

Rev. Janet Doyle  
Elmer Presbyterian Church  
Palm Sunday  
April 10, 2022  
Scripture: Psalm 118: 19-29; Matthew 21: 1-11

## **Sermon: The King Is Coming!**

This morning's scripture reading from Matthew describes Jesus' Triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Jesus decided to go into Jerusalem, even though it was a dangerous place for him. Matthew wrote that Jesus came to Jerusalem to fulfill Zechariah's prophecy, written about four centuries earlier, that one day the true King would come, not on a magnificent war horse, but on a young donkey.

Zechariah 9:9 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 the colt, the foal of a donkey."

Popular thinking during Jesus' day was looking forward to a Messiah who was going to be an all-conquering hero throwing the Romans out and re-establishing Jewish sovereignty. That was probably why so many people came out that day.

Kings at times rode on donkeys in times of peace and the Jews certainly knew that Zechariah 9:9 was a prophecy of the coming King—the Messiah. Jesus, on that ride into Jerusalem, was proclaiming His Messiahship, His fulfillment of Scripture, and His coming in peace to offer salvation to the people. By this entry, Jesus was compelling the people to recognize Him, at least for the moment, as the coming King, which was predicted in Zechariah.

Jesus, God in human form, didn't come as a King in the way we would expect a king to come.

Isaiah 53 tells us what kind of King Jesus came to be.

"Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was

crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers was silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.”

Jesus, our King, our Savior, didn't come to wear a golden crown with jewels but he rode into Jerusalem knowing he was going to wear a crown of thorns and die upon the cross. Jesus, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, didn't come in the way we would expect a king to come.

Jesus, the King who was born in a humble stable, came as a servant—a suffering servant. He came to take away the sins of the world. Jesus loved us so much that His death on the cross gave us new life. Jesus paid the price for us so we would have eternal life because by His wounds we are healed.

Jesus is not a King we should fear. Nor is he an oppressor or an evildoer, nor is he greedy for self-gain, nor hungry for power to lord over people. Our earthly kings of history and dictators of the past and present are to be feared for they are out for selfish-gain and power. Jesus is an example we should follow. By contrast Jesus teaches us humility, poverty, and lowliness. Jesus is the only righteous King who saves. Jesus said once, (Matthew 11:29) “Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart!”

Jesus promises us that He will come again. We live and serve in His name, awaiting His return to us, and we need to be ready for our King's return. We don't know what hour or day or year he will come again but out of the clouds he will come riding on a white horse.

Revelation 19:11 says, “Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war.”

This verse reports that the apostle John saw heaven open and observed a rider on a white horse. The rider is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, who identified himself to the church in Laodicea as “the faithful and true witness.”

In the ancient Roman world, victorious generals would ride white horses in a victory parade. Their captives would be dragged behind them. So, in Jesus’ second coming our King will be riding a white horse as he returns to the earth.

In Revelation chapter 19, John sees Jesus now coming as the glorious King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

George Frederick Handel (1685-1759) composed a piece of choral music, “The Messiah,” in 1741. I’m sure most, if not all of you, have heard it. It has captured the hearts of all peoples with its heavenly majestic sound. At holiday times, followers of Christ gather together to sing and praise the Lord Jesus as the Redeemer, Ruler and King of all creation.

I love listening to and singing the final chords of this masterpiece with the wonderful truth of the words proclaiming Jesus, “THE KING OF KINGS, THE LORD OF LORDS, FOREVER, FOREVER, ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA. HE SHALL REIGN FOREVER AND EVER, ALLELUIA!” What an amazing piece of music!

In John 18:37, Pilate said to Jesus, “Then you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

This week we are entering into the holiest days of the year. Today Jesus is hailed as a King. The people gathered as Jesus approached Jerusalem shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in highest heaven!” The crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The entire city of Jerusalem was in an uproar as Jesus entered. “Who is this?” they asked.

Jesus, our King, did not have a golden chair, but he did have a wooden tree. The shouts of “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord” one minute soon became shouts of “Crucify him, Crucify him!”

His victory wasn't conquering land, but a victory in conquering death for all time. His victory will be an everlasting victory like no earthly king has ever known. The Son of God hung on the Cross in order to free us from the bondage and tyranny of the devil, and Jesus invites us into His Heavenly Kingdom. Jesus promises us that His Kingdom will have no end.

The saving act of our Lord and King becoming Emmanuel, God with us, suffering, and dying on the Cross, is the greatest expression of love that we will ever know. Let us walk the road to Jerusalem with Jesus this Holy Week.

As the Apostle Paul writes in Philippians, Christ "though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself...and became obedient to the point of death...even death on a cross." There is no greater commitment than that.

This Palm Sunday we are being challenged once again to reflect on our commitment as disciples of Jesus to our Lord, our Savior and King.

We can't just come to church on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday and not pay attention to Jesus' Last Supper, and the Passion of the Cross, feeling and understanding what the death of Jesus on Good Friday means to our life and faith. We have to experience the darkness of betrayal, and denial, and death on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday to see the hope and light of Resurrection Sunday. This is an essential piece to our faith. Don't miss Jesus' Last Supper and don't miss Good Friday. Come to worship services this Holy Week, and on Easter Sunday, you will understand why Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

No matter where we journey in life, as followers of Christ Jesus, we journey through Jerusalem and on to Calvary with our Lord. Like Jesus, we too are called to walk the way of the cross and be a servant leader. It is only at the foot of the Cross can we find forgiveness, reconciliation, peace, hope, assurance of salvation and new life with our King.

The King is Coming! Is Jesus your King? Is Jesus your Lord and Savior?

Today join me in welcoming our King!

"Hosanna, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Hosanna in the Highest!"