Our King Has Come…Our King Is Coming!

Matthew 21:1-10

Sermon final

The gospel of Matthew proclaims the coming of a King and His Kingdom. The "Messiah" which means "Anointed One". For centuries the Jewish people had waited for Him in silence. He would be the "Son of David", the eternal King promised to come from David's line. He would be a conquering ruler who would crush their enemies and usher in an eternal Kingdom that would know no end. This was the Jewish hope at the time Jesus lived, and there were expectations of how this King would come and fulfill God's promises to them given in the prophets. ***But no one understood the Messiah to be the King who came to save people as Jesus did.***

All throughout Matthews gospel you have this *tension* of God's Kingdom coming in ways that the people expected, but also in ways they did not expect. He was born in Bethlehem - that was expected. He performed healings and miracles in fulfillment of the prophet Isaiah - that was expected. He spoke of going first to the Jewish people - that was expected. But then He also ministered to Gentiles - that was unexpected. He acted favorably towards women, tax collectors, sinners, and centurions - that was unexpected. He told people to not publicly proclaim His identity as Messiah - that was unexpected. But nothing was more unexpected to His disciples than what Jesus told them in Matt. 20:18:

> **"See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death [19] and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day." (Mt. 20:18)**

This is a very different entrance into Jerusalem, with a very different outcome than what they expected.

In Matthew 13 Matthew gives us a series of parables that Jesus tells regarding the kind of Kingdom God He was establishing. These parables were difficult to understand, in part, because they describe God's coming kingdom in a foreign way.

Consider the parable of the weeds (Matt. 13:24-30): Jesus tells the parable in which the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man who went and sowed seed in his field, but while he and his servants were sleeping an enemy came in and sowed weeds among the good seed. So you have a mixed kingdom of good seed and evil weeds sown by the enemy. That's not the Kingdom of Heaven the Jewish people expected! The servants of the Master ask him, "should we pull up the weeds?" I mean who wants evil weeds in their kingdom that will destroy the

good seed? But the Master says, "No…don't pull them up, rather, let them grow together until the harvest. I will tell the harvesters to gather the weeds then and throw them into the fire. This is a different Kingdom than what they expected. A Kingdom with good and evil growing together until a "still to come" future reaping? ***So the Kingdom of Heaven has a King that has come, and a future reaping that is coming.***

Another parable: The parable of the net (Matthew 13:47-50). Jesus again makes a comparison to the Kingdom of Heaven to a net thrown into the sea. After its filled with all sorts of fish, it is dragged to shore and then the good fish are sorted among the bad fish. The bad fish are thrown into a fiery furnace of weeping, and gnashing of teeth (again, a picture of reaping and eternal torment). Again, a mixed Kingdom where good and evil together exist, with a future judgment to come where the good and the bad are sorted and the bad are thrown into the fire. There is a messy time period where God's Kingdom and the Kingdom of darkness exist together, but there is a day still to come where there will be a reaping of the weeds, and a sorting out of the good and the evil fish.

One more parable: The parable of leaven (Mt. 13:33). The Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven that a woman used to leaven her bread. She takes three measures of flour and "hides" (the kingdom comes in hidden ways) a small amount of leaven in until eventually the leaven does what leaven is supposed to do…it spreads to the whole dough. The Kingdom of Heaven doesn't come in its fullness or entirety. It comes in a small measure, but grows and grows until it spreads and fills the whole earth. Again, this is very different than the Kingdom the people expected. They expected a Kingdom that would come in power and fullness and it would immediately fill the earth with its influence.

The gospel of Matthew gives us a different picture of God's Kingdom. A King who has come…and a King who is coming. His Kingdom has come, but His rule NOW is different than what His rule will one day be. What does the rule of God look like now?…that's our question this morning. Here is the question before all of us this morning: Will you surrender and worship the King ***on His terms***? The Jewish people rejected Him…will you? **Three things for us to consider in this story: First**, the King came as the people expected, but, **second**, He brought salvation in an unexpected way, and, **finally**, we are to worship Him on ***His terms***.

1. **Our King came as the people expected**

The story is set near the end of Jesus' ministry. Jesus and His disciples are doing what faithful Jews did, they are traveling to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. However, the manner of their entry is very unique and caused the whole city to be (v.10) "stirred up" and to say, "Who is this?" That's the question every person must answer about Jesus. There is already a plot to kill Jesus by the religious leaders that is happening behind the scenes. They were jealous

of the attention that Jesus had received from the people who were following Him. Jesus commands two of His disciples to bring to Him a mother donkey with her foal…a young donkey that the other gospels tell us has never been ridden on. Look at v.2:

> **"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." (v.2)**

This is a strange request. Imagine I told you, "go to the corn field across the street and hop in the tractor that has its keys inside. Start it up and bring it to me. When the farmers asks you what on earth you're doing, say to him, 'the pastor of RR has need of it!'"

You get shot for lesser things! Donkeys were very expensive and they were a source of livelihood. But the disciples go as Jesus commands. Notice that when Jesus commands the disciples to do something difficult, He provides the means for them to be successful.

This is how the providence of God works: God NEVER commands you and I to do anything unless He also provides the means for us to be successful. If God is asking you right now to do or to bear something difficult in your life, He will always be faithful to provide what you need to obey…our part is to be faithful to obey the commands He gives.

That is a very minor point…the main point here is that Jesus is intentionally doing this for a greater purpose – Matthew tells us that this is in fulfillment of what was spoken by the prophet Zechariah in Zechariah 9:9:

> **"Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold your king is coming to you, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'" (v.5)**

Their long-awaited Messiah has come. Matthew quotes the prophecy of Zechariah which is significant, because in Zechariah, the King to come is promised to be a conquering King who comes, and stands upon the Mount of Olives and it is split in two from east to west by a very wide valley and the nations gather to Jerusalem at that time to battle against the Lord. And the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when He fights on a day of battle. His disciples knew this prophecy. The people knew this prophecy. Jesus is coming into the city as Messiah would be expected - in kingly fashion - in the OT kings are depicted as riding on a donkey. Solomon, David, King Jehu…over and over kings ride on a donkey. Zechariah's King comes upon a donkey. Jesus is showing Himself to be the Messiah of Zechariah, the Son of David, the King in fulfillment of the prophets who is entering in kingly fashion….and He comes exactly as the people would expect, riding on a donkey.

However…

2. **Our King saves in an unexpected way (vv.8-9)**

"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!" (vv.8-9)

Notice the people understand what Jesus means by riding on a donkey into the city. This is really the height of Jesus' public ministry. All along Jesus' true identity was hidden from people, but as He approaches Jerusalem the gospels show that His true identity as the Messiah becomes more and more public and now we are at the height of it as His identity is being proclaimed in a very open and public way. The picture given by Matthew is a scene of worship that surrounds Jesus – those who are "before" Him and those who "followed Him" are shouting praise. Jesus receives it…He knows who He is and He knows what He is doing. The religious leaders are furious. In Luke's gospel they command Jesus to tell the people to be quiet but Jesus says, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." (Lk. 19:40)

This is like a royal red carpet - It was common to spread cloaks and branches in celebration of a King in the ancient world. The word "Hosanna" means "Save us" and comes from a Messianic Psalm 118:25-26:

Save us [Hosanna], we pray, O Lord! O Lord, we pray, give us success! [26] Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We bless you from the house of the Lord. (Psa. 118:25-26)

They are praising Jesus as the coming Savior, but soon they will cry out, "crucify Him!". They are expecting a King who would fight for them, as the Maccabeans did 200 years earlier and they celebrated with palm branches, and they cleansed the temple, and they offered sacrifices. Jesus on the next day would also cleanse the temple, and on Friday He too would offer a sacrifice…but not one that was expected. One outside the camp…and one for all people of all time. Jesus comes to save in an unexpected way and to defeat an unexpected enemy.

The Jewish people thought, "our greatest enemy is Rome." But our greatest enemy is not evil in the world around us. Our greatest enemy is not even the devil. Our greatest enemy is the evil that lies within the human heart!

Jesus came to save us from our sin and from the evil within us, not the evil around us. The people of Israel missed this. Our biggest problem is not the world around us, our biggest problem is that because of our sin we have a terrifying enemy - God Himself. And an even greater problem is this: How can God be just while at the same time be merciful? Therein lies the mystery of the gospel – God punished my sin and is just in doing so…but because of His great love and mercy for me He punished my sin upon the Perfect Son of God, Jesus. This is the sacrifice Jesus came to offer. He sent His Son to be rejected by His people and to die on a

Roman cross and rise again 3 days later in order to bear our greatest burdens, our greatest enemy, so that we can be cleansed and forgiven! This is the gospel, the good news of the King who has come to save though not as expected.

It's fitting that Jesus came the first time riding on a beast of burden. The King who bore my sin on the cross came mounted on a beast of burden. He bears the burdens and sins of the human heart and His Kingdom rule is not over the realms of the earth, but over the human heart. Does Jesus rule over your heart? That's what He wants this morning…He wants your heart. We must come to the King on His terms and receive the Kingdom He came to bring – a kingdom that rules, *but over the human heart.*

He is going to come again. There is a day of reaping that is still to come…where He will separate the wheat from the weeds, the good from the bad fish, the goats and the sheep. Our King Has Come…and Our King is Coming. When He comes again you don't want to be His enemy! He came the first time to save you and not to judge, but when He comes again He comes to judge and to judge the nations who have rejected His offer of amnesty. Zechariah's battle will happen, and God's victory in Zechariah will happen. But for now…we live in world where darkness and light exist together. It is an age of mercy and invitation. The King has Come and He invites all of us to trust in His salvation.

You DO NOT WANT TO FACE the King as a rebel when He comes to judge. The King who comes to judge arrives in a very different manner than what we see here. Consider John's depiction in Revelation 19:11-21:

> **Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse!** [not a donkey, but an animal of war] **The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. [12] His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.** [this is a fierce, fiery, glorious King who is coming] **[13] He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood** [at His first coming He sheds His own blood. At His Second Coming He is clothed in the blood of His enemies that He fights against]**, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. [14] And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. [15] From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.** [He comes the first time to save the nations from sin, now He comes to strike them down and to rule and to execute the wrath of God. If the wrath of God is not absorbed through the Son of God, the wrath of God will fall upon YOU.] **[16] On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.**

Again, in Zechariah's prophecy of the King who comes as one prepared for battle:

> **Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. (Zech. 14:3)**

Listen to the depiction of this great battle in Psalm 2:

> **"Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 'Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.' He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then He will speak to them in His wrath, and terrify them in His fury" (Psalm 2:1-2)**

You DO NOT WANT to meet this Coming King as a rebel. Today, before He comes again, we live in a day of grace, and mercy, and INVITATION. He invites you and me to bow the knee now before it is too late…to receive the sacrifice by faith that He has provided for us.

3. **Our King is to be worshipped**

Listen to the invitation given at the end of Psalm 2:

> **Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him. (Psa. 2:12)**

For each of us, the most important question we could ever answer is the same question the people asked when Jesus rode into Jerusalem in v.10: "***the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?"***

Who do you say Jesus is? Is He simply a good man? A prophet? A Holy Man? Is He your King? Have you "Kissed the Son", bowed the knee, have you "taken refuge in Him"?

One final parable about the Kingdom of Heaven in Matthew 13:44: The parable of hidden treasure:

> **The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. (Mt. 13:44)**

(Retell in your own words)

To receive Jesus as King, you must discover Him as a treasure more valuable than all you possess. He doesn't want anything from you that you can't give Him…He wants your heart. You must come to the King on His terms – as a King who desires to rule over your heart. ***To***

overthrow kings and kingdoms is nothing to God…to overthrow the human heart…that cost God everything. This morning, Kiss the Son, and surrender all for the sake of the Treasure. Is there something you are holding back from Him? Is there something the King has asked you to do? Maybe for some of you today is the day when you will bow the knee and Kiss the Son and take refuge in Him.

Connection Group Questions

1. ***Opening Question*** **-** If you were promised that a good and powerful King was coming to save you, what would you expect his kingdom to look like?
2. ***Read the following three parables in Matthew 13*** **-** How is the Kingdom described in these parables different than the Kingdom the Jewish people expected?
    a. The parable of the weeds (tares) – Matthew 13:24-30
    b. The parable of the net – Matthew 13:47-50
    c. The parable of leaven – Matthew 13:33
3. ***Read Matthew 21:1-7*** – What was significant about Jesus riding on a donkey into Jerusalem? Was this expected by the Jewish people?
4. ***Look again at 21:2*** - the disciples were asked to do a very unique task. What was it? What would be some temptations for someone to avoid Jesus' command?
5. ***Application*** - Give an example of a time when God asked you to do something that didn't make sense at the time. What was the outcome?
6. ***Going Deeper into Matthew*** - In Matthew's story of Jesus' final week, he highlights Psalm 118 which is a Messianic Psalm. What is the significance of each mention of Psalm 118 by Matthew in the following passages:
    a. Matthew 21:8-9
    b. Matthew 21:33-44
    c. Matthew 23:37-39
7. Pastor Brian said we live in an age of mercy and invitation. What does God's Kingdom look like now and what will it look like in the future? (One passage you can compare is Revelation 19:11-21)

8. Pastor Brian said that Jesus wants to rule over our hearts. What does it look like for Jesus to rule as King over our hearts? Is it possible for someone to think Jesus is their King when He really isn't?

9. ***Closing Application*** - In light of the fact that Jesus is King, what are some things you might need to surrender to Him?