

## Context: The Last Week of Jesus' Earthly Ministry

The events from Palm Sunday to the Last Supper take place in the final week before the crucifixion. This week is sometimes called **Passion Week** or **Holy Week**. Everything Jesus does during this time is deliberate, prophetic, and loaded with eternal significance.

This study will walk through:

1. The Triumphal Entry (Palm Sunday)
2. The Cleansing of the Temple
3. The Withering of the Fig Tree
4. Confrontation with the Pharisees and Final Teachings
5. Prophecies of the End Times (Olivet Discourse)
6. The Anointing at Bethany
7. Judas' Betrayal and the Plot
8. Preparation for Passover
9. The Last Supper

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### 1. Palm Sunday – The Triumphal Entry

#### Matthew 21:1–11, John 12:12–16

Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, fulfilling **Zechariah 9:9**, as the crowd waves palm branches and shouts “Hosanna!”

- **Donkey** – Peace and humility, not war. Jesus is coming as a *Suffering Servant*, not a military conqueror.
- **Palms** – Symbolic of victory and celebration. Used in Jewish tradition during Sukkot.
- **Hosanna** – “Save now!” A cry of both **praise** and **petition** from **Psalms 118:25–26**.

#### ◆ Lesson Focus:

To understand the biblical, prophetic, and spiritual significance of Palm Sunday and the Triumphal Entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem.

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## ◆ I. Setting the Stage: The Final Week

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on what we now call *Palm Sunday* marked the beginning of His final week leading to the cross. It is one of the few events recorded in **all four Gospels**, which highlights its significance.

**Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19, John 12**

This wasn't a spontaneous act of celebration—it was a divine appointment.

Jesus, the Lamb of God, was presenting Himself to Israel for inspection—just as the Passover lamb had to be tested and examined before sacrifice. Everything He did this week was deliberate, prophetic, and in alignment with the will of God from before the foundation of the world.

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## ◆ II. The Prophecy

**Zechariah 9:9 (KJV)**

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.*

This prophecy was written over **500 years** before the birth of Christ, and yet Jesus fulfilled it **exactly**.

**Why a Donkey?**

- A donkey symbolized **peace**, as opposed to a horse, which symbolized war.
- In biblical times, kings rode donkeys during peaceful processions (1 Kings 1:33–35).
- Jesus was showing Himself as the **King of Peace**, not as a conquering general.

His choice of a donkey was intentional and prophetic—He was not entering Jerusalem to overthrow Rome, but to conquer **sin and death**.

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## ◆ III. The Entry: Matthew 21:1–11

Let's read the full text.

### **Matthew 21:6–11 (KJV)**

*And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,  
And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon.  
And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches  
from the trees, and strawed them in the way.  
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.  
And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?  
And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.*

### **Garments Spread in the Way**

- Laying garments on the road was a sign of submission and honor.
- It was symbolic of saying, “You can walk over my life. I submit to Your authority.”

**2 Kings 9:13** shows this when Jehu was made king: they laid their garments under him.

### **Palm Branches**

#### **John 12:13 (KJV)**

*Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him...*

- Palms represented **victory** and **deliverance**.
- They were used during **Feast of Tabernacles** (Leviticus 23:40), symbolizing celebration of God’s presence.
- The people waved palms, declaring **Jesus as King**—though many did not yet understand the kind of King He was.

### **“Hosanna”**

- From Hebrew “*Hoshiya na*” – meaning “**Save us now**”
- A cry for help, blended with a shout of praise.
- They quoted **Psalm 118:25–26**, a messianic psalm used during Passover:

#### **Psalm 118:25–26 (KJV)**

*Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.  
Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord...*

They were saying, “You are the One sent by God to save us!”

But many expected political salvation, not spiritual redemption.

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#### ◆ IV. The King They Expected vs. The King He Is

The people wanted:

- A king who would **overthrow Roman oppression**
- A leader who would **restore the throne of David**
- A messiah who would bring **earthly victory**

But Jesus came to:

- Defeat **sin**, not Caesar
- **Rule hearts**, not just lands
- **Offer peace** through the cross, not through revolt

#### **Luke 19:41–44 (KJV)**

*And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it...*

Jesus wept because He knew their celebration would turn to rejection. They missed the true purpose of His coming.

#### **John 1:11 (KJV)**

*He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

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#### **V. The Judgment to Come**

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, He went straight to the **temple**.

#### **Matthew 21:12 (KJV)**

*And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought...*

Before going to the cross, He cleansed the temple. Judgment begins at the house of God. His kingship is not just in celebration—it is in purification.

This too is a picture of what is to come.

#### **Malachi 3:1–3 (KJV)**

*...the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple...*

Jesus will return again, not on a donkey, but on a **white horse**.

### **Revelation 19:11 (KJV)**

*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True...*

Palm Sunday reminds us: the King has come in peace—but He is coming again in judgment. Now is the time to receive Him.

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### ◆ **VI. Palm Branches in Heaven**

Palm branches are not just a part of Jerusalem's streets—they appear again in eternity.

### **Revelation 7:9 (KJV)**

*After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude... clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands...*

The redeemed in heaven will wave palms in worship—not to ask for victory, but to **celebrate the victory** of the Lamb.

What they celebrated by faith in Jerusalem, we will celebrate by sight in glory.

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### ◆ **VII. Application for Us Today**

Palm Sunday is not about tradition. It is a prophetic reminder:

- Jesus is King—whether we recognize Him or not.
- He deserves our praise—before the miracle, not just after it.
- We must receive Him not just with words, but with surrender.
- The same crowd that cried “Hosanna” on Sunday cried “Crucify Him” by Friday. We must be faithful in both the celebration and the suffering.

### **Luke 19:39–40 (KJV)**

*And some of the Pharisees... said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.*

*And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.*

Let us not let the rocks do our praising.

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Jesus entered the city as a King of peace. He left it bearing a cross.  
But He rose as King of glory—and He's coming again.

This Palm Sunday, let us receive our King—not just with palms and praise, but with submission, repentance, and covenant.

**Hosanna. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.**

They cried “Hosanna to the Son of David,” recognizing Him as the Messiah. But their expectation was a political savior—not a Lamb to be slain. This teaches us to **trust God's plan, even when it doesn't fit our preferences.**

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## **2. Cleansing of the Temple (Monday)**

**Matthew 21:12–13, Mark 11:15–17**

Jesus drives out the money changers and commercial activity from the Temple.

**Isaiah 56:7 (KJV)** – “*...Mine house shall be called an house of prayer...*”

**Jeremiah 7:11** – “*...a den of thieves...*”

- Jesus **cleanses the house of God** before He goes to the cross—just like a lamb was inspected and found without blemish before being offered at Passover.

Jesus is not just concerned with **outward praise**, but **inner purity**. His presence demands cleansing. Even today, before revival and resurrection, there must be repentance and purging in His house.

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## **3. The Fig Tree Withered (Tuesday)**

**Mark 11:12–14, 20–21**

Jesus curses a fig tree that had leaves but no fruit.

- The fig tree often represents **Israel** (Hosea 9:10, Jeremiah 24).
- Leaves but no fruit = **form without substance**, religion without righteousness.

- Jesus is rebuking **hypocrisy**—a warning not just to Israel, but to all who have a form of godliness but deny the power.

Jesus looks for **fruit**, not just profession. This leads into His teachings and parables that emphasize readiness and righteousness.

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#### 4. Conflict with Religious Leaders (Tuesday–Wednesday)

##### Matthew 21:23–46, 22:15–46

Jesus is confronted by the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes in the temple. He answers their challenges and teaches with bold authority.

##### Key Moments:

- **Parable of the Wicked Tenants** – Israel’s rejection of the prophets and of the Son.
- **The Greatest Commandment** – Love God with all your heart.
- **Jesus Silences the Pharisees** – He asks about the Messiah: *“If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?”* (Matthew 22:45)
- (Mat 22:41) While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,
- (Mat 22:42) Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, *The Son of David.*
- (Mat 22:43) He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,
- (Mat 22:44) The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?
- (Mat 22:45) If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?
- (Mat 22:46) And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any *man* from that day forth ask him any more *questions*.

Jesus is exposing the false religious systems that had the appearance of holiness but were full of pride and rebellion. He is re-centering the people on **true worship** and **spiritual truth**.

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## 5. Olivet Discourse – Teachings on the End Times (Tuesday Night)

### Matthew 24–25, Mark 13, Luke 21

Jesus leaves the temple and sits on the Mount of Olives with His disciples. He delivers one of the longest and most powerful teachings about:

- The destruction of the temple
- Signs of the end times
- His second coming
- Parables of preparation: **Wise Virgins, Talents, and Sheep and Goats**

This is Jesus' final extended teaching before the Last Supper. He is warning the disciples (and us) to:

- Stay awake
- Watch
- Be faithful stewards
- Be filled with oil (Holy Ghost)
- Live ready

The King is coming again—not on a donkey, but in power and glory.

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## 6. The Anointing at Bethany (Wednesday Night)

### Matthew 26:6–13, Mark 14:3–9, John 12:1–8

A woman (Mary) anoints Jesus with costly perfume. Judas and others criticize it as wasteful.

**John 12:7 (KJV)** – *“Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.”*

The **alabaster box** represents costly worship—broken and poured out.

- Jesus connects this act to His **burial**, showing He is already preparing for death.

**Revelation:**



What others call a waste, Jesus calls **worship**. This act of devotion prefigures the anointing of His body for burial and shows us the value of giving Jesus **our best, not our leftovers**.

### **John 12:7 (KJV)**

*Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.*

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### **Context**

This verse takes place at **Bethany**, just days before the crucifixion. Jesus is having a meal with Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead, and His disciples. During this meal, **Mary**, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, does something shocking:

### **John 12:3 (KJV)**

*Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.*

This act was seen by others—especially Judas—as a waste. But Jesus saw something greater.

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### ◆ **“She Hath Kept This for the Day of My Burying”**

Jesus reveals that **Mary was preparing Him for burial**. While it’s not clear if Mary fully understood the weight of her actions, Jesus makes it clear: *this moment was prophetic*. She may not have known everything, but she had a **spiritual sensitivity** to what was happening.

Jesus had told His disciples multiple times that He would be betrayed and crucified (see Matthew 16:21, Luke 9:22), but they often failed to grasp it. Yet here is Mary, **breaking open something costly, pouring it out, and anointing Him with devotion**, as if her spirit understood what others couldn’t.

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### **The Alabaster Box – Costly Worship**

Alabaster was a precious stone, and the container would have been sealed. To access the ointment, **the vessel had to be broken**. That alone is symbolic:

- You don't pour out worship without breaking pride.
- You don't release fragrance without personal sacrifice.

**Mark 14:3 (KJV)** says, *"She brake the box, and poured it on his head."*

The perfume was **spikenard**, an imported oil from India—extremely expensive. In fact, Judas notes it could have been sold for 300 pence (John 12:5)—roughly **a year's wages**.

Mary's act shows:

- **True worship costs something.**
- She gave her **best**, not her leftovers.
- She broke what was **precious** and poured it out **without reserve**.

It's a picture of **whole-hearted surrender**—nothing held back.

### **The Fragrance Filled the Room**

*"...and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment."*

The result of broken worship is **an atmosphere that shifts**.

When true adoration is poured out, everyone senses it—even if they don't understand it.

### **Preparation for Burial**

Jewish burial customs involved **washing, anointing, and wrapping the body**. Spices and ointments were used to honor the dead and preserve the body (John 19:39–40).

Jesus was letting them know that **His death was near**. Mary's anointing wasn't random—it was **God-ordained preparation**. She was doing **before His death** what others would attempt **after**, but too late.

**Luke 23:56 (KJV)** – After the crucifixion, the women "prepared spices and ointments," but Jesus was already risen by the time they returned.

Mary's worship was **prophetic**—she anointed the Lamb before the sacrifice.

This ties directly into the **Passover preparation** timeline:

- Jesus was the Lamb selected and set aside before Passover (Exodus 12:3–6).
- He had to be **without blemish**, and **set apart** for death.
- Mary's anointing functions like a **priest preparing the offering**.

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## Jesus Accepts It—and Defends Her

When Judas and others criticized her, Jesus rebuked them.

*“Let her alone...”*

He **defended her offering** and **validated her revelation**.

Some in the room saw waste.

Jesus saw worship.

Some saw extravagance.

Jesus saw **insight, faith, and preparation**.

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- **Mary broke something costly** to anoint Jesus for burial.  
But in a few days, **Jesus would be broken**, and **He would anoint us** with salvation.
- What she did in **devotion**, He would soon do in **redemption**.

## Isaiah 53:5 (KJV)

*But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities...*

She gave everything to the One who was about to give **everything** for her.

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**Mary understood the moment.** She gave everything—before the cross, before the resurrection, before the glory. That’s real worship: loving Jesus for who He is, not for what He’s about to do for us.

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## 7. Judas’ Betrayal and the Plot (Wednesday Night)

**Matthew 26:14–16, Luke 22:3–6**

Judas agrees to betray Jesus for **30 pieces of silver**—fulfilling prophecy:

**Zechariah 11:12–13 (KJV)** – *“So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver...”*

Judas had walked with Jesus, witnessed miracles, and still turned away for personal gain. This reminds us that closeness to Jesus does not replace **faithfulness** to Jesus. The enemy still tempts people to trade the eternal for the temporary.

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## 8. Preparation for the Passover (Thursday Morning)

**Matthew 26:17–19, Mark 14:12–16**

Jesus sends Peter and John to prepare the Passover meal in an upper room. Everything is pre-arranged—showing Jesus’ divine foreknowledge and sovereignty.

This would be the **final Passover** celebrated under the Old Covenant.

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## 9. The Last Supper (Thursday Evening)

**Matthew 26:26–30, Luke 22:14–20, John 13–14**

Jesus sits down with the twelve in the upper room for the Passover—but He gives it a new meaning.

### Breaking Bread and Giving the Cup

- **Bread** = His **body**, soon to be broken.
- **Cup** = His **blood**, to be shed for the New Covenant.

**Luke 22:20 (KJV)** – *“This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”*

Jesus is transitioning the people of God from **shadow to substance**, from Passover to Calvary.

### Foot Washing (John 13)

Jesus washes the disciples’ feet, teaching them to serve one another. Even Judas’ feet are washed.

### The New Commandment

**John 13:34–35 (KJV)** – *“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another...”*

This commandment defines the people of the New Covenant—not by the law written in stone, but by the love poured into hearts through the Holy Ghost.

The Last Supper is not the end—it is the beginning of the greatest act of love the world has ever seen. Jesus is preparing not just to **suffer**, but to **save**.

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### **Closing Thought: From Branches to Bread**

From the **palms of praise** on Sunday to the **bread of covenant** on Thursday, Jesus moves with unwavering purpose. Every step is ordered. Every word is weighty. Every action is loaded with fulfillment.

He is the **Lamb** selected on the 10th day, examined, and found without blemish.

He is the **Bread of Life**, broken for us.

He is the **King of Glory**, who came not to be served but to give His life.

This week reminds us that **Jesus didn't just die—He died on purpose.**

He wasn't taken—He gave Himself.

And it all begins with Palm Sunday, but it leads to the upper room, where the cross comes into focus.