

## **Theme: “Names of Wondrous Love” – THE SON OF DAVID**

### **Text: Matthew 21:1-11 (NKJV)**

Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. <sup>3</sup> "And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." <sup>4</sup> All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: <sup>5</sup> "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.' " <sup>6</sup> So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. <sup>7</sup> They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them. <sup>8</sup> And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup> Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!" <sup>10</sup> And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" <sup>11</sup> So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."

I thought Jesus' earthly father was Joseph? I thought Jesus' true father was God the Father? Why then were the people crying out on Palm Sunday, "**Hosanna to the Son of David!**" (v. 9)? What was the significance of this "Name of Wondrous Love" for Jesus that the adoring crowds were proclaiming on Palm Sunday? Let's take a closer look at this name for Jesus, as well as this incredible—yet perplexing scene in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

First of all, by this name and title, "**Son of David,**" the people were proclaiming Jesus to be the long-awaited Messiah. You see, the Messiah that was prophesied in the Old Testament would be a descendent of the great king of Israel, King David. This was common knowledge among the Jewish believers who would have known their Old Testament Scriptures. Earlier in the Gospel of Matthew Jesus was called by this name by people who sought healing from Him (**Matthew 9:27; 15:22; 20:30-31**). In one incident, after healing a man who was demon-possessed, blind and mute we're told that "**all the multitudes were amazed and said, 'Could this be the Son of David?'**" (**Matthew 12:23**).

Jesus' enemies were upset that the people (including children) were crying out this name and title to Jesus. We read just a few verses later in the Gospel of Matthew, **But when the chief priests and the experts in the law saw the wonders he performed and heard the children calling out in the temple, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' they were indignant.** <sup>16</sup> They said to him, "Do you hear what they are saying?" "Yes," Jesus told them, "Have you never read, From the lips of little children and nursing babies you have prepared praise?" (**Matthew 21:15-16 EHV**).

A few days later during Holy Week Jesus would question the Pharisees about this very name and title of the Messiah: While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, "**What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?**" They said to Him, "**The Son of David**" (**Matthew 22:41-42**). They knew what this name "**Son of David**" meant, but when Jesus questioned them further, it was clear that they didn't truly know who the Christ was or what He had come to do.

This "Name of Wondrous Love", "**Son of David,**" also points to something else that is very important about Jesus. It points us to His humanity. He is not just the Son of God, He is the "Son of Man" (which was the way Jesus most commonly referred to Himself in the Gospels). He was and is one of us! He is the "**Son of David**" born into the line of King David to a humble virgin named Mary. Even

His earthly father, Joseph, was of David's line so that even in the legal sense Jesus was the **"Son of David."**

The fact of Jesus' humanity points us also to His humility. In this Palm Sunday scene we see two contrasts very clearly: Jesus being exalted as the Christ, **"the Son of David,"** but also Jesus coming humbly like no other king riding a lowly donkey. Both of these truths about Jesus are important to understand in order to understand these events of Palm Sunday.

Our Old Testament reading from Zechariah—a prophecy which Matthew tells us was fulfilled by Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem on that donkey's colt (**Matthew 21:5**)—helps explain the events of Palm Sunday for us: **"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" (Zechariah 9:9).** Jesus, our King, came **"lowly,"** humbly to bring us **salvation!** That is the message of Palm Sunday.

Let's look at one more important Palm Sunday term to help us understand Palm Sunday: **"Hosanna."** This is probably the word we think of first when we think of Palm Sunday. We will sing this word, **"Hosanna,"** a number of times in our hymns today. We also sing **"Hosanna"** as a part of some of the liturgies we use in our church services on a regular basis. In fact, on some Sundays we sing the very words of **v. 9** of our text, **"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest!" (v. 9).**

But does anyone here know what this word **"Hosanna"** means? From the context of our text we can probably guess that this word **"Hosanna"** is a word of praise, and that's what it is. However, its original, literal meaning in Hebrew was a cry for help from God meaning, *"save" or "help, we pray."* In modern English we would probably say, "Help us, please" or "save us, please." Eventually, however, this word came to be used exclusively as an expression of praise, just like we use it still today. We could translate the phrase from our text, **"Praise to the Son of David!"** But think about what that expression *literally* means: **"Save us please, Son of David!"** Isn't that *also* our cry to Jesus?

We too can sing and shout our **"Hosanna(s) to the Son of David!" (v. 9)** on this Palm Sunday, and every day. We can cry out to our Savior with a plea for His divine mercy, **"Hosanna! Save us LORD, we pray!"** We have "laid down palm branches" in our church to the honor of our glorious Savior King. But more importantly, we honor Jesus, our triumphant King, with our hearts and lives. We prepare the way for Jesus' entry into our hearts with Spirit-worked repentance and faith. We "lay down our garments" of selfishness, and pride, and offer up for Jesus' use "the garments" of our offerings, our time, our energies and talents, yes, even our very lives.

As we look ahead to the events of Holy Week and all that Jesus went through to earn our salvation—the desertion of His own disciples, the insults, the pain of the torture that the Roman soldiers inflicted on Him, and of course death itself and the God-forsakenness of hell on that cursed cross—when we consider all this and hear once again those glorious words of triumph on Easter Sunday, **"He is Risen!" (Mark 16:6),** the words which secured our salvation and guaranteed our own resurrection we too will shout and sing our words of praise, **"Hosanna! Praise to the Son of David!"**

This Palm Sunday, and as we enter into Holy Week, may the Holy Spirit move us to see the majesty in Jesus' lowliness, the power in His willing service and self-sacrifice, and the victory in His empty grave. We will then always sing our **"Hosannas!"** to the **"Son of David"**—that "Name of Wondrous Love" that reminds us of both Jesus' exalted glory and His humility. That is who Jesus is: Our King and our Savior! Amen.