

God's Script

By the time you read this, your expectations may have already been shattered. By Sunday evening, the NCAA and NIT will have completed the first weekend of their respective basketball tournaments. Every year in my memory, the first weekend of games had many surprises, commonly called "upsets". You may have diligently filled out a bracket and even done research, comparing the competing teams' statistics, trends, and injury reports. You can probably toss some of your predictions into the waste basket by now. Things don't happen as we expect them to. Frankly, we don't know what is going to happen in this world. Real life doesn't follow our script.



2024 NCAA Tournament Bracket

On this day, 2,000 years ago, Jesus humbly entered Jerusalem on a donkey. He rode in triumphantly with crowds cheering him on. The crowd honored Jesus by spreading palm branches and cloaks on the road. Some waved palm branches in the air, shouting Hosanna (which means "save us") as Jesus passed by. They wanted Jesus, the long-awaited king, to overthrow the oppressive Roman rulers and relieve them from the tyranny in which they lived.

Jesus was on an entirely different mission. His mission was to provide a path to save believers from the penalty of their sins. He would become the ultimate example of forgiving others. Jesus lived out an altogether different script than what was expected. He would be betrayed by one of his followers, be crucified, but then be raised from the dead on the third day. Jesus *did* come to defeat an enemy, but not the one the people had in mind. He came to defeat sin, death, and the devil. It was the victory of all victories.

The Romans had planned an entirely different outcome than those who cheered Jesus as He entered the city. Jesus was a threat to their power and their plans. By eliminating Jesus, the Romans thought the cross would be the end of the threat and popularity of Jesus. They even turned the people against Jesus. Those who had previously shouted Hosanna now demanded that He be crucified. In reality, God's script showed His power over evil and death. Because of the cross and Resurrection, we can have eternal life.



The palm branches we wave on Palm Sunday remind us of Jesus' victory over death. Palm branches are a symbol of victory, triumph, and peace. God's script for Jesus was far different than anyone expected, but it was a victorious outcome that paved the way for eternal life for all believers. Is your "bracket" – your expectations – busted, because you wanted things to happen according to your plan? Trust God's plan!

As it played out, the darkness of Good Friday turned into "one shining moment" for all of us on Resurrection Sunday. Who could have written that script? Only God.

The Bible Says: *The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—the King of Israel!" (John 12:12) Many are the plans of a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails (Proverbs 19:21).*

Prayer: You came to live among us and show us how to live, not through the power of the sword but through the power of Your love for all of mankind. Hosanna, Lord, save us! Amen.