

THE LORD IS OUR KING

By Rev. B. David Holm

Lessons: Matthew 21:1-17; Arcana Coelestia 2781:7-8

You probably know the story of Palm Sunday already, but it is such a beautiful story and such an interesting one that we enjoy hearing it many times. This is because it teaches us that the Lord is our King—our Ruler—who protects us and gives us laws of order so that we can be happy.

On a Sunday morning less than a week before the Lord was crucified, He and His disciples walked from the little village of Bethany towards Jerusalem. When they got as far as the village of Bethphage, the Lord sent two of His disciples into the village, and told them that they would immediately find a mother ass or donkey tied up and her colt with her. The Lord told the disciples that they should untie them and bring them to Him. He also told them that if anyone said anything to them, they should just say that the Lord needed them.

Now why do you suppose the Lord wanted this ass and her colt? To understand this, you have to learn about a very old custom among the Jews. The custom was this: In a parade the king was supposed to ride upon an ass or mule. All the other people in the parade were to walk—only the king could ride. Now do you understand why the Lord wanted the ass and her colt? The Lord wanted to ride them into Jerusalem and show everyone that He was King.

But there was another reason why the Lord wanted to do this thing. He wanted to keep a very old promise—a promise that was over 400 years old. Long before the Lord rode into Jerusalem on the ass and her colt, the prophet Zechariah had promised that the Lord would do this thing. He had written:

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass” (Zechariah 9:9).

The Lord wanted to keep this old promise, for He was the King that Zechariah had written about.

This is why the Lord sent the two disciples to go find the ass and her colt, They went and found everything just as the Lord told them and brought the animals to the Lord. His disciples then took off their outer robes, put them on the ass and the colt, and set the Lord on them.

As the Lord rode to Jerusalem, a great crowd of people joined the disciples, until there was a big parade. They all knew of this old custom of a king riding upon an ass. So you see, they knew that the Lord was telling everyone that He was King! Many of these people knew about the Lord. They had heard His teachings and seen His miracles. They were very happy when they saw Him in the parade declaring Himself King. They were so happy that they spread their outer robes in front of the Lord. Others of them cut down palm branches and spread them in the way. (You can see the people doing this in the picture you were sent to color) This spreading of clothes and palm branches was also an old custom—so that a king could ride upon a carpet of clothes and branches. Because of the palm branches spread in the pathway of the Lord, we call this day Palm Sunday.

The great crowd or multitude of people hailed the Lord as King. They shouted: “Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.”

Hosanna is a wonderful word. It means “Save us now we pray.” When they cried out this word, they were asking the Lord as King to save them—save them from their enemies and make them happy once more. Gladly they led the Lord into Jerusalem as King.

But you see, this great crowd of people did not really know in what way the Lord was King. They thought He would be a worldly king, who would fight against their enemies the Romans, and save them and make them a great nation once more. How very mistaken they were! The Lord did not want to be an earthly king. His kingdom is not of this world. His kingdom is in the heavens and from these heavens He rules the whole universe. Truly the Lord is KING of kings, for He rules everyone and everything.

But the great multitude on this first Palm Sunday did not understand this. This is why they grew so disappointed when they saw that the Lord was not going to lead them against the Romans. Many of them turned away from the Lord, and some of them just five days later probably were among those who shouted, “Let Him be crucified, let Him be crucified.”

But we today can understand in what way the Lord is our King. He is the King of our spiritual life—not just of our natural life. He is King of our spirit, or minds. This means we are to allow Him to rule our minds and hearts, for He alone rules the heavens. This means that we are to submit to the Lord and obey Him from love.

Now, you all know that part of the duties of a king is to make laws so that His people can be safe and happy. Certainly the Lord as King has given us laws. His Word is filled with laws—laws made from His Divine kindness and fairness. If we want the Lord to be our King, we are to learn and obey those laws. We

must bow ourselves to those laws—knowing they have been given for our welfare and happiness. Only the Lord knows what is best for us. If we know this, then we will allow the Lord to, as it were, ride into our minds—ride in as King—even as He rode into Jerusalem on the ass and her colt.

And we will do more! We will give to the Lord all that we know of what is right and good—give them to Him so that He can enter our minds. These will be like the clothes and palm branches spread in the Lord’s pathway. And we will do still more if we want the Lord to be our King. We will ask Him to save us from our spiritual enemies—all the evil thoughts and loves that would destroy us. He alone can save us from the power of evil spirits. Like the multitude on that first Palm Sunday, we will cry out, “Hosanna to the son of David. Hosanna in the highest.”

The story of Palm Sunday teaches us that the Lord is our only King. It is He who gives us laws that we may order our lives and live in happiness. It is He who protects us from the power of evil. Let each one of us, then, acknowledge the Lord as our King and allow Him to come into our minds. For He alone is “Lord of lords and King of kings.”