

# The Humble King (Palm Sunday)

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Preacher: Shawn Woo

[ 0 : 00 ] We are currently in a sermon series in the book of Exodus, but as it is Palm Sunday, we'll be taking a short break and we will be in Matthew chapter 21 today.

So please turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 21. For those of you who are new to your Bibles, Matthew is the first book in the New Testament. It comes after the book of Malachi and before the book of Mark.

Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word. Heavenly Father, we humble ourselves before your Word again.

We pray that you would strike us anew with a sense of wonder and awe before Christ the King.

We pray that you would remind us and assure us of his humility, meekness, gentleness, patience, and love.

[ 1 : 20 ] That we might know him rightly and love him wholly with our whole heart.

As is fitting. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Matthew chapter 21, verses 1 to 11.

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her.

Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, The Lord needs them, and he will send them at once.

This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, Say to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.

[ 2 : 37 ] The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest! And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, Who is this?

And the crowd said, This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee. This is God's holy and authoritative word. During the last two years, the celebrations for the July 4th here at Boston was somewhat muted.

It was canceled one year, and then I think last year they had the Boston Orchestra perform at a different location, all because of COVID. But normally it's a no expense spared affair.

[ 3 : 48 ] It's a huge celebration where about half a million people gather, many of them clad in red, white, and blue to celebrate the Independence Day. And the air, if you've been there, I've only been there once and have never dared to go back since.

And if you've been there, the air is filled with sweat and energy. It's loud everywhere. It's great fun for the crowd that's there.

But it's all work for the governing officials and law enforcement officials. And that's because it's difficult to maintain order in such a crowd.

And like dry kindling that instantly catches on fire with a single spark, a large energetic crowd like that can quickly spiral out of control with the right set of conditions.

And as we see later in Matthew 26, verse 2, Jesus is here entering Jerusalem on the week of Passover. Jerusalem's normal population around this time is estimated to be around 30,000.

[ 4 : 51 ] But during Passover, which was the most enthusiastically and widely observed holiday, a Jewish feast, the number of people in Jerusalem swelled to around 200,000.

Much like the modern-day Hajj, where Muslims from all over the world make pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, Jews back in the day made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for Passover from all over the Middle East and the Mediterranean region.

Jerusalem, obviously, as a city, could not properly accommodate all of these pilgrims. And so they pitched, tens of thousands of people pitched tents all around Jerusalem, the city proper, and camped out.

It's bustling season and bustling life for the first century Jew at this time. And remember also the meaning of the Passover, that this is something that Jews had been celebrating for 1,400 years by this time.

And it was a celebration of God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt, as we've been looking at in the book of Exodus. It's pretty much like the Jewish Independence Day.

[ 5 : 57 ] Except the Jews were not independent anymore. The Jews were not independent anymore. They were occupied and oppressed by the Roman Empire. And they had been waiting for God to send another deliverer, like Moses or David, to free them from Roman rule.

And so imagine celebrating Independence Day under the noses of your occupiers. There's cause for these governing officials to be nervous, for the rulers to be put on notice.

Imagine a scene with the family, a Jewish family gathering around the hearth, eating the Passover meal. They recount their slavery for 300 years in Egypt, and of how God brought 10 disasters upon the nation, and upon Pharaoh, and delivered Israel with a mighty hand.

And then they whisper to their children, hey, God can do it again. He promised to send another prophet like Moses, in Deuteronomy 18.

So you can imagine the nationalistic fervor, and the religious zeal that filled the Passover celebrations. This is why Pontius Pilate, who was the Roman governor, the procurator of Judea, is in Jerusalem at this time, as we find out later in Matthew 27.

[ 7 : 17 ] He normally resided in Caesarea, but during the Passover, he was in Jerusalem proper, because of its deep religious and national significance. So that's the mood.

It's rife with religious fervor and political tension, and it's in this climate that we see King Jesus riding into the city of Jerusalem. This glorious scene teaches us that Jesus is the humble messianic king who saves us from our slavery to sin.

So we're going to examine first five evidences of Jesus' kingship, and then we're going to see three responses to Jesus' kingship. It says in verse one, Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphagia, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples.

Each of the three locations named here is significant. Jerusalem is the largest and most significant city in Israel. The temple of the Lord stood there, so it was the religious center.

Matthew 4, 5 calls it the holy city. Faithful Jews were expected to celebrate the major festivals in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was also where King David had his court.

[ 8 : 31 ] That was the capital. So Matthew 5, 35 calls it the city of the great king. It was the political center. So even though it was under the rule of the Roman Empire at the time, the Jewish king historically ruled from there.

So it was also the political center, as I said. So Jerusalem is important. Bethphagia was a town on the outer fringe of Jerusalem, and its Aramaic name means house of unripe figs, or house of green figs.

Just a few verses later, in Matthew 21, 18 to 22, Matthew tells a story of how Jesus comes upon a fig tree, and he looks to eat a fruit from it, but it has no fruit, only leaves, and so he curses it.

And the fig tree serves as a metaphor for the house of Israel. Jesus came to Jerusalem to inspect the fruit of God's people, but there is no fruit, only leaves.

And so the name Bethphagia is ironic. Israel should be in a house full of green figs, fresh figs, but instead it is a house of no figs, only leaves.

[ 9 : 37 ] Even more specifically, Jesus goes to the Mount of Olives. Political leaders often have to be mindful of the symbolic significance, implications of their actions, and where they hold their rallies, for example, or what song they will play when they're coming up to the stage, and so on.

So to give you one example, during the 2016 presidential election, Hillary Clinton often mentioned during her campaigns that she intends to make history by breaking through the last glass ceiling standing in the U.S.

If you remember, she chose, as the location for the election party, the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in Manhattan, which is almost entirely made of glass.

Very intentionally, she was making a political statement. So political leaders have to choose those things carefully. So in a similar way, Jesus has very deliberately chosen the Mount of Olives.

That's the location from which he will approach and enter Jerusalem. Because it was prophesied in Zechariah 14 that the Messiah, the prophesied king, the promised king and representative of the Lord, would come to Jerusalem and stand on the Mount of Olives, and that he would fight the decisive battle against the enemies of God's people and deliver them, save them.

[11:00] So Mount of Olives is the beginning point of King Jesus' inaugural parade. These specific locations heighten the messianic expectations, and these expectations are heightened even further by the use of the verb draw near in verse 1.

It says, Jesus and his followers drew near to Jerusalem. Matthew has used that word carefully only three times up to this point in his gospel, and all three of those times he used the verb to proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is near.

So as Jesus is now set to draw near to Jerusalem and arrives on the Mount of Olives, there's the expectation for the Messiah reaches a fever pitch. The kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God is finally at hand.

It's here. This is the first evidence of Jesus' kingship, the geographical setting. And the second evidence is what Jesus does in verses 2 to 3.

It says that Jesus sent two disciples saying to them, go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me.

[12:13] If anyone says anything to you, you shall say the Lord needs them, and he will send them at once. Jesus here is displaying supernatural knowledge and sovereign control in his instructions to his disciples to secure a colt for him to ride on.

And if anyone objects to them, untying the donkey in her colt, they are to respond, the Lord needs them. Since the Lord, the title is most often used throughout the gospel of Matthew to refer to the Lord God, Yahweh.

The fact that Jesus appropriates this title for himself is incredible. And notice that the disciples are not instructed to tell the owner of the colt that, hey, we'll take good care of it and we'll return it very soon after.

No, there's no such assurance. Their simple answer is, the Lord needs them. And Jesus expects the owner of the colt to comply at once.

This situation conveys Jesus' kingly authority. In the ancient world, it was understood that a king had the right to impress the property of his subjects into his service.

[13:23] So Jesus is acting as royalty here. We have something similar even in our own context. We call it eminent domain, right? Got some lawyers who know that about far more than I do.

That gives the government the power to take property, private property, and convert it into public use, as long as they provide fair compensation for it.

So for example, in the 1930s, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts appropriated all private property in the towns of Dana, Infield, Greenwich, and Prescott. They relocated all of its residents and then filled the towns with water to create the Quabbin Reservoir in order to ensure that there's plenty of safe drinking water for the Boston metropolitan area.

That's still the largest inland body of water in Massachusetts. Can you imagine just coming to you one day and saying, hey, you guys are all moving out of here. They have the power to do that. We gave them that kind of power to do that.

Now, this was the prerogative of the government, the rulers of the state of Massachusetts, and Jesus demonstrates a similar power here. He impresses into his personal service a private property of one of his subjects.

[14:34] And the fulfillment of Jesus' command is proof that he actually has this kind of authority. It says in verses six to seven, the disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them.

They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. In biblical narratives, this is called the command fulfillment formula.

The person in authority issues a command, and the command is fulfilled exactly as he has said.

This highlights Jesus' kingly authority. If I ask some of you, hey, can you go and ask one of the neighbors to give me the keys to their car and bring their car over to me because I need a ride

somewhere?

First of all, none of you would do it. Secondly, even if you were to try to do it, you would face all kinds of resistance. You would not succeed. You'd probably end up in jail.

Why? Because I don't have that kind of authority. But Jesus does because he's the king. It's the second evidence of his kingship.

[15:40] The third evidence of Jesus' kingship is the way he is honored by the crowds following him in verses seven to eight. It says they brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

Spreading garments on the ground so that a person does not have to walk on the bare earth is a gesture of honor and respect to the king, similar to the practice of rolling out the red carpet for presidents and other heads of state when they visit on formal occasions.

It's a practice that dates to at least the fifth century B.C. You can see an example of this in 2 Kings 9.13, where people lay their garments underneath the newly anointed king Jehu.

And so this is yet another evidence of Jesus' kingship. And that's why what the crowd shouts in verse nine is so appropriate. They shout, Hosanna to the son of David.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest. The title Son of David is a messianic title because the Messiah, the king, was expected to come from the line of King David.

[16:51] And so this is yet another evidence of his kingship, the fourth evidence. And throughout Jesus' ministry up to this point, Jesus has been very guarded about his true identity as the messianic king and as the son of God.

However, from this point on, the veil comes off. He is hailed as the son of David. They cry out, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Both of those expressions are taken from Psalm 118. Hosanna is a Hebrew phrase that means save us. And in that Psalm, there's an expectation that the blessed one, the one who comes in the name of the Lord, will save them.

And the phrase, in the highest, is a reverent way of referring to the Lord of heaven himself, the most high God. So there's a remarkable parallel between Hosanna to the son of David and Hosanna in the highest.

The son of David is being associated with as a representative of the most high God. The crowd doesn't really fully understand the significance of what they're saying here because Jesus is not only God's chosen king, but he's also God's only son.

[18:00] And so this cry for help, Hosanna, is very appropriate. And the fifth and central evidence of Jesus' kingship in this passage is his fulfillment of Zechariah 9.9, riding a donkey into Jerusalem.

He says in verses 4 to 5, this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, say to the daughter of Zion, behold, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.

The first phrase, say to the daughter of Zion, is taken from Isaiah 62, which is a prophecy of how the Lord will save, bring salvation to his people.

But most of the citation is taken from Zechariah 9.9, which says, 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.

It's a prophecy concerning the arrival of the Messiah, and amazingly, it predicts that the king who is righteous and having salvation will come mounted on a donkey, more specifically on a colt, on a young donkey.

[19:15] Mark 11.2 and Luke 19.30 mention more specifically that Jesus was riding on a colt that no one had previously ridden on. And this helps make sense of why Jesus instructs the disciples to bring the colt's mother with it.

The donkey and the colt come together. Because an unbroken colt, a colt that had never been ridden, was customarily introduced to service in the presence of its mother. Because the presence of the mother ensured that the colt kept calm, especially in a stressful environment like large crowds and noisy places.

So even though the prophecy only says that the king will come riding on a colt, because both the donkey and a colt is mentioned in Zechariah 9.9, Matthew is just pointing out that just if you happen

to be the very legalistic literalist who will argue to Matthew and say, well, no, that was not fulfilled by Jesus because it says donkey and a colt.

He only came riding on a colt. Here Matthew is telling us, yes, actually, colt and a donkey was present. Even when you're insisting on that, the prophecy is fulfilled by Jesus.

And it says in verse 5 that Jesus sat on the cloaks that people put on the colt and rode on it into Jerusalem. This is a remarkable scene. I love this scene.

[ 20 : 38 ] This is the only time that Jesus is seen riding any animal in the gospel accounts. He and his disciples are always on foot, walking everywhere.

Moreover, according to the Jewish oral tradition, the oral commentary on the Torah, it was Jews specifically were instructed to arrive in Jerusalem for their pilgrimage on foot.

So why does Jesus ride a donkey on his last mile into Jerusalem? There's a widespread misunderstanding that riding on a donkey is a lowly, humble thing, something reserved for common village folk.

But that's not true. In fact, riding on a donkey is a sign of royalty. To give you some examples, Judges 10, 3 to 4 says, Jair of Gilead, a judge of Israel for 22 years, had 30 sons who rode 30 donkeys and controlled 30 towns.

Why are they riding donkeys? Because they're the kings. They're the rulers of these 30 towns.

Similarly, in 1 Kings 1, 32 to 35, King David commands Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet to have Solomon his son ride on his own mule in order to declare him king, to show without a shadow of doubt, Solomon is the person I've chosen to succeed me.

[ 22 : 03 ] So he rides on David's own donkey. Finally, there's a letter that archaeologists found in Mari, which was an ancient Sumerian city around 1760 BC in the same geographic area.

It says there, Verily, you are the king of the Hainians, but secondly, you are the king of the Akkadians. My lord should not ride on a horse. Let my lord ride in a chariot or on a mule, and he will thereby honor his royal head.

Because chariots back then were pulled by mules. A military general seeking to conquer a city that doesn't belong to him would come riding, galloping on a stallion.

But a king who comes in peace would trot in on a mule. Jesus knew this full well, and that is precisely why he chose to ride a colt into Jerusalem.

It's an unmistakable claim to messianic kingship. No wonder it says in verse 4 that the whole city was stirred up. The verb stirred up is later used to describe an earthquake, how the earth shook later in Matthew 27, 51.

[ 23 : 13 ] Literally, the city is shaken by what is happening. They're agitated. They're thrown into commotion because here is someone who is claiming to be king, who is being hailed by the crowds as king, coming into Jerusalem on a donkey.

And Jerusalem, remember at this time, is ruled directly by a Roman prefect, Pontius Pilate. So any claim, any suggestion of Jewish kingship is trouble.

So the city is shaken. And Jesus riding a donkey down Mount of Olives into Jerusalem would have been an awe-inspiring sight. I so wish I could have seen it.

When he returns, it would have been even more, it will be even more glorious. But remember that there are hundreds of thousands of pilgrims in and around Jerusalem. Hundreds of thousands. Every single one of them on foot.

Mount of Olives dominates the horizon. Everyone turns to look. And there they is, from the mountain, coming down, one man sitting on a donkey.

[ 24 : 22 ] It's glorious. The long-awaited king is coming for us. He's putting the city on notice.

The king has come. That raises a question. What does it say in verse 5? Behold, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.

Doesn't that mean Jesus is being humble by riding a donkey? If Jesus is declaring his kingship by riding a donkey, then how is that humble? The description of Jesus as humble does not stem from the lowliness of a donkey, but in the fact that this king comes in peace.

King Jesus coming into hostile territory, to Jerusalem, where his detractors will frame him with trumped-up charges and crucify him. But even though he's coming into this rebellious city, instead of coming on a stallion to wage war, to subdue them, no, this king comes on a colt, sauntering down the mountain in peace.

The Greek word translated, humble here in verse 5, the same word that's translated as meek in Matthew 5, 5, where it says, blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

[ 25 : 59 ] The world thinks that it's the aggressive and the assertive who will inherit the earth. But Jesus taught that it's the meek who will inherit the earth. The same word is translated as gentle in Matthew 11, 29, where Jesus says, come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

That's why Jesus is the humble king. King Jesus comes in gentleness, in humility, not to lay a heavy burden on his people, but to lift up their burdens, to bear their burdens himself upon his shoulders.

King Jesus comes to a city full of his enemies who are waiting for him with proverbial pitchforks in their hands and yet he comes riding on a donkey rather than a war horse.

Not to kill, but to be killed like a lamb that is led to the slaughter. Jesus is humble because even though he is king, he is fully submitted to the will of his heavenly father and he willingly draws near where he will be crucified.

[ 27 : 27 ] And we see two responses to Jesus' kingship in this passage, both of which are inadequate. First, notice the distinction between the crowds that went before and after Jesus in verse 9 and 11 and the city in verse 10.

The crowds were shouting, Hosanna to the Son of David, hailing Jesus as the Messiah. But it says in verse 10, the whole city was stirred up saying, who is this?

The city people are unaware of who Jesus is. Who is this man making such a grand claim to messianic kingship? We already know from Matthew 20, 29 that a great crowd was following Jesus all the way from Jericho.

Jericho is the last settlement that the Galilean pilgrim would pass through on their way to Jerusalem. So most likely, this crowd that's going before and after Jesus and hailing him as king is probably made up largely of Jesus' followers from Galilee because that's where Jesus had most of his ministry.

And he was wildly popular there. But Galilee was a rural area. It was a country compared to the city of Jerusalem. And these urbanites are clueless about Jesus.

[ 28 : 48 ] So the Galilean crowd proudly explains to them in verse 11, this is the prophet Jesus. And they're careful to note where he came from. From Nazareth of Galilee.

Calling Jesus prophet here is not a denial of his kingship. They just called him the son of David. Rather, it's just another way to try to explain to the city folk so they can understand who this Jesus is.

They're saying to them, hey, he is the great prophet who has turned Galilee upside down. Haven't you heard of him? He has been doing signs and wonders. His teaching has authority and power unlike you teachers here in Jerusalem.

In fact, we think he is the Messiah. And guess what? He's one of us. He's from Galilee. So there's an urban versus rural contrast here.

And it's often the case that folks in the city are less religious. It's not true even today. A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center several years ago found that major U.S. metropolitan areas generally had significantly lower percentages of Christians than the national average and a disproportionately higher percentage of what they call the nuns, people who subscribe to no religion.

[ 30 : 08 ] A city is where there is a high density of people and for that reason there is a concentration and synergy of human ingenuity and intellect and wealth. However, it also means that there is a concentration of human pride and sin.

The pace of life is faster in the cities. There are more distractions in the cities. So often urbanites are busy hearted, preoccupied people.

As Jesus taught in Luke 8, when the seeds of the gospel are scattered, some of them fall among thorns and the thorns grow up with it and choke it. And Jesus explains this parable in this way that the seed that fell among the thorns represent those who hear the gospel but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life and their fruit does not mature.

There are many cares and riches and pleasures of life in the city that choke the seeds of the gospel, isn't there? Is this you?

Are you running from one meeting to the next? From one project to the next? From one job to the next? From one city to the next? From one school to the next?

[ 31 : 29 ] Do you lack awareness of Jesus because you have been too busy and distracted with important things going on in your own life? Have you succumbed to the tyranny of the urgent and neglected what is most important and necessary in your life?

Have you reflected on the questions of eternal significance? Where did I come from? Where am I headed? What's my purpose? What am I here for?

What about after death? How can I be saved from sin and death? If so, the fact that you are here is a welcome break from the norm and this is a prime opportunity for you to consider the claims of Jesus.

If Jesus really is the chosen king of the creator of the universe then you owe him your allegiance. Do you believe him?

Do you pledge your allegiance to him? Everyone in this world serves one thing or another, one king or another. They worship some kind of thing.

[ 32 : 39 ] The award winning novelist David Foster Wallace, he was not a Christian but he was an astute observer of culture and society and not long before taking his own life he said this in his commencement address at Kenyon College.

Quote, here's something else that's weird but true. In the day-to-day trenches of adult life there's actually no such thing as atheism. There's no such thing as not worshipping.

Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship and the compelling reason for maybe choosing some sort of God or spiritual type thing to worship is that pretty much anything else you worship will eat you alive.

If you worship money and things if they are where you tap real meaning in life then you will never have enough never feel you have enough. It's the truth. Worship your body and beauty and sexual allure and you will always feel ugly and when time and age start showing you will die a million deaths before they finally grieve you.

Worship power you will end up feeling weak and afraid and you will need ever more power over others to numb you to your own fear. Worship your intellect being seen as smart you will end up feeling stupid a fraud always on the verge of being found out.

[ 33 : 58 ] But the insidious thing about these forms of worship is they're unconscious. They are default settings. your default setting is to worship something or someone.

Who is your king? Who rules your life? What occupies your mind and heart? As the winner of the Nobel Prize in literature I don't think you'd expect me to say this name Bob Dylan wrote in his one of his songs you may be an ambassador to England or France you may like to gamble you might like to dance you may be the heavyweight champion of the world you may be a socialite with a long string of pearls you might be a rock and roll addict prancing on the stage you might have drugs at your command woman in a cage you may be a businessman or some high degree thief they may call you doctor or they may call you chief but you're gonna have to serve somebody yes you are you're gonna have to serve somebody well it may be the devil or it may be the Lord but you're gonna have to serve somebody

Jesus is the humble messianic king who saves us from our slavery to sin is there anyone more worthy than him to serve is there anyone more worthy of worship than king Jesus but it's not only the urban Jerusalemites who are ignorant in this passage the crowds that are following Jesus are also missing the point look at what they do in verse 8 after they spread their cloaks on the road it says others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road John 12 13 provides more detail namely that these branches from the trees were not any old tree branches but they were palm branches which is an important historical backdrop in the second century BC during the time of the Seleucid

Empire when they were occupying Israel these rulers desecrated the temple of the Jews they forbade Jews from worshipping and in response the Jews revolted and successively through using guerrilla warfare overthrew the Seleucid Empire from their region and this is known as the Maccabean revolt and Jews celebrate that still to this day during Hanukkah and it's written in the first book of Maccabee chapter 13 verse 51 that following their victory Simon Maccabee their leader and his men triumphantly entered the temple and rededicated carrying palm branches so then in

their symbolic act that's why it's called Palm Sunday in their symbolic act of cutting off and laying down palm branches we see the true nature of their messianic expectation they want Jesus to be another Simon Maccabee they want Jesus to lead them in military victory and political liberation from the

Roman Empire but Jesus is not a second Maccabee he's the first and only Christ the Messiah and he is a king like no other Maccabee came on a war horse to defeat his enemies but Jesus came on a donkey to save his enemies Maccabee was a violent revolutionary but Jesus was the prince of peace that's because Jesus knew that Israel's political subjugation was ultimately due to their sin due to their rebellion against God and freeing them from their political slavery while leaving them to their spiritual slavery is like mowing the weeds in the lawn without pulling out their roots it'll just grow right back so Jesus goes right for the kill right for the root to deal with sin once and for all so that we might be forgiven of our sins and have eternal life perhaps you're like these

[ 38 : 30 ] Galilean followers you're following Jesus to fulfill your own ends maybe you identify as a Christian but mostly for political reasons maybe you want to defeat liberalism and see the Christian worldview in ascendancy again maybe you want to storm the capital and take back America maybe what you really want is not Christ but power maybe what you really want is not to submit to Christ but to co-opt Christ for your purposes that's not the way of Christ Charlemagne the 8th century king of the Carolingian empire is remembered for taking his conquered peoples and lining them up at a beach and forcing them to choose between baptism in the water to become a Christian or the sword death by the sword that is exactly the opposite of what

Jesus is like Jesus is gentle and lowly in heart he's not harsh and haughty in heart he's the humble king so both the Jerusalemite and the Galilean responses are inadequate we need a third response and here is the response that God calls us to we have all sinned against God by rebelling against his rule and seeking to be masters of our own faith have we not we're living not to please our creator but to please ourselves and to please other people in our lives King Jesus could have called upon his heavenly army to descend upon Jerusalem with hordes of fiery chariots and legions of warrior angels King Jesus would have been fully justified in crushing our rebellion and wiping us clean off the face of the earth but no our king came to us in gentleness he came to us in humility and shortly before this passage

Jesus explained to his disciples the pattern that he had set for them in Matthew 20 25 to 28 this is what he said you know that the rulers of the Gentiles lorded over them and their great ones exercise authority over them it shall not be so among you but whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you must be your slave even as the son of man that's Jesus came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many instead of executing rebellious sinners on the cross Jesus gave his life on the cross as payment for our sins to save sinners like us the most high king came to serve his lowly subjects for his crown he took the crown of thorns for his throne he ascended to the cross the ancient equivalent of the electric chair but on the third day

Jesus was raised victoriously from the dead Jesus is the humble messianic king who saves us from our slavery to sin the appropriate response for us then to yield to the humble king receive freely the gift of salvation to despair of our own efforts to save ourselves and cling to Jesus alone for salvation are you this morning laboring and heavy laden do you seek rest for your souls are you breathing with labored breath under the heavy burden of sin and guilt do you feel your moral depravity your weakness your sinfulness and your desperate need for a savior come to Jesus the humble king he beckons you let's pray Lord

Jesus what can we say to such mercy how can we stop from praising your name you are the king of kings the lord of lords and yet you are our king you came to dwell among us to lift our burdens to save us God we thank you we ask that you would help us to bring our lives more fully in submission to your lordship and your will for your glory in Jesus name we pray amen