

March 24, 2019

“The King Has Come”
Matthew 21:1-11

FCF: Our struggle with Jesus as King

PROPOSITION: (anchor) Jesus, the King, has come.
(magnet) We need to learn what it means to live under His reign.

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

Socialism is cool again - not so much in Venezuela but among certain segments of U.S. voters. It used to be that to call someone a socialist was an insult. Not today. But socialism means centralization of goods and power. Which inevitably leads to corruption. Interestingly, its effects are not too far removed from a monarchy. The irony of all that being that Americans have a pretty poor record of living under a king. Just ask George III about a little revolution we had.

Kings aren't elected. They have no term limits or need to campaign. For they have a throne. Little wonder it's hard for us to grasp the reality that Jesus is a king. The difference being his is an eternal throne and a universal rule. And that said, we struggle with Jesus as king.

SCRIPTURE READING: [Matthew 21:1-11](#)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION:

SERMON INTRODUCTION:

It was March 29, AD 33. The Passover crowds and inhabitants of Jerusalem were filled with expectation. Jesus and his disciples were on the Mount of Olives, across the Kidron Valley from the city. And down he came, across the valley and into that city, riding a donkey. It was clearly intentional. It's the only time we read of Jesus riding anything and not walking. Why? He was openly declaring his kingship to the expectant crowds, coming into Jerusalem much as Solomon had years before when he was declared king. The crowd was going wild. They began to publicly acclaim Jesus as king. And this is important - Jesus as king. Not Caesar but Jesus.

The city was shaken. It's hard to overestimate the political and religious volatility incited by Jesus' actions. A series of events was set in motion that could lead to only one of two things - either the overthrow of the Romans and the religious establishment or Jesus' brutal death. He has come to the point of no return. There is now no going back. Does this get your attention?

Jesus lays his cards on the table, making his intentions clear. He is the King. Jesus, the King, has come. We need to learn what it means to live under his reign. What does that involve? We see the answer in the details of these events - the donkey, the prophecy, and the crowds. Looking at those three details gives us some clues as to what it means to live under Jesus' reign.

I. THE DONKEY

First, the donkey. Here we learn of the nature of Jesus' reign ([READ Matthew 21:1-3](#)).

A) The Right to Reign

1. Impressment

Jesus, as the king, has the right to reign. Think of how he came to be on this donkey. Jesus, as was common with royal figures, impressed it into his service. How? Ultimately, it was his.

2. Reference

As is everything else in this world. We're reminded of that in his explanation (**READ Matthew 21:3**). He is the Lord. The early church didn't invent Jesus' deity. They merely witnessed it.

B) The Type of Reign

The donkey alone shows us Jesus has a right to reign. And the type of reign as well. How? The mount a king rode upon when entering a city was viewed as a sign of the city's fate.

1. Not a warhorse

Jesus, the king, enters Jerusalem not on a warhorse. He comes not in judgment or conquest.

2. But a donkey

He comes on a donkey. This king comes in peace. He comes to heal, to renew, and to restore.

The donkey teaches us of Jesus' rule and reign - both his right and the type.

Illustration:

Think with me. A man's ride tells you much about him. When I was in college, I drove a 1965 Mustang. It was what I wanted to be - strong and fast, cool and unique. Years later, after we began a family, it was a station wagon and a minivan filled with crayons and crumbs. Even now, my Forester is a practical vehicle with a bit of dog hair in the back. A man's ride tells you much about him. The same is true with Jesus and this donkey. It tells us about his reign.

Application:

His right to reign and its type. This king comes in peace. Why? Because of our need of peace. Because of the reality of the Fall. Because of a world of disease, emptiness, brokenness, poverty, injustice, and racism. That's why Jesus comes in peace. He comes to make it all new.

Jesus comes in peace and he is our sole hope for peace. He alone can bring the real and substantial peace, the renewal and restoration for which we long. There are many other things that may promise peace and make their appeals. But they are all pretenders. He is our sole hope.

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II. THE PROPHECY

Now moving from the donkey, we have the prophecy (**READ Matthew 21:4-5**). Matthew is cluing us in as to what is happening here. There is such weighty significance in this moment.

A) Long Awaited

1. The One foretold

This is something long awaited. This is the One foretold. This is the prophecy of Zechariah - the righteous Messiah, a meek and majestic figure, coming to us through the line of David.

2. Has come

And, after much waiting, he has come. He has arrived. The wait is finally over. He has come.

B) Greatly Anticipated

He is the One long awaited and greatly anticipated. So much preparation and planning.

1. So long ago

This was not something thrown together haphazardly. Thinking of just this prophecy, Zechariah had begun his ministry around 520 B.C., after that terrible period of the Babylonian Exile.

2. So much since

So long ago. And so much had happened since. The rise and fall of the Persian Empire. Then the Greeks. Now the Romans. The silence of 400 years between Malachi and John the Baptist. And now, when the fullness of time had come, God had sent his Son. At just the right moment in human history, after everything was set, when nations and events had been perfectly aligned.

The prophecy points us to the significance of the moment. Nothing was left to chance.

Illustration:

We admire those who are in control of their emotions. Jesus goes beyond that. He is not just in control of himself. He is in control of the events themselves. He handles not just his own adrenaline. He dictates the results. He does not just act wisely under pressure. He determines the outcome. He doesn't just respond skillfully to what he finds. He knows what he will find because he has mapped it all out. He is in control not just of himself but everything else.

That is how and why Zechariah's prophecy was fulfilled that day in that moment.

Application:

And that certainty and security is the answer for all our worries and fears. That is what can bring calm to a sleepless night when our imaginations are running wild not with creativity but anxiety. "What if I fail that class? What if I screw up that assignment? What if I don't get that job?" "What did he mean by that? Why does the doctor want to see me? What do I do with what I'm seeing with my child?" "Am I ready for this? Will I have enough? Be enough?"

Jesus is in control of all that. His hand is upon us. We need worry and fear no more. No more. Jesus, the King, has come. We need to learn what it means to live under his reign.

III. THE CROWDS

That then takes us to the crowds and their response (**READ Matthew 21:6-11**). What we see playing out here are differing ideas, competing goals, and a tragic conflict of agendas.

A) Joyful Acclamation

On the surface, there is joyful acclamation. For in many ways, the crowds were so right.

1. Their cloaks

They spread their cloaks on the ground in submission. And these were not people with closets full of clothes. But they were determined that not even the hooves of their king's steed be soiled.

2. Their cries

They waved the palm branches in celebration. They shouted and cried "Hosanna" - a prayer and praise. To the "Son of David" - the Messiah king. (**READ Matthew 21:9**) This was a celebration of their hopes that God would deliver them and their expectation that Jesus was that deliverer.

B) *Flawed Understanding*

But delivering them from what? There was flawed understanding to this acclamation.

1. The palms

“Hosanna” was often a nationalistic cry. The palms were patriotic symbols. What does all this mean? They were looking for a warrior king to liberate their nation from Roman oppression.

2. The Prophet

We get a hint of that in the talk of the city ([READ Matthew 21:10b-11](#)). True but not true enough. He is the Son of God. They saw a small problem for which they needed a small savior.

The response of the crowds points to a conflict of agendas. Both then and now.

Illustration:

Think of some of the family trips and outings you’ve had. What happens when the group has differing ideas, competing goals, and varying priorities in mind? Distress, tension, and disappointment. It’s enough to make you say you’ll never do anything with those people again.

Application:

Transpose that over to this account. This conflict of agendas between the people and Jesus is what made them move from cries of “Hosanna!” on Sunday to “Crucify him!” on Friday.

And we need to know we’re prone to do the same thing. The very same. “I don’t want rescue from sin but from my circumstances.” “I don’t need change in me but in them.” “I’m not interested in my holiness. Just give me back my happiness.” It’s that same conflict of agendas. Jesus is a better and bigger savior than we think. And often want. And he will not be dissuaded.

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CONCLUSION:

Again, that first Palm Sunday was the point of no return for Jesus. There was no going back. Caesar could not and would not allow a rival king. That’s just the way rulers are. I was reminded of this by a news article a few months ago ([READ “Burger King...Angers Royals”](#)):

Burger King appears to be eyeing more than just business expansion...

The fast-food giant has launched a mock, online vote titled “[Who Is The King??](#)” that pits its fictional, royal brand name against Belgium’s King Philippe ahead of the company’s first Burger King restaurant in the Western Europe country.

“Two kings, one single crown, who shall reign?” it asks.

Unfortunately for the advertising campaign — as playful as it may be — it’s reportedly broiled more than just burgers.

A spokesman for Belgium’s royal family [told the BBC](#) that they have reached out to Burger King to express their disapproval of the advertisement, which features a cartoon image of King Philippe.

Now, obviously, the Belgium Royal family was not threatened by this. They knew that there was no danger here of an insurrection or rebellion. So they’re not threatened. Just a bit disrespected.

But there would be much more than an affront taken by the Roman Caesar. Anything that smacked of insurrection or rebellion would be brutally put down. And there was precedence for this. That’s at least partly why the city was shaken and stirred. There can only be one king.

Here's a question. Is he yours? Jesus, the King, has come. Is he your king? Have you bent the knee and given yourself to him? There can only be one king. We cannot serve anything and then him. We simply can't. Are you living under his rule, by his strength, for his glory? Is he your king? Jesus, the King, has come. We need to learn what it means to live under his reign.

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