

# Who Is This King?

## Matthew 21:1-11, Philippians 2:1-11

“Look, here comes the King!” We heard that in the children’s drama this morning as we entered into Palm Sunday. I imagine that on May 6 this year, in London, the streets will be lined with many people, as they were in 1953 for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth, with some very excited, who may be shouting these words. “Look, here comes the king!”

Will you be watching? What do you think of this king? And what does this king mean for you and for the way you live?

Well, may I take you from London to Jerusalem, and to Box Hill? Today we welcomed the king (and a beloved donkey). May I ask you similar questions:



- Who is this king who comes?

- Who is this king for you?

- What difference does he make for the way you live?

- Who is this king who comes?

- Who is this king for you?

- And what difference does he make for the way you live?

Let’s pray...

Jesus is greeted by the people of Jerusalem with acclamation; the crowds spread their cloaks before him, and cut palm branches and spread them on the

road. The crowds shout “Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”

How do we receive him today? How do others around us receive him? Do they even know he’s come to town?

The crowds who met Jesus that first Palm Sunday sing and cry out and enact the words of the prophet Zechariah in chapter 9:

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter (O people, O city) Jerusalem! Look, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

*Zechariah 9:9*

Jesus’ entry to Jerusalem fulfils the Scripture about God’s Messiah coming to rescue his people, which was written by the prophet Zechariah hundreds of years before. And as you look at Zechariah 9 this will tell two vital things of the promise:

1. The king comes to you. Jesus, God's messiah, comes to you and to me and to the city, the town, the church, the neighbours, the family, the place where you are — he comes triumphant and victorious...

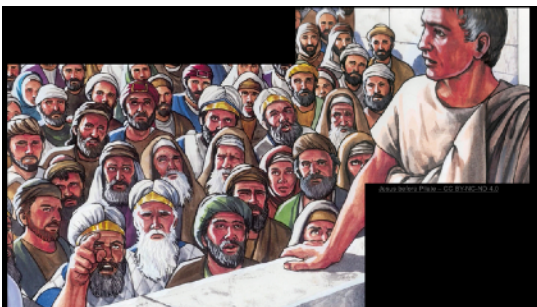
And

2. He comes humbly, he comes in humility riding on a donkey.

Triumphant and victorious but also in humility.

But what does it all mean for us today?

The crowds that greet and follow Jesus, like us with our branches or our singing of hosanna (which actually means "Save us. We pray!") will soon be replaced by shouts of 'crucify him' in the same city, and perhaps by the same people.



Let's listen in as Matthew tells the story in chapter 27:

Now at the festival (Passover) the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner called Jesus Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?"

The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" All of them said, "Let him be crucified!" Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!"

*Matthew 27:15-18, 21-23*

The crowds change. The one they welcomed as king now is betrayed.

Do we change, too? Do you and I, too, betray him... by our sins, by our times of selfishness in the presence of the humble king? Our turning from him? Palm Sunday, like the whole season of Lent, is a day to examine, not the one on trial before Pilate, but the one in the mirror on trial before God.

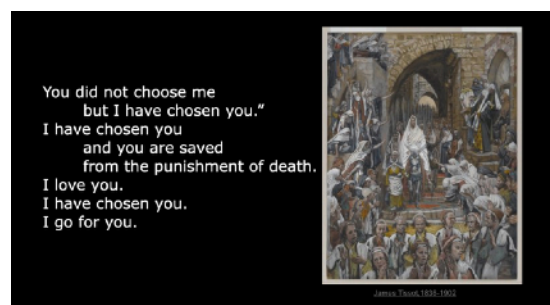
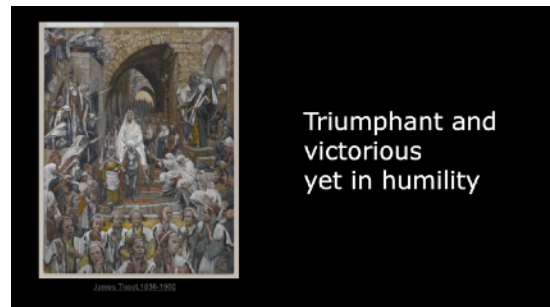
And it is not a pleasant place to be.

By our sin we betray the king of kings. This is truth.

It's not then by our good deeds, or by our power or will, that we somehow elect Jesus as Prime Minister or Premier, or choose him as our king.

In the mirror of God's Word, we betray him because of our sin.

But onwards he comes, this king on this Palm Sunday, humble and riding on a donkey... willingly he comes... and calls us to follow him into this week deeply and closely. For this week, the king's sacrifice in love for you will proclaim the words of John 15 — "You did not choose me but I have chosen you." I have chosen you



and you are saved from the punishment of death. I love you. I have chosen you. I go for you.

So follow me. Confidently follow. Because I go on ahead now, for you and ahead of you.

As we enter into Holy Week now, we go with Jesus to Good Friday and the victory of the humble king who gives his life in the place of the crowds, in the place of those who greet him and follow him as he comes today; in our place. This humble king will triumph for you and me.

The unexpected triumph and the sure victory of this king comes in the place of ultimate humility in sacrificing his own life to rescue the people he reigns over.

Read Isaiah 50:6:

I gave my back to those who struck me,  
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;  
I did not hide my face  
from insult and spitting.

Here is your king. We travel with him to the place of his death, of his giving of his own life in place of you and me. Jesus fulfils the words of the prophet Isaiah who tells of the suffering servant... not the mighty king some expect or want... but the one who takes the anger and punishment of God because of human sin, yours and mine included, on his own body. This is the king who reigns on the cross, triumphant over death, over sin, over the evil one, for you and me.

The crowds sing "Hosanna". Save us, we pray. And the crowds shout "crucify", and the crucified king saves all who trust in him. Our letter-box drop, and your witness for others, is one way that we announce to the community, to the city:

See, your king comes to you humble and riding a donkey.

*Matthew 21:5*

You are saved. Don't ever doubt this. The king has triumphed and won the victory, in love for you.

What difference does the coming of the king make for you?

The wonderful thing is that by the gift of this humble king, you and I can make a choice... not to save ourselves, but how we live as saved, loved, changed people, changed by this humble king.

Read Philippians 2:1-11:

If then there is any encouragement in Christ,  
any consolation from love, any sharing in the  
Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my  
joy complete: be of the same mind, having the  
same love, being in full accord and of one  
mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or  
conceit, but in humility regard others as better  
than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of  
others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,  
who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,  
but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.  
And being found in human form,

**Be of the same mind,  
having the same love.**

he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death —  
even death on a cross.

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,  
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

How do you respond to the coming of the king?

Amen.

*Video of the service including the above address: <https://youtu.be/i-WbsuWlrmk>*