

533 “God’s Foolishness”

In our last Reflection we joined in spirit with the multitudes in praising Jesus of Nazareth, mounted on a colt, riding down the Mount of Olives, across the Kidron brook and up into Jerusalem – “Hosanna! (all praise!), to the Son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!” (from Matthew 21.9 and Psalm 118.26a, KJV). In accord with the Scriptures about Him, Jesus was deliberately bringing matters to a head with the religious authorities, whose members could see, if they cared to look, the fulfilment of Zechariah 9.9 – “behold, thy king cometh unto thee ... he is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon ... a colt, the foal of an ass” (KJV).

Let us now appreciate just how ridiculous Jesus must have looked as He bobbed along on that colt with His feet scraping the dust! We learn from this scene something very special, how God the Father is demonstrating to the world once again His words given to us in Isaiah 55.9 – “For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts”; and later, through Paul, “hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” (I Corinthians 1.20b, KJV).

We note how God the Father delights in demonstrating this “foolishness of God” (from I Corinthians 1.25) when it comes to the clashing contrast between His ways and the world’s ways. He chose Mary to bear His Son, an ordinary girl living in Nazareth, a nondescript town with no mention in the Hebrew Scriptures. He chose the birth of His Son to occur in a manure-ridden cowshed. He chose that His Son was to teach how things work in “the kingdom of heaven” – the blessed ones in God’s sight being not the flashy, the rich, the lauded and applauded, but rather the poor in spirit, the meek, the mournful, the strivers for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the persecuted for righteousness’ sake (from Matthew 5.2-10). So often the truly blessed by God in Christ are those who the world tends not to notice, to bypass, to write off. For “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise” (I Corinthians 1.27a) – including having His own Son mounted on that colt when officially announcing His Messiahship and Kingship in Jerusalem.

The Father then chose for His Son to go through all those humiliating agonies, culminating in Jesus being nailed to that stake and lifted up before the crowds beneath Pilate’s sneery notice, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews” (Matthew 27.37). That vile manner of execution was

for “the accursed of God”, which is exactly what Jesus became in His Father’s sight in the dreadful hours that followed (Galatians 3.13, from Deuteronomy 21.22-23). Jesus’ awful cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” reveals something of the terrible anguish experienced by both the Father and the Son as they strived, utterly together yet then also, and necessarily, utterly estranged, to get this problem of human sin fixed for once and for all (Psalm 22.1 / Matthew 27.46 / Romans 5.1-11).

Hosanna, all praise! – they did it! As the Holy Communion Prayer of Consecration puts it so aptly in the Book of Common Prayer – “Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect and sufficient, sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world ...”.

God the Father then chose for His Son’s lifeless body to be laid in a borrowed tomb; as in Isaiah 53.9a, “he made his grave with the wicked, (the crucified thieves, Matthew 27.38) and with the rich in his death (Joseph of Arimathea, 27.57). But there was to be no fancy headstone over Jesus’ grave, for God’s ways are not the world’s ways, and, best of all in this case, Jesus’ body was not going to be in the ground for long!

The Father then brought about the physical resurrection of His precious Son, a deed which quickly became the bedrock of all Gospel preaching (egs., Acts 2. 29-33; 4.10 / Romans 4.24-25 / I Corinthians 6.14; 15.12-28 / Ephesians 1.3ff), and surely should remain so today.

At the Father’s choice, His crucified, risen and ascended Son is now seated at the right hand of His Father in glory (egs., Acts 2.33a, 34 (Psalm 110.1) / Romans 8.34 / Colossians 3.1 / Hebrews 1.3; 8.1 / I Peter 3.22), where Jesus and the Holy Spirit are interceding for us before the throne of grace (Romans 8.26-28, 34b / Hebrews 4.14-16).

The next choice of God the Father is His Son’s promised two-phase physical return to this earth, first to seize away His true Church, and second, after the 7-year tribulation, to redeem His original covenant people the Jews and establish His Kingdom on earth.

Until then, let the resurrection cries ring forth from our hearts – “Hosanna, all praise! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!”.

