

“Upon further inspection...Jesus is the King We need!”

How do you get ready for holidays? If company is coming over you inspect the house – to make sure it is clean. You inspect the groceries, to make sure you are buying food suitable to be served to your guests. You don't always host for the holidays, but sometimes you travel to see family and friends. In that case you pack your bags and inspect it to make sure you have everything. If you are driving to your destination you inspect the car – to make sure it is safe and ready for travel. You inspect yourselves and the kids – to make sure you are looking presentable for the people you are visiting. Palm Sunday was a holiday in the Jewish culture. It wasn't always known as Palm Sunday. It became known as that because of the special things connected to Jesus that took place that day. Yet before it became known as Palm Sunday, that Sunday was always significant as it was the beginning of a special week- long festival known as Passover. That Sunday was inspection day – the day you picked out the lamb that would be served at the Passover meal later in the week. It is fitting then, that on Palm Sunday, Jesus – the Lamb of God - rode into Jerusalem for all to see and inspect him. And upon further inspection, Palm Sunday reveals that Jesus is the King we need!

Maybe some Passover history would be helpful in order to understand how Jesus is the King we need. When the Jewish person celebrated Passover, they were remembering how God saved their ancestors from the 10th and final plague of death in Egypt and freed them from their slavery in Egypt (Read Exodus 12 to learn more about it). Part of that celebration included following the ritual of what the Israelites did that first Passover meal. They selected a young, male lamb for the meal. They were to carefully inspect the lamb to make sure it had no defects. Then they were to kill that lamb, making sure not to break any of its bones, and spread some of the lamb's blood on the door frame of their house. Finally, the lamb was to be prepared and eaten as part of the Passover meal. This Passover lamb and rituals were a picture of the greater work of saving and freedom that Jesus would provide to Israel and all people. Certainly the events of that first Passover proved to Egypt and Israel that God was in control. That God was the king and leader of Israel. Yet I find it interesting that God didn't tell Israel to kill a bull or an ox – animals of power – for the occasion, but rather a young, seemingly powerless, lamb, that would silently allow itself to be killed. The reason God did this was to prove to Israel and us that upon further inspection...Jesus is the King We need. On Palm Sunday, inspection day, we might expect Jesus to ride into Jerusalem on a royal mode of transportation – like a stallion or a chariot – symbols of kingly power. Yet instead he rode in on the lowly offspring of an adult donkey. Why? Because Jesus is different than normal earthly kings. He is a king like no other. He is the king who came to fulfill the promises that were made about him in OT Scripture. Verse 4-5, **“This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet (Zechariah): ‘Say to the Daughter of Zion, See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”** Jesus drove to Jerusalem that day in the truck instead of the sports car, because he was coming to Jerusalem not to relax, but to work – to complete God's plan of salvation. Yes, Jesus wasn't the king many in Jerusalem expected or wanted, but he was the king they needed and the one we need too. And I think it is amazing that Jesus even showed up to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. He knew what he was getting himself into. In fact, not all that long before when he told his disciples they were going up to Jerusalem to wake up Lazarus, his disciples tried to talk him out of it. **“But Rabbi, they said, a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you are going back there?” (John 11:8).** Anybody who knew Jesus' situation knew it would be crazy for him to go to Jerusalem at this time. It would be like John F. Kennedy still going to Dallas, and riding in a convertible at a parade, even though he knew someone would kill him there. Yet Jesus proved that he was a king like no other, the king we need because he came for a different purpose. Paul talked about that in our New Testament lesson today. **“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and**

became obedient to death – even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2:5-8). Jesus is a king like no other because he came not to have his needs fulfilled, but rather to fulfill the spiritual needs of people like us. And another great thing about our servant king Jesus – is that he comes to us to give us what we need. As king, Jesus doesn't wait for you to come to him. He doesn't say he'll come to you only if you see to it that certain conditions are met first. No matter how many times you have failed to understand and appreciate his love. No matter how many trainloads of those opportunities to do good works that God prepared in advance for you to do that you have failed to do. No matter what wretched evil thing you have said or done against God or your fellow human beings, your king has come to you - a king like no other who fulfills your greatest needs. The king of heaven rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, on a donkey, prepared to give his life for You, to suffer damnation in Hell in Your place, because he loves You, and he always will. Today, Jesus comes directly to You and speaks right into your ears, reassuring you again that he came and did save you. Let that good news rule your heart and life.

Do you sense what an undeserved honor Jesus has bestowed on you? Based on nothing about you, but solely because he came in the name of the Lord and delivered you from eternal death in Hell - You are a royal son or daughter of the King! That's a special honor, from a special king, and upon further inspection...since Jesus is the King We need – he deserves our honor and praise like no other. When you come to church here, no one's going to make you sing. If you're a member of this congregation or you're interested in becoming one, no one's going to make you submit a copy of your 1040 and demand that 10% clicks into the offering plate every week. There are no plans to install spy-cams in all your homes to insure that, whether you're single, married, parent or child, you are in fact traveling the straight and narrow and doing everything a "good Christian" is supposed to do. No one's going to push your arm up behind your back and say, "You haven't signed up for anything lately. It's high time that you did!" But when you hear what you have heard today that the Lord Jesus, your Savior-King, has come to fulfill Your needs and by the grace of God You believe in your heart that your Hell became his and his Heaven became yours - then you won't even need to draw any conclusions as to what you ought to do. The Holy Spirit will draw your conclusions for you, namely, that the king who has forgiven you all your sins and has allowed you to call him yours is a king to be praised. He's a king you'll want to praise and a king you can't help but praise. How do you praise him? Come here often, and when you do - sing for your king. When the opportunity is presented to financially support Gospel ministry here and around the world, gladly give your best for your king. In your particular station in life, live for your king. Serve one another in the same way you would serve your king. These are the hosannas and palm branches you can offer to your king. When Zechariah first wrote, "Your king comes to you," he prefaced it by saying, "Rejoice greatly." With their palm branches and their hosannas sung to high heaven, the Palm Sunday crowds certainly did that. Join them. Rejoice greatly in the confidence of salvation that your King has brought you. Rejoice greatly, because upon further inspection...Jesus is the King we need – Amen.