

This morning, I am in the twelfth week of a sermon series that I've entitled "Meeting Jesus." I am making my way through Luke's account of the life of Jesus, looking at various interactions that people had with Jesus, in order to better understand what it means to know and follow Him. This morning, we are going to skip ahead to Luke's Palm Sunday account in Luke 19:28-48, where he records Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem for the final week of his life. In a few days it will be Good Friday, the day which commemorates his crucifixion. And next Sunday of course is Easter, the day in which we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Let's read Luke's account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

Luke 19:28–48 - After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.²⁹ As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them,³⁰ "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here."³¹ If anyone asks you, "Why are you untying it?" say, "The Lord needs it."³² Those who were sent ahead went and found it just **as he had told them**.³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?"³⁴ They replied, "The Lord needs it."³⁵ They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it.³⁶ As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.³⁷ When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:³⁸ "Blessed is the king who comes **in the name of the Lord!**" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"⁴⁰ "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."⁴¹ As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it⁴² and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes."⁴³ The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you **in on every side**.⁴⁴ They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."⁴⁵ When Jesus entered the temple courts, he began to drive out those who were selling.⁴⁶ "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be a house of prayer'; but you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"⁴⁷ Every day he was **teaching at the temple**. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him.⁴⁸ Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words.

As Jesus makes his way towards the city, the people cry out, "Blessed is the king who comes **in the name of the Lord!**" (**Luke 19:38**). They recognize and exclaim

that Jesus is more than just a good teacher, miracle worker, or prophet, but is something greater. And this passage is really about Jesus the king in four acts:

1) The revealed king

All throughout Jesus' life and ministry, we have seen Him tell people to be quiet about who He is. We see him healing people and telling them not to tell others. We see demons proclaiming that he is the Son of God, and he commands them to be quiet. It has seemed all along that for some reason, Jesus doesn't want the masses to know who He really is. It may seem curious when and why he does that, but by the end of this passage, the reason becomes clear. By verse 47, by the end of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, the religious leaders have made up their mind that Jesus must die. Why?

Go back to the beginning of the passage. Jesus and his disciples are heading to Jerusalem for the Passover festival, and he instructs them to "Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' say, 'The Lord needs it.'" (Luke 19:30-31).

And as Jesus mounts the colt and rides into the city, we read this:

As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: ³⁸ "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (Luke 19:36-38).

This passage is full of symbolism, full of Old Testament prophecy, that the crowd and religious leaders would have understood. Consider Zechariah 9:9:

Zechariah 9:9 - 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.

Or Psalm 118:

Psalm 118:25–26 - Lord, save us! Lord, grant us success! ²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you.

It is clear to the crowd what is happening: **Jesus is entering the city as the revealed king**, the Messiah king promised in the Old Testament, the descendant of King David who has come to take His rightful place on the throne. **Remember that Israel was under Roman occupation at this time**, and so as the crowd welcomes Jesus into the city, they are full of joy and anticipation, crying out “Hosanna!” which means “Lord, save us!” They are clearly picturing Jesus as a mighty hero and kingly warrior who has come to save the day and rescue them.

And as Jesus makes his way, we see some other subtle picture of how creation responds to the revelation of its true king. We see a young colt that has never been ridden going down the middle of a road filled with loud worshipers, at total peace under the command of King Jesus. If you’ve ever tried to ride a horse that has never been ridden before, you know that this is truly a miracle. And secondly, as we read in **Luke 19:39-40** - Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!” ⁴⁰ “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

Creation is worshiping the revealed king as he enters his city, and the people who have gathered are joining in the song.

But soon, we see Jesus react to this experience in an unexpected way:

2) The weeping king

Luke 19:41-44 - As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it ⁴² and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. ⁴³ The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴ They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”

Breaking out into tears during a triumphal entry does not seem to be a very kingly thing to do. What is going on here? Jesus knows that this journey is not going to end well. He knows that the people who are cheering him are eventually going to be changing their tune, calling for his death. And so, as he sees the city, it moves him to tears, knowing that they don’t recognize Him for who He is, that they will reject Him, and that eventually Jerusalem will be destroyed by Rome in 70 AD.

Jesus is king, but he is a weeping king, because he so deeply loves his people and grieves their rebellion and refusal to trust His love for them.

1 Timothy 2:3–4 - This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Can you see God weeping over you? When was the last time you wept for those who are lost? When was the last time you were moved to tears by the impending destruction of those you love? If this is how the king feels about his people, let this be true of us as well. There is great power in tears for our sin and for the sin and rebellion of those we love.

Matthew 5:3–4 - “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”

Galatians 4:19–20 - My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, ²⁰ how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!

We serve and follow a weeping King; let us also be a people who are not afraid to weep over the brokenness in our life and in the world.

3) The sacrificial king

Maybe you’ve already wondered this, and certainly some of the crowd must have wondered this as well: if Jesus is the revealed King, the Messiah, the descendant of David coming to save His people and restore the glory to Israel, **then why is he riding in on a colt, on a little horse?** Would it not be more fitting to ride in on a warhorse? What is going on here?

The truth is that Jesus has come as the revealed King, but contrary to the hopes of the people, He has not come to do battle with Rome. He has not come to overthrow the earthly powers that are oppressing His people. No, Jesus has come to take on a greater power. Ever since the beginning, mankind has been separated from God by sin. And from the very beginning, after the first human sinned, God gives this promise to the serpent, the devil:

Genesis 3:15 – “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

God promises that one day a descendant of the woman will come and do battle with the serpent, and although the devil will injure him, he will kill the serpent, crushing his head. And now the king has come to do battle with the dragon, to slay him and to rescue the people who have been held captive by him.

1 John 3:8 - The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Hebrews 2:14–15 - Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Jesus is the king to whom all the kings point, the Savior to whom all the saviors point, come not just to overthrow Rome but to kill the ancient serpent, to put an end to sin and death and evil itself. But in order to do this, He is going to have to die in our place, for our sins. He will have to let the serpent strike his heel so that he might crush his head.

Colossians 2:13–15 - When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

This is why Jesus rides in on a colt. **He is coming in strength, yes, but also in weakness.** He comes as a king, yes, but not as a warlord, bearing the sword, but as a king who has come to take the sword into himself.

Remember that Jesus is arriving in Jerusalem for the Passover festival, the annual reminder of how God rescued His people from slavery in Egypt. Remember that the blood of the lamb was put on the doorposts, so that the angel of death would pass over their houses, striking down the firstborn of every Egyptian household while sparing every Jewish household that took shelter under the blood of the lamb. And God told them to celebrate Passover as a yearly reminder. And so, every year on the 10th day of Nisan, thousands of lambs would be driven up to Jerusalem throughout the day. The historian Josephus tells us that one year a census was taken of the number of lambs slain for Passover and the figure was **256,500**. That

means that Jesus is entering Jerusalem on the 10th of Nisan, on a colt, surrounded by lambs who are about to be slain for the Passover. And just like the Passover lamb, upon entering the city, Jesus would go to the temple to be “examined” to ensure that he was without defect, without sin, so that he could be an acceptable sacrifice.

What does this mean? There is a greater Exodus that is happening. The story of God saving His people from slavery to Egypt through the blood of the lamb is pointing to what is about to happen, as God will save His people from slavery to sin and death and the devil through the blood of the true lamb, Jesus, the Son of God, the Messiah, the King descended from David. By his death on the cross, they will go free.

Remember what John the Baptist said when He saw Jesus:

John 1:29 - The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

Remember how Jesus changed the words of the Passover liturgy at the last supper:

Matthew 26:26–28 - While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.”²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you.²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

And remember how Peter put it:

1 Peter 1:18–19 - For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors,¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

Jesus enters Jerusalem on Palm Sunday as the revealed King, the weeping King and as the weak King. Please know that on Palm Sunday and on every other Sunday since then, we have longed for a warlord, a victorious king who will win the day through conquest and worldly power. But Jesus has shown us that victory does not come through worldly means, but through weakness, through sacrifice, through love. And lastly:

4) The confrontational king

When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

Luke 19:38-39 - “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”

They know what is happening here. He is claiming to be the Messiah, and they see it as blasphemy.

And when he enters the temple, he confronts the religious leaders and their establishment:

Luke 19:45-48 - When Jesus entered the temple courts, he began to drive out those who were selling.⁴⁶ “It is written,” he said to them, “‘My house will be a house of prayer’; but you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”⁴⁷ Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him.⁴⁸ Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words.

He drives out those who have turned the temple into a marketplace. And a few short days later, the same crowd that cheered for him will be chanting “crucify Him.”

Jesus is revealing himself as the King that he is, and because of this, it is decision time. You can either crown Him as King, or kill Him as a blasphemer. But you can no longer straddle the fence. You can no longer see Him as just a prophet or good teacher. As C.S. Lewis put it:

“I’m trying here to prevent anyone from saying the really silly thing that people often say about Him: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must never say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic, on the level of the man who says he is a poached egg, or else he would be the devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman, **or something worse**. You can shut him up as a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon,

or you may fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about him being a great moral teacher. He did not leave that open to us, and he did not intend to... Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God.”

Who do you say that He is? The time has come to crown him or kill him. There is no middle ground. You were created to worship and serve King Jesus. And if you reject him, you will crown something. As C. S. Lewis wrote in his essay *“Equality”*:

“Monarchy can easily be ‘debunked’; but watch the faces, mark well the accents, of the debunkers... Where men are forbidden to honor a king they honor millionaires, athletes, or film-stars instead: even famous prostitutes or gangsters. For spiritual nature, like bodily nature, will be served; deny it food and it will gobble poison.”

You need to crown something or someone – reject Jesus and you will serve something or someone. Political leaders, celebrities, athletes, people in your life, the opinion of others, success, money, something. You will bow down to something. You were created to serve the one who loved you so much that he came in weakness to give His life for you, to save you from sin, death, and the devil. Turn from sin to the Savior, the true King, today.

If you do not know Jesus, you can pray;

Jesus, I believe that you are the Messiah, the true King, the Son of God. I believe that in you is found eternal life, life to the full. I believe that apart from faith in you, I will die in my sins, separated from God for all eternity. But I believe that you love me so much that you died on the cross in my place, taking the penalty for my sin, and that you rose from the grave, conquering death. I turn from my sinful, self-centered way of life and I believe in you as my Savior and Lord. Amen.