



ON THE PALM BRANCHES

by St. Proclus of Constantinople

It irritated the high priests and Pharisees to hear from the crowds: "The King of Israel."

They were hearing what they did not wish to hear.

They were used to addressing him as one possessed by demons, but these were proclaiming him "King":

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel."

Who is the one who suggested this utterance to the crowds?

Who is the one who put this praise into their minds?

Who is the one who entrusted them with branches from the palm trees?

Who is the one who suddenly at a fixed signal acted as military commander of them all?

Who is the one who taught them this harmony of voice?

The grace from above, the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

And therefore they called out with boldness:

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel."

The crowds caused the Pharisees to turn away.

They loathed the high priests.

They lifted up their voices in song befitting God.

They caused creation to rejoice.

They sanctified the air.

They shook the dead beforehand.

They opened heaven.

They planted paradise.

They stirred up the dead to the same zeal.

For that reason some of the Greeks at that time were urged on toward their zeal for God, because of this utterance befitting to God; and having reached a turning about, they approached one of the apostles by the name of Philip, saying to him:

“Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”

Behold the preaching of the crowd, and how they moved the Greeks to conversion.

The Greeks say, “We wish to see Jesus” — not so much in order to look him in his face, as to carry the cross.

And therefore Jesus, having seen their intention, openly said to those present: “The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified.”

Glorified — referring to the conversion of the Greeks; a glory that the Jews donned but that the nations put on.

Therefore Jesus said concerning the Gentiles: “The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified.”

Glorified — referring to the cross, for from it the cross is even now glorified.

For the cross itself even now still glorifies kings,

and gives radiance to the priesthood,
and preserves virginity,
and establishes asceticism,
and strengthens union,
and guards widowhood,
and protects orphans,
and increases the blessing of children,
and multiplies the Church,
and enlightens the people,
and preserves a spiritual lifestyle,
and opens paradise,
and guides the robber,
and roots out enmity,
and extinguishes hatred,
and puts demons to flight,
and drives the devil away.



FOR REFLECTION:

1. Who does St. Proclus say inspired the people to sing “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”?
2. Which Psalm does this verse, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”, come from?
3. What does he mean that the people “sanctified the air” and how did they do this?
4. How does St. Proclus tell us Jesus was glorified?
5. Why did Jesus being called a king irritate the high priests and Pharisees?
6. How can I show that Jesus is my king during this Holy & Great Week, and in the rest of my life?