

Chapter 1

Palm Sunday

Preparation: Read Luke 19:28-40

In the book and film, *The Lord of the Rings*, Aragorn, one of the main characters, is heir to the throne of the Kingdom of Gondor. The royal line was thought to be broken and Gondor believed it had no king. There is a scene in the third installment of the trilogy in which the evil kingdom of Mordor wishes to destroy Gondor and the rest of Middle Earth with it. Aragorn is forced to call on an army of ghost-soldiers to help defeat Mordor. The army can only be released from their captivity and allowed to rest in peace by the true king of Gondor, whom no one thought existed. Aragorn shows that he is the fulfillment of prophesy and the only one who could free them when he goes to their dwelling place to show himself as king and call them to action. Similarly, the Kingdom of Israel thought it had no king and that the line of David (the royal line) had died out long ago. Jesus goes to Jerusalem, the city of kings to fulfill the prophets and set His people free from their own captivity.

Entering into Christ's Passion:

The Long Road to Jerusalem

- 1 **Read Luke 9:51-56.** Here, Jesus “sets His face” to travel to Jerusalem. Before He goes however, He sends messengers before Him to prepare His way in every town He will visit along the way. Why do you think He does this?

- 2 **Read Luke 9:52-56.** In what ways does Jesus call us to be His messengers?

- 3 Do you think that Christ sends messengers before us to prepare our way? Have you ever felt like someone was looking out for you or preparing your way?

- 4 **Read Luke 17:24-25 and 18:31-33.** What is Jesus trying to tell His disciples in these verses? Do they understand Him?

❧ *Royal Entry* ❧

Read Luke 19:28-40. Here, the Palm Sunday narrative that many of us are familiar with begins in earnest. Jesus enters the city of Jerusalem. From that point on, the story speeds up until the day Christ goes to the cross.

- 5 Why do you think it was necessary for Jesus to travel all the way to Jerusalem for His passion?

- 6 **Luke 19:33-39.** Jesus seems to enter Jerusalem in a somewhat unusual way, yet all of the bystanders seem to know exactly what's going on. Why do you think this is?

- 7 How does Jesus still come to us today?

- 8 What is *our* response to Him?