

The Coronation of the Humble King

Selected Scriptures

80-185

Certainly one of the most defining moments in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ was that great event that occurred on what we call Palm Sunday. It is such an important component of the gospel record that all four writers -Matthew, Mark, Luke and John - give great detail and insight into that event. In spite of the fact that it is in all four gospels, it is a definitive moment, if carrier great importance and value, it is largely overlooked by Christians, and that's sad, because it is so replete with truth and insight.

The world is always looking for great leaders, great rulers, great monarchs, great kings, great presidents, emperors. And Israel was no different. Israel was not just looking for a great king, they were looking for *thegreat* king. The Anointed one. The Messiah. The King of all Kings. The Son of David. The one who would come and set up a kingdom, the likes of which they had never experienced, which would far surpass the Kingdom of Sol or David or Solomon. They were looking for that great king who would establish an everlasting kingdom.

The King came, and he had a coronation in his first coming. And that coronation was a very defining moment in clarifying the nature of his Kingship, and the nature of his kingdom.

I want to address that monumental event by having you turn to the 21chapter of Matthew. Matthew, Chapter 21. We don't have kings in America;...in fact, we were established as a people who sought freedom from the rule of kings. America was born out of an anti-king revolution. We are a republic, a democracy... we are a people who wanna rule ourselves. In America, it is rule *by*the people.

Now as a result of our disassociation and even animosity toward monarchies, we know very little of the majesty, very little of the pomp, very little of the ceremony that attends a monarchy. The best we could do in understanding it is a periodic glimpse at the British Royal Family, which is really just another soap opera. Only it seems more fantastic than the fantasy soap operas. And, we may live long enough to see the coronation of another individual when the Queen Mother dies. But apart from the distant fantasies of television and the illusions that are brought to us on the small screen, we are very unfamiliar with the issues of monarchy, and particularly with the unique coronation of a king or a queen. But this is the event that we see in our text.

Jesus said to Pilate, "I am a king", and it was true he was. But he also said "My kingdom is not of this world". And the nature of his Kingship and the nature of his kingdom is demonstrated clearly in the coronation. And we'll see that in contrast to a typical coronation. The kings of the world, for example, have coronations that follow perhaps somewhat similar patterns, from earliest ancient times certainly in the western world and Europe, kings were inaugurated with some great public ceremony and great public honor. They might be raised up on a shield, placed head and shoulders above everyone and carried along that way, they might be placed on some sacred stone, they might be presented with

some symbolic spear that spoke of the greatness of their power and their authority and their right to execute. They might be given a sword, a bejeweled sword. They might be given a crown. Typically they wore a crown of great value filled with jewels and made of gold. They were given robes of distinction, and all of this was done in sight of the people, to affirm that this was their ruler, this was their monarch, and they were to obey Him and submit to Him.

It was also typical in Europe that this coronation of earthly kings and their national kingdoms was somehow infused with borrowed religious features that came out of the history of Israel, and they were back because of obviously the influence of the reformation, obviously the influence before that of the Roman Catholic Church, they went back to Scripture and they found there that there were kings in the Old Testament that had a divine right to rule, and therefore they gave divine sanction to these kings of the earth, ruling as it were as vice regents of God in their national sovereignties.

In England for many centuries, the king's coronation was followed by a banquet in Westminster Hall. It is also true in England that whoever is the king or the queen is the head of the church, again infused with a divine element or component.

When kings were coronated in England, and I suppose it'll happen this way again... if it occurs in our lifetime we'll see it...the king's champion and full armor would typically ride in on horseback or some mode of transportation into the presence of the great crowd, and he would throw down the gauntlet, and three times challenge anyone to deny the sovereign's right to the crown.

What he was doing was in effect symbolizing the fact that all the great champions and all the great soldiers and warriors and the armies that were a part of that nation were going to come to the defense of this man's right to reign. There was unequalled splendor in England, there was wealth, opulence beyond description, rich, clothing, horses, carriages, all the arch bishops, all the wealthy, all the noble, all the well known dignitaries, everybody was there. All the retinue and splendor that men could muster for the occasion was brought to bare, to bring honor to this monarch to show the glory of his kingdom, and as it were to crush the people into submission under the weight of this tremendous power.

Coronations in France were very similar. The king was vested with a purple robe made out of velvet, sprinkled with fleures or flowers of gold, wearing a gold ring and carrying a gold scepter. And the monarch was then paraded upon a mighty horse before the people, again indicating his splendor and sovereign power.

To give you just a little idea of some of the specifics, I went back and found some notes on the coronation of Queen Victoria, which was sort of a pinnacle of coronations, 1838. The crown made for Queen Victoria had rubies, sapphires, pearls, and was capped by a diamond - a 309 karat diamond. Now ladies, you can look at yours and just wonder what a 309 karat diamond would look like. Also, Queen Victoria was given a scepter, and the top of that scepter was the world famous diamond called the Star of Africa, 516.5 karats. Really amazing opulence, amazing wealth.

Coronations were obviously, on the basis of what we can tell from history, events of great splendor, great wealth, lavish wealth, which boasted of the glory and the honor of this earthly king and his kingdom. All of that to say the coronation of Jesus was anything but that, anything but that. And He was making a statement that not only was He a different kind of king, not only did He come for a

different kind of rule, but He was establishing a different kind of kingdom. It wasn't built on intimidation, it wasn't built on earthly wealth, it wasn't built on earthly power, it wasn't built on military might, it wasn't political, economics played no part in it, and its ruler is not one who parades Himself in a proud fashion, but one who humbles Himself. In fact, the dominant theme of the coronation of Jesus is humility - the very opposite of what you see in any other coronation of worldly kings. And yet, this is the truest and purest king ever, with the only true and pure and lasting kingdom.

So we come in Matthew 21 to the triumphal entry of Jesus. And we learn what kind of king He was, and what kind of kingdom He represented. It was a moment of glory which triggered, initiated, launched the Passion Week. In fact, this triumphal entry as it's called, this coronation of Jesus by the crowd is the last act in the drama of His public life; it's the last act in the drama of His public life. He will have some ongoing conversations with the leaders of Israel during the Passion Week, He will spend time with His disciples before His death, after His resurrection until His ascension for 40 days He will be with those who believe in Him, but as far as the populous is concerned, this is the last act in the drama of his public life. The next public event is His death, followed by His resurrection. This momentous significant moment not to be treated lightly and to be understood for its importance.

Now the coronation unfolds in this passage, we'll just look at the first 11 verses here, and I'll give you a simple little outline to sort of hang your thoughts on as we go through. It was Passover time in Jerusalem, a season in which the city was literally bulging with pilgrims. A beehive of motion and commotion. The city would swell from day to day to day as migrating Jews came into the city for this great annual holy feast, and Jesus was one of them, along with all the rest. He was coming for the Passover; not just to celebrate the Passover, but to become the true and only Passover lamb, slain for the sins of the world. Let's look at chapter 21 and begin with the end of the pilgrimage. Verse 1, the end of the pilgrimage: "And when they had approached Jerusalem, and had come to Bethpage to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples." When they had approached or drawn near Jerusalem, things were coming to an end. The end of journey for Jesus was Jerusalem. He was coming there to die. The goal of our Lord's pilgrimage was reached; this was the end of His earthly pilgrimage. This was the end of His 33 years, this was the end of his 3-year ministry, this was the end of His recent multiple-week trek from Galilee. He had left Galilee weeks before, and He'd come down the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee and along the east bank of the Jordan River through a place called Paria, and there He administered the Gospel of the Kingdom and the power of the Kingdom. He had come all the way down through the land of Palestine on that east bank of the Jordan until just north of Jericho, and He crossed over the Jordan River, and went then south in to the city of Jericho, which is on the west bank of the Jordan.

Chapter 20 of John tells us that He had come across and down into Jericho. There, He demonstrated His divine power in quite remarkable ways. One of the things that is absolutely unforgettable is the fact that He brought thereafter tax collector into his kingdom, a man by the name of Zacharius, who was small and wanted to see Jesus and in order to see Him he climbed up in a tree and was hanging over a branch, watching as Jesus went by through the crowd. And you remember, Jesus confronted him, went to his house, led him to a saving faith, redeemed that man. It was quite a remarkable conversion, it had immediate implications for everybody in town because he decided he would pay back everything he had extorted from people unjustly fourfold, and the conversion of Zacharius would have gone through the town of Jericho in a matter of minutes as people talked about this remarkable transformation.

And then there were two blind men; one by the name of Bardamayas, and Jesus gave them sight.

They were familiar folks around the pathways and roads of Jericho they had been begging as blind men for a long time. And no that they were seeing, this was a captivating, shocking, startling miracle.

From Jericho, then He ascended. It's about 17 miles from Jericho to Jerusalem, but it's almost straight up 3,000 plus feet. And they would have come up the old Roman Military road, which you can still traverse if you choose to. It's a little frightening sometimes in a bus to do it, but wonderfully adventuresome. And Jesus was trekking up that 3,000 plus feet to come to the city of Jerusalem. He would have arrived in Bethany, that's two miles east, just on the back side of the Mount of Olives you have the city of Jerusalem, the Tidron Valley where the Brook Tidronis. Then you have the Mount of Olives, which is not particularly large, and just on the other side is Bethany, just two miles from the eastern wall of Jerusalem.

It was time for Him to take his place as rightful king, it was time for Him to fulfill prophecy, it was time for Him to go into Jerusalem to be coronated. But, his coronation wouldn't be like most. First of all, it wouldn't be orchestrated by the establishment, it wouldn't be orchestrated by any noble group or any royal family or any elite people, it wouldn't be orchestrated by the local politicians, it wouldn't be put together by Roman governors and authorities, it wouldn't be put together by Jewish religious leaders; this was a coronation that would come as a grass roots movement from the people up. This would be a coronation that occurred by the mob deciding to crown Him king, apart from whether or not anybody in the establishment was for it or against it - in fact, *knowing* they were against it.

You remember, the people had been warned, "have nothing to do with Christ", John 11 talks about that. They were warned, they were threatened by the Jewish leaders to have nothing to do with Jesus Christ who posed a great threat to the existing Jewish establishment because he confronted their theology, and exposed them for what they really were: charlatans and frauds and spiritual hypocrites. And so the people were told to have nothing to do with Him. But in spite of what the establishment wanted, when Jesus arrived there was a grass roots, ground swelled, massive coronation of Jesus as King, that came from the populous themselves.

This was unusual. This would have looked more like a coo than a coronation to many. Not, however, in the normal manner was Jesus coronated. There was no crown, there were no jewels, there was no splendorous robe, there was no great white horse, there was no great champion riding in and throwing down a gauntlet, affirming that the military might of the people would come to defense of the sovereign. It was just unlike any other coronation. He came in meekness, he came in humility, there was no pride, there was no self-exaltation; he came not even in military mode - not even like a triumphant military general or conqueror. He came as one who was meek and humble, and he came more in a mode of peace than war.

When Jesus came into the city, it's important to note also that he didn't come alone - he had a rather formidable retinue that he'd accumulated in the trip. Starting in Galilee, there were people who came with Him as he traversed and as he taught and as he healed, the crowd grew and grew and grew in the weeks of his travel. And then there was Jericho and then there was the miracle of the conversion of Zachius and the two blind men, and the crowds swelled and swelled. And all the pilgrims who were coming down to Jordan Valley and sweeping up into Jerusalem would have been swept up into the interest of Jesus, and they were all migrating up that hill together. The crowd was growing and growing.

And of course when they reached Bethany, that added even more to the drama of the moment. They

reached Bethany, it says in John 12:1 "six days before the Passover", which would have put it on Saturday. They came into Bethany on Saturday, and when people heard that Jesus was in Bethany, that stirred a tremendous amount of interest. Bethany, as I said, was very nearby, and Bethany was the place where Lazarus lived and Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, and the city knew that. And the word that was now spreading to the pilgrims that were coming from everywhere, that Jesus who raised him from the dead was there, and Jesus was there, and the dead man who had come to life was there.

And as John tells us, the crowd began to migrate out of Jerusalem, down those two miles on the back side of the Mount of Olives to the place of Bethany not just to see Jesus only, John said, but particularly to see Lazarus, this man who was dead and had come back to life.

So six days before his crucifixion, one day before the triumphal entry, he is in Bethany, and the crowd is swelling and swelling. It's only six days until the Lamb of God, the Passover Lamb, the true sacrifice, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world will be offered. And he will be offered on the Passover day as the true Passover Lamb. God's timetable is perfect. Six days.

He'll spend those days in two places: Bethany and Jerusalem. In Bethany in comfort and love of his friends; Mary, Martha and Lazarus. And during the day he would go into the city and he will do what he needs to do in the temple. He will cleanse the temple on Monday and he will confront the leaders, and he will take their masks off as it were and reveal their hypocrisy, and escalate the hatred that leads to his death on Friday.

Only six days until the nails, only six days until the thorns, only six days until they spit in his face, six days until the cursings, the spear, the hate, the sin bearing, the loneliness of being God's Forsaken; only six days until he feels the full fury of the wrath of God upon Him - only six days.

During those six days there was some measure of comfort in the home of those he loved, but it was certainly offset by the stinging thorns from hell through the mouth of betrayer Judas to scar that otherwise sweet fellowship that he enjoyed at Bethany and his disciples. The hate was relentless all week long, and it was mounting. But for now, he's in Bethany. And for now, the crowd loves Him, and they've come to see Him. The one who could raise people from the dead, and to see the dead that he raised.

Not only, then, is there a huge crowd gathered in Bethany, but there's still a massive crowd in Jerusalem. Maybe one way to get a fix on how large the crowd would be would be to remember that 30 years after this event, 30 years after the execution of Christ; this would have been seven or eight years before the destruction of Jerusalem when Jerusalem was still flourishing, 30 years later. One of the Roman generals was ordered to take a census of the number of lambs that were slaughtered during the Passover. And according to the Roman record, there were 250,000 lambs slain in one Passover season - 250,000, a quarter of a million. Passover regulations among Jews indicated there was a minimum of ten people per lamb. If they followed that, there would have been at least two and a half million people in and around the city of Jerusalem during the Passover season. It is a monumental moment in terms of the vastness of this crowd. The most people at the greatest event. And that's where Jesus ends his pilgrimage.

Verse 1 again says: "Then Jesus sent two disciples". And by doing this, he initiates, he ignites he

triggers his execution. And it's all on perfect time schedule. The two were likely Peter and John. He sends these two disciples away. This is Jesus initiating the events of the Passion Week. He knew that he would enter the city, and there would be this massive, massive coronation by the populous. He also knew that because of this, the religious leaders would have their fury and their anger elevated. And that whatever plans they had for Him would therefore be hurried. They would be riding on a wave of greater fear than they'd ever experienced in the past over this man Jesus because now he commanded the entire mass of pilgrims. Now his influence extended beyond any local area, because these pilgrims had come from all over the surrounding world. They already wanted Him dead, but now they wanted Him dead quickly. And Jesus knew that this demonstration would trigger their hostility to a new level, thus leading to the cross soon, as God had planned it. By forcing the issue, Jesus was taking control of the events so that he would actually be killed by Friday, which was the day the Passover lamb was killed, and thus would be the perfect fulfillment of the Passover.

Once again, he shows that he's not a king like earthly kings, and he's not the king of Israel's hopes, he's not the political king they want, he's not the military king they want, he's not the welfare king they want. They wanted free food, they wanted medical care - in fact, you couldn't imagine a greater king than where you have all the food you can possibly want and never have to work for any of it because he creates it., never being ill - in other words, you have all you need to support your life, you have complete, perfect health, and then the military strength to defeat all your enemies. That's the king they wanted. That's the Messiah they wanted.

But Jesus was not that kind of king. He was not a military king, he was not the creator of a welfare state, and he was not someone who just wanted to make people physically whole. He was not a King who would bring a military to, and following uneasy peace, he was a King who would bring a spiritual peace that would last forever. His Kingdom was not of this world.

Like so many people today and always, the populous of Jerusalem wanted Jesus of their own invention. Not the Jesus who was the Son of God. They wanted Him to do their plan, not God's plan. They wanted Him to be King for who they wanted Him to be, not for who he was. It is likely then that it was on the next day, Sunday, that our Lord actually entered into the city.

By the way, that was exactly the day when the lamb was normally selected for Passover. So he presented Himself as Israel's chosen sacrificial Passover lamb, on the very day that Passover lambs were selected. He ended the pilgrimage leads us to the exactness of the prophecy.

Let's go to the second point, the exactness of the prophecy. When Jesus sent out the two disciples, he had something marvelous in mind. He said to them in verse 2, "Go into the village opposite you that's Bethage, and immediately (or straightway as it is translated sometimes) you'll find a donkey tied there, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to Me". Go over to Bethage which means house of figs. It's an obscure village, archeologically we don't know where it is, it's somewhere between the Mount of Olives and Bethany, somewhere in that vicinity.

The Mount of Olives is a 2,600 foot high ridge that runs east of the little higher plateau of Jerusalem, and between it is the Kidron Valley. So he says, "You go the Bethage" which would have been very, very close to Bethany nearby, "and when you get there, you'll find a donkey tied and a colt with her". Supernatural knowledge. Mark tells us in Mark 11:2 that they found them exactly as Jesus indicated. And He said, "When you find them, untie them and bring them to Me".

It is possible this is the home of some follower of Jesus who had believed in Him, some would be anxious to supply this animal for Him to ride, and Mark and Luke both add that the animal had never been ridden, which is an interesting note. Because according to Deuteronomy 21:3, and 1 Samuel 6-7, "To ride an animal young and never before ridden was a sign of special honor". It wasn't just a common animal that everybody rode...this was one set apart that had never been ridden by anybody else, just a matter of distinction.

And so Mark and Luke tell us that this was an animal in such qualification. The mother was probably led out in front so that the colt would follow more readily, and the animals could be returned later that afternoon when Jesus came back from Jerusalem from Bethany. Verse 3, "Just in case anybody says anything to you, you shall say the Lord has need of them, and immediately he will send them." How did he now that? Well, He's Sovereign God; they'll do whatever He prompts their heart to do. "If they ask, 'Why are you taking these animals and what is the purpose', just tell them and they'll be glad to let you have them. Just tell them the Lord has need of them". Which, again, is indication to me that they likely were Christian people...or believing people weren't called Christians then...but believing people, who had committed themselves to their Messiah.

And according to Mark and Luke, this is exactly what happened; they went, a question was asked, they were told the Lord has need of them, and they were given the freedom to take the animals. The Lord has control of all the details, all the timing, everything. Here is the true King, sovereignty orchestrating His own coronation in every detail, every detail.

Now before we follow the disciples in the doing of this, the Lord says why He's doing this, verse 4. The reason the Lord is doing this is because this taking place fulfills what was spoken through the prophet. In other words, Jesus wants to demonstrate again his Messiahship by fulfilling prophecy. And He quotes a specific prophecy taken from Zachariah 9:9 with an introduction from Isaiah 62:12: "Say to the daughter of Zion, (verse 5) behold your king is coming to you meek, and mounted on a donkey even on a colt, the fowl of a donkey" or as it's indicated in the NAS, the beast of burden.

Now Jesus is gonna fulfill prophecy in doing this, another evidence of his Messiahship. Some people say, "Well, you know, Jesus was kind of a good guy and He was a wonderful teacher, and He kind of got swept up in the enthusiasm of the crowd, and it ultimately got Him killed". Jesus didn't get swept up in anything. He was deliberately acting on God's schedule, and He was orchestrating every single component. Everything He did was generated at this series of events launched on Sunday. Not the least of which, by any means, was the fulfillment of Zachariah 9:9.

Let's look at verse 5, "Say to the daughter of Zion", that's an expression to identify the people of Jerusalem. This is a common Hebrew figure by which a city was represented as the offspring of the locality. The locality, Mount Zion, was the premier mountain there and the people around it were sort of seen as the "daughters of Zion". Zion was the most prominent point in Jerusalem...higher than Mount Moriah, by the way.

So the Prophet calls to the people of Jerusalem in the future, and he says, "Behold your King is coming to you". Behold He's coming. And this is right out of Zachariah 9:9. "He's coming meek, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt; the fowl of a donkey. Your King is coming". But Zachariah's presentation of this king is so different. This is not the typical coronation of a proud sovereign, this is

not the typical coronation of military conqueror. By the way, if you go back to Zachariah 9, you can read contrast there. The first seven verses of Zachariah 9 prophecy a human king, namely Alexander the Great. And the first part of Zachariah 9 prophesies Alexander the Great's campaign thorough Syria, Phoenicia, Philistia and Israel, and how he conquered all those nations, and even saved Israel.

And Zachariah sang, "The Lord will use a human conqueror", Alexander the Great. But, when the Messiah comes, He's not gonna come like Alexander the Great came, He's gonna come riding on a colt, the fowl of a donkey. You can be sure that's not how Alexander the Great came. Not at all. "And He will not be like Alexander the Great", the contrast of Zachariah 9 is really wonderful. "He will not be a foreign tyrant, He will be your own king. He will not be like Alexander the Great...cruel and oppressive...but righteous. He will not come slaying, but saving. He will not come rich like Alexander, but poor. He will not come proud like Alexander, but meek. He will not come riding a great white horse, but the colt of a donkey. He'll be your king. He'll come in righteousness. He'll show Himself a savior." Literally, that's what Zachariah says in Hebrew. He'll come humbly, not like any other king, riding on a colt, the fowl of a beast of burden.

You know, donkeys had a little respect in Israel. They don't have any respect today in most cultures, but in Israel donkeys had a little respect - until Solomon. Solomon brought in the horse. And when Solomon instituted the wide use of horses, donkeys lost their dignity, whatever dignity they had. Jeremiah 17:25 can be noted in that regard. And you just would not imagine a king being coronated riding on the colt of a donkey. Just doesn't fit. But this king was not like any other king.

And what He was doing was making a statement...this is a defining moment. He is saying, "Folks, my Kingdom is not like any other Kingdom. It's not military. It's not economic. It's not political. It's not about human power. It's not about intimidation. It's not about earthly power. It's not about that. It comes in meekness. It comes in humility". He was declaring Himself not to be a military Messiah. He was declaring Himself not to be a political Messiah. He was declaring Himself to be a meek and lowly sacrifice for sin. It is a scene of immense humility, riding a common beast of burden, an animal for a time of peace - not a time of war.

So the Lord sent his disciples to start the prophetic fulfillment, which would affirm that He indeed was the true and promised Messiah.

Well, the disciples obeyed, verse 6; the disciples went and did just as Jesus had directed them, and brought the donkey and the colt and laid on them their garments on which He sat. Matthew indicates that they put their garments on the colt and on the donkey, their outer long robes, because they didn't know which one He would choose to ride. They weren't too good on their prophesy either. In fact John 12 ... I read it earlier to you ... they didn't understand the prophesy at all until after the ascension, when Jesus went back to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit. Then it finally dawned on them that that was a prophesy being fulfilled. They were doing it and didn't even know it.

Well He took His seat on the colt, with the help of the disciples according to Luke 19:5, and the mother donkey leading, they went off toward Jerusalem, to enter as king. Clear prophetic fulfillment; just what Zachariah had said, just the way it would be. An exact, precise fulfillment.

So we've examined the end of the pilgrimage and the exactness of the prophesy, let's turn thirdly to

the epitome of praise. What happens as He comes in that Eastern gate is quite remarkable. In verse 8, you could translate this one of two ways: most of the multitude or a very great multitude. It was definitely a very great multitude, as we noted earlier...it could have been upwards to two million plus.

They spread their garments in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road. This is a very great multitude. It includes ... now remember, all these migrating pilgrims from Galilee all the way down through Peria, the back side of the Jordan Valley, the east side of the Jordan Valley, across picking up these multitudes of people in Jericho who were drawn to Him because of the wonders that were done there, they've come to Bethany and people have come out of the city of Jerusalem to Bethany, people who live locally have known that He was the one who raised Lazarus from the dead, they know Lazarus. The crowd is huge, this crowd is moving toward the city of Jerusalem around Jesus. At the same time, there's a crowd in the city and the two crowds are converging on the gate as He enters. A very great multitude.

And the word has gone all over everywhere, that The One who feeds the multitudes, The One who raises the dead, The One who does miracles is coming. Enthusiasm is overwhelming. Excitement is great. They believe this is the moment of their Messiah. And again, the leading Jews, the Sages, the Pharisees, the Chief Priest, the High Priest, everybody who's in the power has nothing to do with this. What you have is a grass roots movement. They disregarded the warnings of their leaders, the resurrection of Lazarus having excited their expectations, they started to throw their clothes in the way to create a carpet for Jesus to ride this little fowl into the city. By the way, doing that ... according to 2 Kings 9:13 ... is an act of submission, or obedience, to a king.

In fact, they outdid themselves. I mean, it wasn't enough they took their garments and threw them there, they started cutting branches from the trees. According to John's Gospel 12:12, 13 I read to you earlier, they were palm branches. Palm branches, palm trees were always symbols of strength and beauty and joy and deliverance and salvation because in that desert land, palms served as a great assistance to live. They provided a measure of shade, they provided fruit for the people, even their stock or the trunk from palm trees was used in various ways and the branches could be cut down and used for thatched roofs and various kinds of things. So palms spoke of strength and beauty and joy and salvation because they played such a positive role. You see them again in Revelations 7, when you see the multitude say of the tribulation and their waving palm branches as their praising the Savior.

So they were cutting down these branches which were symbols of strength and beauty and joy and salvation, all of that, and they were throwing them at His feet, again hailing Jesus as the conquering hero as He comes riding in on this little donkey's colt.

Remember now, Passover could have excited them because the first Passover was when God had delivered them from ... where? ...from Egypt. And maybe this is the time when he's gonna deliver us from the bondage of Rome. Once, the Passover brought us out of the bondage of Egypt, maybe this is the time to bring us out of the bondage to Rome. And remember, Jesus had demonstrated and said He was greater than Moses, and Moses never raised the dead. Surely this was the moment. The people are filled with hope, they're ecstatic, the enthusiasm is basically incendiary and highly infectious, and this crowd becomes a mob. People are caught up and swept up in the euphoria. And verse 9 says: "And the multitudes going before Him and those who followed after" ... these are the two crowds converging ... "were crying out, saying 'Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest.'"

Folks, this is all a representation that they were convinced this was God's great anointed Messiah King. Hosanna to the Son of David. Do you know what Hosanna means? "Save now. Save now. Save now". It could be translated as "grand salvation". It is the cry for deliverance. They're not talking about their souls folks. They're not talking about their hearts. They're not talking about eternal things...that's the sad part. They wanted immediate freedom from the bondage of Rome. They wanted immediate deliverance from the diseases of life and the battle for bread. They wanted everything that Jesus could do to be done right there; they wanted all the glories of the Kingdom the prophets had talked about. Right then. So prayer and praise were combined in "hosanna, save now, save now, save now", and it swelled across the masses of tens and twenties of thousands of people in every direction.

And they say it to Him as "Son of David", which is a messianic title: 2 Samuel 7:12, 13: "There would be a son of David who would be the Messiah with an everlasting kingdom" and they're saying, "You're our king. You're the Son of David we've waited for all of these centuries. You are our king; you are David's heir". And He was - His father Joseph came through the line of David and bore the right to the throne. His mother came through the line of David, and had the blood, the royal blood in her veins, so on both sides He had a right to be the king. He was a rightful king in Israel.

And they acknowledged it, and they say, "You're our king, you're the Son of David." And then they say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" and they're quoting Psalm 118. Psalm 113 to 118 is called the "Hallel"; halleluiah. And this is the last Psalm in the Hallel. Hallel means to praise God. And they're praising God, because the one that God has promised to come in His name is here. These Psalms, by the way, were part of the first memory work of all Jewish children. They were needed to be memorized because they were sung at all the great events, particularly part of the Passover ritual.

And Psalm 118 is known as the "Conqueror's Psalm". The Psalm which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner, that's how Psalm 118, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord", that's Psalm 118:26. These very words were sung and shouted at Jerusalem many, many times. Particularly they had been sung and shouted when Judas Maccabeus ... you remember there was a Jew during the intertestamental period, the 400 silent years between the old and new testament, they were under Syrian power, Syrian authority, and Judas Maccabeus was the general that lead the Jewish army to overthrow the Syrians. That was 100 years earlier than this. And then they had sung the great Hallel, concluded with Psalm 118 attributing to Simon Maccabeus that great power.

But it was a distinctively messianic song. And here they're hailing their conquering Messiah, their conquering king, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord", and then they say "Hosanna in the highest". Let's take the message of "save now" and catapult it right up into the throne of God, and put it up into Heaven, right where God dwells, right in the abode of God. "God, bring down your salvation through your Anointed One. Crush Rome". And this is the mood. This must have been absolutely overwhelming.

And here was the crowd, on one completely different wavelength than Jesus. Crying out for political, military, social, economic deliverance from all the issues of life that are temporal...and here was Jesus, coming in not riding on a great white steed with all kinds of pomp and circumstance, but meekly coming to be a sacrifice for sin. And they wanted Him to conquer Rome. And on Monday, He

went out conquering, and He made war, but He made war on the temple ground with the Jews. And that catapulted the whole exhilaration of Sunday into the blackness of them crying for his death. He was supposed to overthrow the Romans, not the Jews.

They wanted all their comforts in life immediately. He came as a savior. And when He confronted their sin instead of their political problems, their big problems were their sin problems. When He confronted their sin problems, and unmasked their sin, they executed Him.

It was an unusual coronation, wasn't it? A pageant of a king like no other, with a kingdom like no other.

I was reading the other day that the third most common subject in American journalistic history is the sinking of the Titanic. That is in all journalism and literature in our country. The second most common subject addressed in American literature is the Civil War. The number one most common subject addressed in American Literature throughout the history of this nation is the life and death of Jesus Christ. This may have been the most unusual coronation, but it is the most well-remembered one. There never was any like it. You say, "But truthfully John, our king deserves a better coronation", that's true. He does. And may I remind you, He will have it. He will have it. He will be crowned King of Kings, Lord of Lords.

This is the King with two coronations. One was a fickle transitory coronation by people who totally misunderstood Him, and the next one will be a coronation in which He will come in great power, destroy the ungodly, destroy the wicked, and glorify His own, and establish His Kingdom on earth. He will have that coronation. Revelation 11:15-17, Revelation 17, Revelation 19; yes, He'll come back. He's coming, and He's coming to reign, isn't He.

So our Lord comes to the end of the pilgrimage, fulfills the exactness of the prophecy, receives the epitome of praise from men, but the last point, and the one that sadly we have to arrive at is the element of perplexity...the element of perplexity. They all looked so good.

You come to verse 10, when He had entered Jerusalem all the city was stirred. Literally, the drink is shaken. It's used in Matthew three times, that same word, to speak of earthquakes. The whole place was rattled. The place was shaken. They were saying, "Who is this?" The whole place is caught up in this thing, and they're saying, "The king is here? The king is here? The Son of David's here? Who is it?" And the multitudes were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth and Galilee". That was kind of strange. Nothing good ever came out of Galilee. Nazareth was a hick town, and the Messiah certainly couldn't have come from there, He should have come out of the religious establishment.

Luke says the whole crowd was praising God with a loud voice. Mark says what John says, that the Pharisee said, "The whole world has gone after Him. I mean, this thing is, this is way beyond our ability to control". People caught up in the malay were weren't even sure what was going on, they were saying, "Who is this? Who is this? Who is this?"

And the answer was, "This is the Prophet Jesus from Nazareth and Galilee". True as far as it went, but terribly incomplete... would you agree? What's left out? This is not just a prophet from Nazareth and Galilee ... this is who? This is God in human flesh. This is the Son of the living God. Yes He was

a prophet, but the people had always seen Him as a prophet...they'd always seen Him as a prophet. Yes, He was from Nazareth, a town that mostly garnered disdain. And even today if you go there, it's a pretty tacky place. And Galilee...that was rural Israel. So far as they went, they were accurate, but it was all pretty incongruous that some prophet, some preacher out of Nazareth and Galilee should be hailed as the Son of David, Messiah, Savior, King, the one sent from God.

His ministry came to a climax, the whole populous hailed Him as King and Savior, and even identified Him to a certain point, but not beyond. And they really wanted Him to be the Jesus to meet their agenda. And people are still like that today. Show them a Jesus who will fix their life, show them a Jesus who will solve their problems, minimize their battle for bread, minimize their anxiety, deliver them from the illnesses and difficulties of life. Show them a Jesus who can prevent death or raise dead people, show them a Jesus who cares about suffering people. They like that. But then you expose to them a Jesus who confronts their inequity, who confronts their sin and their transgression, and they'll wanna get rid of Him. It's always been that way.

This was the defining moment for them. This was the defining moment for Jesus, too. They were trying to elevate Him, and He was trying to humble Himself. They thought he was coming to conquer Rome, and he was really coming to be a sacrifice for their sins. They thought He was coming to win a battle, He was really coming to be defeated as it were by the wrath of God..

And the next day when He goes into the temple and attacks the Jews, and then when they see the Romans take Him prisoner and start to control Him, there's an escalation of their hostility toward the same Jesus they had hailed on Sunday, and by Friday they screamed for his blood to the degree that He's executed. They had all the convincing revelation, they had all the information, they asked the right question, they were given the right answer as far as it went, but in the end they rejected their Savior because they were looking for somebody their own plans devise rather than the one God sent.

Now the Lord does care about your pain, and He does care about your problems, and He does care about the issues of life, and He does care about your well being, and He is compassionate, tender-hearted and merciful, but Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And He's gonna confront your sin, and He's gonna unmask your hypocrisy; this true Christ is gonna go for the heart, as it were. He's not interested in fixing your temporal life, He's interested in changing your eternal destiny. And that's a matter that has to call for the dealing of sin. He comes to forgive your sin. He comes to expose it, and then forgive it. He comes to die on a cross to be your sacrifice, your substitute, to take your death, to die in your place, to feel the wrath of God for you, in order that you might be free to enter into the joy of becoming like Christ. And as we heard sung earlier, standing in the glory of his presence forever. That's why He came.

Don't substitute the Jesus of your own invention for the one who came. "If anybody comes and preaches another Christ", Paul said, "let Him be cursed". There's only one Jesus Christ, and that's the one who came the first time to seek and to save that which was lost. He came to die, He came to be a sacrifice for sin. He doesn't have a political agenda, He doesn't have an economic agenda. He doesn't have a social agenda, He has a spiritual one. And it's not all about this world, it's all about the world to come. It's not about the kingdoms of men, it's about the Kingdom of God. It's not about making your life more comfortable, it's all about forgiving your sin and dealing with inequity in your life. That's why He came.

And it was all fine, until he began to unfold his real agenda, and then they killed Him. But that, too, was in God's plan, wasn't it? And He was on target to end up on the cross on Friday, in order that He might bear the sins of some of the very people who cried for his blood.

Father, we thank you for this glimpse. We thank you for this vision from the pen of the inspired writer Matthew, that allows us to look at the cross through the triumphal entry, to see the tremendous contrast between who Jesus was and who the world wanted Him to be. Those of us who know you also realize that life still isn't all that we would like it to be, we still struggle and suffer and battle for bread and endure illness and disease; we exist in negative social circumstances and in environments politically and morally that we would do anything to change, but you're not yet prepared to change this world. You will do that eventually, in the glory of your Kingdom, when you recreate the earth.

But for now, your mission has to do with the souls of men. It has to do with confronting their sin and hypocrisy and unmasking that, and calling them to repentance and faith in the Savior who gave his life for them. We don't wanna be in the fickle crowd, who want the Jesus of our own liking. We wanna be among those true believers, who accept the Savior for who He is. Came the first time to be the Passover lamb, to humble Himself, take on the form of a servant. Be found in fashion as a man, and be literally humbled to death, even death on a cross. And having been sufficiently humbled to die for us and bear our sin, He will be coronated and exalted to the height of the highest infinite heaven. We know He's already been exalted and set at the right hand on your throne, and someday He'll be exalted in his creation, when He comes back to reign as King of King and Lord of Lords.

But in the meantime, we accept Him as the humble, sacrificing savior who gave his life for us. And we acknowledge Him as the one who alone can deliver us from our sins. And give us the hope of eternal life, and for that we rejoice. We don't wanna be among the fickle crowd, we wanna be among the true worshippers of Chris who hail our humble King, because He came to die for our sins. For that we love and adore Him, and we pay, O God, that we may ever do the same, to your Honor and Glory, Amen.

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