"This is the day that the Lord has made…"

Matthew 21 v 1 to 11, Luke 19 v 28 to 44

"This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it" – do these words sound familiar? Of course this can apply to *any* day, but it is a quotation from Psalm 118 (v 24), a 'Hallel' (praise) psalm recited at Jewish festivals (such as Passover) with waving of willow or palm branches, and a Messianic psalm in that it looks forward to the *particular*, special day when the 'anointed king' will enter Jerusalem.

Later Jesus explicitly applies this psalm to himself (Matthew 21 v 42), but as we read the story of his triumphal entry in Matthew 21 and Luke 19, we see the crowd applying the Messianic prophecies of this psalm to Jesus, and the Pharisees getting upset because they thought this was blasphemy…

Matthew's account of Jesus' triumphal entry (Matthew 21 v 1 to 11)

- On several previous occasions the crowd wanted to make Jesus king, but he slipped away saying 'my hour has not yet come' – but on this occasion Jesus deliberately stages the event! Why?
- When the two disciples are sent out by Jesus on this special errand (v 1 to 6), in what ways are they put to the test, and what would they learn from this experience?
- What was Jesus' purpose in entering Jerusalem in this manner (see Zechariah 9 v 9)? What does this teach us about the nature of his kingship?
- What do the crowds shout, and what do their words tell us about Jesus?

Note that Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem took place four days before Passover (on 10th Nisan), the day when Passover lambs were inspected – here Jesus submits himself to examination. It was festival season in Jerusalem, and every able-bodied man was required by the Law to go to Jerusalem, so there may have been over a million visitors.

"Hosanna" (v 9) is the Hebrew phrase הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא (*Hoshiah'na*, 'save us, we pray' – see Psalm 118 v 25). "Hosanna to the Son of David!" This is Messianic adoration. Jesus receives, indeed encourages, such worship, because this is the day when the Messiah comes as Saviour to Jerusalem, in fulfilment of Gabriel's prophecy in Daniel 9 v 24 to 27.

Luke's account of Jesus' triumphal entry (Luke 19 v 28 to 44)

- Why did the Pharisees tell Jesus to rebuke his disciples (v 39)? How did Jesus reply (v 40), and why?
- What moved Jesus to weep over Jerusalem? How do these verses show that love does not exclude judgment? What specific judgments were pronounced upon Jerusalem (v 43 to 44), and why?

"Would that you, even you, had known *on this day* the things that make for peace!" Jesus mourns over the fact that the people of Jerusalem did not know the time of the Messiah's coming, the particular day prophesied in Daniel 9 v 26. "But now they are hidden from your eyes…" Hidden forever? See Romans 11 v 25, 26a

[MORE OVER…]

Jesus held the people of Jerusalem accountable to recognize "this day" (v 42), prophesied by Gabriel to Daniel some 500 years before, referring to the prophecy of Daniel's '70 weeks', which many believe Jesus fulfilled on the exact day of the triumphal entry (see below). Read Daniel 9 v 24 to 26a. Verse 24 sets out an overview of the scope of the prophecy. To whom is the prophecy addressed? Has it already been fulfilled, or does its fulfilment still lie in the future? Verse 25 refers to the decree of Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem (see Nehemiah 2), and to the coming of the 'anointed king' (Hebrew: נָגִיד מָשִׁיחַ *Meshiah negid*), Jesus Christ; verse 26a predicts that the Christ will be 'cut off' (Hebrew: כָּרַת *karath*) or executed, but not for his own crimes…

Mathematical Miracle – Sir Robert Anderson in his book The Coming Prince (published in 1894) showed that the two historical events described in verses 25 and 26 took place on the following dates: Event A (the decree of Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem): 14 March 445 BC; Event B (Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem): 6 April 32 AD.

The intervening period was 476 years and 24 days; i.e. 476 x 365 = 173,740 + 24 + 116 days for leap years = 173,880 days.

Given that the Jewish Prophetic year was 360 days, we have the prophesied time interval between Events A and B as 69 weeks of years = 69 x 7 x 360 = 173,880 days!

So what was Gabriel's margin for error? Zero.