

Title: "Hosanna!"  
Text: Old Testament: Psalm 24  
New Testament: Luke 19:28-44  
Theme: Jesus Christ brings a Palm Sunday message with mixed responses.

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New Horizon URC  
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#### Introduction

##### 1.0 A Misunderstood "Hosanna"!

- 1.1 In Jesus Day
- 1.2 In Our Day

##### 2.0 A Christ-centred "Hosanna"!

- 2.1 Hosanna!
- 2.2 The Coming Kingdom
- 2.3 The Son of David
- 2.4 The King of David
- 2.5 The Prince of Peace
- 2.6 A Humble entry
- 2.7 A Prophecy Fulfilled

#### Conclusion

### Introduction

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ: As we celebrate Palm Sunday today, we need to ask ourselves a question. Do we really know what our praise to God is all about? Do we really understand what Jesus came on this earth to do for us? As we enter this week called 'Holy Week' or 'Passion Week' we have the opportunity to think about this in preparation for the remembrance of the death of Christ on Good Friday and His resurrection on Sunday. As we consider this today, I want us to consider that Christ's entry into Jerusalem was received with mixed responses on that First Palm Sunday and that the same confusion remains today. That's why I've chose for our theme of this message, "Jesus Christ brings a Palm Sunday message with mixed responses."

On many occasions throughout His ministry, the people wanted to proclaim Jesus as their king. He evaded 回避 them every time. Now He accepts their praise willingly. Only from John in 12:11-19 do we get the information that this happened on the Sunday. John 12:1 refers to Jesus anointment in Bethany as being 6 days prior to the Passover. In Jn. 12:12 we read that it was the next day that the events of Palm Sunday occur. It is interesting to note also that it only from in John's account do we read in v. 13 that the branches used were palm branches. The other gospels mention only branches. So it is from John 12:13 that we get the popular name for this Sunday, "Palm Sunday."



## 1.0 A Misguided "Hosanna"!

### 1.1 In Jesus Day

To set the stage for our message, we want to look at the different motivations for shouting 'Hosanna' on that first Palm Sunday. This is important, because in Luke we read that Jesus wept in the process of approaching Jerusalem. In v. 41 we read that they were tears of sorrow over the future state of Jerusalem.

The weeping is identified in vv. 42-44 as being over the fact that Jesus knew that this beautiful city would one day be destroyed. That happened about 35 years later, in 70 A.D. under Emperor Nero. But at the heart of this was the reason it would be destroyed. It was because the people living in Jerusalem would not believe that He was the Messiah. In the place of penitent hearts in Jerusalem, Jesus found hardened hearts. Instead of commitment to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, there was open apostasy.

They had their own idea of what they expected from God, and they didn't particularly like the way that God portrayed Himself especially as the week progressed. They were looking for a miracle working Messiah, not a dead Messiah. In v.37 we read that **"... began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen."**

There were two main reasons for their unwillingness to accept the King as He was. First, there was an arrogant uncertainty about their own ideas of God's way of doing things. Second, there was a fear that Jesus might cost them their place in the world. This was a time for nationalistic demonstrations 民族主义示威游行, patriotic fervour 爱国热情 (palm branches symbolized this), even messianic 救世主的 hope for the Jewish community. The pilgrims were on their way to Jerusalem for their annual Feast of the Passover. Having been under Roman oppression, they were thinking back to the time when their ancestors were under the Egyptian oppression, and how God provided deliverance for them. They were comparing notes as to what happened then and what could happen at this same time each year when they remembered those events.

Jesus was among the pilgrims going to Jerusalem with the masses and with His band of followers. They were shouting appropriate phrases borrowed from Psalm 118 that was not uncommon on Passover celebration events. In our passage, there is a specific mention that there were many people. V. 37 talks about **"...a whole multitude of the disciples"**.

### 1.2 In Our Day

But you know, we have to ask ourselves if we, today, are sincere about our acknowledgement of Jesus Christ as the Lord of our lives. We often have some unholy motives, inappropriate reasons, for shouting our hosannas to God. Jesus is just as concerned about the future state of each of us this morning. We need to ask ourselves what the real reason is that we come to church on a Sunday morning. Are we coming out of obligation, or out of an earnest desire to praise the Lord, and to hear what God has to say to us?

In Jesus day, the people were looking at Jesus as being a different kind of Messiah than He was claiming to be. They were looking for an earthly king to overthrow the Romans once and for all and to re-establish the Jewish nation once again. But this was not to be. Their expectations were not going to be met. Why? Because they were looking for a God whom they wanted, and ignored the God as He was really being presented.

We're not that different today. We have a tendency to formulate a God that fits what we are looking for, don't we? In the same way that this occurred on that first Palm Sunday, we have a tendency 倾向 to seek the God we want instead of the God who is. We want a God who will do things the way we want them done. We want a God who will be flexible with us, and allow us some freedom. We want a God who will fit into our own mould 模型. One who fits into the way we see life. But, in the same way as on the first Palm Sunday, Jesus Christ comes into our lives and says to us, "But that is not who I am." He turns everything upside-down for us, and tells us that He wants obedience to Him, not negotiation 交涉 with us. He wants total commitment to His rule in our lives, not a wavering 摇摆不定, lukewarm 不冷不热, occasional following of Him. He wants an intimate relationship with us as His children, and not just a nodding acquaintance 点头之交 as we often demonstrate our relationship with Him.

## 2.0 A Christ-centred "Hosanna"!

So let's examine our relationship with God and re-commit ourselves to God, not on our terms, as dictated 决定 by our friends and the popular trends in our society, but on His terms as spelled out clearly for us in His Word

## 2.1 Hosanna!

This morning we want to shout 'Hosanna' with the right motivation in our hearts. Hosanna! The word means 'save', 'save us', 'Lord, save us'. By the time Jesus approached Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday, the band of disciples was joined by a crowd of disciples (v.37) made up of the pilgrims who were coming into Jerusalem for the Passover celebration. Some were already in Jerusalem and were coming out to meet Him, having heard that Jesus, who had just raised Lazarus, was coming into town. John 12 describes this meeting in vivid detail. What excitement! Not only were they shouting praises to God, they were also excitedly talking to each other about the miracles and the teachings of this man whom they now accompanied into Jerusalem.

Psalm 24 is fitting in this context, because it makes reference in v.3 to the approach to the 'hill of the Lord' which is a reference to the temple, located in Jerusalem, where Jesus is now entering. Psalm 24:3, "**Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in his holy place?**" This is a psalm written by David when the Ark of the Covenant, kept in captivity, was brought back to the temple. It actually refers more to the Ascension of Jesus Christ and generally it used in that context. But there is an intimate connection between the Triumphal 凯旋道德 Entry to Jerusalem and the Ascension of our Lord. In the context of our passage, it is appropriate, because we are about to enter the week which prepares the people for the Passover celebration. Unknown to the people, however is that Jesus is coming in to perform the very last sacrifice, the ultimate sacrifice, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ Himself, on the cross.

The Psalm was often sung in choral 合唱的 refrain 叠句, 副歌 at the time of approaching God in the temple worship. One half of the choir approaching the gate would sing out, "**<sup>7</sup>Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.**" The other half of the choir inside the gate would respond, "**<sup>8</sup>Who is this King of glory?**" The first half would answer, "**<sup>8</sup>The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.**" Then they would go through the song once again, "**<sup>9</sup>Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.**" The second choir would once again ask, as if not quite understanding or wanting a confirmation, "**<sup>10</sup>Who is this King of glory?**" And the first choir would respond clarifying, "**<sup>10</sup>The LORD of hosts C He is the King of glory.**"

## 2.2 The Coming Kingdom

The "Hosanna!" is also a reminder of the coming kingdom of Jesus Christ. In Mark 11:9,10, we read, "**<sup>9</sup>Those who went ahead and those who followed cried out, saying, Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! <sup>10</sup> Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!**" This is like a Messianic proclamation, something that is still not accepted by the Jews to this day. It comes to expression in the figure of Jesus as the head of the kingdom of David.

The coming kingdom is a kingdom of grace. But not everyone was happy about this. In all of the excitement of the event, there was a 'fly in the ointment'. In vv. 39, we read about the response of the Pharisees, "**And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, Teacher, rebuke your disciples!**" They knew they would never be able to quiet the people down themselves, so they asked Jesus to do it for them. He simply responds in v.40, "**I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.**" Only Luke reports this part of the incident. The Pharisees knew that if Jesus were to take over as king, their rule was done, and their prominent 突出 position in society would come to an end. So they try to remind Jesus of His previous dislike for the praise of the crowds. But the appointed time had now come.

## 2.3 Son of David

The "Hosanna!" is also a reminder of the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of David. This roots the coming of Christ in the history of God's people. As the representative of the house of David, the promises of the Father were going to be fulfilled in Him. He enters Jerusalem under the praise of the people. But He himself knew that what lay ahead of Him as He entered Jerusalem was a time of suffering. But the suffering was for these same people who were uttering 说出 these misguided Hosannas.

The purpose of His coming was to serve as a representative for them --- and for us! --- to God... a representative to suffer the punishment that we deserve. How He longed for the people to understand the grace that He had come to offer. How He longs today for us to understand the reason for His coming.

## 2.4 King of David

The "Hosanna!" is also a reminder of the fact that Jesus Christ was a king. In Luke, the accent 重音 is on the king, not on the kingdom. In Luke 19:38a, we read, "**Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!**" This phrase is quoted by each of the gospel writers. But we also note in v. 36 that, "... **as He went, many spread their clothes on the road..**" This was often done in a way similar to the red carpet treatment that dignitaries 权贵 often receive today. In 2 Kings 9:13, for instance, we read that when Jehu was anointed king over Israel, we read, "**Then**

***each man hastened to take his garment and put it under him on the top of the steps; and they blew trumpets, saying, "Jehu is king!"***

The kings who were their ancestors (David, Solomon, others) provide a shadow of what the King of David, Jesus Christ, was to be to them. But here was a King who was different from what they had expected. His rule was a rule by death, not physical conquest 征服. Oh, he conquered alright! What He did set the pace for conquering the enemy, Satan and his power. But it was done by suffering the punishment allowed by God and designed and executed by Satan.

## **2.5 The Prince of Peace**

What kind of a king was this Jesus Christ? One thing that distinguished Him was that He was the Prince of Peace. The crowds shouted in Luke 19:38b, ***Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!*** This is a reminder of the chorus of the angels at his birth in Luke 2:14, ***Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!*** Now the same chorus greets Him as He is about to go to His death.

Jesus did not come into Jerusalem mounted on a horse as a king would customarily do. A horse was a beast of warfare used by soldiers and kings. Instead Jesus came in on a donkey (a beast of peace, used by the common folk) despised in general by people, One of the titles conferred on Jesus in his prophetic birth announcement in Isaiah 9:6 is the title, "Prince of Peace". Today we lack this contentment and peace as we are soberly reminded of in the bombing raids that take place in our current situations of conflict.

## **2.6 The Humble Entry**

But the entry of this king had yet another side to it. It was also an entry to identify with the humble pilgrims who were in Jerusalem at the time. Luke 19:30-35 tells about the selection of the colt. This is a prophecy fulfilled in Zechariah 9:9, ***"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"***

At the time, the significance was unknown to those around. It was only later, after the crucifixion, that the crowds and the disciples understood the significance of this act of humility. Jesus was trying to help them understand that Jesus was identifying with the lowliest sinner.

This is consistent with 1 Peter 5:6 we are reminded, ***"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."***

This was a colt (v.30) on which no one had ever ridden. That is to say that it was reserved by God for sacred use. This is significant for Jesus, the Son of God. It is in the same way that we note at His birth that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a virgin. It is in the same way at His death that the tomb in which Jesus was laid had never been used.

## **2.7 A Prophecy to Fulfil**

While this is a fulfilment of prophecy in the past, it also fulfils a prophetic function looking ahead. It is a stepping stone to the final fulfilment. It looks ahead to His ascension into heaven as He takes His place at the right hand of God the Father, as King and Ruler. It looks ahead to the time of the entry of His Spirit into the hearts of all His people. It also looks ahead into the coming into the glory of His Kingdom at his return.

## **Conclusion**

In the same way that He came into Jerusalem on that Palm Sunday almost 2 thousand years ago, He is coming into our midst here this morning, looking for the response of you and me today. And what will He find in your response today? Will it be a misguided and empty shout of Hosanna? Or will it be a Hosanna filled with and honest acknowledgement of Jesus, the King who is, rather than Jesus the King that we would prefer Him to be.

Today, this Palm Sunday, and every Lord's Day and, in reality, every day of our lives is a celebration of what Jesus Christ has done for us as the King that God intended Him to be. He is the King who ushers in God's Kingdom, the Prince of Peace who identifies with each one of us this morning, and who wants to be the true King of your life. Amen.