

■ No. 131 Invitation to Live by the Word (Commentary and Meditation)

● Gospel of the Entrance into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11)

This scene depicts Jesus' entry into Jerusalem the beginning of His Passion. The Mount of Olives lies to the east of Jerusalem, and Bethphage (a place name meaning "house of unripe figs") serves as the starting point just before a king enters the city. Jesus sends two disciples (Deuteronomy 19:15) to prepare a colt, a peaceful mount used by a king (Zechariah 9:9), through which God's plan is fulfilled.

Jerusalem is also called Zion, and the city is personified as a daughter. The prophecy, "Behold... mounted on a colt" (Zechariah 9:9), is thus fulfilled. Respect and submission to the king are expressed by placing garments on the colt, and acts of welcome toward the king (2 Kings 9:13) are shown by spreading garments and laying branches on the road, symbolizing victory.

The Messianic title "Son of David," along with the plea "Save us" (Psalm 118:25), becomes "Hosanna," and the praise "in the name of the Lord... in the highest" (Psalm 118:26) is proclaimed. The crowd's expectation is liberation from oppression. The people of the city are perplexed by the crowd's rejoicing, and although the crowd calls Him "the prophet Jesus, the Son of God," they still do not fully understand who He truly is.

[Author's Note] Reflecting on the beginning of the Lord's foretold Passion filled me with a deep sense of solemnity.

● First Reading (Isaiah 50:4-7)

This passage is known as the "Third Servant Song," and it presents three aspects of the Servant:

- (1) "Listening" to God's voice
- (2) "Speaking" God's word
- (3) Continuing in obedience even amid praise and suffering

The One who sends (Yahweh) is called the Lord God, and the mission to speak God's word is expressed as "He has given me a tongue." Words of hope in despair bring encouragement. The word given each morning by God is described as awakening indicating a continual seeking of God's ongoing revelation: "He awakens my ear morning by morning." Once heard, the Servant obeys.

The gift of understanding given by God is described as "opened ears." Voluntary obedience is expressed as "I did not rebel, nor did I turn back." The unjust persecutors are described as those who strike, while the Servant offers his back and cheeks without resistance, refraining from revenge and following the example of Jesus.

Because he is righteous, he does not regard insults as disgrace. His determination is described as setting his face like flint, expressing an unshakable faith. Since God vindicates him, he will not be put to shame. This passage reveals the posture of disciples and believers who listen to and follow God's voice.

[Author's Note] I was taught the process and the profound grace of those who walk guided by God.

● Second Reading (Philippians 2:6-11)

This passage is known as the "Christ Hymn."

Although Jesus is God, He demonstrated obedience to God even to the point of death on the cross; therefore, He is highly exalted.

Believers are exhorted to have the same mind as Jesus (Philippians 2:5), embracing humility, self-emptying, and obedience as the foundation of their way of life.

It proclaims that Jesus is Lord over all creation (Isaiah 45:23).

Jesus did not cling to using His divine privileges for His own benefit. Though He possessed them, He chose not to use them, but instead took the lowest form that of a servant and served. This is expressed in "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14), indicating that God came as a true human being.

In perfect obedience, even to death on the cross, He listened to and followed God's voice. Because of this obedience, He was granted resurrection, ascension, and sovereignty by God, and was given the name above every name the title "Lord" (Yahweh).

All creation those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth is placed under His lordship, and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

● Gospel Reading (Matthew 27:11-54)

Jesus is interrogated before the governor Pilate, yet He speaks little, showing His acceptance of the cross. His kingship is revealed not through power, but through humility; not through domination, but through sacrifice; not through majesty, but through endurance.

The crowd hands Him over out of envy, releasing Barabbas ("false salvation") while crying out for Jesus of Nazareth ("the true Savior") to be crucified. Pilate's wife speaks the truth, yet Pilate yields to worldly pressure.

Jesus is clothed in a red robe, crowned with thorns, and given a reed; the soldiers mock Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews." Pilate washes his hands with water, declaring avoidance of responsibility and outward purification, yet true purification comes through the restoration of one's relationship with God.

At Golgotha, Jesus is crucified, enduring mockery and suffering. He cries out, "My God, my God... why have you forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:2), and breathes His last. At that moment, the curtain of the Temple is torn from top to bottom, removing the barrier between God and humanity and opening the way to God (Hebrews 10:20).

The earth quakes, and the state of the holy ones of the Old Covenant in Sheol comes to an end. Witnessing this, the people and the centurion confess, "Truly, this man was the Son of God." The death of Jesus reveals the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation.

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