

THE LORD IS OUR KING AND SAVIOR

Rev. B. David Holm

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

On the Sunday before He was crucified—one week before He rose from the dead—the Lord did a most important thing. He showed everyone, who was there to watch, that He was King. It was of great importance that He did this, for by it He showed that He is our King. You see, we *really need to know* that the Lord is our *King*. Otherwise, we might not allow His laws and rules to lead us and govern us.

You have just heard the Palm Sunday Lesson. Do you remember it? The Lord and His disciples were walking from the village of Bethany, where they had spent the night, to Jerusalem, where the temple was. When they had walked some distance, they came to a little road which led to the nearby village of Bethphage on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. The Lord sent two of His disciples to go into Bethphage. Do you remember why He sent them? Yes, to find a mother donkey and her baby colt. The Lord knew that they were there without even looking. As you know, the Lord knows everything.

He wanted the ass and her colt to ride on into Jerusalem. You see, it was a very old custom among the Jews for a king to ride upon an ass in a procession, while the other people walked. In the case of such a procession, everyone knew that the person riding upon the ass was declaring himself a king. The Lord, on that first Palm Sunday, wanted to show that He was King.

When the disciples returned with the donkey and her colt, they put some of their clothes on the animals and set the Lord upon them. Then they continued on to Jerusalem with the Lord riding and the twelve disciples walking. Soon other people joined the procession, and it was not long before a whole multitude of people had joined the procession. Some of them took off their outer garments and spread them in the way of the Lord. Others cut down palm branches from the palm trees and spread them in the way. The Lord was now riding on a carpet of clothing and branches. The multitude hailed the Lord as King and 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 word that is used when we want the Lord to save us. The multitude, then, was shouting out to the Lord to save them. But, you see, the multitude didn’t really understand. They thought He would save them from their enemy, the Romans, who were ruling over them.

But the Lord did not come into the world to become an earthly king. He came to become the King of heaven. The people did not understand this. The Lord's work of teaching and telling the people about heaven and about the difference between right and wrong was almost over. In five short days He was to be crucified by His enemies, and in just one week He was to rise from the sepulcher and show Himself as the King of heaven. It was important that He be hailed as King before He left this world. It was important that His disciples should know Him as a King before He was to leave them. Then when He rose from the dead, they could more easily recognize Him as King of heaven. The disciples did just that when He appeared to them after He rose to life from the sepulcher. They hailed Him as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. For they knew He was their God, and they worshiped Him.

It is very important for us as well to know that the Lord is our King—that we are ruled by Him. To understand that the Lord is our King, we must know what a King does for his people. Do you know what a king does? He makes laws, doesn't he? Well, the Lord also makes laws for all of us. We call His laws His Commandments. Indeed, all of His many commandments to us are summed up in His Ten Commandments. We are to live according to the Lord's laws because He is our King. We must try very hard to obey the Lord's laws.

However, a king does more than just make laws. He also loves his people, takes care of them and protects them in times of trouble. The Lord, as our King, also does these things for us. He loves each one of us with a deeper love than anyone else. He takes care of each of us by giving us all that we have or need to have. He also protects each of us. He protects us especially from evil spirits who try to get us to do bad things. So it is that the Lord watches over us all even as a king watches over his people.

Yes, the Lord is our King and we are to obey Him and love Him and allow Him to protect and save us from evil. Then we, like the multitudes on the first Palm Sunday, will say in our hearts, "Hosanna"—for the Lord will then be our Savior. Let us think deeply on these things on this special day—the day of Palm Sunday. *Amen.*