

Culham / REEP Easter Calendar 2003

<http://www.reep.org/resources/easter03/>

THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

The day Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey is known as Palm Sunday

ASS

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey – a common enough thing to do at this time! Yet the people who wrote down the story of Jesus saw this as a sign that Jesus was the Messiah.

Matthew's Gospel often points out actions of Jesus which he believed fulfilled a prophecy from Jewish scriptures. In this case, he believed that Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem on a donkey had been foretold in the book of Zechariah (9:9): *'Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'*

The word 'Messiah' is Hebrew and means *'the Anointed One'*. Kings were anointed with oil when they were crowned. In Jesus' time people hoped for a King sent from heaven to save them from oppression. The word *'Christ'* is the Greek translation of *'Messiah'*.

PALM BRANCHES

As Jesus entered Jerusalem, the people were very excited. They spread branches on the road – and even laid down their clothes. They shouted 'Hosanna!' which means 'Save us Now!'

Palm Sunday is the name of the day when the Church remembers Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. In many churches, crosses made of palm leaves are given out. Palm trees don't grow in Britain, so in the past people used to re-enact this story by carrying branches of willow and yew trees around their church.

In some pictures Zacchaeus is shown up in the trees, pulling down branches to hand to people below. There is nothing about this in the Bible, but why might some artists have decided to show it? Read Luke 19:1-10 – a story which occurs just before Jesus set off for Jerusalem.

CITY GATES

Jerusalem was the main city of the Jewish people. It contained a great Temple, where sacrifices were offered to God.

'Zion' is another name for Jerusalem.

In Jewish tradition, Jerusalem is the focal point of worship. In Islam, all Muslims pray towards Mecca and expect to make a pilgrimage there at least once in their life. In Christianity, though, there is no focus on earth. For Christians, Jerusalem became a symbol of heaven – a place beyond the boundaries of this earthly life.

WHIP

The whip in Jesus' hand is a reminder that after he entered Jerusalem he went into the Temple and chased out people who were using it as a place to buy and sell things.

Culham / REEP Easter Calendar 2003

<http://www.reep.org/resources/easter03/>

Jesus wasn't always quiet and gentle! In Mark's Gospel, *'he overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves'* (Mark 11.15). Money changers provided silver coins for paying temple taxes and offerings. Doves (pigeons really) were sold to be sacrificed. Prayers in the temple, for blessing or for forgiveness, involved sacrificing an animal. If you were rich, you might sacrifice an ox or a lamb – most people could only afford a dove! Jesus presumably thought that the worship of God had become a money-making business rather than an act of devotion.

Copyright Culham Institute / REEP 2003