

PROPHECIES CONCERNING PALM SUNDAY

—taken from the writings of St. Eulogios, Patriarch of Alexandria—

The events associated with Christ's entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday loudly proclaim the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

On this day, as Christ entered into the city of Jerusalem, the multitudes cried out and the children praised Him with the following words: **“Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! The King of Israel!” (Jn. 12:13)**. Who is coming? He who is coming, He who has appeared, He who has arrived, is God who became man, as it is written: **“Afterwards, He was seen upon the earth and lived among men” (Bar. 3:38)**.

Let us listen to how the prophet Zechariah heralded this very appearance and coming of the Lord many centuries beforehand. Behold how he invited the entire creation to rejoice by crying out loudly to Jerusalem, and through her to the Church: **“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!” (Zec. 9:9)**. It is noteworthy that the Archangel Gabriel addressed the Virgin Mary in this same manner: **“Rejoice thou who are full of grace! The Lord is with thee” (Lk. 1:41)**. Our Savior also greeted the women in the same manner after His resurrection: **“Rejoice!”** And so, the prophet Zechariah proclaiming the same message cried out, **“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Proclaim it aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!” (Zec. 9:9)**. But why should Zion rejoice, Zechariah? **“Behold,”** he replies, **“your King comes to you” (Zec. 9:9)**. Please tell us also the manner in which He will come. How will he appear? Will He perhaps arrive on a chariot, accompanied by soldiers and horses as kings typically travel? No, replies the prophet. On the contrary, He will come **“mounted upon a donkey, even a young foal” (Zec. 9:9)**. Really? Is it possible for a king to mount a donkey and thus strip himself of his glory? Yes, replies the prophet. Because He will not come with the same haughty and peremptory manner of worldly kings. Rather, He will come **“in the form of a bondservant, and in the likeness of man” (Phi. 2:7)**; **“like rain upon a fleece, and like a raindrop that falls upon the earth (Ps. 71:6)**; **“as a sheep led to the slaughter (Isa. 53:7)**. Thus, He comes clothed in human nature and sitting on an irrational animal.

“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” (Mt. 21:9) exclaimed the multitudes. This is something quite remarkable. The crowds see Christ sitting on a small, meager donkey and they cry out **“Hosanna in the highest!”**? The multitudes look at the image of a slave, and they call Christ **“God the Lord, who comes in the name of the Lord?”**

(Ps. 117:27). Yes, reply the masses. He may be sitting on a donkey, but He has not been separated from the bosom of His Father. Here on the earth He is being praised by small children, but above in Heaven He is being worshipped by the angels. He is entering Jerusalem without ever having abandoned the eternal Jerusalem on high. But this is not only our opinion. This is how all the prophets viewed Christ as well. St. John the Baptist pointed to Him and exclaimed, **“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29)**. The prophet Isaiah stated, **“Behold our God ... He Himself will come and save us” (Is. 35:4)**. The prophet David looking to the west incites, **“Make ready the way for Him Who rides upon the sunset; His name is the Lord” (Ps. 67:5)**. And in another verse, the same prophet and king heralds collectively the entire earth in all directions, thus clearly foreshadowing the cross: **“From the east and the west and the north and the south” (Ps. 106:3)**. The prophet Jeremiah, as if pointing to Him Who is coming, sings thus to the gentiles: **“This is our God; no other shall be compared to Him. He found the whole way of knowledge ... Afterwards, He was seen upon the earth and lived among men” (Bar. 3:36-38)**.

God Himself, through the mouth of the prophet Zechariah, orders Jerusalem to be joyful, **“Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I am coming to you, and I will dwell in your midst,” says the Lord” (Zec. 2:14)**. Thereafter, the prophet David urges the children, **“Praise the Lord, O children” (Ps. 112:1)**. And the children reply, **“Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Mk. 11:9)**. Seeing and hearing all this, the Psalmist cries out to the Lord: **“From the mouths of babies and nursing infants You prepared praise” (Ps. 8:2)**. The Lord Jesus similarly incites the nations: **“Let the children come to Me” (Mt. 19:14)**.

The children very fittingly followed Elizabeth’s example. Elizabeth had addressed the Mother of the Lord with these words: **“Blessed is the fruit of your womb!” (Lk. 1:42)**; the children now likewise say to the Son of the Virgin, **“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”** That is, blessed is He who comes from Heaven and from the Virgin. Blessed is He who comes to the Passion. For, as Christ Himself stated: **“I came forth from the Father and have come into the world.” (Jn. 16:28)**.