

The King Comes!

Mark 11:1-19

Key Verse: 11:10

“Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!’”

Today we are beginning part three of Mark’s gospel (11:1-13:37), which reveals that Jesus is Lord. In the second part (8:27-10:45), Jesus had referred to himself as “the Son of Man.” It is a messianic title that emphasizes his humility as the obedient servant of God. Throughout part two, Jesus had interacted a lot with his disciples; Jesus asked questions and they answered; they asked questions and Jesus answered. However, as he enters Jerusalem, Jesus teaches that he is Lord and King. Jesus’ teaching tends to be somewhat indoctrinational. The disciples must simply trust and obey to learn the lessons he teaches. In today’s passage Jesus enters Jerusalem as the King sent by God to fulfill his promise to Save. To all who accept him, Jesus is Savior King. To all who ignore him or reject him, Jesus is the righteous Judge. Which do you prefer? Let’s accept Jesus as Savior King today.

I. “The Lord needs it” (1-6).

Jesus and his disciples were making their final approach to Jerusalem from the twin cities of Bethphage and Bethany, about two miles away. As we have studied, Jesus was conscious of God’s unfolding purpose for him. Jerusalem is the place where he would suffer, die and rise again according to God’s will. Yet Jesus was not overwhelmed with his emotions. Jesus was sound in mind and taught his disciples with a clear point. Jesus taught that he is Lord. Faith that “Jesus is Lord” must be the basis of a disciple’s worldview and practical obedience.

Look at verses 1b-3. “Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ tell him, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.’” What a challenge! Jesus put his disciples in a most difficult situation. Jesus challenged them to claim someone else’s colt in his name. How did they respond?

Look at verses 4-5. “They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, some people standing there asked, ‘What are you doing untying that colt?’” Perhaps seven or eight big men with serious expressions on their faces surrounded the disciples. Sweat may have broken out on the backs of the disciples. With all the courage they could muster, they said, “The Lord needs it, and will send it back here shortly.” Suddenly the faces of the men broke into bright smiles. They parted before the disciples like the Red Sea and let them pass, saying, “Sure! Take the colt. The Lord needs it.”

Why did Jesus do this? He wanted to teach his disciples practically that he is Lord. Jesus revealed his divine omniscience and omnipresence. Jesus knew exactly where the donkey's colt was and that it was tied up and that it had never been ridden. How could Jesus know this? Because Jesus is God who sees everything and knows everything. Soon, Jesus would leave this world. His disciples would not see him anymore in the flesh. But as Lord he was with them always and they needed to learn to live before him. Most of all, Jesus revealed his ownership of the colt. It is because Jesus is the Creator God who made the colt. John 1:3 says, "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." Psalm 24:1 says, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." Jesus is the true owner of all things.

Jesus wants us to recognize his lordship over all things: our lives, relationships, property, the world, and all who live in it. Jesus wants us to live under his Lordship with simple trust and obedience. When the Lord gives a command or claims something, we must give it to him or get it for him—which may be harder. Abraham's servant in Genesis is a good example. Abraham sent him on a mission to get a wife for his son Isaac. Abraham did not allow him to bring Isaac along with him. Through prayer, the servant found the girl he believed God had chosen. Then he simply explained how the Lord had guided his journey and told in great detail what the Lord had done to lead him to Rebekah. Finally Rebekah's mother and brother Laban said, "The Lord needs her. Take her and go." Actually Laban was the kind of person who grabbed tightly whatever he could hold on to and never let go. But when he was convinced that the Lord was calling Rebekah, even he became helpless and gave her to Isaac. When we really have faith that Jesus is Lord and that he needs something, we can bring donkeys to Jesus and marriage candidates to Jesus and anything to Jesus. We can also give our children and sheep to Jesus. Postmodernism claims that each person has his own private truth and that there is no public truth. It does not acknowledge universal morals, and has no purpose. Postmodern people are alienated from God and from others. Those who believe that Jesus is Lord can experience the universal truth of God's presence and God's reign. They can live dynamic lives and be useful to God.

II. Jesus comes in the name of the Lord (7-10).

When the disciples practiced the Lordship of Christ they experienced the power of God. They must have laughed out loud and given each other high fives as they returned to Jesus. When they presented it to Jesus, they were smiling from ear to ear. They had a sense of victory and spiritual joy in their hearts. They could see more clearly that Jesus is Lord. With great reverence, they threw their cloaks over the colt and offered it to Jesus. Their good influence spread quickly among the humble people following Jesus. Many placed cloaks and branches on the road. They recalled all the good things Jesus had done: healing their sicknesses, planting the word of life and hope in them, raising the dead, and giving sight to the blind. Genuine thanksgiving and love and worship began to rise up in their hearts. They broke into a chorus of praise. Let's read verses 9-10. "Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!'" What is the meaning of this?

First, people welcomed Jesus as the King sent by God. Let's read verses 9-10 again. "Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David. Hosanna in the highest!'" These words were a quotation from Psalm 118:25-26. This is a messianic psalm in which Israel welcomes her king as he returns victorious from battle in the name of the Lord. They welcome their king in the expectation that he will reign over them with peace and love and they offer themselves to serve him as his loyal subjects. Jesus wants each of us to accept him as king, remembering all the good things he has done. Jesus wants us to accept him with worship and thanksgiving and praise in our hearts.

Second, Jesus is a gentle and humble king. By riding on a donkey's colt, Jesus deliberately fulfilled Zechariah 9:9, which says, "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." Usually when kings enter a city they come in power and glory, like Caesar in the movie "Gladiator." A recent movie, "Hero," tells us of the ancient Chinese king of Qin. His palace was made up of hundreds of rooms with secret passageways. He was surrounded by tens of thousands of soldiers. No one could approach him. When he gave a command, it was obeyed immediately. With one nod of his head people lived or died. Perhaps his desire to unite China was good. However, this kind of king makes people tremble in fear. He causes people to have high blood pressure and anxiety attacks. One charismatic leader took over a large corporation and turned it from a bankruptcy candidate into a healthy, profit-making business. However, his ruthless attitude toward the family lives of his employees led to many divorces and a lot of broken hearts and lives. Jesus is different. Jesus is a gentle king. Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey's colt. This does not intimidate anyone. Rather, Jesus tells us that he is gentle and humble and approachable. We can rejoice greatly at Jesus' coming. Gentle Jesus came to save us. There was a young man who experienced something painful when he was young. He could not talk about it with anyone. By God's grace he married a beautiful Christian woman who was gentle and prayerful. Because of his unsolved inner problem he blew up at her from time to time. But she never retaliated. She bore with him with prayer. He saw the gentleness of Jesus in her. After ten years, he could trust her enough to open his heart and share his secret. Then, as they prayed, gentle Jesus healed him.

Third, Jesus is the righteous king. All kings who ever reigned in the world, besides Jesus, have been fallen men with a sinful nature. David is known as the best king in the history of Israel, a shepherd king. However, David once fell into sin, and when he did so, he caused great harm to his people. Many people liked President Bill Clinton because of his compassion toward ordinary people. But he also fell into sin and caused great damage to the nation. But Jesus is the righteous king. Jesus' character is flawless. Jesus is perfect in his moral, ethical, and spiritual life. Jesus is always motivated by love. Jesus always sees things as they truly are; Jesus has perfect understanding and wisdom. Moreover, Jesus is mighty strong, strong enough to defeat the dark power of evil and bring true justice. Because of this Jesus can bring real peace.

Fourth, Jesus is the king who saves. "Hosanna!" means "Save us now." Jesus had already done so much to shepherd his people according to their need. The people believed that anything was possible for Jesus, even the restoration of

the kingdom of David. So they cried out for salvation, “Hosanna in the highest!” However, the deep purpose of Jesus’ coming was to save us from our sins. For this Jesus would suffer unbearable punishment and hang on the cross until he died. For this Jesus would cry out to God in agony of soul as he took the place of sinners, bearing God’s wrath. Jesus would be completely humiliated as he bore the sin of many and made intercession for transgressors. This Savior King Jesus is willing to come to anyone who cries out, “Hosanna!”

Last week, one precious woman of God suddenly fell into feelings of jealousy, and the devil came into her heart. She doubted the love of God, and the love of her husband, and became irrational. At this time of crisis, her husband came to Jesus sincerely with repentance and faith. He repented for losing his sense of mission and neglecting the young people God had entrusted to him to raise as disciples. He repented for not serving his precious wife with affection and respect. Together with his Christian friends, he cried to Jesus, “Hosanna, save us!” The Savior King Jesus heard his prayer. Jesus visited his wife through the Holy Spirit and brought healing and restoration to her soul. As both of them humbly accepted Jesus as their Savior King, he came in to rule their family newly. They are a new creation in Christ. Jesus came to save us from our sins. The word of God promises, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Joel 2:32; Ac 2:21).

III. Jesus is Lord of the temple (11-19).

After entering Jerusalem, Jesus first went to the temple, God’s house. The temple was the place where Jesus should be welcomed by priests and temple servants. But when Jesus went to the temple, no one welcomed him. People were busy buying and selling and making preparations for the Passover. Jesus looked around at everything and then went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again” (12-14). As we have studied, Jesus is the humble and gentle king. Yet this time, Jesus spoke harshly to a fig tree. Why? The fig tree was a symbol of Israel (Isa 5:2). God had blessed Israel especially among the nations to produce spiritual fruit that pleased him. He wanted to find obedience to his will. He wanted to find the love of God in his people’s hearts. He wanted them to eagerly expect his coming. Instead he found a people who were self-centered, preoccupied, and indifferent.

On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, ‘Is it not written: “My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations”? But you have made it “a den of robbers”’ (15-18).

Jesus' main point here is that the temple is God's house. The temple must be used for God's purpose as a house of prayer for all nations. God's vision for Jerusalem is expressed in Isaiah 2:2-3, which says, "In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.' The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." As God's chosen people, the Israelite leaders should have had this purpose in their hearts. But they did not. When they should pray for world salvation, they prayed for their own welfare. They ignored God and his broken heart for perishing people. Their busy temple activity was nothing but a way to make a living. Because of their bad influence the whole nation was frustrated from living for God's purpose. Jesus took immediate and drastic action to restore God's purpose and presence in the temple.

As God's King, Jesus came to restore God's purpose for his people. As Jesus challenged the religious leaders to repent, Jesus challenges us to repent. We are the temple. 1 Corinthians 6:19,20 say, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body." God wants to restore his holy purpose in our lives. When we invite Jesus in, he cleanses all of our pride, selfishness, and darkness of sin and restores our souls. How did the religious leaders respond? They began to look for a way to kill Jesus. Jesus is truly a righteous King. Jesus challenges the power of evil with the almighty power of God. Jesus will not be satisfied with lip service or superficial offerings. Jesus wants to restore our life purpose with God's holy mission. Jesus wants us to pray for people of all nations to come to God and be saved.

In this passage Jesus comes as King. He is so gentle and humble that he comes to anyone who welcomes him. Jesus comes to save us from our sins and restore God's rule of love and peace in our hearts. Jesus is also the righteous Judge who expects good fruit from his people and who cleanses the temple with divine authority. May this King Jesus come into each of our hearts today and restore our purpose in God to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.