

## News Story Summary

On April 21, Queen Elizabeth of England will celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Because of her love for all things equestrian, she will have an equestrian themed party. It will involve 900 of the best horses from the United Kingdom and around the world. An invitation to attend or to participate in this event is a tremendous honor!

Surprisingly, organizers of Siena, Italy's famous Palio horse race have declined the invitation to participate. The Palio race began in 1656 and takes place twice a year at the Piazza de Campo. Organizers said it would not be possible for England to provide enough space to recreate the event. They had no interest in going to England and simply being in a parade. Instead, organizers invited the queen to come to Siena sometime and witness the spectacular event live.

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the phrase "Sienna's Palio organizers snub Queen.")

## Focus Attention

Invite the group to share stories of a time when they received an invitation that was very special. Explain that you are going to share a story about someone who recently received a special invitation. Relay the news story. Ask: *Do you think the reasons stated for declining are legitimate? How do you feel about them offering the queen a "better" plan? Do you think she will accept?*

Explain that today's Scripture is about a very special invitation that Jesus extends to each of us. Challenge the group to look for the offer extended by Jesus in today's study and to evaluate the different responses to His offer.

## Challenge

Remind the group of the news story. Ask: *What role do you think pride played in the declining of the offer to participate in the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration?* Invite group members to evaluate their hearts to determine whether they have accepted Jesus' invitation of salvation. Explain that accept Jesus' offer requires them to overcome any pride, stubbornness, and/or "better ideas." Let them know that you and the minister(s) of your church are available to talk with them if they want to know more about Jesus' invitation to salvation.