

Praise The Lord

Mark 11:1-11
SS Lesson for 04/17/11

Devotional Scripture: 1 Chron 16:7-15

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Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The major outline of the lesson came from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator. This week's lesson exhorts us to **Praise the Lord Jesus**. The **study's aim** is to show the power of praise in recognizing the Messiah. The **study's application** is to live our lives with the knowledge that Jesus is the Messiah and as a result praise Him.

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Palm Trees

I live in Los Angeles, which must rank near the top of palm-tree cities for the United States. Palm trees are everywhere! And they are lovely. They have an unmistakable look: trunks of varying height and thickness, crowned with clusters of large, drooping leaves. Properly speaking, palm trees have no branches, just leaves or fronds at the top. They present a particularly beautiful silhouette when profiled against a darkening sunset sky at the close of the day. Palm Sunday gets its name from this tree, cultivated since ancient times. Historical sources indicate that the date palm tree was widespread in the Jordan River valley and Galilee and may have been common in Jerusalem (see Psalm 92:12). These trees were neglected and cut down after the Roman devastation of Palestine that culminated with the destruction of Jerusalem in ad 70. This tree is portrayed on Roman coins issued to celebrate the imperial victory. One popular species, called the Judean date palm, was thought to have become extinct by the end of the second century. In a remarkable recovery effort, scientists in Israel managed to germinate a 2,000-year-old seed from a Judean date palm in 2005. The resulting tree, nicknamed Methuselah, is currently growing under controlled conditions. It was about five feet tall in 2008. If successful, this holds the prospect of letting us see the same type of palm fronds that were spread before Jesus on that great day when the multitude shouted, "Hosanna in the highest!"

Lesson Background

The Sunday before Jesus' arrest and crucifixion is traditionally called Palm Sunday. Sunday had no religious significance for the ancient Jews. Their description for the day was simply "the first day of the week" (see Acts 20:7), meaning the first day of the workweek after the Sabbath day. The events of the week leading up to the death and resurrection of Jesus are set in the context of a Jewish holiday time that celebrated both the weeklong Feast of Unleavened Bread and the daylong Passover (see Leviticus 23:5). Both festivals were derived from the events of the exodus of Israel from slavery in Egypt. Passover marked the deliverance from the death of the firstborn, the final plague (see Exodus 12:12, 13). Unleavened bread commemorated the hasty meal the Israelites were to eat just before they fled from Egypt (see 12:8). In Jesus' time, Passover was considered to be a pilgrimage festival. That meant that all Jewish men were expected to celebrate it in Jerusalem, if possible. For Jews living in distant cities (like Rome), this pilgrimage might be a once-in-a-lifetime event, carefully planned, executed, and treasured for the rest of one's life. Jews living in Palestine often were able to attend this festival each year, taking time off after the spring harvest to do so.

From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

Going through the outward motions of worship does not constitute worship. Many regularly practice the religious exercises associated with worship but do not fulfill the most elementary requirements God has established for it. Specifically, they do not come with trusting, humble, obedient hearts, ready to take instruction from the Lord. There are those who hope to earn credit with God simply by attending religious services or fulfilling prescribed outward observances such as public praying, reciting the creed. We think of Palm Sunday as a high point of worship for Jesus' followers. We refer to His entrance into Jerusalem as the "Triumphal Entry." This event had great meaning for Jesus as He presented Himself as King in fulfillment of prophecy. But many in the cheering crowds had only a superficial understanding of Jesus' mission. To

them He was just a miracle-working prophet from Galilee who could fill their stomachs and heal their ills. And when He failed to meet their expectations, they were ready to join the crowds calling for His crucifixion. The highlight of Jesus' public ministry before He was crucified came the day He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. In this week's lesson we explore the public praise that Jesus received from the common people who recognized Him as Messiah. When public dignitaries come into town, it is not uncommon for crowds to gather to take a peek at celebrity. Large crowds come simply to catch a glimpse of the person and to try to understand why he has such a following or why he is so important. In Mark 11 we read about a time when someone was coming down the road to Jerusalem, and there were some people who recognized Him as the promised Messiah for whom all good Jews had been waiting all their lives. Something wonderful was about to happen, and many people crowded around Jesus to see what it was.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Preparation for Jesus (Mark 11:1-6)

- 1 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples;
- 2 and He said to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring it.
- 3 And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and immediately he will send it here."
- 4 So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it.
- 5 But some of those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, loosing the colt?"
- 6 And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go.

Be prepared to be sent out (1)

Sent out to do good works (2 Tim 2:20-21)

20 In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. 21 If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

Sent out because Jesus wants us to do something specific (Acts 22:6-10)

6 "About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. 7 I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?' 8 "Who are you, Lord?" I asked. "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting," he replied. 9 My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. 10 "What shall I do, Lord?" I asked. "'Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.'

Sent out after being commissioned and anointed (Acts 13:1-3)

13 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. 2 While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Sent out through appointment (Luke 10:1)

10 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.

Sent out to present the Word of God (Col 1:25)

25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—

Sent out with the administration of the right hand of fellowship (Gal 2:9)

9 James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews.

Be led by Jesus (2)

Led by believing in God's directions (Gen 22:2-5)

2 Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about." 3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

Led by being obedient (Acts 8:26-29)

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road — the desert road — that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." 27 So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. 29 The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

Led by Divine guidance (Acts 16:6-10)

6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. 7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. 8 So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Led to accomplish a specific purpose at a specific time (Est 4:12-14)

12 When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, 13 he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. 14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"

Led by God's arrangement (1 Cor 12:18)

18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

God will provide all necessary resources (3-4)

Provision of resources to have all that is needed (2 Cor 9:8)

8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Provision of resources to do good works (Eph 2:10)

10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Provision of resources to be generous (2 Cor 9:11)

11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

Provision of resources that come from God's hands (1 Chron 29:14)

14 "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.

Provision through the use of other's resources (Mark 14:13-16)

13 So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. 14 Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' 15 He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." 16 The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

Provision through Divine intervention (Jonah 4:5-8)

5 Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. 6 Then the Lord God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine. 7 But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

Provision through Divine provision of resources (Gen 22:9-13)

9 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. 12 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." 13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son.

Be prepared with an answer for our actions (5)

Some questions should give over to faith (Job 38:1-4)

38 Then the Lord answered Job out of the storm. He said: 2 "Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? 3 Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. 4 "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand.

Be prepared to provide the reason for the hope of faith (1 Peter 3:15)

15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

Be prepared to answer by not distorting God's word or using deception (2 Cor 4:2)

2 Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Be prepared to answer by using wisdom spiritually discerned by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:13-16)

13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. 14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: 16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Do all things for the glory of Jesus (6)

As we work, it must always be to the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31)

31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Do all things in the Name of Jesus (Col 3:17)

17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

For the glory of Jesus because all competence comes from Him (2 Cor 3:4-6)

4 Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. 5 Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. 6 He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant— not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

For the glory of Jesus because He strengthens to do all things (Phil 4:13)

13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

For the glory of Jesus because we reflect God's glory (2 Cor 3:18)

18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

For the glory of Jesus because of His love and faithfulness (Ps 115:1-2)

115 Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness. 2 Why do the nations say, "Where is their God?"

Presentation of Jesus (Mark 11:7-11)

7 Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it.

8 And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

9 Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

10 Blessed is the kingdom of our father David That comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

11 And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Recognize Jesus as King (7-8)

God pronounced Jesus as King (Ps 2:6)

6 "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill."

The Angels pronounced Jesus as King (Isa 9:6)

6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Jesus was a King because of prophecy (Jer 23:5)

5 "The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.

At Jesus' birth He was pronounced King (Luke 19:38)

38 "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

Nathanael pronounced Jesus as King (John 1:49)

49 Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel."

The Jerusalem crowd pronounced Jesus as King (John 12:12-15)

12 The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. 13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!" 14 Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written, 15 "Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt."

Give praises and glory to Jesus (9-10)

Give God the glory as part of thanksgiving (2 Cor 4:15)

15 All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

Give God the glory because in all things God should be praised (1 Peter 4:11)

11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Give God the glory because we are owned by Him (1 Cor 6:20)

20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Give God the glory because we are to give God the glory in all things that we do (1 Cor 10:31)

31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Praise God for His majestic glory (2 Peter 1:17)

17 For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Experience the presence of Jesus (11)

Jesus' presence affords rest (Ex 33:14)

14 The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

Jesus' presence comforts in trials (Isa 43:1-2)

43 But now, this is what the Lord says — he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. 2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

Jesus' presence is promised until the end of time (Matt 28:19-20)

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Jesus' presence warms the heart (Luke 24:30-32)

30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. 32 They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

When I was a boy of age 6, I was finally deemed old enough to wear a suit to church for Easter Sunday. This was not a new outfit, having been passed down from my older brother. But it was new to me, and I was intrigued by the potential of looking all grown up when I went to church. That morning my unruly hair was brushed, then plastered with some goop. My hands and nails were clean, my teeth were brushed. I was ready to don the suit. This included a couple of things I was not accustomed to, though. I had to wear a white dress shirt and a clip-on tie. I also had a leather belt to hold up the pants, which were too big. What I remember the most about this was the difficulty I had in keeping the shirt tucked in. I would push it into my pants on one side only to find it flapping out on the other. I would tuck in the front and realize I had a tail sticking out in the back. This was mainly because the shirt, also a hand-me-down, was a couple of sizes too big. Sometimes I think praise is like that. It is too big to keep tucked in. It wants to come out, to be expressed and enjoyed. We are made to be creatures of praise for our Creator. To deny praise is foolishly to deny our central being. Palm Sunday is a story about this desire to praise (Luke 19:40). The circumstances were right. There was a large crowd of people who had come a great distance with worship in their hearts. They had a great praise literature in the psalms of their heritage. And then they had the proper object of praise to spur them to celebrate: Jesus, the Messiah, the very Son of God.

Concluding Thoughts from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

Fickle. That is an appropriate way to describe the crowd who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem. One day they were delirious with excitement as they shouted "Hosanna." A few days later, they were deranged with anger

as they clamored for His death. Although it is difficult to admit it, we understand their change in attitude and feelings because we ourselves are so fickle, changeable, and unstable in our emotions. They were fickle because they did not understand the plan of God even though He had made it quite clear through the Old Testament prophets. They expected a conquering King, even though Isaiah proclaimed the Messiah would not come with pomp and circumstance (Isa. 53:2). They expected a Warrior on a valiant stallion, though Zechariah had made it clear He would present Himself to His people on the colt of a donkey (Zech. 9:9). They anticipated He would cut off the enemy and restore Israel to her glory; yet they forgot that the Prophet Daniel had said it was the Messiah who would be cut off and have nothing (Dan. 9:26). The fickle finger of faith points at us too. Some days we are faithful. Some days we fight our giants with a handful of stones as we laugh at fear. Other days we cower and deny the Lord as Peter did before a slave girl. There are days when we have the faith to move mountains or at least small piles of dust; there are others when we huddle together and cry, "Lord, do You not care that we are perishing?" This week's lesson text is one of those exuberant proclamations of faith and victory. Waving palm fronds and laying cloaks on the road for the Lord to pass by—we all have days like those. But we need to remember the entire picture. We no longer live in Eden. The perfume of the blooms from the tree of life has been replaced with the smog of sin's decadence. This is a cursed world. And though we are citizens of a different kingdom (Phil. 3:20), we are not there yet. This is not yet heaven. Eden's flowers have withered and blown away, and heaven's golden avenues are still awaiting our feet. So we dare not imagine that something is wrong with us or that something is wrong with God just because every day is not a hosanna day. There is yet to be a hosanna day for God's people. Christ's first coming was no mistake. It was part of a divine plan that originated in Eden and will be fulfilled in heaven. The cross had to precede the crown. In the early 1900s, a missionary who served for many years overseas had to return to the States because of his bad health. When he neared New York harbor, he saw a sign that read Welcome Home. He imagined it was for him, but he knew it was not. Teddy Roosevelt was on board, and the Welcome Home sign was for him. Despair flooded the aged missionary's heart. But then it seemed God spoke to his heart and said, "My son, you are not home yet." You are not home yet, either. Someday these ho-hum days will be replaced by the hosanna days of heaven, and we will rejoice as we should.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. The Lord will provide whatever we need to fulfill His plan for our lives (Mark 11:1-3)
2. When the Lord gives us a task, He will also prepare the way for us to accomplish it (vs. 4-6)
3. If we bring the Lord what He asks, He will make use of it to further His kingdom (vs. 7)
4. If we believe that the Lord is holy, we should sanctify ourselves accordingly (vs. 8)
5. When the presence of the Lord is known among His people, they rejoice abundantly (vs. 9-10)
6. As the Lord's people, we must always be prepared to welcome His presence among us (vs. 11)

Heart of the Lesson from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

What we often call Palm Sunday was a very historic day. This event was crucial to showing everyone that Jesus was indeed the King of the Jews.

Preparing for hosannas (Mark 11:1-3)

When Jesus told two of His disciples to fetch a colt for Him to ride on, they were a bit skeptical. The disciples were often skeptical about things Jesus told them to do. One would think that by now, at the end of His earthly ministry, they would finally have confidence that whatever He told them was something they could completely trust Him on. This skepticism by the original disciples actually gives those living today great confidence. How often do we show a doubtful spirit when we know God has clearly led us in a certain path? All of us have been through that and most likely will go through it again. Not that it is right, but Jesus loves us so much that He is willing to meet us where we are to help us in our spiritual growth.

Securing means for hosannas (Mark 11:4-6)

Some believe that there was some supernatural arrangement that God made to make the donkey's owners agree to Jesus' borrowing it. But it is just as reasonable to believe that Jesus had made a simple arrangement with them earlier. Either way, the result was the same. We run into difficulties all the time. How often do we turn to God to deal with them? Too often we do not. In the book of Joshua, when Israel was conquering the Promised Land, the people met a group of people who said they were from a faraway country. The Israelite leaders were a bit skeptical at first, but in the end they believed these Gibeonites and made a treaty with them. The problem was that they had failed to ask God about it (9:14). They had to honor their oath to these people even to the point of protecting them when they were attacked (10:6-7). When we fail to seek God in all we do, there are always greater problems.

Shouting of hosannas (Mark 11:7-11)

Since we all know how Jesus' life ended, it is sometimes hard for us to realize just how this Palm Sunday celebration happened. Try to imagine what it was like. Jesus was greatly honored by the masses everywhere He went. It was only the Jewish leaders who hated Him. This Palm Sunday parade was really a natural outgrowth of the appreciation of the people for Jesus and His ministry of compassion. He had healed so many over His three-and-a-half-year ministry. Yet it was ultimately His preaching that turned people's lives around. We may never have an active part in a healing ministry. Most of us will never preach a sermon, and not one of us will be hailed as Jesus was on Palm Sunday. But we can make Jesus known to others. And we must make Him known. That is what God has commanded us to do. Palm Sunday happened once. Many praised Jesus on that day, but many more have since. If you are reading this, you are likely one who has praised Him often. That is good. But we need to share the good news of the gospel with others so that they too can praise Him. When Christ saves someone, that is certainly a reason to praise Him.