the most prominent attributes declared of God. It is synonymous with justice, and its use in the Bible means "straight" or "morally right." When we say that God is "just" we are saying that God always does what is right, consistently, without partiality or prejudice. These two words are the same in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. God's actions are always fair and right. This righteousness is an expression of His

holiness. He is infinitely pure and always opposed to sin. Since this is His nature, we see that He IS just. It is not a characteristic that He applies to Himself but it is His way, His manner, or simply the way He is. He consistently acts in accordance with His own character. He cannot be anything different than the way He is. There is no standard of righteousness or justice that can be applied to God as a measurement. He IS the standard. The Hebrew word *tsaddeq* means “righteous” and is applied to God (Job 10:15, 15:14, 22:3; 34:17; Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 119:137, 129:4).

2. HE SHOWS HIMSELF AS A SAVIOR.

This characteristic of God and His Messiah, as a savior (“*having salvation*”), is diametrically opposed to Alexander, who was a conqueror. Alexander slaughtered thousands at Damascus, Tyre and Gaza and then sold thousands more into slavery. The Hebrew word translated as “*savior*” is *nosha*. Of the various Hebrew language expressive grammar participles forms, this one is written in the nifal form. This form is categorized as reflexive, which means that something is shown or done by the person who is the object of the action. In this case it is the Messiah is showing Himself to be the Savior because He is “*having salvation*”.

In the Bible salvation is mentioned in two different ways. One is physical salvation as if being saved from an impending catastrophe. The other is spiritual salvation, and that is what is discussed here in Zechariah 9:9b as coming from the Messiah. He saves because of the substitutionary atonement of His death. His death provided us the means to be connected to God and “saved” from the effects of our sins, which is eternal damnation. Eternal damnation is a permanent separation from God since He cannot be in the presence of sin. That is because He is perfectly holy. That is the punishment a holy and just God *must* give to those who do not accept the atonement He has provided. This is the *hosanna* from Psalm 118:25 which was shouted by the people recognizing this Jesus who saves as He arrived in Jerusalem. In Isaiah 51:6, the Hebrew word for “salvation” is *yeshu’ah*. In the New Testament the Greek name of Jesus is based upon the Old Testament word for salvation. His name is *Iesous*, meaning “Savior.” He was the servant who brought the Lord’s salvation to mankind (Acts 8:26–40). He is Himself that salvation which the apostle Paul proclaims in Romans 10:13.

3. HE IS LOWLY.

“*Lowly*” is translated from the same word as “humble” (Psalm 18:27-28; II Samuel 22:28). Jesus came to the lowest members of the Jewish society. He did not court the governmental powers to gain access to the population. He started out lowly and humble and stayed that way during His First Advent. He did not have position, title, or possessions. He washed the feet of the apostles to demonstrate servanthood to them. He was beaten with a Roman *flagella*, which ripped the flesh from His body. They beat Him about the head as they mocked Him. Finally, Jesus suffered the humiliation of being nailed naked to the cross. The Roman crucifixion was meant to degrade the worst criminals as a deterrent to other criminals so they would not commit crimes against the state. Here the God of the Universe, who created it all, entered a human body to take on the low state of a man and allowed Himself to be humiliated to the point of death on a cross for all mankind. This is what it means to be “*lowly*”.

4. HE IS RIDING A COLT OF A DONKEY.

This Messianic passage displays our Lord's prophecy of the manner in which he would display Himself one week prior to His crucifixion. After the time of King David, human kings usually displayed their power and glory by riding on majestic war horses (I Kings 10:25-29; II Kings 9:18-19; Esther 6:8; Jeremiah 22:4). Our Messiah showed his humility by riding a donkey, the ordinary person's beast of burden. A "colt" is a young donkey (male in this case) and "foal" is another term for a young donkey, which refers to an even younger animal, hence the greater display of humility.

THE TIMING OF THE EXACT DAY OF HIS ARRIVAL

Daniel 9:24–25

²⁴Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. ²⁵Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times (ASV, 1901).

The prophecy starts off with Daniel's prayers being answered by the angel Gabriel. He says, "*Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city.*"

The Hebrew word translated "weeks" in Hebrew is shavuim (Strong's H7620). It should be translated as "seven" or as "seventy-sevens." Shavuim simply refers to seven of something much like we refer to a "few" as referring to 3 of something. Unfortunately, the word shavuim has been mistranslated in our Bibles as "weeks." Genesis 29:27 also uses this word in describing the length of time that was required for Jacob to wait until he could marry Rachel. He worked for her father Laban for seven years and the text says that he worked for him for one "week" – shavuim. Shavuim simply means seven of something and in this context, it is speaking about a shavuim of years or 70 years which is 490 years in total.

Gabriel then is telling Daniel that seventy sevens of years have been decreed upon the Israelites. 490 years are "decreed" and fall within the Times of the Gentiles to bring about the final restoration of the nation Israel. The purpose of the 490 years is to accomplish six things, 3 are negative and 3 of them are positive:

1. To Finish the Transgression
2. To Make an End of Sins
3. To Make Reconciliation for Iniquity
4. To Bring in an Age of Righteousness
5. To Cause a Cessation of Prophecy

6. To Anoint the Most Holy Place

All these decrees which are listed in verse twenty-four and relate in outline form to the purposes of the Tribulation and the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. Verse twenty-five is the focus of our study regarding the appearing of Jesus in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Gabriel then says to Daniel, “*Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.*”

The *going forth of the commandment* is from first chapter of Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:5-7). We see that the Persian King, Artaxerxes Longimanus, on March 14, 445 BC issued a decree and he sends back Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem from the Babylonian destruction. The seventy-sevens which are a total of 490 years are sub-divided into three categories.

1. The Seven-Sevens or 49 years
2. The Sixty-Two Sevens or 434 Years
3. The Last Seven Years

For our purposes the first two segments help us see the date that Messiah the Prince came to Jerusalem. The angel Gabriel said, *Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks.*” The first sub-division begins with Nehemiah returning to Jerusalem to rebuild the city in very difficult times as the book of Nehemiah accounts the events. It speaks of the time that it took for the rebuilding of the city to be completed as far as they could get it. It took forty-nine years to finish or *one seven*. This is seven weeks or seven shavuim.

The Sixty-Two Sevens or 434 years:

The second subdivision immediately begins after the first seven sevens. There is no break between them. There is no particular sign for the second sub-division to begin or to start that. It just runs right into it.

Adding the first seven sevens (49 years) to the next segment of Sixty-Two Sevens (434 years) give us a total of 483 years that will elapse from the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus to the coming of Messiah the Prince.

The following chart shows a time line that begins on March 14, 445 BC when the command was given to rebuild Jerusalem came from Artaxerxes Longimanus. We see where the first seven-week period of 49 years elapses. Included in the chart are a couple dates identified such 270 BC - the writing of the Septuagint. The Septuagint was the Greek translation in Alexandria Egypt where 70 scholars translated the Old Testament Hebrew into Koine Greek so that it could be more widely distributed. This segment of 62 weeks runs to April 6, 32 AD. That's the date Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a colt on what we call, Palm Sunday or His Triumphal Entry. They were praising Him and singing Hosanna, saying, “Blessed [be] the King that cometh in the name of the Lord.” The prophecy is very exact. Accounting for leap years, it works out to be 173,880 days.

The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9

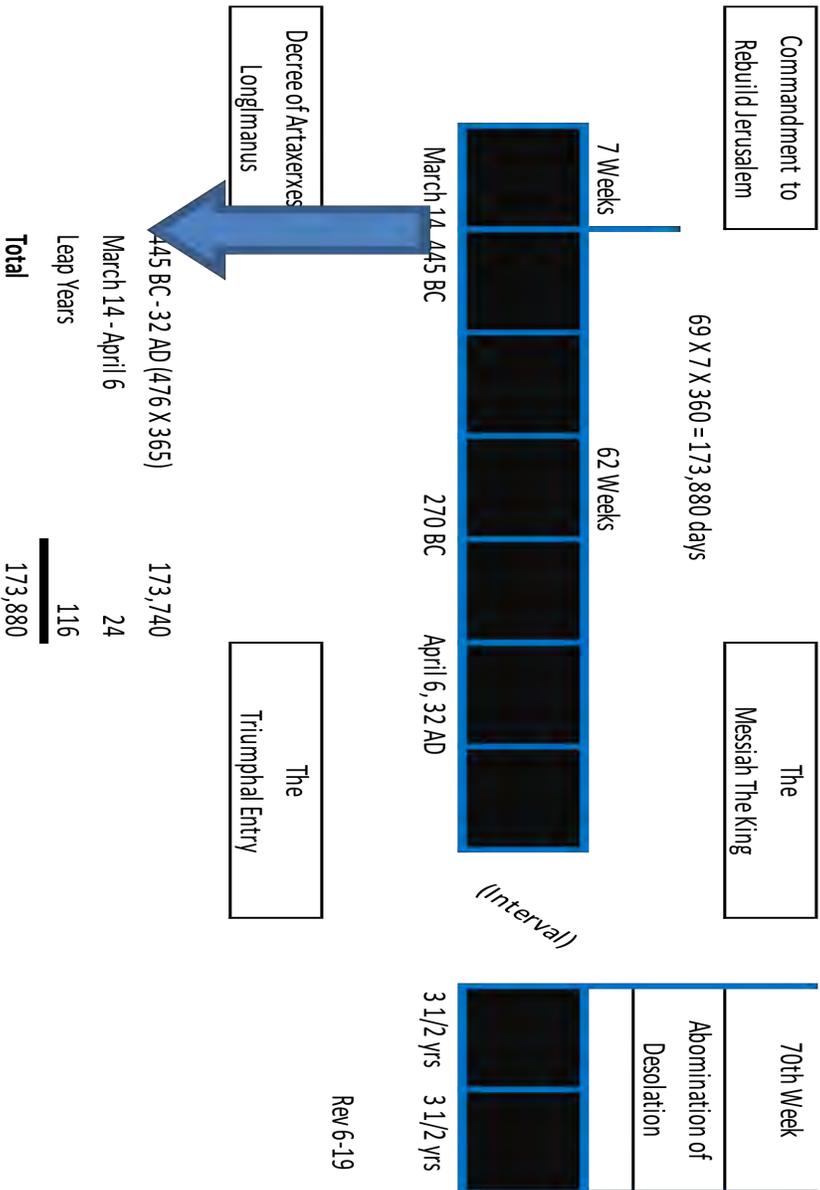


Chart by author

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