

Palm Sunday Introduction

Today is Palm Sunday; the first day of what we call the Passion Week and a day when one of the world's most extraordinary prophecies was fulfilled.

1. Palm Sunday was designed to be the greatest of all Jewish celebrations. It was the day Christ offered Israel their promised Kingdom. By the end of the first century it had become a special Holy Day for Christians around the world.

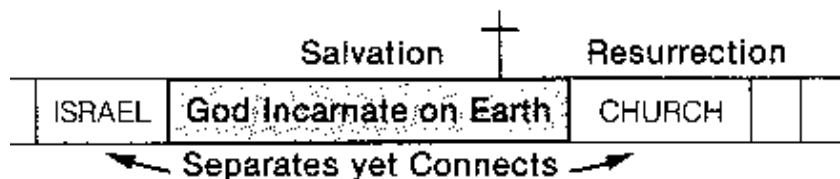
2. The day on which Israel was to have crowned Christ as their King had become the first day of a seven day "Passion Week." It is the day our Savior entered Jerusalem to begin his "week of horrors" and our "week of victory." Israel's rejection of Christ's offering would result in a sea change for his promised people.

3. Early in our Lord's earthly ministry Christ provided numerous evidences that the Kingdom of God had come. The Kingdom offered by Christ during the Passion Week was an offering to Israel of an earthly kingdom.

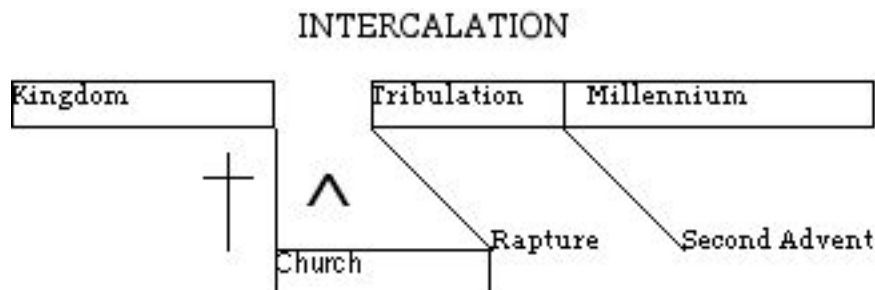
4. For example, Jesus said in Mat 12:28 that His ability to cast out demons was prima facie evidence that the Kingdom of God had come.

Mat 12:28 But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

5. Sadly, Israel's rejection of Christ's offering changed the Age of the Kingdom from one of an immediate promise to one of separation and connection. The Kingdom of Christ became that which separated Israel and the Church while at the same time connecting Israel with the Church.



6. Rather than becoming the long awaited promised Kingdom for Israel, their rejection resulted in the insertion of the Church Age between two Jewish ages; the two being the Age of the Kingdom and the Tribulation.



7. There is a special irony here for Israel. It was in 539 B.C. that Daniel was given one of the world's most spectacular prophecies concerning the timing of the first Palm Sunday.

8. Judah by c. 600 had become an idolatrous nation; a nation which had been warned time and again to repent and return to Jehovah God. Judah was ripe for God's discipline, the fifth cycle was about to fall upon the apostate southern kingdom.

9. In 606 Babylon advanced upon Judah with a great and powerful army; Judah was devastated and many hostages were taken captive to Babylon as slaves. As a result of Judah's continued rebellion further defeat and hostage taking occurred in 597 and 586. The attack in 586 resulted in the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple. By 586 the diaspora was complete.

10. In c. 539 Daniel read from the 25th chapter of Jeremiah. It was from Jeremiah he learned the diaspora would last 70 years. The old prophet put a pencil to 606 minus 539 arriving at 67 years; by his calculations the dispersion to Babylon should end in three So excitedly he began to pray. The prayer can be found in Dan 9:1-19. The prophet only wanted to know if his calculations were correct. Gabriel was sent to answer his prayer and much more. Daniel was astonished at his answer:

Expanded Translation:

Dan 9:24 Daniel I have heard your prayer ...

Dan 9:25 I want you to understand, that from the commandment to rebuild the city of Jerusalem which will occur only once and that on the first of Nisan c. 445; from that day until the Messiah arrives in Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday shall be 483 years to the day. The streets of Jerusalem and its inner and outer walls shall be restored, even in dangerous times, Nehemiah and his people will work on the city walls with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other.

11. These Scriptures represent a remarkable prophecy for both Israel and the Church. In hind-sight we have seen the prophecy fulfilled to the letter.

12. For more information I recommend you go to www.westbankbiblechurch.com and click on Pastor Merritt's study book entitled *Doctrine of Palm Sunday*.

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