

PALM

(Heb. tamar), the date-palm is characteristic of Palestine. It is described as "flourishing" (Ps. 92:12), tall, as in "upright" (Jer. 10:5). Its branches are a symbol of victory (Rev. 7:9).

The whole land of Palestine was called by the Greeks and Romans as Phoenicia, i.e., "**the land of palms.**"

It is said that the finest specimens of this tree grew at Jericho (called also as city of palm trees) in Deut. 34:3 and Engedi and along the banks of the Jordan. Branches of the palm tree were carried at the feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:40). At our Lord's triumphal entrance into Jerusalem the crowds took palm branches, and went forth to meet him, crying, "Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 21:8; John 12:13).

With reference to Judges 4, a palm tree (v.5) may allude to the **stateliness** and **gracefulness** of women (Song of Songs 7:7 – 8). The palm is associated with **prosperity** in Psalm 92:12 and **leadership** in Isaiah 9:14. Complete the equation and what we have is the significance of a **prosperous woman leader completely endowed with feminine grace and strength and overall administrative capability.**

Along with the cedar of Lebanon, palm tree is symbolic of **strength, longevity** and **desirability.**

Applying all these virtues to the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, we see a group of people who went all the way to Jericho to get the palm leaves. They intended **strength, longevity** and **desirability** to him.

Today, on the occasion of Palm Sunday, we may be far removed in space and time from Palestine, yet the event of the Triumphant Entry gives us hope and courage as we wait for the coming of Christ is victory.

Prayer for the Palm branches and crosses

Almighty God, we praise you for the acts of love by which you have redeemed us through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; may these branches and crosses be for us signs of his victory, and grant that we who bear his name may ever hail him as our King, and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life; who lives and reigns in glory with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

ALL: AMEN

O Lord God, we ask you to bless these branches of palm to those who carry them; that both now and in the days to come they may be a reminder of your dear Son's passion, and a pledge of your victory over sin and death, for the glory of your great name.

ALL: AMEN

ACCLAMATION

The presbyter and the people make this acclamation loudly and joyfully.

**All: Hosanna to the Son of David!
 Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!
 Hosanna in the highest!**