

Turning point

Notes on the Bible readings

● Every year at this time, Jerusalem was filled with pilgrims arriving for the Passover. It would have been a chaotic time, more like a demonstration or a march than a pilgrimage walk. The inevitable strains on law and order would have drawn in extra soldiers to keep the peace, which only heightened the pilgrims' hopes for freedom.

● When Jesus and his followers went on this pilgrimage, this was a clear moment when Jesus' disciples may have anticipated him acting differently. Would he turn the stones of popular expectation into the bread of political freedom? Was he willing to risk everything to show the crowds who he was? Instead he entered the city as a peacemaker, on a donkey, hungry only for righteousness and mercy.

● A man and his followers coming into the city on a donkey would have been a tiny part of this chaos. Would he have even been noticed? What would the Romans and bystanders have thought of this? As some were shouting 'Hosanna to the Son of David', would they have been heard above the noise of the crowds?

● But Jesus was making a peaceful statement about the kind of king, prophet and leader he was. The reading from Isaiah foreshadows Jesus' suffering by reminding us that a prophet's vocation is costly. Would we, as a community of faith, rejoice and celebrate Jesus coming to us as this kind of king?

For reflection and comment linking this week's Bible reading to the news, current issues and events, go to www.rootsontheweb.com and click on PostScript.



Questions for reflection

- ▶ When have you been in a large crowd at something special?
- ▶ When might you feel as if you are going in the opposite direction to the 'crowd'?
- ▶ What evidence is there that your church community is 'on the move'?



A prayer of approach

*Lord God, let us approach with shouts of praise:
hosanna in the highest!
Let us draw close to you
on this day that caused disturbance and disruption.
Let us approach the throne
of the one who came as a humble servant,
who came to set us free, to change things for ever.
Hosanna to the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Amen.*

A prayer for others

*Lord Jesus,
we pray for all who give of themselves sacrificially,
for those whose lives are dedicated to serving others:
parents, carers, foster carers, doctors, nurses...
those caring for children or elderly relatives.*

*We pray for those serving in war-torn countries
around the world:
medics, those who work in missions, the media,
NGOs and charities...
who bring food, shelter and healing to those in need,
sometimes putting their lives on the line.*

*We pray for those in our communities who need our
unconditional love:
those hurting from broken relationships, abuse, bullying,
domestic violence...
children and adults whose lives are bereft of love and hope.
Amen.*

A personal prayer

*Jesus, I journey with you today as you journey with me.
Let me go where you go. Amen.*

Live your faith

Join a local walk of witness during Holy Week.