

引言 INTRODUCTION

According to church tradition, today is called Palm Sunday. Two thousand years ago, Jesus entered Jerusalem the last time on His way to the cross. People cheered for Him and they laid palm branches on the road, hence the name Palm Sunday. The scene was a celebration. But did people actually welcome their King? There was a legendary story in Spain about the visit of a king to a small village. It was an utmost honor because no royalty had ever showed up at such an unknown place. The local people were very excited. They discussed how they should show their love for the king. Someone suggested they could treat the ruler with the best wine. Each family could bring a bottle of home-made wine to the town-square and mix them in a big barrel. Then they would present a cup to the king. Everyone agreed that it was a great idea. On that special day, the residents lined up by the road. There was joyful music. The crowd roared as the royal procession was approaching. Finally, the moment came. The mayor gave a cup to an official. He dispensed some wine from the container. He noticed something unusual. He took a sniff, then sipped it. It was water, not wine! What had happened? Some people were too stingy to give their best to the king. They brought a bottle of water instead. They thought no one would find out because eventually everything would be blended together. But the problem was, every person had the same trick in mind! In the end, the king was greatly humiliated. The villagers put up a charade. Their respect for their lord was superficial. That was the attitude of most people toward Jesus on the first Palm Sunday. What about you? How do you receive Jesus, the King of kings? We must show our love to Him through what we do. Our actions should come with affection.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 為君王而準備 Preparation for the King

Let us first look at the preparation for the King. Jesus asked the disciples to get a donkey. Notice Jesus gave them specific instructions: they should go to the village ahead (most likely Bethphage), there they would see a colt with its mother, and the little donkey was tied up. Jesus also told them the exact words to say when someone asked why they took the colt. Every detail happened just as the Lord said. The disciples did not seem to be surprised how Jesus could predict everything. Perhaps they were so used to seeing Him perform miracles. The reason is of course because Jesus is God. Everything will take place according to His plan. This is the only place in the Bible that records Jesus riding on an animal. It was not because He was tired or the road was too rough. Matthew, the gospel writer, says the incident fulfilled an Old Testament prophecy. Verse 5 is a quote from Zechariah 9:9 – “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’” The major audience of Matthew was Jews. His goal was to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, the promised Savior. Many things happened to Jesus had been foretold by the prophets several hundred years ago. At that time, the Jews knew this passage. Quite likely they recalled the prophecy when they saw Jesus coming on a colt. But something is not quite fitting. A king is a warrior. He should sit on a war-horse, not a donkey! Zechariah says this was a righteous King and He came to bring salvation. Jesus did not come for war, but peace. He was powerful, yet

humble. The kingdom He would establish was not earthly, but heavenly. After the disciples brought the donkey, they laid their robes on it. Perhaps it served as a cushion. After all the preparations, now Jesus sat on the donkey. Zechariah's prophecy was fulfilled. The Lord never did things randomly. It can be pure chance if only one or two events came true. But scholars calculated that there are more than 300 Old Testament prophecies about Jesus that were fulfilled. Some of those incidents such as His birth from a virgin, being born in Bethlehem, His lineage from king David and His death, etc. are beyond Jesus' control. The conclusion is that the Bible is God's Word. All that it says about Jesus will be accomplished if it has not happened yet. God is full of wisdom. You do not exist without a reason either. God has a plan for you. He wants you to know Him, believe Him and follow Him. In preparing for the colt, the disciples showed an example of submission. They did what the Lord told them to do. It is common to have questions about how God guides our life circumstances. For example, why do others not face the same difficulties you encounter. God may not give you an answer right away. That is why we need faith to follow Him. Do not get stuck on a certain problem. Ask God to increase your faith. There are some good lessons we can learn from the colt too. The animal did not understand who was sitting on it, where it was going and what the purpose was. All it knew was to obey when being called. Jesus chose the young one, even though its mom was right next to it. God does not focus on your age, experience or skills. He is looking for those who are willing to serve Him. Many kids in our church clean tables, wash dishes, push back chairs and sweep the floor. They are glad to help because they have a heart to serve God. New believers can find ways to get involved too. Teaching Sunday school or leading a committee will need some training and spiritual growth. But anyone with a warm personality and a friendly smile can be a greeter or usher. We work as a team and contribute in different ways. We prepare this building not only for weekly meetings, but we also make it ready in preparation for the King.

2. 向君王的歡迎 Reception of the King

All the preparations for the King were completed. Jesus was approaching Jerusalem. Next we see the reception of the King. People stood on both sides. Some spread their robes on the road, others laid down palm branches. The colt stepped on those objects as it walked along the path. It is like a red-carpet reception for celebrities and national leaders. The crowd gave the Lord a very warm welcome. It was similar to a New Year's Day parade or a victory celebration for a championship sport team. But why was there a huge crowd? The context tells us that they gathered to observe the Passover. It was one of the three major festivals that all the Jewish men must go back to Jerusalem to celebrate. The other two events were the Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles. God set up the Passover the night when He rescued the Israelites from Egypt. Since then, Jews use the day to remember God's liberation of their ancestors from slavery. In verse 9, the crowd welcomed Jesus with a special chant: **And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"** It was a quote from Psalm 118:25. "Hosanna" was translated from Hebrew, which means "save now." It was a way to praise God for His deliverance. The title "the Son of David" and the expression "he who comes in the name of the Lord" both point to the Messiah. People knew Jesus' family history. His earthly father Joseph was a descendant of king David. Jesus was included in the royal lineage for being born into the family. Jesus' background and His works made people wonder if He was the Messiah. They expected that one day God would send a Savior to restore David's dynasty and the glory of Israel. Now the time had come!

Luke 19:37 gives another reason behind the crowd's excitement: ...the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen. Some people witnessed Jesus perform miracles to heal patients and cast out demons. What if Jesus could use His supernatural power to overthrow the Romans? He could set people free from the oppression of the Caesars just like God saved their ancestors from the Egyptian Pharaohs. Of course, Jesus had a very different plan. People were not only held in physical or political bondage. They were also in spiritual captivity. Their true enemy was not a foreign government, but Satan. Therefore, Jesus did not seize the opportunity and call for a revolution. That explains why the crowd dispersed soon after the warm reception. They cheered Jesus with a wrong motive. We worship the same Lord every Sunday. We must praise Him for the right reasons. You come here not only to meet your friends, sing some songs and listen to a speech. You come here to pay tribute to the mighty King. We participate in worshipping God and not observing a religious ceremony. We sing to God with joy. We respond with "amen" in our hearts when others pray. Therefore, do not look at Jesus from a distance or from the side-line, but follow Him closely. The crowd put clothes and branches on the path to receive Jesus. What do you lay down before Him? Do you lay down your worries, burdens and pride before His throne? Do you turn off your phone and lay it down so that you can focus on worshipping God? The Lord is with us when we gather in His name. Let us give Him our best.

3. 對君王的認識 Perception of the King

We have studied the preparation for the King and the reception of the King. Now we will look at people's perception of the King. Who did they think Jesus was? By then many people had met with Jesus or had heard of His stories. Others saw His miracles and how He interacted with people. With all that information, they still did not have a concrete idea of who Jesus was. After all the fanfare in Jerusalem that day, people could not help but ask: "Who is this?" (verse 10) Some responded in verse 11: And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee." They knew Jesus' name and His hometown. They perceived that Jesus was a prophet. People could feel that His was different from other rabbis. He taught with authority. They also attributed Jesus' supernatural power to God. The closest figure they were familiar with was a prophet. Old Testament prophets conveyed messages from God. Some of them like Moses and Elijah performed miracles. They concluded that Jesus was just a prophet like those messengers. The mentioning of Nazareth could be a ridicule. It was a small village few people knew. People naturally think that famous figures should come from a big city like Jerusalem or New York. But Nazareth or Memphis? Nathanael scoffed when Philip told him that he had met Jesus. Listen to their conversation in John 1:46 – Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Fortunately, Nathanael went and checked things out. Later, Jesus included Nathanael as one of the twelve disciples. The Lord asked the twelve men after they had followed Him for a while: "Who do people say I am?" They said some people thought that Jesus was John the Baptist, other said He was Elijah or one of the prophets. Then Jesus posted the same question at His disciples: "Then who do you say I am?" One person gave a perfect answer. Look at Matthew 16:16 – Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Peter got it right! But as it turned out, this understanding was only a head knowledge. They had yet to fully comprehend the meaning of "Christ" and the mission Jesus came to accomplish. That was why they all scattered when their Master was arrested. They lost all hope when Jesus died on the cross. A lot of people wrestle with the same question today:

“Who is this Jesus?” Some people suspect that Jesus is like a fictional character in a novel. Others think that Jesus was a wonderful teacher and a merciful charity worker. They appreciate Jesus’ contributions to the society. Some believe that Jesus was the founder of a religion. However, they think that Christianity is just one of the many religions to choose from. We should read the Bible with the same mindset like we read social media. Do not jump to a conclusion before doing a fact-check! Use an objective mind to do an investigation. What if Jesus is really who He said He was? What if He is the Son of God? What if He was the Savior foretold in the Old Testament? What if everything written in the Bible about Jesus actually took place? What if Jesus did not die on the cross as a religious fanatic but as a solution for your sins and mine? What if Jesus’ death is the only way to reconcile with the Father? What if Jesus actually rose from the dead? The key is no longer about how you feel who Jesus is or how others describe Him. It is about the truth of who He really is. Then a follow-up question will be: how you should respond if Jesus is offering you salvation? Will you receive Him or reject Him?

結論 CONCLUSION

On the first Palm Sunday, people put together a parade of charade for Jesus. They saw Him as a man. Their actions did not come with affection. The same crowd who welcomed Jesus with excitement denied Him with resentment just five days later. They were manipulated by the religious leaders and asked the Romans to nail Jesus to the cross. Little did they realize that He who died was the King sent by God. It fulfilled yet another prophecy that the rock people despised had become the cornerstone God cherished. There is a story about a rock that a man in Michigan kept for 30 years. He had no idea that it was a valuable stone. Let us just call the guy Don. He got a 22-pound rock when he purchased a farm. The original landowner told Don that it was a meteorite. Don treated it like an ordinary rock. The only function he could think of is to use it as a doorstep. One day he read news about people making money by selling similar rocks. Therefore, Don took it to a geology professor for an evaluation. A specimen was also sent to a lab in D.C. to confirm the results. It turned out that the rock was made of 88% iron and 12% nickel. It was one of the largest meteorites ever found in Michigan. It could be worth \$100,000. A rock that no one paid much attention to is actually a precious stone. Just like that rock, Jesus did not come with an attractive package. This King had no robe, no crown and no palace. He looked more like a humble servant than a mighty leader. He did not conquer enemies by weapons and armies. He attracts people to Him with a gentle voice. Today, He is also calling you to follow Him.

引言 INTRODUCTION

根據教會傳統，今天被稱為棕櫚主日。兩千年前，耶穌最後一次進入耶路撒冷，並走向十字架。群眾為祂歡呼，並且把棕櫚樹枝鋪在路上，這就是棕櫚主日名字的由來。當時是慶祝的場面。但人們真的歡迎他們的王嗎？在西班牙有一個流傳的故事。一位國王要訪問一個小村莊。這是至高的榮譽，因為從來沒有皇家人員出現在那種小地方。當地人民非常興奮。他們討論應如何表達對國王的愛。有人建議可以用最好的酒來招待國王。每個家庭帶一瓶酒到廣場，然後把所有的酒混在一個大桶裡。然後他們向國王獻上一杯酒。大家都同意這是個好主意。終於大日子來到了，居民在路的兩邊等待。現場奏起歡樂的音樂。當皇家隊伍臨近時，群眾發出歡呼聲。然後關鍵時刻來了。市長給一位官員一個杯子。他從容器裡倒出了一些酒。他注意到一些不對勁的地方。他聞一下那杯酒，然後嚐了一口。那是水，不是酒！發生什麼事了？有些人太小器了，不願意向國王獻上最好的東西。他們卻給了一瓶水。他們認為沒有人會發現，因為最終所有酒都會混在一起。但問題是，每個人心裡都想著同一個招數！結果，國王受到了極大的羞辱。村民弄了一個騙局。他們對王的尊敬是虛假的。這也是第一個棕櫚主日大多數人對耶穌的態度。你呢？你如何接待萬王之王耶穌？我們必須透過我們所做的事情來表達對祂的愛。我們的行動應該帶著愛。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 為君王而準備 Preparation for the King

首先我們來看看如何為君王而準備。耶穌吩咐門徒去找一頭驢子。耶穌給了他們詳細的指示：他們要去前面的村莊（很可能是伯法其），在那裡他們會看到一頭驢駒和牠的媽媽，小驢子是被拴住的。耶穌還告訴他們當有人問他們為什麼要帶走驢駒時，他們該如何回答。每一個細節都正如主所說的發生了。門徒似乎不驚訝耶穌能夠預知一切。也許他們已經習慣了看見祂行神蹟。原因當然是因為耶穌是神。一切都會按照祂的計劃發生。這是聖經中唯一記載耶穌騎在動物身上的地方。這並不是因為祂累了，也不是因為路太崎嶇。福音作者馬太說，這事件應驗了舊約的一個預言。第5節引用了撒迦利亞書 9:9 — 「**要對錫安的居民說：看哪，你的王來到你這裡，是溫柔的，又騎著驢，就是騎著驢駒子。**」馬太的主要讀者是猶太人。他的目的是證明耶穌是彌賽亞、就是神所預言的救世主。許多發生在耶穌身上的事情在幾百年前就早已被先知預言。當時，猶太人熟悉這段經文。當他們看到耶穌騎著驢駒時，他們很可能想起了這個預言。但是這個情景有點不恰當。君王是個勇士。他應

該騎的是戰馬，而不是驢子！撒迦利亞說這是一位公義的王，他來是為了帶來拯救。耶穌來不是為了戰爭，而是為了和平。祂有能力，但又很謙卑。祂所要建立的國度不是地上的，而是天上的。於是門徒把驢子牽來，然後把自己的衣服鋪在上面，可能是用作軟墊。一切準備就緒後，耶穌便騎上驢子，成就了撒迦利亞的預言。主從來不會隨意做事。如果只有一、兩件個預言應驗，那可能純粹是偶然的機會。但學者們計算出舊約中有 300 多個關於耶穌的預言已經實現了。有些事件，例如祂由童女所生、生於伯利恆、祂是君王大衛的後裔以及祂的死亡等等，都是耶穌無法控制的。結論是，聖經是神的話。它所講述有關耶穌的一切事情都將會實現。神充滿智慧。你的存在也不是無緣無故的。神對你有一個計劃。祂希望你認識祂、相信祂並跟隨祂。在準備驢駒時，門徒顯示出順服的榜樣。他們照主的吩咐去做事。我們常常會對神如何引導我們的生命有疑問。例如，為什麼其他人沒有遇到你所遇到的困難。神可能不會立刻給你答案。因此我們需要以信心來跟隨祂。不要被某個問題所困擾。求神增加你的信心。我們也可以從這匹驢駒身上學到一些功課。這隻動物不明白是誰坐在牠身上，牠要去哪裡，目的又是什麼。牠只知道當被召喚時要服從。耶穌選擇了那隻驢駒，雖然牠的媽媽就在旁邊。神不在乎你的年齡、經驗或技巧。祂尋找那些願意服事祂的人。我們教會裡的許多孩子都擦桌子、洗碗、排椅子和掃地。他們很樂意幫忙，因為他們有一顆服事神的心。剛信主的人也可以參與服事。教主日學或帶領一個委員會需要一些訓練和靈命成長。但任何一個熱情、笑容友善的人都可以做迎賓或招待。我們作為一個團隊以不同的方式互相合作。我們把這棟建築物整理好，不只是為了每週的聚會，也是為君王而做好準備。

2. 向君王的歡迎 Reception of the King

群眾為君王做好一切準備。耶穌逐漸接近耶路撒冷。接下來我們看到人們向君王表達歡迎。兩邊都站滿了人。有些人的把衣服或棕櫚樹枝鋪在路上。驢駒沿路行走時，便會踩到那些東西，就像人們以紅地毯迎接名人和國家元首。群眾給予主熱烈的歡迎，類似元旦遊行或冠軍球隊的慶祝活動。但是當時為什麼會有那麼多人呢？上下文告訴我們，他們聚集在一起慶祝逾越節。那是所有猶太男士必須回到耶路撒冷慶祝的三大節期之一。另外兩個節日是五旬節和住棚節。神將以色列人從埃及拯救出來的那個晚上設立了逾越節。從那時起，猶太人就用這一天來紀念神將他們的祖先從奴役中解放出來。在第 9 節中，群眾向耶穌歡呼：**前行後隨的眾人喊著說：和散那歸於大衛的子孫！奉主名來的是應當稱頌的！高高在上和散那！」**這是引用自詩篇 118:25。「和散那」是從希伯來文翻譯過來的，意思是「馬上來拯救」。這裡是讚美神拯救的表達。「大衛的子孫」這個稱號和「奉主名來的」這個說法都指向彌賽亞。人們知道耶穌的家庭背景。祂地上的父親約瑟是大衛王的後裔。耶穌因為出生在這個家庭而被納入皇族血統。人們因為耶穌的背景和祂的事工懷疑祂是否是彌賽亞。他們期望有一天神會差派一位救世主來復興大衛王朝和以色列的榮耀。現在時機已到！路加福音 19:37 解釋群眾興奮的另一個原因：**…眾門徒因所見過的一**

切異能，都歡樂起來，大聲讚美神。有些人目睹了耶穌行神蹟，祂醫治病人，驅趕邪靈。如果耶穌能夠使用超自然力量推翻羅馬人，那不是最好不過嗎？祂可以將人們從凱撒的壓迫中解放出來，就像神將他們的祖先從埃及法老的壓迫中拯救出來一樣。當然，耶穌有一個截然不同的計劃。人們不只是受到身體和政治的束縛，他們也受到屬靈的奴役。他們的真正敵人不是外國政府，而是撒旦。因此，耶穌沒有抓住機會發動一場革命。這也解釋了為什麼人群在熱烈歡迎耶穌後不久就散去。他們是出於錯誤的動機為耶穌歡呼。我們每個星期日都敬拜同一位主。我們必須以正確的理由讚美祂。你來這裡不只是為了與朋友見面、唱歌和聽演講。你來這裡是為了向偉大的君王致敬。我們是參加敬拜，而不是參觀宗教儀式。我們以喜樂向神歌唱。當別人禱告時，我們在心裡回應「阿們」。因此，不要從遠處或在旁邊觀看耶穌，而是要緊緊跟隨祂。人們把衣服和樹枝放在路上迎接耶穌。你在祂面前放下什麼？你願意將你的憂慮、重擔和驕傲放在祂的寶座前嗎？你會關掉手機並把它放下，使你能專心敬拜神嗎？當我們奉主的名聚集的時候，主就在我們其中。讓我們向祂獻上一切最好的。

3. 對君王的認識 Perception of the King

我們讀了人們如何為君王而準備並且向君王表示歡迎。現在我們來看看人們對君王的認識。他們認為耶穌是誰？那時，許多人已經見過耶穌或聽過祂的故事。其他人也看過祂行神蹟以及祂對待人的態度。雖然有了那麼多的了解，他們還是不太確定耶穌是誰。經過那一天在耶路撒冷的熱鬧場面，人們不禁問：「這是誰？」（第 10 節）有些人在第 11 節中回應：眾人說：「這是加利利拿撒勒的先知耶穌。」他們知道耶穌的名字和祂的家鄉。他們認為耶穌是一位先知。人們能感覺到祂與其他拉比的不同，祂的教導帶著權柄。他們也將耶穌的超自然能力歸於神。他們所熟悉最接近的人物是先知。舊約先知傳達來自神的信息。他們中的一些人，如摩西和以利亞，能行神蹟。他們認為耶穌和那些使者一樣，只不過是一位先知。提到拿撒勒可能是一種諷刺。那是一個很少人知道的小村莊。人們自然而然地認為名人應該來自像耶路撒冷或紐約那樣的大城市，不可能是拿撒勒或孟菲斯。當腓力告訴拿但業他遇到耶穌時，拿但業不覺得有什麼了不起。聽聽約翰福音 1:46 中的對話：拿但業對他說：「拿撒勒還能出什麼好的嗎？」腓力說：「你來看！」還好拿但業真的去看清楚。後來，耶穌把拿但業列為十二門徒之一。門徒跟隨耶穌一段時間後，主問他們：「人們說我是誰？」他們回答，有些人以為耶穌是施洗約翰，有些人說祂是以利亞或另一位先知。然後耶穌向他們提出同樣的問題：「那麼你們說我是誰？」有一個人給了完美的答案。看看馬太福音 16:16 – 西門彼得回答說：「你是基督，是永生神的兒子。」彼得說對了！但事實證明，這種理解只是頭腦的知識。他們還未完全理解「基督」這個稱號的含義，以及耶穌要完成的使命。因此當他們的老師被捕時，他們都四散而逃。當耶穌死在十字架上時，他們覺得所有的希望都破滅了。如今，許多人都在思考同一個問題：「耶穌是誰？」有些人懷疑耶穌就像小說裡的

虛構人物。其他人則認為耶穌是一位傑出的老師和一位熱心的慈善家。他們感謝耶穌對社會的貢獻。有些人認為耶穌是宗教的創辦人。然而，他們認為基督信仰是眾多可供選擇的宗教之一。我們應該以閱讀社交媒體同樣的心態來看聖經。在弄清事實之前不要妄下結論！要用客觀的心態去調查。耶穌是否具有祂所說的身份？祂是否神的兒子？祂是否舊約所預言的救世主？聖經記載關於耶穌的一切是否都確實發生？耶穌死在十字架上，是一個宗教狂熱分子的自我犧牲，還是為了解決你和我的罪？祂的死是否是唯一使我們與天父和好的途徑？耶穌是否真的從死裡復活了？重點不再是你覺得耶穌是誰或是別人如何形容祂，而是祂的真正身份。那麼接下來的問題是：如果耶穌願意賜救恩給你，你會如何回應？你會接受祂還是拒絕祂？

結論 CONCLUSION

在第一個棕櫚主日，人們為耶穌組織了一個虛假的歡迎行列。他們把耶穌視為一個人。他們的行動並沒有帶著愛。同一群熱烈歡迎耶穌的人，在五天後就滿懷怨恨地拒絕了祂。他們被宗教領袖擺布，要求羅馬人將耶穌釘在十字架上。他們根本沒有意識到，那個死去的人就是神派來的君王。這件事情應驗了另一個預言：人們所厭棄的石頭成為神所珍貴的房角石。有一個關於密西根州一名男子保存了 30 年的一塊石頭的故事。他不知道那是一塊值錢的寶石。我們就把這個人稱為小張吧。他是在購買一個農場時得到那塊重達 22 磅的石頭。原來的地主告訴小張，那是一顆隕石。小張把它當作一塊普通的石頭。他能想到的唯一用途就是用它把門擋開。有一天，他從新聞中讀到有些人把類似的石頭賣掉賺錢。因此，小張把石頭拿給一位地質學教授作評估。樣本也被送往華盛頓的一個實驗室來檢定。結果發現，那塊石頭是由 88% 的鐵和 12% 的鎳組成。它是在密西根州被發現最大的隕石之一，價值 10 萬美元。一塊沒有人注意的石頭，原來是一塊寶石。就像那塊石頭一樣，耶穌的外表很平常。這位君王沒有穿皇袍，沒有王冠，也沒有住宮殿。祂看起來比較像一個卑微的僕人而不像一個偉大的領袖。祂並不是靠武器和軍隊征服敵人的，祂用溫柔的聲音吸引人們來到祂面前。今天，祂也在呼喚你跟隨祂。