

THE LORD RIDES UP TO JERUSALEM

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Lessons: Matthew 21:1-11, Arcana Coelestia 9212: 5, 6

The Lord was making His last journey to Jerusalem. He had come to the village of Bethphage at the foot of the Mount of Olives. There, early on the first day of the week—the day after the Sabbath and our Sunday, now called "Palm Sunday," the Lord sent two of His disciples to a nearby village to fetch a donkey and her colt. When they were brought to Him, He rode on the donkey up the steep road to the Temple in Jerusalem.

A very great multitude had heard of the Lord's coming to Jerusalem and many people had journeyed with Him from Galilee. They wanted the Lord to be their King, and when they saw Him riding on a donkey, they thought that He was going to become their king, because for many hundreds of years kings had ridden on donkeys. So the disciples and multitudes, and many children of all ages, cut down branches of trees and laid them as a carpet for the Lord to ride over, and others spread their garments in the way.

Slowly and joyfully, with dancing and the singing of psalms, this procession went up the winding road to Jerusalem and the Temple. Truly it was a royal and a triumphant procession. For the Lord was King. He had been "born King of the Jews". He was King of Kings. And now, after many and hard battles against the hells, He had conquered them and had finished the work He had come on earth to do.

As the procession entered Jerusalem, the people of the city, hearing the shouting and singing, hurried to the gateway, and seeing the multitudes, the Lord riding as King on the donkey, they asked "Who is this?" Some of the multitude answered, "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee". Then they sang, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"(Luke 19:38).

What is the meaning of that triumphant procession? Why did the Lord allow people to think that He was a King, when He did not seize Herod's throne and make Himself King of the Jews? And why did Pilate put on the cross over the Lord's body, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews"?

A king is the highest ruler in a country. He represents the laws of the country and the truths from the Lord that lead and teach people. The Lord was really the ruler of heaven and earth, and so He was not only "King of the Jews" by

birth, but also King of King; for He was the Truth Itself, and all truths come from Him alone.

He was born "King of the Jews", because by the Jews were meant His Church on earth that had the Old Testament. That Word was from the Lord alone. So He had taught men, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." He wanted people to know that He was a spiritual King and to acknowledge and worship Him as the King and Ruler of heaven and earth.

This is why the Lord moved the people to gather to Him as He went up to Jerusalem, to hail and praise Him as a victorious King, to humble themselves before Him. And He Wants us to celebrate Palm Sunday every year so that we will remember that He is "the King that comes in the name of the LORD", from whom is "peace in heaven and glory in the highest". *Amen.*

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"To ride on an ass and her colt was a representative of the highest judge and king ...In Zechariah 9:9 it is said of the Lord that He "was riding upon an ass, even upon a young ass, the son of she-asses," and He is there called a "King;" and it is added that "His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." That the highest judge rode upon a she-ass, and his sons upon young asses, may be seen in Judges 5:9, 10; 10:3, 4; 12:14; and that the king rode upon a she-mule, and the sons of the king upon mules, in I Kings 1:33, 38, 44, 45, and in II Sam. 13:29. By the disciples putting their garments on the ass and her colt, was represented that truths in the whole complex were submitted to the Lord as the Highest Judge and King; for the disciples represented the church of the Lord in respect to its truths and goods, and their garments represented the truths themselves. The like was represented by the multitude strewing their garments in the way, and also branches of trees. The reason why they strewed them in the way was that by "a way" is signified the truth whereby the man of the church is led. The reason why they strewed branches of trees, was that trees signified the perceptions and also the knowledges of truth and good, consequently "the branches" denote the truths themselves. This was done also in conformity with a customary rite; for when the highest judges and kings rode in their solemn procession, the princes of the people then put their garments on the asses and mules, and the people themselves strewed their garments on the way, or in their place the branches of trees; for the judicial function in heaven is the Divine truth from the Divine good, and the regal one is the Divine truth" (*Arcana Coelestia* 9212:5, 6).