

Here Comes Our King
(The Triumphal Entry of Jesus)

Mark 11:1-11

Introduction: 1) Steve Lambert is a Christian brother who lives in Washington, D.C. and is a member of Capitol Hill Baptist Church where my friend Mark Dever is the pastor. Reflecting on the differences between Christianity and Islam he provides a most interesting perspective and contrast between the two when he writes,

“In no other manner are the differences between Muslims and Christians more sharply contrasted than in the difference between the characters and legacies of their prophets. Perhaps the contrast is best symbolized by the way Mohammad entered Mecca and Jesus entered Jerusalem. Mohammad rode into Mecca on a warhorse, surrounded by 400 mounted men and 10,000 foot soldiers. Those who greeted him were absorbed into his movement; those who resisted him were vanquished, killed, or enslaved. Mohammad conquered Mecca, and took control as its new religious, political, and military leader. Today, in the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, Turkey, Mohammad’s purported sword is proudly on display Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, accompanied by his 12 disciples. He was welcomed and greeted by people waving palm fronds—a traditional sign of peace. Jesus wept over Jerusalem because the Jews mistook him for an earthly, secular king who was to free them from the yoke of Rome, whereas, Jesus came to establish a much different, heavenly kingdom. Jesus came by invitation and not by force.”
(Quoted in Mark Dever, *It Is Well*, (Wheaton: Crossway, 65).

2) Mark 11 begins the last chapter in our Lord’s earthly life. Chapters 11-16 record the final week of that life. Mark devotes more than 1/3 of his gospel to “passion week.” Some have referred to Mark’s gospel as a “passion narrative” with an extended introduction. That is not a bad description. It will be a busy and active week culminating in his death on the cross and His glorious resurrection.

3) It begins with his arrival in Jerusalem during Passover. Traditionally we call it “the triumphal entry.” It is a clear and unambiguous declaration of His Kingship. So important is the event it is recorded in all 4 gospels (Matt 21; Mk 11; Luke 19; John 12). With His arrival “the die is cast!” There will be no turning back. The Lamb who was slain before the foundation of the world (1 Pet 1:20) will now be slain in space and time. The atonement for sin ordained in eternity past now becomes historical for all to behold.

4) Jerusalem would be a buzz with activity. During Passover the population could swell to 3 times its normal size as pilgrims from all over the world descended (better “ascended”) upon it. However, this Passover would be unlike any other had or ever would be. As Paul would write in 1 Cor 5:7, “For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.” So, in light of all this, how should we respond to the coming of our King?

I. Worship the One who is always in control. 11:1-3

- Jesus and the disciples, as they drew near to Jerusalem, came to Bethphage (“house of unripe figs”) near Bethany on the Mount of Olives (v. 1). Bethany was the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead (John 11:38-44). It will be the place where Jesus will stay during the final week of His life (Mk 11:11).
- Our Lord then dispatched 2 unnamed disciples to a local village telling them as they entered they would find an un-ridden colt tied up upon which no one had ever sat. “Untie it and bring it” (vs. 1-2). How did He know all this?!
- If that is not unusual enough, He instructs them further in v. 3 (read). Note the repetition of the word “immediately.” Note also it is “the Lord” (*kurios*) who has need of it” (v. 3). As the Ark of the Covenant needed an unyoked carrier (1 Sam 6:7; cf.

Num 19:2; Deut 21:3), so the true Ark of the Covenant, the Lord Jesus, required an unriden animal for this sacred assignment. It is bringing the Holy One into Jerusalem.

- All of this is carefully laid out by “the Lord” who has planned everything out to the last detail and is in complete control.
- From the moment He enters Jerusalem the prerogatives of deity are present. Jesus is Lord and Master of every detail of His divine destiny. He knows what will happen and when it will happen. It will all go according to plan.
- Sinclair Ferguson is spot on, “His majesty and authority began to shine through from the moment of his entry into Jerusalem” (*Let’s Study Mark*, 180).
- We should also take note, without running past it too quickly, of the importance of the Mount of Olives (v. 1) in biblical and redemptive history.
 - The Mount of Olives is a ridge about two and a half miles long. It rises to a height about 2700 feet, 200 feet higher than Mount Zion. The view from its summit is breath-taking. Its crest is less than a mile directly east of Jerusalem. It is known for its many olive trees.

Significant historical events:

- 1) Its slopes were the path of David’s retreat from Jerusalem to escape capture by Absalom (2 Sam 15:30-32).
- 2) On this mount Solomon grieved God by erecting idols for his foreign wives to worship (1 Kings 11:1-10).
- 3) On this mount Jesus wept over the disobedience and blindness of Jerusalem (Lk 19:41-44).
- 4) Ezekiel witnessed the Glory of God on the Mount of Olives (Eze. 11:23).

- 5) Jesus, the Son of David made his royal entry into Jerusalem from here. (Mk 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-40; Matt 21:1-10; John 12:12-13).
- 6) The disciples witnessed Jesus' ascension into glory on this mount (Lk 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-12).
- 7) In Acts 1:10-11 Jesus said He would come again in the same way you have watched him go. Zechariah 14:4-5 tells us what will happen when those holy feet touch down once again where He left, "On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him."

Transition: We should worship the One who is always in control.

II. Worship the one who submits to the Word of God. 11:4-7
(cf. Zech 9:9ff; Matt 21:4-5; John 12:14-15)

- The two disciples go and 1) find things as Jesus said and 2) did as Jesus said (v. 4).
- As they were warned, "some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing untying the colt?" (v. 5)
- They responded and "told them what Jesus had said." (v. 6). The response was quick and to the point: "and they let them go." (v. 6).
- In vintage Markan simplicity we are told in v. 7 that: 1) they brought the colt to Jesus, 2) threw their cloaks on it (for Him to sit on) and 3) Jesus sat on it to ride into Jerusalem. Oh, there is so much here between the lines!

- Jesus has walked everywhere else in His ministry throughout Israel except for those occasions when He was riding in a boat. Now for the one and only time He rides an animal, a small colt. Matthew 21:7 more fully informs us it was a donkey and that it was accompanied by its mother.
- All of this is highly symbolic in light of Old Testament prophecy, expectations and allusions!
 - The phrase “The Lord has need of it” is the exact same phrase used in Mark 2:25 to justify David’s eating “the bread of the Presence” when he and his men were hungry. David’s greater Son is here!
 - His riding in on a donkey also is a declaration of His kingship and a fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 as Matthew 21:4-5 and John 12:14-15 make clear. In fact listen to Zechariah 9:9-17 which, as is often the case with Old Testament prophecy, does not make a clear distinction between our Lord’s first and second coming. All of it surely would have been in the minds of those watching all of this unfold.

“ 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. 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. As for you, also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double. For I have bent Judah as my bow; I have made Ephraim its arrow. I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece, and wield you like a warrior’s sword. Then the Lord will appear over them,

and his arrow will go forth like lightning; the Lord God will sound the trumpet and will march forth in the whirlwinds of the south. The Lord of hosts will protect them, and they shall devour, and tread down the sling stones, and they shall drink and roar as if drunk with wine, and be full like a bowl, drenched like the corners of the altar. On that day the Lord their God will save them, as the flock of his people; for like the jewels of a crown they shall shine on his land. For how great is his goodness, and how great his beauty! Grain shall make the young men flourish, and new wine the young women.”

- Our Lord lived His life from beginning to end in total and absolute submission to the Word of God. His life, death and resurrection were the very unfolding of the drama of redemption. No wonder He would say in John 5:39, “You search the Scriptures because you think in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me.”
- Tim Keller is right, “We cannot, in the end, follow Jesus without adopting His loyalty to the Bible.”

III. Worship the One who embodies humility. 11:7-8

- Jesus mounts the young colt and begins the parade into Jerusalem (v. 7). Here is deity on a donkey! The prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 beautifully makes a connection to his riding in on a donkey and his humility. And did you notice he had no need to break it in! He is Lord of all creation! This donkey knew its Creator, its Master! Isaiah 11:6-9; for a moment, flashes before our eyes! There the Bible says, “The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child

shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

- Yes He is their King coming to them.
 - Yes He is bringing righteousness and salvation.
 - And yes, He comes humble and mounted on a donkey.
- The response of the people is noted in vs. 8-10. Here in v. 8, “they spread their cloaks on the road and others spread leafy branches they had cut from the fields.” Only John’s gospel mentions palm branches (John 12:13). It was a festive time of celebration as they welcomed this King, and it recalls the inauguration and anointing of Jehu as King in 2 Kings 9:12-13.
 - Coming in this way our Lord now proclaims openly what he has forbidden until this moment: I am your King! Jesus with purpose and intentionality presents Himself as the Messiah knowing that it will provoke a confrontation with the Jewish leaders that will result in his crucifixion. And yet, His declaration also is bathed in gracious humility.
 - The paradoxical Kingship of Jesus shines so bright at this moment! He is royalty and deity wrapped in a single person, and yet He moves forward in His declaration to be King in lowliness, weakness and service. He does not come in pomp and circumstance. No, He comes in meekness and lowliness, He comes in humility and simplicity.
 - I absolutely love the way Sinclair Ferguson captures the moment:
 - “Think, for a moment, what Mark’s record would convey to those who read it first – the Christians in Rome. No doubt

many of them had seen generals enter Rome in triumph to receive the accolades of victory. How stark the contrast between Roman glory and Jesus' humility must have seemed. How mighty and powerful the sword and political power by contrast with King Jesus! Yet we know that his kingdom was established, while the glory that was Rome disappeared into oblivion. We know that what Jesus did in Jerusalem established a kingdom which would outlast all the kingdoms of this world and break in pieces every man-centered kingdom which sets itself against it. Jesus had come to taken his throne – but had committed himself to begin his reign from a cross.” (*Let's Study Mark*, 181).

IV. Worship the One who alone can save. **11:9-10**

- On a personal level I am fascinated by these 2 verses which record the shouts of the crowd. On the one hand their words could not be more true. On the other, they could not have been more misunderstood by those who were making them. Only Jesus, and Jesus alone, knew the full import and significance of what they were saying.
- Both those who went ahead of Him and those who followed Him, in other words everyone in the caravan going up and into Jerusalem where shouting the same thing, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the coming Kingdom of our Father David! Hosanna in the highest!” Let’s break all of this down and note all that is here.
 - “Hosanna” means literally “Save, I pray” and is repeated by Mark for emphasis (vs. 9 & 10). It draws from Psalm 118:25-26 (The Egyptian Hallel; Ps 113-118) 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! We bless you from the house of the Lord.” Passover celebrated the Hebrew people’s liberation and deliverance out of Egypt. Now the nation of Israel anticipates a Messianic liberation and deliverance from Rome.

- “Blessed” is also repeated (vs. 9-10) and draws from Numbers 6:24-27 which says, “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.”
- The one who is blessed, better, will be the blesser, it is, 1) he who comes in the name of the Lord, 2) who is bringing the coming kingdom of David!”
- 2 Samuel 7:12-16 is being fulfilled! And it was!
- Isaiah 9:1-7 is being fulfilled! And it was!
- Isaiah 11:1-10 is being fulfilled! And it was!
- Jeremiah 23:5-8 is being fulfilled! And it was!
- Ezekiel 34:23-24 is being fulfilled! And it was!
- Micah 5:2-4 is being fulfilled! And it was!
- Oh, but it was not being fulfilled in the way they thought, hoped, and believed it would be. They are right, He is their King. But He is not here to purge Israel of foreign domination. No, he is here to purge His people of their sin! They are looking and longing for a temporal, political and military Savior. He, however, is bringing what only He can bring, a complete and eternal salvation of body and soul! They want and expect a Savior only for Jews, but He is a Savior for the whole world, for any and all who will believe on His Name. John 1:12 says it so well, “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God ...” John 3:16 says it so well, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should

not perish but have eternal life.” John 14:6 says it so well, “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life, No one comes to the Father except through me.” Acts 4:12 says it so well, “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” 1 Timothy 2:5 says it so well, “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus ...” Christ’s salvation and triumph would be the victory of life over death, salvation over sin, truth over error, love over hate, forgiveness over condemnation. They cried out for salvation that day. Have you cried to Him to save you? He is the only one who can.

V. Worship the One who always acts justly. 11:11

- This day ends rather uneventful. It is actually quite anti-climatic. Tomorrow will be a different day (11:12-25). Things will never be the same again!
- 1) Jesus enters Jerusalem, 2) goes to the temple, 3) looks things over very carefully, 4) sees that it is late (in the day or for the temple?) and 5) leaves with the disciples for Bethany where He will spend the night.
- I cannot help but wonder if Jesus’ mind returned to the 1st time He saw the temple as a 12 year old boy (Luke 2:41-52). Certainly He must have been impressed in some ways at that young and tender age. Not now, not knowing what He knows now and what will transpire in the coming days and years.
- Jesus does not come to the temple as a tourist or gawking pilgrim caught up in the fanfare of Passover and enamored by the spectacular beauty of the temple. No, he makes a commanding survey of the situation, takes careful inventory of all that He sees,

and goes away to return the next day when He will curse something, the temple, that should have been bringing the nations to God (11:17), but in reality was driving them away.

- It would seem that this would have been the moment for Him to claim and receive His Messianic throne and Kingdom. Amazingly, nothing, not one thing happens. The enthusiastic crowds have mysteriously vanished. Was He only “King for a day?” Jesus quietly, and with no fanfare whatsoever, leaves with the 12.
- However, Malachi 3:1-2, a text Mark cites at the very beginning of this gospel, is lurking in the prophetic shadows, “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap.”
 - The refining fire has arrived to purify that which is putrid.
 - The fuller’s soap has arrived to cleanse that which is filthy.
- He will start His work with the temple.
He will finish His work on the cross.
- He acts justly wherever and whenever He judges. He is so worthy of our worship.

Conclusion: 1) Our King has come and ... our King is coming again. And, what a difference there will be in His 1st and 2nd Advents.

The First Coming of Jesus	The Second Coming of Jesus
He came to die.	He will come to reign.
He came on a little donkey.	He will come on a warrior horse.
He came as a humble servant.	He will come as an exalted King.
He came in weakness.	He will come in power.
He came to save.	He will come to judge.

He came in love.	He will come in wrath.
He came as deity veiled.	He will come as deity revealed.
He came with 12 disciples.	He will come with an army of angels.
He came to bring peace.	He will come and make war.
He was given a crown of thorns.	He will receive a crown of royalty.
He came as the Suffering Servant.	He will come as the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

2) Very few bowed before the great King the 1st time He came. However, every knee will bow when He comes again (Phil 2:9-11). Are you looking? Are you waiting? Are you ready? Here the words of the great hymn writer Isaac Watts as you think on these things.

Jesus shall reign where e'er the sun
 Doth his successive journeys run;
 His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
 Till moons shall wax and wane no more
 Blessings abound where e'er he reigns:
 The prisoner leaps to lose his chains,
 The weary find eternal rest,
 and all the sons of want are blest.
 Let every creature rise and bring
 Peculiar honors to our King;
 Angels descend with songs again,
 And earth repeat the loud Amen.