

Palm Sunday: The King's Arrival

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 02 April 2023

Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0 : 00] Such a joy to worship and sing with you guys. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Sean. I'm one of the pastors of Trinity Cambridge Church, and it's my joy and privilege to preach God's Word to you this morning.

If you have a Bible, please turn with me to John chapter 12. We have been in a series in the book of Exodus, but for Palm Sunday and Good Friday and Easter, we're going to be in the book of John. If you don't have a Bible, just feel free to raise your hand, and we'll bring a Bible along to you that you can use while you're here. John is in the New Testament after the book of Luke and before the book of Acts.

And let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word. Father, we humble ourselves before you, submit ourselves to your Word, to your authority.

We ask that in the preaching of your Word this morning and in the hearing of your Word, that Jesus Christ, your Son, our King, would be exalted.

[1 : 33] That He would be made known, made more real in our hearts, magnified in our minds, so that we might follow Him in His footsteps toward the glory of the cross.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. If you are able, please stand with me for the reading of God's Word from John 12, verses 12 to 33.

The next day, the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.

So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, crying out, Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.

And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion. Behold, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt.

[2 : 53] His disciples did not understand these things at first. But when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about Him and had been done to Him.

The crowd that had been with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised Him from the dead continued to bear witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet Him was that they heard He had done the sign.

So the Pharisees said to one another, You see that you are gaining nothing. Look! The world has gone after Him. Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks.

So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, Sir, we wish to see Jesus. Philip went and told Andrew.

Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone.

[4 : 02] But if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

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.

Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this purpose, I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.

Then a voice came from heaven. I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again. The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered.

Others said, An angel has spoken to him. Jesus answered, This voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world. Now will the ruler of this world be cast out, and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.

[5 : 12] He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. This is God's holy and authoritative word.

You may be seated. Nowadays, it's not uncommon for people to have virtual friends, whether it's a friend you made on Reddit, or while playing a game online, or someone you met on a dating app. So it's likely that some of you have also had the experience of meeting someone, a virtual friend, in person for the first time, only to find out that this friend of yours that you thought you knew is nothing at all like the person you had imagined.

Maybe the profile picture was a little bit outdated. Maybe you imagined him to have a deep, baritone voice, but instead, he has a high, squeaky voice.

Maybe you imagined him, maybe you imagined her to have, you know, a social, you know, be social and talkative, but in real life, she's very withdrawn, and maybe timid, tends to isolate herself.

[6 : 35] It can be a jarring experience when your expectations are not met. It's upended. And often for us, the reality is worse than our fantasies.

For hundreds of years, the Jews had also been waiting for something, expecting someone. They'd been waiting for the Messiah, the King, the Savior, to come and redeem them and rescue them. Having been conquered by nation after nation, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and Greeks, and then finally under the Romans, the Jews had been longing desperately for the Messiah finally to come.

Their expectations were high, and their anticipation was at a fever pitch by the time of this event. But when Jesus, the Messianic King, finally came, he was not what the Jews expected him to be. He came in humility. He came in mercy. He came to die. And to follow Jesus, that means, for us, is to follow his path to glory through death.

[7 : 53] That's the main point of this passage. To follow King Jesus, is to follow him, his path, to glory through death. And we're going to explore three ways in which Jesus defied the people's expectations.

First, the King's agenda. Second, the King's audience. And the third, the King's ascendance. The setting for this scene is the Passover feast, which is the greatest and most widely observed feast of all the Jewish feasts.

Verse 12 notes that there was a large crowd that had come to feast. And that's not an understatement. Or that's not an overstatement, rather.

Jerusalem's normal population around this time is estimated to be about 30,000 people. But during Passover, historians estimate that the number of people in Jerusalem swelled to around 200,000. And so obviously, that city can't fit 200,000 people, so people would pitch tents all around the city, and the whole city would be bustling with the influx of pilgrims, tens of thousands of them.

[8 : 57] And a large crowd in a section of the city hears that Jesus is approaching the city, says in verse 12. And the teacher, this teacher that is famous for his authoritative teaching, this healer who's healed cripples and the man born blind, this miracle worker who not long ago raised Lazarus from the dead, is coming.

So notice that Jesus is already famous among the people. He says in verses 17 to 18, the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness.

The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done these things. So Jesus is a celebrity. Here, people are flocking to just get a glimpse of this man who raised someone from the dead when they hear that he is approaching.

So everywhere, you're hearing murmurs of people, hey, there, Jesus. Jesus is coming. I think that's Jesus over there. Some people are shouting, hey, Jesus. Jesus is coming. Make way.

The men of God who raised a man from the dead. And what this large crowd expects from Jesus is clearly seen in the following verses. It says in verse 13, the Jews took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, Hosanna!

[10 : 16] Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Even the king of Israel. This is a quotation from Psalm 118, which says, Save us, we pray, O Lord. O Lord, we pray, give us success.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna! is a Greek translation of the Hebrew phrase that means save us. So this psalm was sung during many of the Jewish feasts, such as the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of Passover.

So observant Jews would have been intimately familiar with it. They probably knew it by heart. But this psalm was originally used to pronounce blessing on those who were coming to worship the Lord, coming in the name of the Lord to worship him.

But the Jewish commentary on this psalm also reveals that the Jews understood this line messianically. The one who comes in the name of the Lord that they were expecting to see is the Messiah himself.

And the messianic interpretation is confirmed by what the crowd says afterward. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.

[11:23] The crowd surrounding Jesus is proclaiming Jesus to be the King, the promised Messiah. Remember that at this time the Jews are under Roman occupation.

Imagine that you were the Roman governor at this time, over Jerusalem at this time. You're already on high alert because there's an unusually large gathering of Jews in the city and with just the right spark crowds can quickly flame into mobs, dangerous mobs.

And not only that, there are Jews, these are Jews that are gathering to celebrate the Passover which is when the Lord delivered the nation of Israel from another oppressor, from another occupying nation, the Egyptians.

Egyptians. It's the Jewish equivalent of American Independence Day as I've said before. So Jewish religious fervor and national patriotism is peaking right at this season.

So it's code red if you're the administrator, if you're the governor of this city. And this brazen Jewish crowd, instead of minding their overlords, starts proclaiming, here is the King of Israel, save us.

[12:36] save them from what? From the Romans, of course. In the Roman Empire, there's only one king, Caesar. This is a treasonous statement.

And the palm branches provide yet another clue to what the crowd is expecting. These are not palm trees you find in California and Florida. These are date palm trees which are a lot shorter and very numerous in this region.

And the Old Testament doesn't prescribe anywhere that people should worship God with palm trees during the Passover feast. But this had become a national symbol by this time for a number of reasons.

Just two centuries earlier, when the Syrian ruler Antiochus Epiphanes overran Jerusalem and desecrated the Jewish temple by setting up a pagan altar inside it, the Jews, under the leadership of the Maccabee brothers, Judas, Jonathan, and Simon, staged a successful military campaign to recapture and re-consecrate the Jewish temple.

And it's written in the first book of Maccabee, chapter 13, verse 51, that on the 23rd day of the second month in the 171st year, the Jews entered it, the temple, with praise and palm branches and with harps and cymbals and stringed instruments and with hymns and songs because a great enemy had been crushed and removed from Israel.

[14:00] Simon Maccabee and his men triumphantly entered the temple that they had retaken and rededicated in carrying palm branches.

And so by greeting Jesus with palm branches, these Jews are betraying their true expectations. They want Jesus to be another Simon Maccabee. They want Jesus to lead them into military victory and political liberation from the Roman occupiers.

But Jesus defies their expectations in verses 14 to 15. It says, Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it. Just as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion, behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt.

This is a reference to Isaiah 49 and Zechariah 9. Zechariah 9 we read during the call to worship which speaks of how the Messianic king will come riding on a donkey, humble and mounted on a donkey.

By procuring a donkey and sitting on it, Jesus is consciously fulfilling this Messianic prophecy of Zechariah. So in doing so, he is confirming the crowd's expectation on one hand, that he is the Messianic king.

[15:18] So there's a, and I say this every Palm Sunday, but there's a widespread misunderstanding that riding on a donkey is a lowly, humble thing, something reserved for the common village folk.

But that's not true. Common village folk don't ride donkeys, they walk. In fact, riding a donkey is a sign of royalty. To give you some examples, Judges 10 says that Jair of Gilead, a judge of Israel for

22 years, had 30 sons who rode 30 donkeys.

They ride donkeys because they're the rulers. 1 Kings 1, 32-35, when King David commands Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet to have Solomon his son ride on his own mule when he wants to declare that he is his choice for his successor to reign as king.

Riding on David's mule showed David's stamp of approval that Solomon is the royal heir. Finally, there's a letter that archaeologists found from Mari, which was an ancient Sumerian city around 1760 BC.

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

[16:37] A military general seeking to conquer a city would ride in galloping on a stallion, but a king who owns the city will come in peace, and he would trot in on a mule.

Jesus knew this full well, and that's precisely why he chose to ride on a young donkey into Jerusalem. Jesus is not being demure about his kingship. He's putting the whole city on notice, saying, I am the king.

I am the Messiah, and here I come. And Jesus is riding on a donkey, and I love imagining this scene from Mount of Olives. We know from the other gospels, Jerusalem is filled with the pilgrims all on their foot.

According to the Mishnah, which is the Jewish oral commentary on the Torah, Jews were specifically expected to arrive in Jerusalem for their pilgrimage on foot. So tens of thousands of pilgrims, perhaps hundreds of thousands of pilgrims, all on foot.

And Jesus and his disciples are always on foot. This is the only time in the gospels that he is riding any kind of animal. And yet, in a sea of people on foot, there is one man rising above the whole crowd, and he is sitting on a mule, and he's riding in as the glorious king.

[17:55] Heads are turning. People are making way. It's a glorious scene. It's the king's arrival. But on the other hand, Jesus is also correcting the crowd's messianic expectations.

Remember the palm branches. The Jews are hoping and expecting Jesus to be another Simon Maccabee, a rebel, an insurrectionist, a revolutionary, a conquering king, galloping in on a stallion to rally his troops and wage war against the cruel oppressors.

But instead, Jesus trots in gently, meekly, on a donkey's colt. I mentioned to you earlier that verse 15 is a quotation of Zechariah 9.9, but if you turn to Zechariah 9.9 and read the verse that follows immediately after that, verse 10, it says this, I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem and the battle bow shall be cut off and he shall speak peace to the nations.

His rule shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. Jesus speaks peace to the nations. He cuts off the battle bow and the war horse.

But the Israelites did not want Jesus to speak peace to the nations. They wanted him to speak vengeance to the nations. Do you think that there weren't any Jewish women who were raped by Roman soldiers during this time?

[19:39] Do you think there weren't any Jewish men who were unjustly tried and arrested and maybe even killed? Do you think that there weren't any Jewish discrimination and bigotry toward the Jewish people in the Roman Empire at this time?

The Romans were a sinful bunch like the rest of us. I can assure you that all of those things happened. The Israelites were a conquered and oppressed people under Roman rule and yet Jesus came riding in on a donkey and spoke peace to the nations.

Wait a minute, Jesus. You're supposed to crush our enemies not save them. Something's wrong with the picture here, Jesus.

Where's the war horse? Where's the battle bone? Do you know what these people have done to us? 1 Peter 2, 19-25 tell us that Jesus was reviled but did not revile in return.

He suffered unjustly yet he did not threaten. Instead, he entrusted himself to God who judges justly. And it says that Christ suffered in this manner for us.

[21:19] Quote, leaving us an example so that we might follow in his steps. Do you know that the Bible commands us to suffer unjustly?

As Christians, we say that we love Jesus' humility and his meekness that he is a suffering servant. But when I look around at how many Christians behave, it makes me wonder whether that's really true.

Some Christians prefer to carry pitchforks rather than to carry the cross. I think many Christians nowadays want Jesus to look more like Che Guevara than a king riding on a donkey, a revolutionary to overthrow the establishment. They'd rather punish their enemies than suffer unjustly in their hands. They'd rather cancel their enemies than forgive their enemies. They'd rather slap back than turn the other cheek. But that is not the pattern that Jesus set for us. We serve King Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

[22 : 41] I'm not saying that we shouldn't seek institutional justice for the sake of others. That is a faithful application of the command to love our neighbor as ourselves. But when it comes to you, personally, do you seek justice for yourself?

Or are you willing to take the path of humility and meekness and suffer unjustly? When your boss belittles you, when your neighbors mock you, when your friends offend you, are you willing to suffer like a lamb that is silent before its shearers?

Or is your response, how dare you do this to me? I'll show you. I'm going to blast you on social media and make you sorry for what you did.

If someone's committing a crime against you, that's one thing. Report it to the proper authority, sure. But when someone sins against you, and it's a choice between leaving justice in God's hands and taking it into your own hands, which would you choose?

When we refuse to take justice into our own hands and entrust ourselves to God's ultimate justice, in doing that, we're honoring God. That's our vote of confidence.

[24 : 02] God, I trust you. God, I know that you are just. God, I know that I might suffer now, but that day is coming when you will come with perfect justice. And when we suffer in that way, we're imitating Jesus, our suffering Savior.

And in doing that, we're pointing people to the good news of Jesus Christ, to the gospel. Look at my life. Look at my unjust suffering.

Who does that remind you of? That's my Savior. If Jesus had come merely to execute justice in his first coming, he would have crushed the Romans, yes, but he would have also crushed every single one of the Israelites.

Because they had all fallen short of his glory. Because they had all rebelled against him. I think we missed this point for similar reasons in our own lives.

I think we're sometimes too eager to pick up the pitchforks for this very reason. It's because we're not carrying the cross. We don't see ourselves as sinners at the foot of the cross.

[25 : 18] Instead, we're self-righteous. We think we have everything figured out and can discern and judge the sins of others with perfect clarity. We think that sin is more their issue than my issue.

But if we followed in the footsteps of Jesus and carried our own cross, then we'd be more humble. I think we'd be quicker to hear and slower to speak. I think we would take the logs out of our own eyes before we try to remove the specks from our brothers and sisters' eyes.

Jesus came to satisfy God's justice on the cross so that he might show us mercy, so that he might offer us forgiveness. To follow King Jesus is to follow his path to glory through death.

And after seeing the crowd's reaction to Jesus, the Pharisees are envious, and they say to one another in verse 19, you see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him.

And that brings us to the second way that Jesus appended people's expectations, the king's audience. Jesus did not come only for the Jews.

[26 : 34] He came for the whole world. The whole world has gone after him. The Pharisee statement that the world has gone after him is even truer than they realize in the book of John, the word world is a key word that occurs again and again.

It occurs more frequently in the gospel of John than any other book in the New Testament. In fact, it occurs 78 times in the gospel of John alone, which is more than a third of all the occurrences in the New Testament.

In fact, it occurs several times in this passage. It says again in verses 31 and 32, now is the judgment of this world. Now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.

Similarly, it said in John 1 29, Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And most famously in John 3 16, God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

It doesn't mean that God saves the whole world without exception. Only those who repent and believe in Jesus will be saved. But it does mean that God saves the whole world without distinction. [27 : 53] Jesus is the messianic king, not only over the Jews, but over all peoples, over the whole world. He did not come to announce judgment of mere Israel or even of the Roman Empire only, but the judgment of this world.

He did not come to overthrow a small fry like Caesar. He came to overthrow, cast out the ruler of this entire sinful world.

The title ruler of this world occurs again in John 14 30 and 1611 and similar titles are used throughout the New Testament to refer to Satan. The true king has come and Jesus' glorification, his enthronement means Satan's dethronement, his overthrow.

Jesus' coming into his kingdom means the expulsion of the ruler of this world. Don't ever forget that Jesus is seated on his throne even right now, reigning at the right hand of the Father.

We can get worked up and so worried about presidential elections and geopolitics, but the ruler of this world has already been cast out.

[29 : 18] And the true king is already seated on his throne. Whether the U.S. or China wins the contest for global supremacy, whether Biden or Trump wins the next election, Jesus is still king.

God has not promised to send another Messiah. Jesus is it. He's the one. And no matter who your favorite political candidate is or who your fantasy Messiah might be, that person is not going to save you.

Only Jesus can save you. So be watchful, but not fearful. Be informed and be involved in politics, whatever degree your vocation calls for.

But don't be consumed by world politics. Jesus is still king. And remember also that there is no aspect of your life that's beyond the reach of Jesus' rule.

If Jesus rules over the whole world, then you cannot confine or compartmentalize the scope of his authority. His sovereignty is universal and total. 19th century Dutch theologian and prime minister, Abraham Kuyper, once famously said this, there's not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry, mine.

[31 : 02] Is Jesus king over every domain in your life? Not only on Easter and Christmas, but over 365 days of your life.

Not only during two hours on Sunday morning, but 24 hours a day of your life. Is Jesus Lord, is Jesus king in your life?

In every square inch of your finances, every square inch of your speech, every square inch of how you work, how you behave when no one is looking, is Jesus king there?

Is he ruling in your life? The reality of Jesus' universal rule and appeal is confirmed immediately by verse 20.

It says, now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. The Greeks are not people necessarily from Greece, but as elsewhere in the New Testament, this is the way they refer to Gentiles, all non-Jews who come from different parts of their Greek speaking world.

[32 : 06] So the nations, indeed, the world has begun to come to Jesus. And they reach out to Philip, maybe because he's from the area near the Decapolis where the Gentiles lived, Bethsaida in Galilee.

They approach Philip, and then Philip approaches Andrew, and together they tell Jesus about it. And it's the arrival of the Gentiles that prompts Jesus to say this in verse 23, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Up to this point in the Gospel of John, the hour of his glorification has always been future. But now the arrival of Gentiles has triggered this hour of Jesus' glorification.

The appointed hour, the right time, has come. Back then, if you remember, there was a strict separation between Jews and Gentiles. Gentiles could not enter into the inner courtyard of the temple.

They had to stay outside in the outer court. If they were to transgress that boundary, they could be killed. It was on pains of death. They were threatened to do that. But Jesus came not to save the Jews only, but to save all nations, to save the whole world, in a sense.

[33 : 23] That's why it says in verse 32, when Jesus says, when I'm lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself. Salvation is from the Jews because Jesus is a Jewish Messiah, but salvation is not merely for the Jews.

That's why the Great Commission does not say, make disciples of your tribal group or your ethnic group. It says, make disciples of all nations. That's why Jesus promises his followers before his ascension to heaven in Acts 1-8, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth, meaning not only to the Jews in Jerusalem but also to the Samaritans in Samaria and also to the Gentiles in the ends of the earth.

So you cannot reject Jesus with this excuse, saying to yourself, well, I'm not a Jew, so I can't believe in the God of the Bible. Well, my parents are atheists, so this can't be for me.

Well, my country is Muslim, so I can't be a Christian. My culture is Hindu, so I can't be a Christian. My family is Buddhist, so I can't be a Christian.

You can't have those excuses because Christianity is not a Western religion. It's not an American export. Jesus rules over the whole world.

[34 : 53] Christianity is the only major religion in the world whose founding document, the New Testament, was written in the language that is not the native language of the founder, Jesus.

Jesus spoke Aramaic. The New Testament is written in Greek. Why? Because Jesus is the Savior of the whole world, not only of the Jews but of the Greeks, the Gentiles.

The Atlas of Global Christianity, it's a book, it's essentially a book of maps and statistics and diagrams related to global Christianity. It chronicles the shifts in the gravitational center of Christianity from 30 A.D.

to the present day. The center of gravity for Christianity was at first, of course, in Jerusalem around 30 A.D. and then it gradually shifted north and west so that its gravitational center was in Constantinople, which is modern-day Istanbul in Turkey.

That was around 1000 A.D. and then by 1500 A.D., the gravitational center shifts still further north into what is Budapest, Hungary, and Vienna, Austria. By 1900 A.D., it shifted further west due in large part to the rise of the United States and the gravitational center was Madrid, Spain.

[36 : 08] And then since then, the gravitational center of Christianity has shifted even more southeast rather than northwest so that it's now in Niger, Africa, and it's expected to continue its shift southeast.

east. That's where the center of gravity for Christians in Christianity, global Christianity now is. Let me ask you some questions. Do you know where the gravitational center of Buddhism is?

You probably do. It's Southeast Asia. It has always been Southeast Asia. Do you know where the gravitational center of Islam is?

I bet you do because it's the Middle East Middle East. Do you know where the gravitational center of Hinduism is?

Yes. India. And it has always been India. Christianity is the only world religion who has truly one adherence from the whole world.

[37 : 15] that has shifted its gravitational center all over the world. There is no single monolithic Christian civilization or Christian culture because there has already been multiple Christian civilizations and multiple Christian cultures.

Why? Because King Jesus is king not only over Israel but the whole world. Because he came to save the world. That's why we cannot say, oh, we shouldn't send missionaries out to other countries and cultures.

That's so colonial. Or, oh, I'm not going to share the gospel with my non-Christian neighbors because I wouldn't want to impose my religion on someone else.

that is politically correct nonsense. It's only colonial if the territory you colonize doesn't already belong to your king.

But the whole world already belongs to Jesus. He already is king over the whole world.

[38 : 26] when the rightful king takes his throne. That's not colonialism. That is justice. In Matthew 28, 18 to 20, Jesus says, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. Why do we go to all nations? Because Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth.

When did King Jesus ever get tame and become an exclusive feature of your local religion and culture? That's like saying, oh, I can't expect my neighbors around me to keep the same laws that I keep.

I mean, that'd be so dogmatic. I wouldn't want to impose my personal preferences on them. No. All your neighbors are expected to keep the same laws that you keep because they're under the same laws.

They're under the same president, under the same Congress, under the same Supreme Court. The rule of the land is not your personal preference or opinion.

[39 : 44] Likewise, if you live in this world, if you live in any world, you are part of King Jesus' domain, whether you like it or not. And Jesus is not just your king.

He is their rightful king. He is king over the whole world. So you better let them know or they'll be in grave trouble because those who reject Christ the king stand condemned already under the judgment of God.

king king. King Jesus surprised people both in his agenda and his audience. But perhaps the most shocking and unexpected of all is his ascendance.

So the hour of Jesus' glorification is here. The king will finally ascend to his throne. But what exactly will that ascendancy look like? Jesus gives a hint in verse 24, Jesus continues in verse 27, now is my soul troubled.

What shall I say, Father, save me from this hour? But for this purpose I've come to this hour. The hour of his glorification is here, but Jesus is troubled. It's not saying he's excited, he's troubled, he's in anguish.

[41 : 09] He feels a deep revulsion and anxiety. Jesus wants to cry out to the Father, Father, save me from this hour, and yet he decides not to. He steals himself in his resolve to obey his Father to the end because this is the very purpose for which Jesus came to our world.

For Jesus, the hour of his glorification is not about his own glory, but the glory of his Father. So he prays, Father, glorify your name. In spite of his anguish and troubled soul, Jesus will not ask his Father to spare him from the hour, but he will keep steadfast purpose, and he will be glorified through his obedience, through his submission, and through his death.

For Jesus, the hour of glorification is about his death. God this is made even clearer in verses 32 to 33. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself.

Being lifted up is a good thing, right? People want that. They want to be exalted. They want to be raised higher than others. This is Jesus' long-awaited ascendance, but what exactly does that being lifted up look like?

Verse 33, he said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. John is fond of using words with double meaning. He's using the word lift up to refer to Jesus' exaltation, but he's simultaneously also referring to Jesus being physically hoisted up on a cross, being lifted up to die, to be tortured, those two things are not opposed to each other.

[43 : 01] They happen simultaneously. Jesus doesn't get exalted because he was crucified. His crucifixion being lifted up and dying is part of the very glory that God has given and assigned to him.

That's why he speaks of the grain of wheat falling to the ground and dying only then does it bear much fruit. The death of the grain is the first stage of its fruitfulness. Likewise, death of Jesus Christ is the first stage of his glorification which culminates in his resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father.

So there's great irony here in the strange glory of our Savior. The world presumed that it was passing judgment on Jesus, debating his identity and sentencing him to execution.

But in reality, Jesus threw his life and death past judgment on the world. The ruler of this world, Satan, presumed that he was winning when he led Jesus to be crucified.

But in fact, that happened to be his decisive blow, his defeat. Jesus chose the glory of the cross in obedience to God the Father who loved us from before the foundation of the world in order to save us.

[44 : 23] Jesus could have crushed us, his rebellious subjects under his feet because we're all unworthy sinners, because we have all rebelled against him.

Instead of living for God and for his glory, we've lived for our glory. We've lived for ourselves and we've served other lords and other gods. We are traitors.

rebels. But instead of us, Jesus was pierced for our transgression. He was crushed for our iniquity so that we can be forgiven, so that we can be reconciled to God the Father, so that we can live.

Even while Jesus was here on earth, Jesus deserved the most lavish and royal golden throne that human beings could ever design. But instead, his throne was the cross, the ancient equivalent of

the electric chair.

Jesus deserved to wear the most beautifully bejeweled crown that has ever graced a man's head, but instead on his precious head sits the crown of thorns.

[45 : 38] cross. That was his inauguration day, his crucifixion day. There were no parades, only a trail of tears, mourners, no champagne bottles were popped for Jesus.

When Jesus was thirsty, hanging on the cross and dying for us, someone gave him a sponge full of vinegar, sour wine. There were no adoring crowds, no rapturous applause from the crowds, only a hateful mob that yelled crucify, crucify, jeering, mocking.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus did not deserve such a shameful, humiliating death. In fact, as the only sinless man in the history of humankind, he's the only one that deserved to live, to not die.

But Jesus died for us. He died in our place. He died for our salvation.

That's the kind of king we serve. And serving the crucified kings means that we also have to choose the glory of the cross every day of our lives.

[47 : 10] That's why Jesus said in verses 25 to 26, whoever loses his life loses, loves his life, loses it. Whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 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. The language of love and hate here is a Jewish idiom that expresses choosing something over another thing.

So whoever loves his own life over loving God at the expense of loving God will lose his life for he worships himself and is an idolater.

But whoever loves God more than even his own life and even more than this whole world will keep it for eternal life. The glory of our discipleship lies in forsaking our own glory to seek the glory of Christ our Savior.

That is the spiritual law that governs the whole of the Christian life. So what does that mean practically? Our path to glory always involves carrying the cross.

[48 : 21] It goes through death. when you give up your worldly selfish ambitions of success and fame and fortune in order to obey God and in order to serve your loved ones it very well might feel like something inside you is dying.

But that's the path of the cross that Jesus calls us to follow him in. When you give up your desire to be liked by everyone and avoid trouble and then you actually evangelize even if that brings ridicule and ostracism it will feel like a kind of death but that is the path of the cross that Jesus calls us to follow him in.

When someone has hurt you and offended you and instead of canceling them and wishing for their downfall you pray for them you forgive them and you seek their genuine repentance and reconciliation it will feel like a kind of death inside but that is the path of the cross that Jesus calls us to follow him in.

in. When you refuse to lie and manipulate your circumstances and the peoples around you to get what you want and advance yourself you might not get what you want and that will feel like death but that is the path of the cross that Jesus calls us to follow him in.

In Philippians 2 8-11 it says that Jesus humbled himself by becoming obedient to death even death on a cross therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father do you want true lasting glory and there's only one path it's through death suffering faithful obedience to Jesus on on to death only the grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies bears fruit the glory of the cross is waiting for you remember that

[51 : 11] Jesus never asks you to follow him where he hasn't already gone before you to follow King Jesus is to follow his path to glory through death let's pray together father we confess when we are reminded of precious truths like this that that we become so worldly forgive us Lord Jesus we seek the glory of the cross we want the glory that comes from

God and not the glory that comes from man so help us by the power of your spirit to pursue this path of obedience of death and suffering so we might share in your glory Lord Jesus in your precious name Jesus we pray amen said 62 N to praylove 16■