

Amazing Prophecies Fulfilled on Palm Sunday

Message 2 of 3 in the series: "Amazing Bible Prophecies Fulfilled at Easter!"

A. Amazingly, Jesus fulfilled Zechariah's five-hundred-year-old prophecy when He rode a donkey colt into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

Prophecy: "Rejoice, O people of Zion! Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, **your king is coming to you**. He is righteous and victorious, yet **he is humble, riding on a donkey—even on a donkey's colt**." Zechariah 9:9 (NLT)

Fulfillment: "As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 'Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, "Why are you doing this?" say, "The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'" They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, some people standing there asked, 'What are you doing, untying that colt?' They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. **When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it.** Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, 'Hosanna!' 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' 'Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!' 'Hosanna in the highest heaven!'" Mark 11:1-10 (NIV)

Note: Jesus came into Jerusalem humbly riding a donkey rather than a war horse to signal that He was NOT coming to start a political revolt. "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but **to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many**." Mark 10:45 (NLT)

Note: "Hosanna" (OT Hebrew) means "Please save us!" The crowd was shouting Psalm 118:25-26a. "**Lord, save us! Lord, grant us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**" (NIV)

IMPORTANT! God had given Zechariah this prophecy 500 years earlier because He wanted people to recognize and believe Jesus was the Messiah. Unfortunately, most people didn't. "He came into the very world he created, but **the world didn't recognize him**. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him." John 1:10-11 (NLT)

- Jesus' disciples didn't recognize the significance of the moment. "**His disciples didn't understand at the time that this was a fulfillment of prophecy**. But after Jesus entered into his glory, they remembered what had happened and realized that these things had been written about him." John 12:16 (NLT)
- Many in the crowd cheered for Jesus because they mistakenly thought Jesus was coming to be a political/military hero who would drive the Romans out of Israel. Sadly, a few days later many of these same people would shout for Jesus to be crucified when He didn't meet their expectations. "Many in the crowd had seen Jesus call Lazarus from the tomb, raising him from the dead, and they were telling others about it. **That was the reason so many went out to meet him—because they had heard about this miraculous sign.**" John 12:17-18 (NLT)
- The Jewish religious leaders were insanely jealous of Jesus and feared his growing popularity, so they demanded that Jesus tell His followers to stop saying He was the Messiah. "But some of the Pharisees among the crowd said, '**Teacher, rebuke your followers for saying things like that!**' He replied, 'If they kept quiet, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!'" Luke 19:39-40 (NLT)
- Jesus wept as He rode into Jerusalem because His own people didn't recognize Him. "But as he came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, **he began to weep. 'How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes.** Before long your enemies will build ramparts against your walls and encircle you and close in on you from every side. They will crush you into the ground, and your children with you. Your enemies will not leave a single stone in place, **because you did not recognize it when God visited you.**" Luke 19:41-44 (NLT)

Why it Matters: God still wants people to recognize and believe that Jesus is the Messiah who came to make it possible for sinful, rebellious people like us to have peace with God and a personal relationship with Him. "Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, **we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.**" Romans 5:1 (NLT)

"But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God."

John 1:12-13 (NLT)

B. Amazingly, when Jesus rode a donkey colt into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, He also fulfilled a prophecy that was revealed to Daniel by the angel Gabriel.

Prophecy: “As I was praying, Gabriel, whom I had seen in the earlier vision, came swiftly to me at the time of the evening sacrifice. He explained to me, ‘Daniel, I have come here to give you insight and understanding... so that you can understand the meaning of your vision. A period of seventy sets of seven has been decreed for your people and your holy city to finish their rebellion, **to put an end to their sin, to atone for their guilt, to bring in everlasting righteousness**, to confirm the prophetic vision, and to anoint the Most Holy Place. Now listen and understand! **Seven sets of seven plus sixty-two sets of seven will pass from the time the command is given to rebuild Jerusalem until a ruler—the Anointed One—comes.**” Daniel 9:21-25a (NLT)

Note: “Sets of seven” = sets of seven years.
Seven sets of seven = $7 \times 7 = 49$ years.
Sixty-two sets of seven = $62 \times 7 = 434$ years.
49 years + 434 years = 483 years.

Note: The lunar calendar used by the ancient Jews contained 360 days/year instead of 365 days/year.
Therefore, 483 years on the Jewish calendar = 476 years on our calendar.

Note: The command to rebuild Jerusalem was given by King Artaxerxes of Persia in 444 BC. “Early the following spring, in the month of Nisan, during the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes’ reign, I was serving the king his wine... ‘If it please the king, and if you are pleased with me, your servant, **send me to Judah to rebuild the city where my ancestors are buried.**’ ...**And the king granted these requests, because the gracious hand of God was on me.**” Nehemiah 2:1-5 & 8b (NLT)

So, Gabriel told Daniel that 476 years after the command to rebuild Jerusalem was given (444 BC), the Messiah would come putting an end to sin, atoning for guilt, and bringing in everlasting righteousness.

$-444 + 476 = \text{AD } 33$

Fulfillment: “Taking the twelve disciples aside, Jesus said, ‘Listen, **we’re going up to Jerusalem, where all the predictions of the prophets concerning the Son of Man will come true.**’” Luke 18:31 (NLT)

Why it Matters: Even though it often doesn’t seem like it, God is working out His plan for human history, and everything is exactly on schedule. “But **when the right time came**, (in the fulness of time) **God sent his Son**, born of a woman, subject to the law. **God sent him to buy freedom for us** who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children.” Galatian 4:4-5 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! We can have courage and confidence that God knows how to get us where He wants us to be exactly when we need to be there. “The Lord will work out his plans for my life—for your faithful love, O Lord, endures forever.” Psalm 138:8a (NLT)

VERY IMPORTANT! God’s plans are bigger and better than our plans. That’s why we need to surrender every part of our lives to Him including our understanding of how things ought to be. “The Lord says, **‘I will guide you along the best pathway for your life.** I will advise you and watch over you. Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control.” Psalm 32:8-9 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. Read Zechariah 9:9. Why do you think Jesus riding a donkey into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday was such an important event that all four gospels recount it? (Matthew 21:1-17, Mark 11:1-10, Luke 19:29-40, John 12:12-19)
2. What was Jesus trying to communicate by riding a donkey rather than a war horse? (Mark 10:45, Matthew 11:28-30)
3. Does it shock you that many of the same people who cheered for Jesus shouting Psalm 118:25-26 on Palm Sunday shouted for Jesus to be crucified on Good Friday? (Matthew 27:22-23)
4. How was it possible that almost no one recognized who Jesus really was or understood what He was trying to accomplish. (John 12:16-18, Luke 19:39-44)
5. Read Daniel 9:21-25, Galatians 4:4-7, & Nehemiah 2:1-8. Then discuss the calculations in this week’s sermon notes regarding Daniel’s 69 “weeks of years” between Artaxerxes’ command to rebuild Jerusalem and the arrival of the Messiah in Jerusalem. How does it make you feel to know that God has a plan for human history, and everything is happening right on schedule?

6. Since God has no problem working out His plans for the whole world, why do we often struggle to surrender control of our plans to Him? (Psalm 32:8-9 & 138:8, Isaiah 55:8-9)