

What kind of King?

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[0 : 0 0] Well, it is good to be with you this Sunday morning. It is a joy and privilege to be going through this passage with you. But as I was looking at this passage, I was thinking back to how I avoided watching the coronation.

Some of you were glued to it, but it doesn't seem that long ago. At the coronation, what we saw was it was a huge event. There were countless horses with military men riding them, crowds lining the streets and singing and waving flags.

And Charles himself was taken in a large, ornate gold carriage drawn by horses. There was much pomp and ceremony, and however you feel about it, people flocked to come and catch a glimpse of him.

People were left wondering, what kind of king would Charles be? And today, in our passage, we see Jesus coming to Jerusalem. Crowds are coming out to meet him, and they're welcoming him and cheering.

And they're waving these palm branches and proclaiming Hosanna, and welcoming him as their king. But this king isn't coming with an army, isn't on a carriage, or even a horse.

[1 : 2 3] This king is coming humbly on a donkey. And last week, we had heard how this crowd were expecting and questioning whether Jesus would indeed go to Jerusalem.

Would he come? Would he be arrested? And would he be king? And this week, we see him arrive, but it is not the king that the people expect.

And today, we're going to see just what kind of king Jesus is going to be. And we're going to look at this passage under four headings. The king has come. He is a king for everyone.

This king rules in his death. And will you live for him? So first of all, we see the king has come. We see in verse 12 that a large crowd has come up to Jerusalem for the Passover.

And many hundreds of thousands would do this. They would come up from all over Israel and from the many nations the Jews had been scattered to. They would all gather in Jerusalem for this feast and celebration that was there to remember what God had done.

[2 : 3 2] How God had rescued them and delivered them from Egypt. How his judgment passed over them, over his people, and fell on their enemies because this blood of a lamb was shed in their place.

And this was meant to be a reminder forever for the people of Israel. They were meant to every year come and take this feast. To remember that God saves, and he does so by substitution.

The life of one for another. The lamb for you. And that these people who are gathered in Jerusalem for this Passover, they see Jesus coming, and they come out to meet him.

And they welcome him into Jerusalem. And we see they're waving their palm branches, and they're singing. And we see their joy as they proclaim him king.

In verse 13, they cry, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the king of Israel. And Hosanna just means save now.

[3 : 41] Because this is a military-occupied country who long to be free. Once again, saved by God as he did for them in Egypt.

But now it's from the Romans who occupy them. They want them to restore them to the days of King David. Sorry. Where there would be peace and prosperity, and no more enemies to challenge them.

To set them free to live according to the law of God, not the law of the Romans. And see, they've looked at Jesus. They've looked at the miracles, or as John calls them, the signs.

And they have decided that Jesus is the long-promised Messiah. The Christ, the one who was to come. The one the Old Testament told them would come.

And deliver God's people. This king from the line of David who would rule, and whose kingdom would stretch from shore to shore. But Jesus knows their expectations.

[4 : 48] And he knows their longings for a king to be like this. And as we saw, if you were with us, when we looked at it in John's Gospel in chapter 6, how Jesus avoids this.

They come to him and try and make him king in chapter 6, and they try and do it by force. We also see that Jesus knows the prophecy of Zechariah, which we have quoted for us in our passage in verse 15.

So that instead of riding on a war horse to liberate Jerusalem, Jesus is riding on a donkey. Where it reads in Zechariah, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king is coming to you. Righteous and having salvation is he. Humble and mounted on a donkey. On a colt, the foal of a donkey.

But notice that Jesus doesn't come to them on a donkey, and then they go, Ah, we should make him king. They make him king. They proclaim him to be their king.

[5 : 50] And in response, Jesus takes this donkey. Jesus is actively and choosing to fulfill this prophecy. He's meeting their expectations, but in a way that they do not even imagine.

But they should have. Because this is the sort of king that the Bible promised. This humble king of peace. And despite all these promises, there's a lot of commotion in Jerusalem.

Some believe, some doubt, and many do not understand. And we see this in verse 16, that even his own disciples seem to not understand what these things mean. But we learn they soon will.

We are told there that when Jesus is glorified, that is his death, they will remember, verse 16, that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.

They will then see this event as a fulfillment of him, the true king. We also see that there's those there, in verse 17, who were at the feast with Lazarus, who saw Lazarus, who was alive even though he had died.

[7 : 07] And they have gone up to the feast in Jerusalem and they're continuing to bear witness to anyone who will listen that this Lazarus who died was brought back to life by this man, Jesus.

And what is the response to the Pharisees? The ones who had sought information for anyone to tell them where they could find him so they could arrest Jesus. Well, they feel pretty defeated.

The crowds are going after him. There seems to be nothing they can do. You see this in verse 19. So the Pharisees said to one another, you see that you're gaining nothing.

Look, the world has gone after him. See, you don't need informers to know where Jesus is when he's riding into the city that is lined by people praising and singing and proclaiming him king.

It's not just a few followers now. It seems the whole city and even, as they say, the whole world that is going after him. Which is interesting. It takes us to our second point.

[8 : 13] This king is for everyone. I said this feast of the Passover is so important in the Jewish calendar. People from many other countries would come as pilgrims, those who were Jews, who'd been scattered, who'd ended up in all the other nations around the Mediterranean.

But also, there was many others who came who heard about this God and have come to worship him too. And these people would travel by boat, by camel, by donkey, by foot, and just come from miles and miles away all to Jerusalem.

And we see this in verse 20 where there's some among them who are Greeks. And these Greeks are most likely Gentiles who are God-fearers, who are believers, but outsiders.

And they have come to Jerusalem to worship. But these Greeks won't be allowed to come close. They can come to Jerusalem, they can come to the temple, and they can praise God, but they cannot get past the court of the Gentiles upon pain of death.

And here we see these Greeks, these outsiders who have come to Jerusalem and hearing all that is going on, how there's this uproar in the city of this coming king, and how these eyewitnesses are speaking of what he has done, how he brought a man back from the dead.

[9 : 41] And these Greeks, they come to the disciples of Jesus, not to Jesus himself, because they're far off. And look with me at verse 21, you'll see just how far off they are.

They ask Philip, which is a Greek name, who asks Andrew, and both of them then go to Jesus. But take a look closer in verse 21 at what they ask.

Sir, we wish to see Jesus. Sir, they say, we wish to see Jesus.

There's a longing. They want to get closer. They want to come and see him, to meet him. But how can they do that? Well, we don't see Jesus respond to them.

We don't see Jesus run over to them and give them a gospel presentation. Rather, look with me at verse 23, and we see Jesus answered them, answered Philip and Andrew, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

[10 : 46] This is a strange answer for we wish to see Jesus. But Jesus explains that this is a sign that the coming of these Greeks and the nations coming in to Jerusalem here and coming to see him speaks about an event that has happened.

His hour has come. His hour for the Son of Man to be glorified. This is not a new idea in John's gospel. It's been something that is all the way through it.

And if we had read through it, we would see it almost like a bookmark that comes up. My hour is not yet. My hour has not come. And if we'd read through it, we'd be left wondering, when will this hour come?

When will it be Jesus' hour? Well, now it has. Now that he's reached Jerusalem, now that these Greeks have come, Jesus says, now is the hour.

You might ask, why is it that these Greeks coming to Jesus, longing to see him, would be the reason for this hour? Well, Jesus has repeatedly said, he's not come just to be the saviour of the Jews only, but the saviour of the world.

[12 : 10] This is the good news of the gospel. And this is what we find in John's gospel. In chapter 3, we read, and as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

And the verse that follows, that we know so well, for God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes should not perish, but have eternal life.

For what John the Baptist proclaims about Jesus, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. This is what even the high priest said last week, but he didn't know he was saying it.

He didn't know the meaning. He said in chapter 11, but Caiaphas, one of the high priests, said to them, you know nothing at all, nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.

He did not say this of his own accord, but being the high priest, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

[13 : 30] And this is what the Old Testament promised, that this long-awaited Savior was never just to come for the Jews only. And in the passage that we had quoted in Zechariah, the very following verse goes on to talk about that this humble king who came on a donkey shall speak peace to the nations.

His rule shall be from the sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. This king is far more than someone who would just drive off the Romans.

He's going to bring peace to the nations to welcome them in and rule over them. This is far bigger than just a king over the Jews.

This is someone who is to be king of the world. Where the people of the nations around God who had once been outsiders are to be welcomed in, to come into God's temple to worship him.

Not as outsiders but as his own people. And in John's gospel this is the first time that the Gentiles have come to him. And this is what the Pharisees said if you remember back in verse 19 right before we met the Greeks.

[14 : 53] Look, the world has gone after him. the world, these outsiders. I think this is something a lot to say for us.

If we are Christians, who are the Greeks or the outsiders that we know? Who are those that are around us who wish to see him?

Who might not know it's Jesus they're looking for? Who may not feel welcome to come? who feel outside? But let us be that people who bring them to Jesus.

To bring them to his word so that they might see that this humble King Jesus is for them. Who tells them to come.

And if you are here this morning and you wish to see Jesus we wish to show him to you. this is what this church is here for. To show people who Jesus is.

[16 : 00] And if you do feel like an outsider feel that Jesus wouldn't welcome you I would ask you to look at him again. See that he says to come.

Because he is a king for everyone even you. If we feel that we are too weak too lost too broken too unwanted listen to him and he says come come to him.

So I ask will you come and see him with us? Come look at what we say in this third point. See our third point the king rules in his death.

See this king is quite like any other ruler. not just in how he acts as a humble ruler of peace or who he welcomes into his kingdom but in how he rules.

See Jesus rules in his death. Jesus explains that for in order for these outsiders to be welcomed in he must die in their place.

[17:12] He must become the Passover lamb. he explains that he must die to take the sins of the world and to welcome the nations in and he does it in a parable and he begins this parable with this typical style of emphasis in verse 24 he says truly truly I say to you which just means listen up this is important and it's as simple as it can be to a people in a society that lived by the land who planted their crops and if you want to know more about how this all works I'm sure you can go to Andrew and he'll explain to you just how wheat seeds go into the ground and how the crops all work but Jesus says to them he says as you all know that when you sow a seed when you put a seed into the ground this grain of wheat goes into the ground and it dies and it must die and when it dies it bears fruit and that fruit is a crop of wheat and Jesus is saying that he is the single seed that will go into the ground and die but he will bring much fruit the salvation of the nations he's saying that for them to be brought in he must die see for Jesus to enter into his glory it's not about him leading an army him amassing a wealth or even him riding this war horse into Jerusalem he's not come to overthrow the Romans but he is the seed that must fall into the ground and die see for Jesus the death isn't a way round about to get to the glory it is the glory because it will bear much fruit much and many people will be saved this is the way of this humble king to set people free from a true bondage from sin and from death to give them rest but this death and this approaching hour we see causes this soul to be troubled and he says this in verse 27 his soul is troubled and as to his father he turns in prayer as he contemplates this hour that is coming have a listen to what he says and what shall I say father save me from this hour but for this purpose

I have come to this hour the hour twice there this hour that he has come for he's not looking for rescue for it far from it this is the very reason that he left the glory of heaven he was born as a baby in Bethlehem the reason he grew up began his ministry and speaks these words of life and truth and it's a reason why he's come to Jerusalem even though the Pharisees have promised to put him to death why?

because for this very hour he has come he willingly takes this path even though it's an awful thought for the sinless one to take on the sins of the world for the one who has always been one with the father to cry out as one forsaken yet even though the soul is troubled at this thought instead of asking to be delivered from it look what Jesus says in verse 28 father glorify your name bring glory to your name and wonderfully we're given an insight and we get to hear the response an audible response that is heard by the crowds and some think it thunders others believe it is an angel who has spoken but we see that it's a voice come from the father then a voice came from heaven

I have glorified it and I will glorify it again Jesus tells them that this voice that is confirming him that the coming up to the hour of his death is for them it is for their benefit it's not the voice of these crowds who are crying out king this is the voice of the king of heaven the father who declares that his king shall rule and shall rule in his death and Jesus will continue to unpack what this coming hour is we've seen his death is coming his glory is coming and glory to his father's name is coming but we also see how he will die and how he will rule you see this in verse 32 he says when I am lifted up which is to show what kind of death he will have which you will see later as crucifixion but he says when I am lifted up then all people will be drawn to me all people will be drawn to me and these are words taken from

Isaiah 52 that we read every Christmas that Jesus is the servant who suffers and in Isaiah 52 we read in verse 13 behold my servant shall act wisely he shall be high and lifted up and shall be exalted and as many were astonished at you his appearance was so marred beyond human semblance and his form beyond that the children of mankind and so shall he sprinkle many nations go and read that go and read Isaiah 52 and see how it speaks of this king see how Jesus speaks and how he knew of his coming crucifixion he would be despised and rejected he would be pierced and crushed he knew that we were like sheep who have gone astray and that the Lord would lay our iniquity on him he knows he will die in our place he will be lifted high and crucified but in doing so he will draw all people to himself all the nations will come in and find forgiveness this is the promise of Jesus this it's the promise that the

[24 : 23] Bible makes throughout of the one who would come this is the promise of Genesis 3 the serpent crusher who would come born of the seed of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent but whose heel would be bruised this is what he says in this passage that he has come to judge he has come to defeat God's enemies you see this in verse 31 now is the judgment of this world now will the ruler of this world be cast out and this judgment that he comes for is upon God's enemy his true enemy the ruler of this earth not the ruler in Rome or on you this ruler we know as Satan will be cast out he will be defeated he will be removed from his usurped rule and Jesus will be lifted high because he is the eternal ruler of this world because it is only by defeating the current usurper rule that

Jesus can bring the nations in that he can bring the lost people from across the world to himself by him taking our place by him sending out his followers with this message who will go out and bring people in who will tell people that the rightful king reigns and we saw a taste of this if you were with us when we looked at Lazarus how Jesus wept at the tomb at this intrusion of death and yet with a word drew Lazarus out of the tomb death had no hold it had no power and this is why the people are in such uproar who is it that commands even death we'll see it again we'll see it again when when Jesus steps forth from the tomb death and we'll see it though we will die death will not hold us the same

Jesus who defeats death will save us will bring us to be with him and if this is the king like this if this is the king of this world it comes with implications for us we see this in 25 and 26 and it brings us to our last point will you live for him if Jesus is the king like this so should his people not live for him Jesus uses his love hate language which is just a way of speaking about your ultimate desire that you must follow this wholeheartedly and turn away from the other we see this in 25 whoever loves his life loses it and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life this is the cross shaped life that he calls those who follow him to so that if anyone would come after him he must take up his cross and follow him it's the opposites in the gospel where you lose what you cannot keep to gain what you can never lose and for us who seek to follow this king we need to turn away from other means of glory following the example of this humble king and it's made clear in 26 and listen out for the personal pronouns if anyone serves me he must follow me and where

I am there will my servant be also if anyone serves me the father will honor him Jesus is clear that he is the king you must serve him you must follow him and where he is you will be we're tied to him to follow Jesus is to live for him as a disciple and in John's gospel as you read through it the discipleship is a picture of a servant and Jesus is that picture of that servant who lays down his life for his people who tells his followers that there's no greater love than this and you lay down your life for your friends see the beginning we spoke about King Charles and his coronation that might make no difference to your life other than if you need a building opened or what picture you have on your bank note or whether you get a bank holiday even the oath of allegiance was optional but see

King Jesus' rule demands a response either you reject him or you follow him because he is Lord and Lord of all where you say where you go I will follow where you lead I go whatever the cost for it will be worth it he leads the example he lays down his life for us he welcomes the outsider and we must this is who we are as a church who we want to be those who welcome people in who show them Jesus and who follow Jesus ourselves Jesus also says if you follow me if you forsake the world and follow me the father will honour you Jesus promises that you do not earn it you do not deserve it but you have been given it freely and in response we live for him and if you know him as king will you live for him and it's good news for us but Jesus closes with a final sobering warning see this crowd they understand in bits but they have questions they say how can this be in verse 34 how can you say the son of the man must be lifted up who is the son of man they get that Jesus means his death and though they proclaim him to be

[31 : 20] Christ the promised saviour king they cannot understand how he could die and still be king how he can he defeat the Romans and all God's enemies and still be this ruler what they forget is this is the feast of the Passover where the lamb will die in the place Jesus says I'm about to do that for you that's who the Christ is see they don't understand that even though he's raised someone else from the dead they don't understand that Jesus is the about to do this Jesus makes one final appeal to them and it's the last time that he'll speak to the crowds and compel them to come in in John's gospel he says come to the light while you have the light while you have the light believe in the light this is the same Jesus who says he is the light of the world says the light is among you for a little while so come come to me come to me he says when he is lifted up he says he will draw you to himself because he was lifted up because he defeated death because he has defeated the rulers and the powers of this world we can come to him we can call other people to come to him and also we can live for him we have the power to live for him we are free to follow him as king he covered our sins in the past he'll cover our sins in the present and any in the future so will you come and follow him will you come and serve him and will you come and lead others to him let's pray that that would be true of ourselves