

“Who is this King?”

Matthew 21:1-10

Introduction: In the eyes of many people, King Jesus died a common criminal. Beaten, shamed, and defeated. So, who is this King?

1. He is the “Humble” King

Matthew 21:1-3 – “Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, ‘Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them at once.’”

Jesus was not a king operating out of desperation or improvisation, but rather calculated, intentional decision-making.

Matthew 21:4-5 – “This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, ‘Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’” (cf. Zechariah 9:9)

Matthew 21:6-9 – “The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!’” (cf. 2 Kings 9:13)

The people just wanted to be delivered, freed, and liberated from Roman oppression, worshipping Jesus with their lips but only seeking temporary relief.

Matthew 21:10 – “And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, ‘Who is this?’”

Jesus may be a humble king, but He’s not a distant king. Jesus may be a humble king, but He’s not a subtle king.

2. He is the “Rejected” King

Matthew 26:57-61 – “Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end. Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said, ‘This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’”

In this moment of injustice, Jesus doesn’t panic; instead, He remains composed, unwavering, and in complete control.

Matthew 26:62-64 – “And the high priest stood up and said, ‘Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?’ But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, ‘I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.’ Jesus said to him, ‘You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.’”

He confirms their accusation by naming himself Messiah and proclaiming His future seat at God's right hand.

Matthew 26:65-68 – “Then the high priest tore his robes and said, ‘He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your judgment?’ They answered, ‘He deserves death.’ Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, saying, ‘Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?’” (cf. Isaiah 53)

3. **He is the “Crucified” King**

John 19:16-18 – “So he delivered him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.”

John 19:19-22 – “Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, ‘Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.’ Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, ‘Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but rather, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’” Pilate answered, ‘What I have written I have written.’”

John 19:23 – “When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom...” (cf. Psalm 22:18)

The cross reframes what it means to be king: authority is measured not by domination or wealth but by love and obedience to God.

4. **He is the “Victorious” King**

Matthew 28:1-5 – “Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.’”

Matthew 28:6-8 – “‘He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.’ So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.”

Matthew 28:9-10 – “And behold, Jesus met them and said, ‘Greetings!’ And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.’”

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION:

1. What are your most important daily rhythms or priorities?
2. When in your life have you felt rejected or misunderstood?
3. Like those singing “Hosanna,” have you ever worshipped Jesus only with your lips, hoping for temporary relief?
4. What might taking a step of faith and fully trusting in the risen King to lead you into a new life of purpose look like for you?