

The King is Here

When we look at the life of Jesus, we find an ordinary man. A man born into humble circumstance and reared by a working-class family in a region of working-class people. There is nothing to suggest that Jesus is or was anything other than an ordinary man. Certainly, there is no hint that He is royalty.

We have on previous occasions, considered some of the many Old Testament prophecies that spoke of and pointed to Jesus. Usually, we look at those prophecies that point to His birth and maybe a few that point to His crucifixion. There are prophecies that mention that He will be a king. He is qualified to be a king due to His lineage traced back to King David. One of those prophecies is found in Jeremiah.

“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. (Jeremiah 23:5 NASB)

As God began to work His plan, He sent an angel to visit with Mary. In this visit, the angel tells Mary that her child will be given the throne of David and He would have an everlasting kingdom.

The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.” (Luke 1:30-33 NASB)

This ordinary baby born to an ordinary girl who was reared in an ordinary working-class family was, according to an angel of God, born a king.

Jesus approached the end of His life on earth clearly and definitively declaring to the Roman governor that He is indeed the king of the Jews.

The religious leaders who brought Jesus to Pilate are leveling charges that they are hoping will ignite the ire of a Roman governor. They erroneously tell Pilate that Jesus forbids the to pay taxes. We know this is false because just a few days earlier they tested Jesus concerning taxes. **Is it lawful to pay a poll-tax to Caesar, or not? Shall we pay or shall we not pay?” But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, “Why are you testing Me? Bring Me a denarius to look at.” They brought *one*. And He said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” And they said to Him, “Caesar’s.” And Jesus said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they were amazed at Him. (Mark 12:14-17 NASB)**

The conversation about taxes occurred on either Tuesday or Wednesday. This is only two to three days before their allegations made to Pilate. So, Pilate latches onto the title of king and decides to make the most of it. It will be a resume builder for him to execute a king. So, when he asked Jesus about being a king, Jesus agrees.

Then the whole body of them got up and brought Him before Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying, “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.” So, Pilate asked Him, saying, “Are You the King of the Jews?” And He answered him and said, “*It is as you say.*” (Luke 23:1-3 NASB)

Jesus stands before the Roman governor and affirms that He is the King of the Jews. The irony of this scene is that the scene in Jerusalem just five days earlier is totally different.

To help us understand the scene from that Sunday, we need to remember the events of a few days earlier. We aren't sure of the number of days but certainly days and not months. We remember a close friend of Jesus name Lazarus died. In John the 11th chapter, we Jesus did not arrive in Bethany until four days after he died. Jesus asked for the stone to be rolled away from the grave and He calls out and Lazarus is raised from the dead.

Therefore, many of the Jews who came to Mary, and saw what He had done, believed in Him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them the things which Jesus had done. (John 11:45-46 NASB)

All of those who were sitting on the fence about this Jesus are now moved to belief. However, there are some who are more concerned about their own situation than whether Jesus is the Christ.

Therefore, the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, "What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. If we let Him *go on* like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish." (John 11:47-50 NASB)

They were more concerned about their place and what the Romans might do to them and their nation. They looked at their situation from a worldly perspective and never considered that if Jesus was the Christ of God, then God would bring about His on will regardless of the Romans. Never the less, following the resurrection of Lazarus, Jesus gained some followers and popularity. The stage is set for the Sunday before Jesus would stand before Pilate. Let's read from Mark's account as found in the 11th chapter.

As they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, and said to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied *there*, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it *here*. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' you say, 'The Lord has need of it'; and immediately he will send it back here." They went away and found a colt tied at the door, outside in the street; and they untied it. Some of the bystanders were saying to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They spoke to them just as Jesus had told *them*, and they gave them permission. They brought the colt to Jesus and put their coats on it; and He sat on it. And many spread their coats in the road, and others *spread* leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. Those who went in front and those who followed were shouting:

"Hosanna!

BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD;

Blessed *is* the coming kingdom of our father David;

Hosanna in the highest!" (Mark 11:1-10 NASB)

There are times when we use words found in the Bible or in some theological writing and make an assumption that everyone knows the meaning. The word hosanna is an expression of adoration, praise, or joy (Oxford Dictionary).

John's account tells us that the green branches were palm branches. This scene is presented in one of the minor prophets. Zechariah tells us of the triumphant entry and the colt of a donkey.

**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. (Zechariah 9:9 NASB)**

The triumphal entry is that of Jesus coming into Jerusalem on what we know as Palm Sunday, the Sunday before the crucifixion. This event is one of the few incidents in the life of Jesus which appears in all four Gospels (Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-40; and John 12:12-19). When we look at the four accounts, it becomes clear that the triumphal entry was a significant event, not only to the people of Jesus' day, but to Christians throughout history. We celebrate Palm Sunday to remember that momentous occasion.

Unfortunately, the praise the people lavished on Jesus was not because they recognized Him as their Savior from sin. They saw the power that He had through the miracles. They knew that He held power over death as evidenced by the resurrection of Lazarus. They welcomed Him out of their desire for a messianic deliverer, someone who would lead them in a revolt against Rome. There were many who, though they did not believe in Christ as Savior, nevertheless hoped that perhaps He would be to them a great temporal deliverer. These are the ones who hailed Him as King with their many hosannas, recognizing Him as the Son of David who came in the name of the Lord. But when He failed in their expectations, when He refused to lead them in a massive revolt against the Roman occupiers, the crowds quickly turned on Him. Within just a few days, their hosannas quickly changed into cries of "Crucify Him!" Those who hailed Him as a hero would soon reject and abandon Him.

As we read the accounts of the triumphal entry, we see the contrast from triumph to rejection. We see the passion of Christ unfold in these days between Sunday and Friday. Aside from giving us some historical facts, what is there in the events of this celebration of Jesus entering Jerusalem for us to use today? It is the story of the King who came as a lowly servant on a donkey, not a prancing steed, not in royal robes, but on the clothes of the poor and humble. Jesus Christ comes not to conquer by force as earthly kings but by love, grace, mercy, and His own sacrifice for His people. His is not a kingdom of armies and splendor but of lowliness and servanthood. He conquers not nations but hearts and minds. His message is one of peace with God, not of temporal peace. As we see the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, we witness a spiritual king showing the attributes of holiness, love, grace, and peace.

Have we come to worship Him with our hosannas or have we run, like some of the Jews, to seek how we can protect our world from this radical person? Do we allow Jesus to reign in our hearts or are we afraid that He will shatter our world? To be sure, Jesus has entered the world scene as a king. Does He receive our adoration and praise or will we refuse to accept Him? That is the choice we make. That is the choice we need to make now while we have time.