

The King Who Comes in the Name of the Lord

Palm Sunday

April 10th, 2022

Intro

One week before the annual Jewish Passover, an itinerant teacher rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. The gathered crowd paved the road with their own coats and tree branches. Children and adults cried out to God and declared that this teacher was the king who comes in the name of YHWH. 5 days later he hung on a cross outside the city walls. 3 days after that He stood on resurrected legs.

This week we remember the significance of each of these facts of history.

Today we remember His kingly entrance as the crowd cried, "Hosanna!"

Friday, we meditate on His death as the crowd cried, "Crucify Him!"

Next Sunday, we celebrate His resurrection, as the angel declared, "He has risen!"

To understand the entrance into the city that we remember on Palm Sunday, we need the historical and theological context.

Even a strictly historical event is meaningless if we don't understand what led up to it. For example, in 1944, a 64-year-old American man waded onto a beach in the Philippines and said, "People of the Philippines, I have returned!" So what? But then you learn the backstory. He was an American military general named Douglas MacArthur. MacArthur served as a military advisor to the government of the Philippines beginning in 1935. On December 8th, 1941, the day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Japan invaded the Philippines. MacArthur helped the army of the Philippines fight back but was eventually forced to abandon the island in 1942 under order from President Roosevelt, leaving behind 90,000 soldiers. After traveling to Australia to regroup he announced, "I shall return," a promise he repeated for 2 ½ years. In the fall of 1944 he launched a series of attacks beginning in New Guinea and established a stage to retake the Philippines. So, when he waded ashore in October 1944 and declared, "I have returned" it was a promise 2 ½ years in the making. That history explains the moment. Without the backstory and identity, it's just a senior citizen standing in the water. With the backstory, he's a victorious general fulfilling a promise to liberate a people he was forced to leave behind.

It's the same and so much more so with Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. It wasn't 2 ½ years in the making. It was 1,000 years in the making.

I want to follow that journey this morning by tracing the theme of the king who comes in the name of the Lord from the Old Testament until this moment when Jesus rode into Jerusalem.

1. The **Prediction** of a King (2 Samuel 7:12-16)
 - a. 1st and 2nd Samuel describe the transition of Israel from the chaos during the time of the Judges to the monarchy.
 - i. For 400 years after leaving Egypt, there were no kings over Israel. The Lord would raise up "judges" to lead the people when need arose.
 - ii. It was a chaotic time as "everyone did what was right in their own eyes" (Judges 21:25). The time of the Judges showed the need for wise, faithful leaders.
 - iii. 1st Samuel begins with Israel as a group of tribes and ends with an established monarchy.
 - iv. However, these human kings were flawed as well. Their flaws are not hidden in scripture but are displayed both as "teachable moments" for us to learn from and to point ahead to the one good and perfect Messiah King to come.
 - b. First, a man named Saul is appointed king. His rise and fall are swift and dramatic.

- c. Then the Lord chooses an unlikely king in a young warrior shepherd named David.
 - i. His rise is anything but swift. He overlaps with Saul for years as Saul declines in military strength and mental stability.
 - ii. Once on the throne, David leads a golden age of peace for Israel, but he is far from a perfect leader.
 - iii. He cheats, he takes, and he kills before he is confronted. And then his repentance is as deep as his sin.
- d. In the middle of his own rise and fall, God makes a promise to David. We call this the Davidic Covenant.
- e. God's promises:
 - i. Name
 - 1. Point back to the promise God had made long ago to Abraham: "I will . . . make your name great" (Genesis 12:2). The Lord intended to fulfill that promise by making David's name great.
 - ii. Place
 - 1. I will appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them
 - 2. It will be a place of safety from their enemies. It will be a place of rest, which is the next promise.
 - iii. Rest
 - 1. God promises rest in the land of promise.
 - iv. House
 - 1. When you die I'll raise up a descendant after you and establish his kingdom.
- f. Who fulfills these promises?
 - i. Solomon, in the near term, but clearly more than just Solomon is in mind.
 - 1. Near and far fulfillment, immediate and ultimate meaning – like climbing a mountain range and you near the "top" only to see that there is a further, greater peak yet to come that you couldn't see because of what was in front of you.
 - ii. Solomon
 - 1. Would build a "house" for the Lord's name (v. 13a)
 - 2. Solomon and his descendants would "commit iniquity" and be corrected by the nations around them that God brings against them. But He would not remove His lovingkindness from them.
 - 3. Bergen – though sins by David's descendants would bring punishment and alienation, it would not result in the Lord's withdrawal of love. In fact, the Lord's faithful, loving commitment (*hesed*) to David's descendants would "never be taken away" (v. 15). What God had done to Saul he would never do to the house of David.
 - iii. Beyond Solomon to the Messiah
 - 1. The throne of his kingdom will last forever (v. 13)
 - 2. Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever
 - 3. Your throne shall be established forever (v. 16)

- iv. Notice that at this point David wasn't told when and the people through David weren't told when this would happen. The next generation? 5 generations later? Later revelation in the book of Daniel narrows that timing very precisely, but that prophecy from Daniel is another 400 years after David's time.

g. Other kingly predictions

- i. **Jeremiah 23:5-6** "Behold, *the* days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶ "In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness.'

2. The Songs of the King (Psalm 2; 110)

a. Psalm 2

i. The rebellion of humanity (2:1-3)

- 1. This rebellion is "against" the Lord and "against" His Anointed, Jesus.

- a. Sinclair Ferguson that this one word "against" is essentially a biblical definition of sin. It is "against" God. Our concern with moral right and wrong is that sin is "against" God.

- b. **Psalm 51:4** Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.

ii. The response of God (2:4-6)

- 1. The people plot, conspire, rage. How does God respond? He laughs!

- 2. Dale Ralph Davis: "The mighty politicians, the dictators in their military fatigues, the terrorist with their bomb loads strapped to their backs – God is unimpressed. If you have a sentimental view of God as the great soupy softie in the sky, then you will not understand this picture of v. 4." (slightly adapted)

iii. The reign of Christ (2:7-9)

- 1. Now there is a new voice, the voice of God's Anointed, the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

- 2. He speaks of the decree of the Lord that speaks to the Messiah as God's Son who will be given the people to the very ends of the earth as an inheritance.

- 3. This decree is what keeps God's people glued together during the present age. We may not know what to make of the world, political issues, present crises, but we know where history is headed.

- 4. The decree tells us three things about the Messiah's reign

- a. Legitimacy

- i. The Messiah is God's Son and He has installed Him (the idea behind "begotten")

- ii. **Hebrew 1:5** For to which of the angels did He ever say, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"? And again, "I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME"?

- b. Scope

- i. The Messiah will be given the nations as an inheritance

- ii. It is international, world-wide
- iii. Custom of kings to give gifts to those that were favored
 - 1. **Esther 5:6** As they drank their wine at the banquet, the king said to Esther, "What is your petition, for it shall be granted to you. And what is your request? Even to half of the kingdom it shall be done."

c. Force

- i. He will break them with a rod of iron.
 - 1. Woah, woah, woah – I thought Jesus was gentle and His yoke is easy. How can these two images coexist?
 - 2. Same Jesus. The difference is in the response of the people.
 - 3. To the weary and heavy laden...
 - a. **Matthew 11:28-30** "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. ³⁰ "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."
 - 4. To those in an uproar, raging against Him... rod of iron

b. Psalm 110:1-2

- i. Described as a Psalm of David
- ii. V. 1- The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."
 - 1. Jesus himself quotes this in Matthew 22 in a question to the Pharisees
 - a. **Matthew 22:42-44** "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" They said to Him, "*The son* of David." ⁴³ He said to them, "Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying, ⁴⁴ 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR FEET "'?
 - b. "Anointed" uses the same language as Psalm 2
- iii. V. 2 - The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, *saying*, "Rule in the midst of Your enemies."
 - 1. Ruling language as the scepter is stretched out
 - 2. Zion is another name for Jerusalem
 - 3. The rule is established by YHWH

3. The ***Disappointment*** of the Kings (1 and 2 Kings)

- a. These promises and songs created expectations and hopes for the people.
 - i. We look back on the timing so we know when it was fulfilled.
 - ii. But in the middle of the age of the kings, they would not have known when or how the Lord would fulfill His promise of an anointed deliverer-king.
 - iii. Our degree of disappointment reflects the gap between our expectations and experiences. Their expectations were high. What were their experiences?

b. Evil kings

- i. **1 Kings 11:6** Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father *had done*.
- ii. **1 Kings 15:25-26** Now Nadab the son of Jeroboam became king over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. ²⁶ He did evil in the sight of the LORD,
- iii. **1 Kings 16:25** Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, and acted more wickedly than all who *were* before him.
- iv. **2 Kings 3:1-2a** Now Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years. ² He did evil in the sight of the LORD,
- v. Total of 19 evil kings in Israel, 16 evil kings in Judah
 1. There were some bright spots – Hezekiah and Josiah and a few others – but they died and the nation turned dark once again.
 2. Every failed king may have been unfulfilled hope. Entire generations passed waiting for the Messiah-King, the Anointed-King in the language of Psalm 2, without fulfillment.

4. The **Entrance** of the King (Mark 11:1-10)

- a. Jerusalem was the religious and political center of the Jewish people.
 - i. While Jesus stayed on the outskirts of the city in rural, obscure towns, he was less of a threat. But when he came to the city of Jerusalem and received acclaim as the king, his claim carried more weight.
 - ii. It's like if someone remains in rural Idaho and claims to be the rightful President of the United States. That's different than if he marches into Washington, D.C. and makes that same claim.
- b. Jesus joined roughly half a million people traveling up to Jerusalem for the week of the Passover.
- c. He paused outside the city and sent two disciples to find a donkey for him to ride.
 - i. It was identified either by his divine foreknowledge or preplanning.
- d. So why did Jesus ask them to get a donkey for him to ride?
 - i. He has been walking all over Israel for 3 years. He didn't suddenly need a break.
 - ii. **Matthew 21:4-5** This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: ⁵ "SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, 'BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, GENTLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.'"
 - iii. See the whole passage in Zechariah 9, given 500 years before this moment. Zechariah is a minor prophet with major impact - quoted or alluded to more than 80 times in the NT.
 - iv. This is the triumphal entry of a king and these parades had customs – the king or important person should ride a horse – a symbol of power and victory in battle.
 1. Riding a donkey would be like putting a homecoming queen and king in a rusted out station wagon for a homecoming parade.
 - v. **Zechariah 9:9-10** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰ I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak

peace to the nations; And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.

vi. Three elements

1. Rejoice, Jerusalem, for your king is coming
2. The king comes gently, in peace. He does not come to make war, but to remove the instruments of war – chariots, war horses, and battle bows.
 - a. Humble, gentle – not because he lacks power and authority, but because He is using that power and authority to serve.
 - b. He could ride in and crush the opposition. He could use those miracle working powers to rally the crowd. But he doesn't.
3. The king brings salvation, for his reign will extended from sea to sea

vii. On the other hand, the riding in on a donkey is the act of a king.

1. It's a king with nothing left to prove. He doesn't need to boast of his victory or convince people to submit to his rule.
2. As far back the 2,000 years before Christ in Ancient Near Eastern culture kings road on donkeys.
3. It's the cross not the colt that makes him a strange kind of king.

e. The people welcomed Him as King (vv. 8-10)

- i. They put their coats and palm branches on the road
- ii. Before and behind him people called out
 1. Hosanna – May God save us!
 2. "BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD;
 - a. Psalm 118:26
 - b. To come in the name of is to come in some sense representing him and to come in order to set forward his purposes. The crowds proclaim Jesus as god's representative, one who would set forward the divine purpose. (Morris).

5. Conclusion –

- a. How did the people as a whole receive the long-awaited king?
 - i. That was predicted as well.
 - ii. **Isaiah 53:2-3** For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no *state*ly form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. ³ He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.
 - iii. And that's where our Holy Week continues as we gather again on Friday to remember the cross.
- b. Our services this week are intentionally designed to reflect the emotional roller coaster that characterized the last week of Jesus life.
 - i. Palm Sunday - Joy mixed with sober anticipation

- ii. Good Friday – A sorrowful recognition that “it was my sin that held Him there”
 - 1. It’s a darker, more reflective service. We even end the night with a practice that has a rich history by leaving in silence.
- iii. Resurrection Sunday – We rejoice – death has died, Christ has conquered



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