

The King Has Come

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[0 : 00] Jesus was not the first king to enter into Jerusalem.

On a donkey. About a thousand years before him, at the end of the reign of King David, when he was old and frail and on his last days, there was a question in the land, who would be king? If you read the story in 1 Kings chapter 1, you see that one of David's sons, Adonijah, thought that there was an opportunity for him to take the throne, even though it had been promised to David's son Solomon.

David's faithful advisors alerted him to this usurping. And David sends Solomon to be brought into Jerusalem on the king's mule, as it says in verse 38.

Verse 38. And the people rejoiced, and Solomon took the throne, and David's kingdom continued, at least for another generation, undivided.

[1 : 34] This is a historical backdrop to the passage that we come to this morning in our series in the book of Luke.

As you know, beginning this January and going all the way to Easter, we're going to be preaching through the end of the book of Luke, from chapter 19 to chapter 24. We're going to be finishing up. And remember that, as Pastor Nick outlined last week, part of what we see in Luke is that chapter 9 through 19 is all about Jesus moving from the north in Galilee towards Jerusalem.

In fact, nine times it is said, he's going to Jerusalem, he's going to Jerusalem, he's going to Jerusalem. And here, in our passage this morning, we see the final time it says he is going to Jerusalem.

His destination is the city where the throne of David and the temple of God sit. This is the city that God had designated as central to his redemptive purposes in the world.

[2 : 36] Imagine for a moment what the expectations might have been in Jesus' day. Here he comes, the miracle worker who's brought healing and hope to many.

He will come and renew our land. Here he comes to sit on David's throne as a political ruler to expel the hated Romans.

Here he comes, a prophet like Moses, to renew the spiritual life and restore the glory of Israel. Expectations abounded as Jesus approached Jerusalem. And yet, for the writer Luke and for all of his readers, they would know that Jesus was heading not to a throne, not to a battlefield, but to a cross.

In the meantime, Jesus arrives in Jerusalem and creates a crisis. As the text says, the hour of visitation has come for Jerusalem and a decision must be reached.

[3 : 52] How will Jesus be received? This is what our text leads us to this morning. We're in Luke chapter 19. If you're reading along in the Pew Bibles, it's in page 825.

Luke 19, we're going to start in verse 28 and read to the end of the chapter. So let's read this together. And when he had said these things, he went on ahead going up to Jerusalem.

When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of his disciples saying, Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat.

Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, why are you untying it? You shall say this, the Lord has need of it. So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them.

And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, Why are you untying the colt? And they said, The Lord has need of it. And they brought it to Jesus.

[5 : 06] And throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. As he was drawing near, already on the way down the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all

the mighty works that they had seen, saying, Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, Teacher, rebuke your disciples. And he answered, I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.

And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace.

But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will set up a barricade round you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you.

And they will not leave one stone upon another in you because you did not know the time of your visitation. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying to them, It is written, My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers.

[6 : 42] And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him. But they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.

This is God's word. Let's pray together. Lord, we thank you for this word, and we thank you for this morning and the opportunity to gather together to hear your word and to respond to you in worship and song.

Lord, we ask for your Holy Spirit this morning to be at work in us. Lord, illuminating and making clear your word, applying it to our hearts, changing our minds, moving our hands to obedience.

Lord, I ask for your help this morning, that I would speak clearly. Lord, that you would fill me with your Spirit, that your word might be proclaimed with truth and power.

Lord, I ask for your help this morning. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. The King is here. That would be the New York Times Post back page headline.

[7 : 57] The King is here. But what would that mean, and what would the article say? Well, as we look at this passage and we think about what we see is that this passage shows us signs of the King coming and the crisis that the King brings as we look at our passage this morning.

So, let's look at those things in turn. So, what are the signs of the King's coming that we see in this passage as Jesus and his disciples come into Jerusalem?

First, let's look at what Jesus himself understood and the way that he gives signs that he is the King. And this brings us to the very beginning of the passage. Where they are geographically, just so you know, is that we are off to the east of Jerusalem on the far side of the Mount of Olives.

And basically, to get from there to Jerusalem, you have to go up over through these towns and then come back down around to come into Jerusalem from the east. And so, that's where we are.

And the first thing that we see is that Jesus sends his disciples to get the donkey. And if you look at the number of verses, this is a major part of the story.

[9 : 11] This donkey fills a good part of the whole thing. Why is it such a big deal? Well, because many Jews would know the words that were read earlier this morning from the prophet Zechariah.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your King is coming to you, righteous and having salvation as he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Zechariah was drawing from an idea that was actually even planted in the Old Testament even earlier in Genesis 49. When Jacob the patriarch is blessing his sons at the end of his life, in 49.11, he mentions to Judah that the scepter will stay in Judah's house and that a donkey or a colt will be one of the signs of the way that a son of Judah will take the throne of God's people in the future.

So Jesus is intentionally drawing and pulling on these Old Testament imagery, these Old Testament predictions to say, I will ride into Jerusalem this day on a donkey.

And it's not just any donkey, is it? Did you see what it said? It is a donkey that is unriden. No one has ever been on this donkey before. That might sound risky to you.

[10 : 47] It sounds risky to me. Who knows what this donkey is going to be like with a passenger. But, in fact, there is a meaning for this.

For it is seen and is thought that an unbroken horse or donkey would be set apart, would be something special, that one who would ride on an unriden horse.

This would be a place of honor and something special. To ride on a donkey that someone else had ridden on, that's normal, that's common. But to ride on one that has never been ridden on before, this is a donkey set apart.

And this is a rider who is set apart wholly for a special use from the Lord. And as we have seen in Zechariah, it is also a sign of humility.

He did not ride on a great war horse. He did not ride in at the head of a column of an army. But he came humbly on a donkey as he came.

[11:51] So the first sign is that Jesus intentionally fulfilled this prophecy to indicate that he knew he was coming as a king.

But the second thing is that as he demanded this donkey, as he sent his disciples to get this donkey, he made a claim of ownership on it. Now, this might have been just a cultural understanding that dignitaries and people, traveling rabbis, might have the right to ask people for the loan of a donkey in a certain situation.

But in fact, it seems that as you look carefully in the language, one of the things that's interesting is it says, and this is distinct in Luke because in Matthew, it just says, some people asked the disciples, why are you untying the donkey?

But do you see who asks it here? It's the owner who asks. Why are you untying my donkey? Why are you driving my car out of my driveway?

Where are you going with it? And the disciples, saying the words that Jesus had given them, the Lord, that is the owner, it's the same word, it's the same root, the owner has need of it.

[13:09] Jesus, as he's coming in, makes this very subtle but very clear claim, I am the owner of everything. And that is a claim to kingship in this cultural pattern.

Jesus is saying, everything that you own, actually I am the owner of all of it. So, Jesus gives a sign of fulfillment of prophecy, he gives a sign of the assertion of his authority.

And then finally, in verses 39 and 40, we see the first response that's negative to this whole thing. As Jesus is coming down from the Mount of Olives, as he's approaching Jerusalem, the Pharisees, the religious leaders, with whom he had had increasing conflict throughout his ministry, tell him to rebuke his disciples.

For they feel that it's wrong. Jesus shouldn't be worshipped and praised in this way. He's just a man. To do this is misleading at best and destructive at worst.

So, they tell him, rebuke your disciples. Don't. Tell them to stop. And Jesus' response, striking, isn't it?

[14:33] No, I tell you that even if these were silent, the stones themselves would cry out in praise. I tell you, if the lips of men and women were somehow stopped, creation itself would rise up to recognize me as the king.

Jesus pushes back on their rebuke and says, it is right that they worship me like this. I am worthy of their praise.

I am the king who was coming to sit on the throne of David. The signs that Jesus has come to claim this kingship, this messiahship, this rulership are actually multiple and multifaceted in this passage. If you've ever heard someone say, well, Jesus didn't really claim to be anything more than a good teacher, this passage shows something different.

And the Jesus who rode into Jerusalem that day is the same Jesus who comes into our lives today to claim worship. He comes to say, I am the king of all.

[16:02] Will you receive me? And the Jesus, as he comes in, it's complex, isn't it? He's not what we expect.

Jesus comes as a humble king. Now, I like that. I like someone who doesn't just run roughshod over me. He comes in in humility and invites me to come and says, come all ye who are weary and heavy laden.

He comes in riding on a donkey, not on a horse. that sounds great. I can submit to a king like that. He also comes as one who claims the worship of all of creation.

And that's a little scarier, but I still like it because he's the lord over all the enemies and the things that are scary in this world that to me are scary. Suddenly, he comes and he claims lordship over all of that and I think, whew, that's comforting too.

That's a king that I want to follow. That's a king I want to worship. But then Jesus comes and he meddles. He meddles in my life.

[17 : 06] When I was a new believer, someone gave me a little booklet by a guy named Robert Munger, My Heart, Christ's Home. Maybe you've heard of it. It's still worth reading. Talks about the process of when Jesus comes in.

You invite Jesus into your house and how he comes in and he sort of takes up residence and then he starts wandering around and he starts finding those rooms that you'd rather him not find and the closet that you locked really tightly to make sure that he couldn't get in.

Jesus comes and he meddles in our lives and he claims a lordship and a kingship in places where maybe we don't want him to be. You know, in the history of the church, we've talked about three of the great dynamics of human life are money, sex, and power and Jesus comes in and he says, your money, I own it all and what I've given to you, I'm loaning to you to use.

It's not yours. I'm giving it to you so you can use it to worship and honor me. He says the same thing with our sex lives.

This glorious gift that he's given us says this isn't for you ultimately. This is for me. Use it to honor me in abstinence and in exercise according to how I have determined it to be used.

[18 : 42] power. This is one we don't talk about nearly as much in our world today but let me think about it this way.

Help you think about it. How is it that you use the authority that you have over other people and how is it that you respond to other people who have authority over you?

Some of you are still young living in your parents' house. Children talking to you. Jesus says because I am the king of your life I am calling you to think about how you respond well to the authorities in your life.

Honor me by honoring your parents and obeying them. Parents teachers in your workplaces all of us have various places where we exercise authority over people even as a customer in a store we exercise a kind of authority.

How do we use that to honor Jesus? We often want to use people to serve our ends. Jesus wants us to serve people to further his ends.

[20 : 14] Jesus comes in as a humble king that sounds great as the king of the universe that sounds a little comforting too but ultimately he comes and he meddles in places that unseat the very sense of self that we have.

He says I want to be king of that. The Pharisees felt threatened because their spiritual identities were at were being called to being submitted to Jesus and they didn't want to do that.

And friends if you haven't felt that wrestling if you haven't gone through that tug of war with Jesus about some part of your life yet then I don't know if you've reckoned with Jesus coming as your king.

Maybe you haven't yet really grappled with those places where he wants to come and meddle. Meddle for your good and meddle for his glory.

So the signs that Jesus gives are clear but then it's not just him who affirms that Jesus comes in as a claiming to be king but his disciples also honor him as a king.

[21 : 33] As you look at this and this is well known you guys know this they take their cloaks and they put it on the donkey because no king would ride a horse that is unsaddled and uncovered.

And so they cover the donkey so that and interestingly did you notice Jesus didn't hop on the donkey he didn't climb up onto the donkey but they took him and they set him on the donkey. It says his disciples put him there in the place of honor and then they laid their coats down on the road before this donkey in a cultural pattern of showing this man is so high and so honored he doesn't it would be wrong for him to simply walk on the dusty path that we common people do. He needs to be exalted and so we cover it's rolling out the red carpet so that your ball gown will be clean as you enter the opera.

Rolling out the red carpet so that when the king comes he won't have to walk through the everyday dirt and grime but he will be honored and exalted in these things.

[22 : 56] Not only do they use their coats and set Jesus up on this donkey like a football coach right at the end of the game lifting him up in praise but then they use their words as well.

Look with me in verse 38 blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord peace in heaven and glory in the highest.

And any Jew in the first century would recognize that this is a quote from Psalm 118 verse 26 blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord we bless you from the house of the Lord this

would have been a common phrase that would have been used particularly as pilgrims would come to the temple courtyard during the high seasons during the feast of tabernacles or during the Passover they would come in and at times perhaps they would be led by the king and this phrase would come from the priests to the king and the pilgrims coming to the temple to worship God blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord blessed is he who comes to worship and to honor God in his temple and Luke records them as adjusting the phrase by saying explicitly not blessed is he but blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord the disciples themselves were willing to say this is him this is the one we've been waiting for this is the one who's going to sit on the throne of David and restore the glory of Israel and then they go on and say peace in heaven and glory in the highest and if you were a careful reader of this book those phrases would jump off the pages in you because way back at the beginning when the coming of Jesus to earth as a baby was announced the angel speaking to Mary said this 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 of his kingdom there will be no end and then when the angels announced to the shepherds in the field they said glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom he is well pleased and these phrases though not quoted would resonate with what had happened 30 some years ago that when Jesus came there was this grand and spectacular announcement that something unique and special had happened that the the long awaited deliverer had come and now 30 years later his disciples pick up these words to say this is the one they had seen his mighty works the healing of the blind and the lame the deliverance of some from the control of demonic forces they'd seen him teach with authority unlike the scribes and Pharisees they had seen him providing feeding multitudes and showing compassion on them they had seen him honoring the outcasts the women the unclean the gentiles expanding the kingdom of God and they worshipped him for his mighty deeds and they did it with this grand parade this grand symbolic parade with praising and donkeys and coats on the ground and all of the resonance of Solomon coming in long ago

I've never been to Jerusalem but reading about this approach it sounds like this road would have been a beautiful road to travel it would have gone up to Bethphage near the top of the Mount of Olives and then come back down towards Bethany and then come around the corner and then Jerusalem would have lay in the valley below them and as they're praising God and as he approaches goes down into the Kidron Valley before he would go up to the gates of Jerusalem the hills would resound with this praise and this celebration and this glory like the ticker tape parade in New York City after a championship win like the duck boats in Boston but even better the King of David sitting on a donkey coming into Jerusalem

[28 : 07] I wonder I wonder what you would feel like about being a part of a parade today to honor Jesus I wonder how you feel about others who are kind of embarrassing in the way that they talk about Jesus all the time sometimes fear that we have an overly privatized sense of religion and worship in our world today now look we need to be wise and there's nuance to claim the name of Christian today doesn't mean what it used to mean it's become a very broad word that describes many people who don't believe in the Bible or the deity of Christ and even in the last 20 years the word evangelical has become more fraught it's become more of a political term for many people and more of a political identity and ideology for some so there's nuance in thinking about how do we identify and celebrate

Jesus publicly but friends are we so afraid of being misunderstood that we hold back where his disciples exalted and gloried and praised Jesus was so often misunderstood in fact even in this Jesus was misunderstood even by those who were praising him let alone those who opposed him for many of his disciples would run later this week let alone the crowds who would join into this procession but then later be swayed in other directions Jesus was often misunderstood the cost of identifying with Jesus will always be great at some point my kids like watching the story keepers have you ever seen the story keepers they're on YouTube if you haven't seen them it's this really cool cartoon that was done in the 90s about life in early church and how people honored and it talks about how they were both hiding and yet very open about their faith it's actually a beautiful portrayal I think it's fictional but it's it's worth seeing if you have kids probably under the age of 11 so after that it's valuable but probably not compelling for you so but but it's a picture of how they love Jesus and were willing to be wise and yet very clear about their allegiance and the costliness of identifying with Christ having the privilege of having lived in China for two years and knowing some national

believers there seeing them count the cost societally in their own homes and in their own families knowing that to identify publicly as a believer could cost them job prospects marriage prospects even their own homes being misunderstood in all of these cases and yet being willing to identify with Christ here closer to home we live in a world particularly

I will say the world of academia where for some identification with Christ will bear a great cost and it's easy to hide it's easy to live in fear and the day may come when our society will shed more of its Christian trappings and where it will be costly for all of us to publicly identify with Christ and to worship him but the disciples gladly did so God because they saw their king and they saw that he was worthy of their praise he was worthy of their adoration he was worthy of them laying down their coats and laying down their lives and they didn't even understand all that that would mean they didn't really understand that Jesus was heading to the cross they didn't understand all of those things and yet as we will see by the end of

Luke the disciples will understand and many will still do the same they will follow him and worship him so what about you how unabashed is your worship of Jesus to ask that question creates a crisis does it not at the very end of our passage we see that Jesus coming creates a crisis for all of us as we see in verses 41 and following as he comes around the corner and sees Jerusalem he stops and he weeps and he mourns because he sees them and he knows that there will be some who will reject him he knows in fact that this city as a whole will not receive him as the king and put him on the throne of David but that he will be rejected he predicts that because of their rejection there will ultimately be a judgment he predicts and says the time is coming when the

[34 : 19] Romans will come and raise this city and in fact that's exactly what happened in AD 70 Titus came in and he literally tore down every wall every building according to the records he left three towers of the entire city standing solely so that people would know that there had been a city there because if he had taken those down literally it would have looked like there had never been a city the destruction was complete and Jesus looked at this city and he knew that his coming would provoke a crisis of belief and he knew that many did not know and would not respond to the day of his visitation with faith and from there then Luke records he goes into Jerusalem and he goes to the temple and he creates another crisis by walking in and blowing up an economic system that had served the worship at the expense of the worship of God

Luke is very brief on this Matthew John other people have much more to say about this but he goes in and he creates this crisis my father's house should be a house of prayer but you have made it a place of commerce and then Luke ends this section verse 47 and 48 he was teaching daily in the temple and you see the division the chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him those who had lots lots of power lots of prestige lots of religious authority they had lots to lose and in that they resisted Jesus coming and they sought instead to destroy him verse 48 but they did not find anything they could do for all the people were hanging on his words the people saw him and they responded to him and they were hanging and yet we know these are the same people who will be fickle and Jesus knows these are the same people who will be fickle but he comes in and he creates a crisis such that everyone who encounters this Jesus in Jerusalem when he first entered and every one of us today as we encounter this

Jesus in this text have to respond who will be king this was the question that was asked in Solomon's day will it be Solomon or will it be Adonijah for us who will be king will you deny Jesus his claim on your life or will you receive him knowing knowing that he is a king who will ultimately earn his throne by going to the cross and dying for sinful rebellious stubborn independent hearts like mine and like yours he who came to establish his kingship not by imposing it upon us but by offering himself up for us and ultimately he would gain great victory because he would rise from the dead and he would ascend to the father and he would sit at his right hand and we know from the rest of scripture that one day he will come again and he will establish his kingdom and he will sit on the throne and all will bow their knee before this king

Jesus today is the day of visitation for all who hear this text in Jerusalem in the first century this was the first time in a one time thing in redemption history but today this is the day for us to consider the day of our visitation for Jesus has come for us he has come for you what will you do with this king let's pray Lord we are humbled and challenged by this text we thank you for your word penetrates our hearts

Lord I ask this morning that we would not resist your Holy Spirit as you may be working in us Lord if there are those of us here this morning who have areas of our lives that we have not yet allowed

you to be king Lord that we would respond to you in faith and surrender those to you and allow you to begin to reorder these parts of our lives according to your plan and for your glory Lord I pray this morning for those here who may have realized that they have never truly bowed their knee before you as king they have liked you as a teacher they have been comforted by you as a counselor but Lord they have never now bowed their knee before you I pray Lord you would help them now to kneel before you

[40 : 43] Lord that their repentance would go to the depth of their being Lord that they would repent of themselves sitting on the throne of their lives and receive you instead as their savior who has dealt with sin on their behalf and as their king who has come to rule Lord we pray that you would do these things for the glory of your name that your salvation would be seen and known and proclaimed and that songs of praise would ring out to the ends of the earth we pray this in Jesus name amen