

# The King arrives

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Now earlier this year, as everyone knows, we had an election. I don't know if you're into politics at all, but we had an election, didn't we? We now have a Labour government with Zakir Starmer as the Prime Minister.

But there's also a big one coming up. In less than a month's time, we'll see another election. It does have a bearing on us, the one that's happening across the pond, when the United States vote for Kamala Harris or Donald Trump.

Now, I don't know if this is your thing. Some people really love it, but you can't really escape it, can you? You can't really escape it. It seems to be on the news all the time. The build-up to this year, to the American presidential election, has been quite dramatic.

We've had two assassination attempts. We've had the candidate for the Democrats stand down. We've had debates with outlandish things and claims made.

There's a lot of anticipation and excitement. In either camp, we think that they've got what it takes to win. There's a lot of promises, isn't there? You heard about each future administration, what they're going to achieve to be successful.

[ 1 : 1 4 ]     And America is split. America is split. Generally, it's in the case with our election too, but as has gone. Generally, people vote for a leader, don't they, who will do what they want.

That's what they do. And it appeals to different things that are proposed. It appeals to people who want different things. In the run-up to the election, it happens over here, don't we? We have debates on TV or perhaps, I don't know if they do this in the States and the UK, get a leaflet through your door, advertising the MP or MSP.

And the purpose is to show you what the leader or the party will do for you to encourage you to vote for them. The more you agree and trust the person in that party means that's who you'd vote for.

If you don't agree with any of them, you might not choose to vote at all. You might vote with your feet. And this morning, as we look at this passage, what we see is a people that are desperate to be led.

They're desperate for a leader who they can trust. They're desperate for someone who will do actually what they want. And what they believe is that the man Jesus Christ, many of them, that their leader that they want is here.

[ 2 : 2 7 ]     Because actually what they believe is that here is the king who has come to do what they actually want. It's why they celebrate his entrance into Jerusalem.

Because they believe and expect he's going to meet their needs. They believe and expect he's going to meet their needs. The big question I want us to ask as we reflect on the crowd is, what do we want Jesus to do for us?

What do we want Jesus to do for us? It was partly the question that actually came the last time we were in Mark's Gospel. Because Jesus asks it as the servant came, what do you want me to do for you?

What do you want me to do for you? Just a reminder to where we're at in Mark's Gospel. We're coming towards the sort of end, a couple more weeks in this third series. But we're looking at Jesus' journey to Jerusalem.

It started all the way up in Capernaum. And it ends up in Jerusalem. It's really interesting in Mark's Gospel. You get the first eight chapters cover about three years of his ministry.

[ 3 : 26 ] And then once you get to chapter nine, through to the second half, it covers about three weeks. You can see where the emphasis lies. It's all on the final part of his life.

The servant king who says, what do you want me to do for you? On the way on the road to Jerusalem. And here we see him finally arriving. We pick up his journey, don't we?

We pick up his journey in chapter 11, where he stands on the edges, the Mount of Olives, ready to enter. There's three things we're going to look at. The first thing is that Jesus is the promised king, revealed.

Jesus is the promised king, revealed. The ability to trust someone comes if they keep their word. If they've got a history of doing that, don't they? That's why we trust somebody.

That's fair, isn't it? We all perhaps know someone in life that we would say are trustworthy. Who, if they say they'll be there, they always are. If they're not, that's the person that you worry about when they're not there on time.

[ 4 : 30 ] Someone says, always on time. What's happened? I hope nothing's happened to them. They're the person that sticks to their word. They're trustworthy. They're always there. When we think about voting for someone, that's why we might want a certain leader.

Because we believe they're going to come through on their promises. In the history of God's people, the living God has made promises in his word to his people.

And what we see time and time and again is, without fail, that God is trustworthy because he keeps his word. God's people have seen him come through on the promises he's made to them in their history.

He'd rescued them from Egypt, perhaps the most famous thing that they'd look back on. Rescued them through Egypt, rescued them through the Red Sea, led them through the desert to the promised land of Israel.

The living God had always kept his promises to his people. Which meant that they trusted him to fulfill other promises that he'd made to them. He'd promised a king in the family line of King David, the great Old Testament hero.

[ 5 : 36 ] He'd promised a king who would bring restoration. And he'd said lots of things in the Old Testament about what this king would be like. In this passage, there's lots of echoes back to what was said about Jesus the Messiah.

He fulfills things that were written about the future king to come. There should be some verses that I'm just going to show on the screen. I think this first one comes from Zechariah 14.

Just listen to this. I don't know if it's on the screen. Zechariah 14, you might be able to see it. Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as he fights on a day of battle.

On that day, his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. And the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south.

And where does Jesus stand before he enters in Jerusalem? He's standing on the Mount of Olives. It's not a coincidence. The next verse, just put the next one on the screen.

[ 6 : 44 ] Rejoice greatly, daughter Zion. Shout, daughter Jerusalem. See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. Jesus arriving on a donkey into Jerusalem, standing on the Mount of Olives before he enters, is foretold within the prophetic books of the Old Testament, written hundreds of years before it happened.

And it's what is written is now taking place. God's people were well aware of what it said about him. And some of the things they get right, some of it they misinterpret.

His twelve disciples, those who he picked up along the road, on the way down, were with Jesus as he stands on the Mount of Olives. And as he rides on a donkey, surely they had a picture of what this might mean in their imagination.

King Solomon was also carried on a mule before taking his place on the throne. Jesus is making a statement. He's drawing attention to himself.

[ 7 : 58 ] He's announcing himself as the king, without saying a word. Riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, setting off from the Mount of Olives, says everything.

It's not a whisper or a suggestion anymore. Jesus' identity is the king, the Messiah. What is this that we're actually seeing?

What we're seeing is a coronation procession. That's what we're seeing. Now, it's not long ago, is it, since we saw one in our own country. We saw King Charles crowned with the crown jewel, brought out of the Tower of London.

And you'll remember if you watched, I'm sure some of you watched at least some of it, on the TV. It was on for, it seemed to be on for me, for the whole build-up.

And afterwards, the interviews, and every man and his dog was asked what they thought about it. And you remember the procession. You remember the armed forces. There was a, I think there was like, cannons going off in the back garden of Buckingham Palace.

[ 9 : 03 ] All the armed forces lined up, the tradition, the rigmarole. And there was a sense, wasn't there, as you were watching this, even if you were, even if you are a royalist, that there's something momentous and part of history.

As we see Jesus go into Jerusalem, this is the beginning of his coronation procession. But at the end of it, his crown won't be made of gold, but thorns.

His throne, he won't sit on. He'll be nailed to it and held up. His throne is a cross, which he's not carried on, but he has to carry himself.

This is the king. We mentioned a few weeks, this is the king. This is how the king comes, not to be served, but to serve. This is his coronation, to become the servant king.

And the truth is, he's not, we might read this and go, okay, but as we know, that he's not just the king then, but he's the king today. He's the Messiah king, who does promise restoration.

[ 10 : 19 ] The things that we read about in the Old Testament, about King Jesus, are not just for them, but they're for us. He did and is still now restoring a people for himself, that will fill his kingdom.

He reveals himself as that person then, and as that same person he is today to us, because he wants to restore us too. He wants, he comes to restore us, he comes to serve us, he comes to reveal himself.

So as we read it in the Word, we connect the dots, just like the people of God, in those days, we're realising that he is the king, he's our king today. So he's the promised, revealed king.

Second thing that we see is, Jesus is the celebrated king. He's the celebrated king. The disciples and others who follow Jesus, they understand what Jesus is getting at, he's making it absolutely obvious, and they want to celebrate him.

They realise the momentous moment, that they're involved with. Just look with me, verse 7, they throw their cloaks over the donkey, and they throw cloaks onto the road. It's exactly what they did for kings in the past.

[ 11 : 31 ] They're laying out the red, sort of the Old Testament version, of a red carpet, for royalty. And they're surrounding Jesus. We read there, ahead of him, and behind him.

They're surrounding Jesus, moving with him. shouting and singing together. Jerusalem is whipped up into an almighty frenzy. The Israelite nation, the Jewish people, expect to be restored.

You can imagine it, can't you? You can picture the din, the noise, perhaps even, maybe there was music, and dancing in the streets. It's like a homecoming celebration.

You think of a, the street parade, perhaps, when you, when a, when your team wins a trophy, and they have the open-topped bus, and they're going back, and it seems like the crowd is almost, they're lining the streets, and they're chanting as the, as the team comes past.

The people here are no different. This is what it's like for them. Hosanna, literally, means, save us. That's what Hosanna means. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. That, that verse comes from Psalm 118, which is about the king having a great victory.

[ 12 : 46 ] Bless the one coming in the kingdom of our father David. This kingdom is coming. The one that we've been waiting for, it's here. He's here now. Yet there's, yet there is real irony in the chanting and the shouting.

You see, these chants and shouts, they weren't just used for when, about Jesus, when he came into them, into Jerusalem.

These chants and shouts, taken from the scriptures, they were used as slogans about power. When they talked about being saved, they wanted to be saved as a nation from the Romans.

What they assume is, they assume something about Jesus. They assume that he's just another Israeli nationalist, freedom, political fighter with an agenda. That's what they want.

And everything is viewed by the, through, by the Jews, by the Israelites, through nationalistic spectacles. It's interesting.

[ 13 : 51 ] They even drape him in their nationalist customs. And ways. That's what the cloaks are about. This is, this is what the, the kings of the Old Testament would happen to them as they were on their way to the throne.

He's come to save the nation of Israel. And they whip it up. It's like a rally to whip up some nationalist agenda. What we see, actually, is the crowd's response.

While Jesus does rightly deserve to be praised and worshipped, what the, it actually reveals what human nature is like. Because what they want is their tribe. They want their nation back on top.

How horrified, how horrified, do you think they'd be knowing that Jesus didn't just come to, wasn't just coming to be their king, wasn't just coming to save them, but he actually came to save their oppressors too?

He actually was coming to save the Romans. They were half right. He was and is their king, come to save.

[ 14 : 57 ] But he didn't come to save a nation, but to save those who would become a completely new people. Those who would recognize what they needed saving from, who didn't need to be saved from a tyrannical empire with a Caesar on top, but actually needed to be saved from themselves.

That included the Romans. That's true today, isn't it? That's what God's doing. That's what Jesus Christ is doing. He's in the business.

He's in the business of saving people from himself. From all walks and backgrounds of life, no one's too far from his grace. Not even a Roman soldier. He didn't just come to save us, sat here this morning.

Again, borders don't matter to him. Even, he came to save not just people like us, but people from all different walks and backgrounds.

There is nothing in the life of a Christian that makes us worthy of salvation. We don't deserve it just as much as anyone else. The Israelites were a chosen people, not because of anything they'd done, but because of God's kindness and grace.

[ 16 : 08 ] He did the choosing. He could have chosen, if he'd have wanted, could have chosen another nation, if he'd have wanted to. God saves people from all different walks and backgrounds.

So we've thought about Jesus, the promised king. We've thought about Jesus, the celebrated king. Finally, we're going to think about Jesus, the underwhelming king.

The underwhelming king. The end of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem is a complete anticlimax. On the whole road to Jerusalem, there's been anticipation building.

There's been excitement. The disciples are amazed with what lies ahead. There's fear about what will take place. They think there's going to be some almighty messianic war where they crush the Romans and Jesus takes his throne and there's victory and chanting and a big party.

Then the ride in and the celebration, it's all connected to that. This is happening. It's really happening. It's building like a crescendo. You expect there to, at the end of the road, I don't know what you expect.

[ 17 : 19 ] Some sort of maybe flurry of supernatural activity. Is he going to heal everyone again? Is he going to cast out every single demon left? You think back to what Jesus has done. He's made a paralyzed man walk.

He's healed the blind. Bartimaeus, he just healed on the road. He's following him. Verse 11. Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts.

This is his moment. He looked around at everything. But since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve. He goes back to the place he started from.

He started in Bethany. So he goes from Bethany, Mount of Olives, Bethany Bethage, into Jerusalem, into the temple, and then he goes back with no fanfare.

Nothing impressive happens. Nothing spectacular. He resists the temptation to be the hero. Remember, this is Passover week when God's people remembered the rescue from Egypt.

[ 18 : 23 ] Jesus gets to the temple, the center of religious life, and he doesn't even stop to pray. He doesn't even offer a sacrifice. And, no one bats an eyelid.

He's completely ignored. God. I don't know if you're like me with movies and TV series. One thing that really gets to me is when you either hear about a new film or a new thing on the TV and it's really built up and hyped as the next best thing.

And if you miss out, you're really going to miss out. You really need to watch it. And then, so, oh, this new thing, it's coming on TV, and then, and then you watch it. And because you, there's so much hype and it's built up so much, you watch it and it's like, is that all what all the plus was about?

I wonder if that's how the disciples, the followers of Jesus felt on that day. Big hype, singing, dancing, and then, no. Goes back the way.

It's such an underwhelming finish. Jesus as the king. was not going to do what the people of Israel wanted.

[ 19 : 42 ] Now, God's people today, they're not, as I've said, they're not an ethnic nation anymore. God's people is the church. Made up of all types of people.

I've said that. In the history of the church, in the history of God's people, there are great, tangible, overwhelming moments of great spirit, God moving in miraculous, amazing ways.

The spirit of God with Jesus acts and ministers in ways clearly obvious. Real spiritual power seems to be on shore. Moments that we have called revival or renewal among God's people.

You get Pentecost, most famous. You've got thousands of people coming to know Jesus as their saviour. But even in the last couple of hundreds of years, there's been great awakenings in the United States, in the 18th century.

You've got revivals in Lewis, in Wales, all over the place, renewals and revivals. Individuals used by God's way, thousands of people turn to Jesus and away from their sin.

[ 20 : 43 ] And it's right that we read those stories and are encouraged by them. Yet in the day-to-day of church life, those special moments where God pours out his grace and whole swathes of people in a community over a short period of time.

It is not our everyday experience. It is not our everyday experience. The problem is sometimes we hear about that and we can think that if we're not seeing that, then something's wrong.

And we make that thing the norm. That's not the everyday experience of a Christian. It's not the everyday experience of church. Now, we can have amazing times of hearing God and his word, great moments of singing praise to him, and a tangible awareness of the Holy Spirit.

Yet another week can go by and nothing spectacular seems to happen. Now, we would all love to see revival, wouldn't it? We'd love to see renewal and thousands turn to Christ, but it isn't the norm.

It doesn't mean we don't pray for it. It doesn't mean we can't have big expectations. But what it teaches is that it's the normal way of Jesus working through the church in God's people is in very unassuming ways.

[ 22 : 00 ] Very ordinary faithfulness that isn't flashy. It means Jesus Christ is at work in you and in people you know and in other Christians in very ordinary ways and means.

It means when you if you're a parent and you're up in the middle of the night trying to put your kids to sleep be faithful in those moments is not insignificant.

Faithfully teaching your kids as they grow up praying for your neighbours and family inviting people into your home at some point even just thinking about I'd love to share Jesus with this person at some point in the future praying how you might do that.

It's not flashy there's no razzmatazz but the ordinary faithfulness that is unassuming is significant to God. It is significant. In the UK today it can look like church is ignored that Jesus is ignored we might look weak to some but it is in the unassuming not flashy not spectacular not impressive faithfulness of ordinary believers in Jesus that he moves in power.

The ordinary faithfulness of Jesus moves in power. Anyone can whip into the crowd when the razzmatazz dies down for a second.

[ 23 : 31 ] Ordinary faithfulness that is attractive and that is distinctive to the watching world. We can all talk a good game even for us here Sunday mornings when we're all together or even if we go to a midweek fellowship can be a real boost spiritually and we love that it's great no doubt about that we come here to praise Jesus to meet with one another to walk side by side and we want that but the reality is actually it still is easy to be faithful when everyone around you is cheering it's much harder in the week when it looks like nobody else cares it's easy to be excited about God if there's revival it's easy it's easy it's easy it's easy when it doesn't seem that way faithful and living as a disciple of Jesus Christ matters as much on a Monday as it does on a Sunday so we've thought about three things the promised revealed king he reveals himself as he walks into Jerusalem to everyone he says

I'm here this is me I'm the king but he comes in ways to be a king that we don't expect we see the celebrated king it's right to celebrate him it's right to praise him for what he's done and we do praise him because he comes as a king that deserves to be celebrated not because he's even a greater king than we even read here than we even realise because he's not the king just of Israel but he's our king he's the king that deserves to be praised and wants to be praised by all people and then we thought about the underwhelming king the king whose mission and ministry doesn't always look bright and flashy but requires the ordinary faithfulness of believers goodness and love in ordinary ways and one day he will come back in a way that is not underwhelming at all you see there is a new Jerusalem planned a new Jerusalem when he will ride in as king and be the king just like here that we all see and know and he's obvious as the king but everyone will realise on that day that he is their king too and will bow the knee to their king goodness and love in ordinary ways

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