

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, ² saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ tell him, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’”

⁴ They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, ⁵ some people standing there asked, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” ⁶ They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. ⁷ When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. ⁸ Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. ⁹ Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

“Hosanna!”

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

¹⁰ “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!”

“Hosanna in the highest!” (NIV 84)

Theme: Your King Comes

1. He knows how to defeat the enemy.
2. He has the power to defeat the enemy.

In the years following the civil war the American frontier was a rough place to live. For anyone west of the Mississippi danger, deprivation, and hardship were common place; as were raids from marauding bands of Indians. To protect those settlers, railroad passengers, and those on wagon trains, the United States Government sent in the Cavalry. 10 regiments of troupes traveled throughout the Great Plains and beyond protecting American citizens. When trouble took place in came the Cavalry on their horses and guns to save the day. This is the origin of the phrase, “The Cavalry is coming.” It means that help is on the way. They couldn’t defend themselves for very long—without help soon they would be over taken, but the Cavalry is coming, help is on the way.

Today we see a Cavalry of one coming—your king comes. He not only knows how to defeat our enemy, he also has the power to defeat him.

If you want to defeat your enemy you first have to know your enemy. Intelligence is key; you have to do some reconnaissance, your investigative work. It’s the same reason why sports teams watch tape of their opponents. You want to know who you are facing—what you are up against. It would be nice to know where your enemy is, how many they are, what weapons they have, what they are capable of, and so on. Of course, that is just the first step. But if you don’t know your enemy and their power, you’re probably going to be in trouble. Who is your enemy? What are you up against? What are they capable of? What powers do they have? By the Holy Spirit, Paul has done the recon work for us and gives his report in Ephesians 6, **Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.**

Our battle is not a physical one. It’s not a war against those we can see. We are not fighting against radical Muslims, mad Russians, or insane communists. Our battle is a spiritual one. It’s against forces that we cannot see. It’s against the devil. It’s against our sinful nature and death. And we know full well the power of the devil. We know what our enemy is capable of.

And yet, what do we often try to do? We try to fight the battle by ourselves. We act as if we don’t need God. We can fight off the devil’s temptations on our own. We are strong and capable, we don’t need help from anyone—even God. The gospel is the one weapon that Satan is defenseless against. And yet, we often fail to use it. Instead of clinging to God’s word, or using it to go on the offensive, we try our own ideas. And when we fail and fall, well we can take care of that too—we can make up for that on our own.

And of course you know the result. Just like Adam and Eve and everyone else who throughout the history of the world has tried to fight the devil on their own—we fail miserably. We get defeated again and again. We fall into temptation and are destroyed by the devil, our sinful nature gets the best of us. This spiritual enemy is too great, too powerful for us to stand a chance on our own. If we try to

fight this battle on our own we will die—and not just a physical death, we will die eternally.

Like the cavalry coming to the rescue in the Old West, Jesus your King comes to your rescue. That is the whole point of Palm Sunday. It's our king coming to our rescue. It is our king willing going into our battle, to fight the fight we couldn't win for us. And he knows the enemy, of course. He created the enemy—he controls the devil and had already defeated him.

And he knew what he had to do to defeat our enemy. Again and again Jesus told his disciples what he had to do. For instance we read in Matthew 16, **From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.** Jesus knew the power of our enemy—and that we stood no chance of defeating him on our own. So he rode into Jerusalem on a lowly donkey to fight our battle for us as our king.

But Jesus didn't look the part. He didn't look like he was going to fight a war; and he didn't look all that impressive. Sure, people were singing his praises and giving glory to God because of him but Jesus didn't enter Jerusalem on a big stately war-horse. He didn't come with legions of soldiers. He came into town a foal, a colt of a donkey—a lowly beast of burden. They treated him like a king, but he didn't rule over a country, he didn't own any land, or a palace to live in. Yet, the people believed he was a king. So they shouted Hosanna and laid their cloaks and palm branches in front of him. You know the type of King they were hoping for. They wanted an earthly king. One who might defeat the Romans and set up his kingdom in Israel. Or a bread king who would give them free food and water so they wouldn't have to work the rest of their lives.

They also knew he was the one they had been waiting for—the Son of David. He is the one God promised to David, a descendent whose kingdom would be established forever. But little did the people know what Jesus was going to Jerusalem to do. They didn't know he was going to fight our spiritual battles for us.

And that is why Jesus had to be more than a king—but also God himself. The first half of our text shows us just that. Before Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, he first had to find one. So he sent

his disciples ahead to a village and told them exactly where they would find the animal. And he also taught them what they should say if anyone questioned them. And things went exactly as Jesus said they would. The donkey was there, someone questioned them, and when they said, **The Lord needs it**, they were able to take the foal with them. It happened exactly as Jesus said. How could Jesus know? Only because he is God. And then he sat and rode on a colt, a foal of a donkey. No one had ever ridden before on this beast of burden; but Jesus once again showed his divine power by riding on the animal. Jesus didn't ride into town to show off or to win a physical battle, but a spiritual one. His triumphal entry into Jerusalem was his arrival as our cavalry—as our Savior over sin, death, and the devil. And in order for Jesus to win that victory for us, he let himself be arrested, beaten, flogged, and crucified. He willingly let himself be nailed to a tree and took our sins upon himself. He paid for our sins, suffering their the condemnation that we deserved. And then he gave up his spirit. But the victory was not yet complete. Jesus doesn't win until next week, on Easter when Jesus showed his power over death by rising from the dead. His resurrection is our comfort and assurance that we too will rise from the dead to live forever with him in heaven. And when he rose from the dead he crushed Satan's head. The victory that Satan thought he won on Good Friday wasn't a victory at all. Jesus rode into town in order to fulfill his Father's will and serve as our substitute. And in doing so his victory over sin, death, and the power of the devil, is now our victory. As Paul points out at the end of his great resurrection chapter, 1 Corinthians 15, **Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.** And that is why we celebrate Palm Sunday—we don't celebrate our Savior's triumphal entry, if he wasn't victorious!

The crowds that followed Jesus acted as if he was a king as they put their coats on the ground in front of him. And they went into the fields and into the trees cutting branches off and putting them on the ground before Jesus' path. Little did they know who he is or that he would win the ultimate victory for us. In Revelation seven John records part of a vision he saw, where the saints in heaven do the same thing for the Lamb of God, our victorious king. **After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes**

and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

The crowds on Palm Sunday also sung Jesus’ praises. It’s a song we know well because we sing it with them every time the Lord gives us the forgiveness of sins in his holy supper. **“Hosanna!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” “Hosanna in the highest!”** Hosanna literally means, “Save us, please.” It stems from Psalm 118 and eventually became part an exclamation of praise.

Save us, please. But save us from what? We know. We know far more than what the people knew that day. We know why Jesus rode into Jerusalem and what he did for us there. He won the ultimate victory for us; he defeated all our enemies and has given us that victory. How much greater of a reason do we have then, to sing his praises! Like the saints already in heaven who cried out together with a loud voice, how much greater of a reason to we have to shout his name and share his gospel! And that is what we do.

When the people of the American Frontier were under attack from an enemy more powerful than they were, the cavalry came riding to their rescue. “The Calvary is coming” they shouted to the hope and joy of all who could hear. Today our king comes to fight and win a greater battle against a greater enemy. And so with smiles on our faces and joy in our hearts we sing and proclaim the name of the Lord—our victorious king who has come to save us. Amen.