

The King Has Come

Matthew 21:1-17

Today is Palm Sunday. The Triumphal Entry is *the* event that triggers all the other events of Easter.

In CS Lewis' book, *The Last Battle*, there is an ape, called Shift, who thinks he is someone special. He sits wearing a paper crown, thinking he's a king when he's nothing but a fake. Given the kind of claims this triumphal entry makes for Jesus, either it is complete lunacy – the first century equivalent of an ape with a paper crown on his head, or Jesus really is the greatest king. Whichever it is has profound implications.

The King Has Come: This event makes claim after claim for Jesus coming into Jerusalem as King:

- Jerusalem was the place of David's throne.
- Jesus deliberately fulfills Zechariah's prophecy of the coming king.
- The crowd spread their cloaks as they did for a previous king of Israel.
- The crowd sing out Hosanna! from Psalm 118 – which referred to the coming messiah.
- The palm branches were a symbol of national deliverance and victory.

So is this man on the donkey no better than Shift the ape and his paper crown? Or is he the King who was to come? If He was just claiming to be the king of a distant land in the 1st Century you could dismiss it as being irrelevant. But what is going on here has far wider and personal implications.

Your King Has Come: The context of Zechariah's prophecy is not limited to Israel. It speaks of the King ruling all nations, to the ends of the earth. So this coming king has come not just for Jerusalem, but for the nations. That is why he removes the traders from the Court of the Gentiles in the temple. He's not just coming to *Jerusalem* as king. He is coming as *your* king.

And the question for each of us is, is He? Is He the ruling, reigning King over your life? The reason this matters is that we will never live as we have been made to live, until we surrender to the King. Jesus comes humbly on a donkey, not on a warhorse, because He is the humble one in whom we can find rest for our souls. It is only as we submit to His rule that we can know that rest of soul that He speaks of. But how can you get there?

He has come to die: Up until now in His ministry, no-one could accuse Jesus of being a publicity seeker. Yet here He is, finally declaring Himself to be king. Why? Because Christ the King had come to die. And within the week He will be tried as King, crowned with a crown of thorns, enthroned on a cross, with the sign 'King of the Jews' written above Him. One man – the thief on the cross – recognizes Him for who He is – the King, and asks that he might enter His kingdom.

That you might enter his kingdom: where is the justice in allowing a man such as the thief – or anyone else like him (or us)– to enter the kingdom of God? The justice happens as Jesus, the King, dies for our sins. Because of His love we can know forgiveness and the rest of soul He promises. 'Hosanna!' means 'Save now God!' and that is just what the King has come to do, the King who deserves your all.