

Two passages in the Bible make the meaning of the palm very plain.

“On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.” (Jn. 12:12, 13). “Branches of palm-trees” are the great spreading leaves. The meaning of the palms is explained by the people’s cry “Hosanna (save now): Blessed is the king of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.” The palms are grateful and joyful acknowledgments of the Lord’s saving power; of the power of His commandments to conquer in temptation, and to lead into all that is good. In the Revelation John “beheld, and, lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” (Rev. 7: 9, 10) Once more the palms are interpreted by the voices that they are joyful acknowledgments of the Lord’s saving power.

The children of Israel as they journeyed from Egypt, after some days in the desert, “came to Eliam, where were 12 springs of water and three score and ten palm trees and they camped there by the waters” (Exod 15:27). A state of peace is described after a sea of temptation, an oasis in the journey of life, when the Lord’s words comes with abundant refreshment. Crossing the Jordan into the promised land and where after John baptized and preached repentance, represents the Lord’s commandments to cleanse the life from wrong. By accepting the commandments as the law of life, at the crossing of the Jordan, “the people passed over right against Jericho” which is Canaan the first city of the promised land it is also the city of palm trees at the fords of Jordan and represents the first heavenly state.

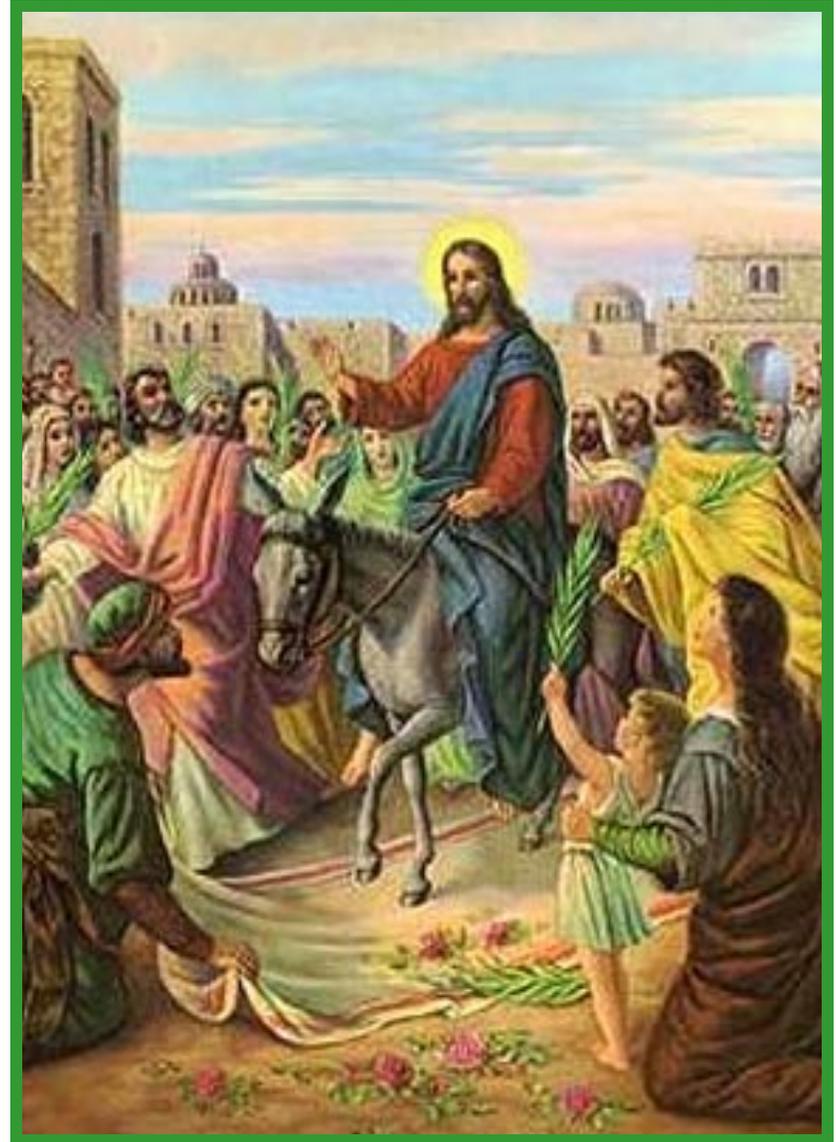
Palm trees were carved on the walls and doors of the temple (1 Kings 6: 29-35; Ezek. 12: 18-20). The temple represents every true dwelling-place of the Lord and a heavenly state in every heart, much the same which lead to and protect the more interior things; that is, keeping of the Lord’s commandments with a sense of security which they give against all harm. “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree” (Ps. 42: 12) . This is a promise that those who try to do right shall have an increasing knowledge of the power of the Lord’s commandments to defend from evil and to lead to good. The whole psalm is a grateful confession of this saving power. Seventy palm trees, signifies the goods of truth, that is in all abundance and is evident from the signification as being all things in the complex. Likewise the significance of “twelve” represents the goods of the spiritual church, which are the goods of truth, that is the affection of good and of delight. Therefore palm trees were employed in holy festivals, as in the feast of tabernacles as Moses spoke of in (Lev. 23: 20). Palm trees also signify wisdom for wisdom is good. With the cherubs and flowers that were carved into the walls of the temple; for the “temple” signifies the Lord Himself or heaven while the cherubs, palm trees, and flowers upon the walls represent providence, wisdom and intelligence, which are from the Lord. When the great crowd had come to the feast and they heard that Jesus was coming into Jerusalem, they took boughs of palm trees and went forth to meet him and cried out “**Hosanna**”.

\*\* (excerpted from: scienceofcorrespondences.com)



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## PALM SUNDAY



“Hosanna”

## Reflections on the True Meaning of Palm Sunday

*What* exactly is the meaning of Palm Sunday? We know the simple facts: Jesus arrived in Jerusalem and asked his disciples to bring a foal, the colt of a donkey to ride upon into the gates of Jerusalem. As Jesus entered the city the crowds began shouting, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Lk. 19:36-38) They waved palm branches and spread out their coats on the streets. This story is quite rich with symbolism and points to something much deeper.

### The Donkey

*\*When* Jesus entered Jerusalem, the crowds believed He was a “King”, who had come to establish Israel's independence from Rome, to liberate them in a very real way as their leader. They wanted a Messiah who would be their political hero. In fact, the whole scene replicates a King or general's triumphant entry into a city.

The irony may have been lost on the people at the time, but Jesus “triumphal entry” was not that of a general or a warrior. Such men ride stallions not a donkey. The donkey symbolized that Jesus came on a mission of peace, and revealed that Jesus to be a humble peasant on a peace mission and not of a military warrior.

The symbol of peace which the donkey represents is important on several levels. The donkey is the animal that is often used to mock and ridicule others. As GK Chesterton wrote of the donkey, he is the “devils walking parody of four footed things.” Jesus' ride on the donkey for his triumphal entry establishes this irony that He lifts up the lowly as well as the lowly donkey in the process. This donkey becomes the sacred throne for, not only a King, but for the very Son of God. Also note, that it was a donkey that carried Jesus and Mary at the beginning of his life just before he was born as they rode to Bethlehem. Now the donkey carries Him into Jerusalem just before His death. Jesus is showing us that what we think has no value, has tremendous value in God's eyes.

*What* did we do to this kind of Messiah? He comes in peace and humility and rides in on a donkey. We do not want to conquer evil with peace, humility, and non-violence. Instead we would rather resort to violence. That's why, just a week later, when these would-be followers realize Jesus' goal is not in line with theirs, they stop shouting “Hosanna” and start shouting “Crucify him!” Jesus did not want a militaristic victory, but to liberate us from all our enemies, from the source and root of our problems: sin, evil, and death itself. This is the triumph behind the triumphal entry. This is the victory that Jesus won.

\*(excerpted from: all-creation.franciscan.com)

## The Palms

The waving of palms and laying down of coats by the people was no accident or coincidence. Palms were signs of victory and of military achievement. The Romans gave palms to the victors in the Roman games, and emperors gave them to their subjects following their military conquests. The Jewish people were aware of this and in 1 Maccabees waved palm branches to celebrate the newly established independence of Jerusalem and Judea.

*\*\*The* date palm is the one always meant in the Bible. It is the most common and the most useful of the large family of palms. The tree has one single stem which never branches, but rises like a straight, slender column to a great height, and bears at its top a crown of very large and graceful feather-shaped leaves. The old leaves gradually drop off below and new ones grow from the center, keeping the crown always full and green. The flowers are borne in large clusters of many thousands, which hang from among the leaves. The staminate and pistillate flowers are on separate trees, and the Arabs are accustomed to cut the pollen-bearing clusters and tie them in the fertile trees that the fruit may be full and good. The dates are the main dependence of the people in countries where they grow, eaten fresh and preserved in many ways. Other parts of the tree are also used, especially the large, strong leaves with their tough fiber. The palm is remarkable for growing in the desert. It was abundant in the hot Jordan valley, causing Jericho to be called “the city of palm-trees.”

The shape of the palm gives a hint to the knowledge to which it corresponds. The low, wide-spreading branches of the fig seemed appropriate to the natural kindness which reaches out on every side in lowly uses. But the palm has no branches, and its tall stem points straight up towards heaven. The knowledge to which it corresponds must relate to one single exalted theme, and the one supreme subject of knowledge is the Lord.

The palm is the tree of the desert. There are deserts in our lives, and what kind of states are they? Barren states, when there is little that makes us happy. The children of Israel journeyed through the wilderness of between Egypt and Canaan, representing the states of privation and trial in our lives. The Lord was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, representing the state of conflict and distress before good had gained possession and become fruitful in His life. The burning heat of the desert represents the heat of selfish passions in these times of trial, causing a feverish thirst for the cool, refreshing knowledge of what is right and wise to do. This knowledge of the Lord as our Savior is the palm of the desert; its leaves are the perceptions and grateful acknowledgement of the power of His truth to save; its fruits are the good works done in that strength, giving to ourselves and other's substantial evidence of the Divine power. This noble tree is our shelter and our food in the desert of temptation. We say, “the victor's palm”, is given to one who excels; and from very ancient days a palm leaf has been an emblem of victory.