

CHRIST'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

– *AUGUST 2.* – *MARK 11:1-11.* –

**"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of
Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee."
– ZECHARIAH 9:9.**

THE MESSAGE of John the Baptist was, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." This same message Jesus bade His disciples carry from village to village throughout Palestine. This same message was the burden of His preaching and the theme of His parables. Finally, at the close of His ministry, the Kingdom came to the Jewish nation in the sense that it was offered to them – it was theirs for the accepting. Today's lesson tells of the formal offer of the Kingdom by Jesus and of the neglect of the Jews as a people to accept it. Thus "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" – except a few. His own nation rejected Him, and five days later crucified Him. A little later, at Pentecost, a few who received Him were begotten of the Holy Spirit and became the nucleus of Spiritual Israel, in preparation for the glorious Kingdom and the work which is to be accomplished at His Second Advent.

On the evening preceding the story of this lesson, Jesus and His disciples were at Bethany, the guests of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, who had prepared a special feast for Jesus, whom they loved so dearly. This was the Lazarus whom He had awakened from the sleep of death but a short time before. The feast took place at the close of the Jewish Sabbath day. The next morning corresponded to our Sunday, the first day of the week.

THE CRISIS OF ISRAEL'S EXPERIENCE

In preparation for presenting Himself as King, Jesus sent two of His disciples for an ass's colt, telling them where they would find it, and instructing them to say that it would be returned after the Master had used it. By the time the colt arrived, a considerable multitude had gathered – people of the village of Bethany and others who had come out from Jerusalem, about two miles distant, to see Jesus and to see Lazarus, upon whom the notable miracle had been wrought. It had long been the custom of the kings of Israel to ride to their coronation [R5494 : page 205] upon an ass; and the multitude seemed to enter into the spirit of this occasion and to realize what it meant that Jesus was about to ride into Jerusalem on this colt. It signified that finally He was ready to assume the office of King.

For some time the disciples had recognized Him as the Messiah, the glories of whose Reign they were to share; and the multitude in general had learned to so regard Him, saying, "When Messiah cometh, will He do greater works than this man?" – could we expect anything more of Messiah than we see being accomplished by this man Jesus? But this was the first time Jesus had formally put Himself forward. On previous occasions, when they had sought to take Him by force to make Him a king, He had withdrawn Himself, realizing that the time was not yet come. Now, so far from withdrawing, He was taking the active part, sending for the colt, preparing for the triumphal ride to the capital of the nation as its King.

We may be sure that the hearts of the Apostles thrilled with excitement as they thought of the nearness of their Master's glory and of their own share in it; for as yet they did not realize the full import of His words to the effect that He must be crucified and must depart to a "far country," even Heaven itself, and be invested

with authority, and later return to establish the Kingdom which would bless the world.

Jesus, however, was fully aware that the presentation of Himself as King was a formal matter, fulfilling the prophecy and leaving the nation of Israel without excuse. [R5495 : page 205] If, when He entered the city, the people should rise en masse, acknowledge Him and acclaim Him, then indeed they would be in line with the Divine requirements which would bring them the greatest of all blessings. But Jesus knew that prophecy had already declared that He would be despised and rejected, and that His own people would hide their faces from Him in shame. (Isaiah 53:3.) The journey and the preparation for it, therefore, meant something very different to Jesus from what it signified to the disciples and the multitudes.

"THE STONES WOULD CRY OUT"

When the ass arrived, some of the people put their garments upon it in lieu of a saddle; Jesus mounted, and the procession began. Some went before Him, and some followed after. The people were familiar with the prophecy relating to Messiah's coming, which declared, "Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass." They were familiar also with the "shout" the prophets had foretold and the responses – one party crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Again came the cry, "Blessed be the Kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Then the response, "Hosanna in the highest!" These different expressions are recorded by the different evangelists.

But not all were enthusiastic acclaimers of Jesus; a discordant note was heard. Some of those who had come from the city through curiosity criticised the shouting, and wondered why Jesus

did not rebuke the people for ascribing so great honor to Him. They sent word to this effect to Jesus through His disciples. Jesus made answer that a great prophecy was being fulfilled. The Prophet Zechariah had by inspiration said, "Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem"! and such a shout must be made. Jesus declared that if the multitudes had failed to shout, the prophecy would still have been fulfilled – the very stones would have cried out.

THE FIRST PALM SUNDAY

It is customary with some Christians in various parts of the world to commemorate especially that Sunday of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. The record tells that on the journey many of the people strewed their garments in the way, as a mark of respect and honor, waiting until the little animal had passed over them, and then running on before and placing them again. Others brought ferns, flowers and grasses, and strewed them in the way. Still others, St. John's Gospel tells us, brought branches of palm trees.

It was a jubilant procession, fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah. Yet to Jesus it had the sad feature, as indicated by the account. When they had reached the turn of the Mount of Olives, which brought Jerusalem into view, the Master halted the procession while He looked over the city and wept, saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your House is left unto you desolate; and verily I say unto you, Ye shall see Me no more, until that Day [nearly nineteen centuries later] when ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah!"

Jesus realized that that day was a turning point with the Jewish nation – that their rejection of Him meant their rejection by the Heavenly Father for a long time. It meant that they would

be cast off from Divine favor, except a few who would become His disciples. It meant that during those long centuries the highly favored people of Abraham's natural seed would be in distress. It meant that the favor of God, which had been with them for centuries, would instead be extended to the Gentiles, to gather out of the Gentiles a company of faithful, saintly ones to be associates and joint-heirs with Jesus and the faithful ones of the Jews in the Heavenly Kingdom. It meant that not until this elect, Heavenly, spiritual Kingdom class should be received to glory would the Jewish people be again received into fellowship with God.

St. Paul markedly calls our attention to this fact that the rejection of Israel is not permanent, but only for a time – only until the complete number of faithful saints be gathered out from amongst the Gentiles. Then God's favor will return to Natural Israel, and subsequently extend to all the families of earth. – Romans 11:25-32.

JESUS, THE PRINCE OF PEACE

How different was this entry of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, from the triumphal marches of earthly conquerors and kings! In the excitement of human passion and the prejudice of human minds a special halo of glory has surrounded the world's conquerors. Heroic deeds, valiant conquests, as pictured by historians have a charm. The rising generation reads with thrilling interest of the prowess of Alexander the Great, of the Spartans of Greece, of the Caesars of Rome, and in more modern times of Robert Bruce, of Napoleon and Wellington, of Generals Grant and Lee, Sherman and Johnson, Sheridan and Stewart. The home-comings of all of these were triumphal marches, in many cases rendering honor to whom honor was due.

Nevertheless, in every instance the mind's eye necessarily closes against scenes which led up to such triumphs. We try to forget the millions of slain and wounded, and other millions of

mourning widows and orphans. We try to forget the smoking ruins of homes behind those victorious armies. However necessary war at times may seem to be for the maintenance of justice, nevertheless [R5495 : page 206] all must concede that the blessings purchased by the sword are procured at a terrible cost.

From this viewpoint Jesus, the Prince of Peace, followed by an army of saints who are walking in His footsteps, presents a beautiful picture – even to the worldly. These victors – Leader and followers – conquer by dying. Thus Jesus said to His followers, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's shall find it." Thus viewed, all the followers of the Lamb are self-sacrificers, as the Bible declares: "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God – your reasonable service." (Romans 12:1.) Such a victory – victory through death – is difficult for the majority of people to understand! What is the philosophy of it? Where is the victory?

VICTOR-KINGS THROUGH DYING

Well may it be asked, Wherein is the victory of Christ and His followers in laying down their lives for the brethren and in support of truth and righteousness? Only the Bible answers the question, and only those who exercise faith can understand the Bible answer. The Bible declares that the real victory of Christ and the Church is over self. Their crowning day is future – their triumph will be then.

The triumphal entry of Jesus on the ass was only typical. The antitype will be glorious – beyond the veil. As Jesus after His resurrection was "received up into glory," so also He has promised His Church that their resurrection shall change them from imperfect human beings to perfect spirit beings, joint-heirs with their Master, their Redeemer, in the glorious Millennial Kingdom which is to bless the world.

After Jesus had risen from the dead, He explained to His perplexed disciples what His death signified, saying, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things [death] and to enter into His glory?" (Luke 24:26.) So St. Paul has declared in respect to all who will be Jesus' associates in the Kingdom – they must suffer with Him if they would reign with Him; they must be dead with Him if they would live with Him. (2 Timothy 2:12.) Christ and His Church die to human hopes and interests, present and everlasting – laying down their lives, suffering for righteousness' sake. Their reward is two-fold: (1) Their own personal exaltation to a Heavenly, spirit glory, like unto the angels, and yet more glorious – "far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named." (2) The Kingdom glory – the joy of being the Divine agents for human restoration.

From this, the Bible viewpoint, the Christian warfare is different from every other warfare known to the world. It is a fight against sin, a fight against self-will, a full submission to the Divine will, a victory through death. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Revelation 2:10.) "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His Throne." (Revelation 3:21.) No wonder that a proposition of this kind is but imperfectly understood by the world! "The world knoweth us not, even as it knew Him not." And this is one of the requirements of the Gospel, that Jesus and His followers shall submit themselves to be misunderstood by the world. We are counted fools for Christ's sake. – 1 Corinthians 4:10.

It requires some stamina to be a loyal follower in the footsteps of Jesus, misunderstood as He was misunderstood by those of His day, reviled as He was reviled. "They shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake." It is only when we understand through God's promises that in these trying experiences of Christ and His followers there is a glorious

purpose, that we are able to endure them with any measure of rejoicing. Only these are granted of the Lord the eye of faith which can clearly discern things beyond the veil – the glory, honor and immortality, and the Kingdom which the Lord has promised to His faithful followers.

"THE WRATH OF THE LAMB"

Since Jesus is the Prince of Peace, how shall we understand various passages of Scripture which refer to Him as a mighty Conqueror in blood-stained garments, taking vengeance on His foes? But especially, how shall **[R5496 : page 206]** we understand the declaration that, at His coming in the clouds of heaven, all the tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him?

Of this Prince of Peace it may be said that He will wound to heal, that whatever disasters He may bring or permit to come upon the world will be so overruled as to make of them blessings in disguise. Undoubtedly much that is said respecting our Lord is highly symbolic. For instance, He is to smite the nations with the Sword that proceedeth out of His mouth – the Word, or Message, of Truth. Such a smiting is in full conformity with the declaration that when St. Peter preached the Gospel at Pentecost, some of his hearers were "cut to the heart" – not with St. Peter's literal sword, but with "the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." Eventually, that Sword will smite all opponents of righteousness for their good. Only the wilfully wicked will eventually be destroyed in the Second Death.

We are not to forget, however, that the inauguration of the Messianic Kingdom is to be in the midst of the Time of Trouble, and that Christ will have to do with the bringing, or at least the permitting, of that Trouble. Apparently mankind will be permitted to bring the great trouble at the end of this Age upon themselves. There are forces of evil, Satan and his angels, ready to do us harm and, through human forces, sin-forces entrenched in human

nature, ready to do harm to the social fabric. The Bible represents that Divine Power holds these in check – the four angels holding the four winds – that they shall not blow upon the earth to its injury until the appointed time, until all of God's elect Church shall have been sealed in their foreheads – their intellect – with the Truth.

At the appropriate time those "winds" of strife will be let loose, and great will be the trouble, until in due time the King of kings and Lord of lords shall intervene to rescue the race from itself and from the Adversary. Then Satan shall be bound for a thousand years, and Messiah's Kingdom shall be established for the blessing of all the families of the earth. **[R5506 : page 206]**

PREPARED HEARTS

FRANCES DARDEN.

Prepare our hearts to know Thee, Lord,
And seek for wisdom in Thy Word,
So, as our days, our strength may be,
To spread Thy Truth, o'er land and sea.
O'er all the earth this light must shine,
Restoring faith to all mankind.

Run swiftly, oh! ye angel "feet,"
Upon the mountains; tidings sweet
Send forth! Proclaim the Word,
So men shall know their reigning Lord.
Earnest watch, on Zion's wall,
Lift high His banner over all;
Loud sound the Seventh Trumpet call!

=====