

April 2, 2023

KIBC Sunday Worship Service (Palm Sunday)

Messenger: Pastor Teiichiro Kuroda

Title of the Message: "Save Us Now"

—Hosanna—

Text: John 12:12~19

12:12 The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that. Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem.

12:13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! □ "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! □ "Blessed is the king of Israel! □

12:14 Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written:

12:15 "Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt. □

12:16 At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

12:17 Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word.

12:18 Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him.

12:19 So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him! □

Introduction

1. Festivals are very common throughout the world and most of them seem to have some kind of religious meaning.
 - On March 26, the KIBC church school had a spring festival called "Kitahama Kids Celebration" at which they will celebrate Easter. As you know, Easter is the festival that commemorates the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.
 - One week before the events of Easter, Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem. The church calls this day "Palm Sunday." According to the church calendar, today is that day.
 - And this coming week is called "Passion Week". During this time we

remember Jesus' passion on the cross. Specifically, Friday is called Good Friday. At KIBC, we will have a Good Friday worship service this Friday at 7 p.m. and then the following Sunday is Easter. On this day, we will celebrate that Jesus Christ has risen.

- Among Christian holidays, Easter is one the highlights, along with Christmas. My friends, if Jesus Christ didn't experience the passion of the cross, then we couldn't celebrate Easter. Therefore, this week is very important and meaningful.

2. "Palm Sunday" is observed over the world. What happened on that day when Jesus entered the city on a donkey's colt?

12:12 The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem.

12:13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! □ "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! □ "Blessed is the king of Israel! □

- The crowd shouted "Hosanna" and welcomed Jesus. In Hebrew, "Hosanna" means "save us now." People came to meet Jesus waving palm branches as he passed by. It is why the day is called "Palm Sunday" today.
- So, what does "Palm Sunday" mean? Why did Jesus enter Jerusalem even though He knew He would be subject to crucifixion?

Let's study about the significance of Jesus' entry to Jerusalem. Two points

Main Subjects

1. The significance of Jesus' entry to Jerusalem

- I would like to tell you about the significance of Jesus' entry to Jerusalem in the following three points.

1) the significance of the entry day

- Jesus entered Jerusalem on the tenth day of Nisan according to the Jewish calendar. This day had deep meaning. On this day, Jews chose the lambs that were to be slaughtered at the temple on Passover. These lambs were taken care of them until the fourteenth day of the month to see whether or not they had blemish or defect.
- It is recorded about Passover in Exodus, chapter 12—

12:2 “This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year.

12:3 Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household.

12:4 If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat.

12:5 The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.

12:6 Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.

12:7 Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.

- My friends, the Jews had to slaughter sheep every time they observed Passover. And those sheep must have been year-old males without defect. Jesus’ entry to Jerusalem on the tenth of the month of Nisan meant that Jesus was being chosen as the Passover lamb. The Bible records that Jesus is the Lamb of God. John the Baptist saw Jesus and said —

The Gospel of John

1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

- Peter said,

1 Peter

1:18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors,

1:19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

- Therefore, Jesus had to enter Jerusalem on the tenth day of Nisan. This teaches us that Jesus entered Jerusalem to be sacrificed. It means ⇒ **“The hour of Jesus” had come.**
- In his public life, Jesus was almost arrested many times by the leaders of that time. However, He wasn’t.

The Bible records as below—

The Gospel of John

7:30 At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.

- My dear friends, “the hour of Jesus” had come. ⇒ It is Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, the beginning of Passion Week. This is the first significant thing we learn today.

* **Then, why did Jesus enter Jerusalem?** This is the second significance.

2) Jesus’ entry to Jerusalem is the great “sign”.

12:15 “Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.” □

- This verse is from Zechariah 9 in the Old Testament. **9:9 Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.**
- Why did Zechariah tell them **“Rejoice greatly”**?
The One ⇒ ① is your king ② is righteous (justice) ③ has salvation ,
④ is lowly (humble).
“the sign” ⇒ “riding on a donkey’s colt”
- Donkeys were domestic animals used for carrying loads, especially in agricultural work. While horses were used for war, donkeys were yoked and put to work in a field. Therefore, it was impossible for a person of high position to ride on a donkey. Even today, a donkey is considered a stupid animal in Israel. However, it was this stupid donkey that carried the Son of God. ⇒ Jesus was worthy of being called the Prince of Peace.
- The Scriptures say “Do not be afraid”. What a powerful and blessed Word God has given. The kings of that time were oppressive rulers like dictators. For example, when Herod the king found out about the birth of Jesus, he gave orders to kill all the boys who were two years old and under.
- Therefore, people were extremely fearful of the king. However, Jesus, who is Prince of Peace, is quite different. God said, **“Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!”** Zion is a hill in Jerusalem and also

refers to Jerusalem itself.

Isaiah

40:9 You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!"

- Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey as Zechariah had prophesied. The Messiah didn't come on the white horse from the royal palace. Rather, Jesus was from Nazareth in Galilee, the place about which it was said, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" This is "the sign" (semeion) God has given. God made people of the world receive the grace through this sign. How thankful we are.

- Like this, the One who is the king of Israel is righteous (justice) and lowly (humble) and came to give salvation. His second "sign" was ⇒ "riding on a donkey's colt."

* **Then, why did He enter Jerusalem?**

The third significance was referred in the shout of the crowd.

3) **Hope and Expectation in "Hosanna"**

- The crowd welcomed Jesus shouting as below —

12:13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! □ "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! □ "Blessed is the king of Israel!

- The Words are prophecy from Psalm 118.

118:26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you.

"He who comes in the name of the Lord" ⇒ This was how the people welcomed the Messiah (the Savior) at that time.

- For a long time the Israelites had been longing for the king of Israel. They were eagerly waiting for the savior. They hoped and expected that the king would save and rebuild their nation. Therefore, the people shouted "Hosanna! (Save us now!)" It was their heart-felt cry of hope.
- The crowd at that time probably didn't shout thinking about the Words of Psalm. However, Jesus' coming gave them good enough reason to believe in the king's coming. Jesus followed faithfully the salvation plan of God the Father in heaven. Jesus became the lamb of "Passover". He was absolutely

faithful.

● The term “Hosanna!” shows the great hope and expectation of the crowd.

• Then, why did the crowd welcome Jesus with palm branches? There are lots of “palm trees” in Israel and even today.

① “Palm trees” are ⇒ “Date palm”

• The shape of leaves is like bird’s feathers, and they use them to make wreaths for festive occasions.

• A certain book records that people have been using “palm branches” for national holidays since around B.C. 2. So when Jesus entered Jerusalem, the crowd took “palm branches”. This teaches ⇒ He who saves Israel is Jesus.

② There is other important reason for taking “palm branches”. This was the custom of “Sukkot”, not of “Passover”.

• “Sukkot” is the festival celebrated on the 15th day of the month of Tishrei (September to October of today). It lasts 7 days and they have special prayer service on the first and final day of the week. This is the thanksgiving festival for the end of the gathering of the harvest.

• The festival also commemorates the days when the Israelites traveled in the desert. People make booths made with branches and live in them for seven days. The Jews still observe “Sukkot” today. (Leviticus 23:39~43, Numbers 29:12~38)

• The important thing is that Passover (the spring festival” comes before Sukkot (the autumn festival). Passover indicates that Jesus Christ the Lamb is sacrificed (His death on the cross). It means that “Passover” that is Jesus’ entry to Jerusalem must have done before “Sukkot” the festival of “palm branches” and of “Hosanna”.

• Like this, Jesus’ entry to Jerusalem has very deep significance. Then, what do we learn on “the Palm Sunday”?

⇒ **We learn the believability of the Bible.**

2. The believability (credibility) of the Bible

• The Bible indicates that Jesus Christ is the Messiah (the Savior).

The Bible: the Book of Isaiah

40:8 The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.

- The Bible is worthy to believe. The crowd gave Jesus a big welcome on “Palm Sunday”. However, even His disciples didn’t understand its true meaning.

12:16 At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

- His disciples couldn’t understand Jesus’ will until after His Resurrection and the events of Pentecost. (Acts 2)
- My friends, human beings usually see only what they want to see. The disciples had the same hopes and expectations as the crowd. What did they really expect?
- The crowd was expecting Jesus to establish an earthly kingdom that same week. What did they see? They realized the true meaning of “Palm Sunday” only after His death on the cross and his Resurrection (after He was glorified).
- My dear friends, what do we really see? And what do our hearts really understand? What things do we genuinely care about?
Today we celebrate “Palm Sunday”. What a response do we offer to the God of the Bible? Let’s take time and think about it?

Conclusion

Title of the Message: “Save Us Now” □

—Hosanna—

- Today we have learned about Jesus’ entry to Jerusalem. Why did He enter riding on a donkey’s colt even though He knew He would be crucified?

Two points

1 . The reason is to fulfill the Words of the Bible.

- ① It was the tenth day of the month of Nisan.
- ② Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on “a donkey’s colt” according to the prophecy of Zechariah.
- ③ The crowd expected an earthly kingdom in this world.

2 . The other reason is to show the credibility of the Bible.

- The Bible always speaks to us. With what hope and expectation do we welcome Jesus before the Passion Week?

* God bless you!