

Pastor T.C. Arnold
Palm Sunday
Matthew 21:1-11
March 24th, 2013

He's quite a unique King. He's one of a kind. There is none like Him. Jesus would show how a king – the true King – is to come. He comes in humility, as a servant – as Luther would say, “Here there is no violence, no power, no anger and now rather... Here there is only kindness, justice, salvation, mercy and every good thing.” Jesus comes to His people, not mounted on a war-horse, but on a beast of burden. Here comes Jesus...and leave it to a Savior who has turned the world upside down to come as King in a way that no king would ever come.

Could you ever imagine how it must have looked? Could you ever imagine putting yourself with that crowd hearing the chants of “Hosanna, blessed is He...”? Could you imagine the palm branches being placed before Him, the thanksgiving and praise that came His way, and glory shown to the King above all kings and yet adorning the clothes of peasant?

Well, the History Channel is attempting to show you how the stories in the Bible must have looked. Much of the time they are taking their “creative liberties” to a whole other level while ignoring important portions of the stories or “including” portions that simply are accounted for in the Scriptures. So, use the text instead. Go to the Word itself and put yourself right there – I know you can do it. I know you can see the King of all kings in your mind's eyes as He descends the Mount of Olives, ready to head up into the Jerusalem to experience an action packed, wonderful, yet horrible week for you.

On the Mount of Olives, somewhere near, is a town called Bethphage. There is where the disciples would obtain the donkey on which Jesus would ride. If you were there... if you could see... you would be on a place where Jesus and others could see most of the entire city and the whole temple in Jerusalem. While Jerusalem is built on a hill, the vantage point from the Mount of Olives is some 80 meters higher than the Holy City. Can you imagine being there? Can you imagine looking toward Jerusalem and seeing the city and its most holy place – the temple? You can see it all – you can take it all in. You can see this place that is in the midst of hustle and bustle because it is the time of the Passover and pilgrims from all over have found their way to Jerusalem. As you are there, can you imagine what will happen within the next week – a very Holy Week – in that very Holy city?

The King's procession begins and “*All Glory Laud, and Honor to you redeemer, King. To whom the lips of children made sweet hosanna's ring.*” And they certainly are singing. They are singing the Hosannas to their King. You are singing as the procession is on its way. You are singing because your King comes. He is King and there is no other city in the world – no other time than the time of the great Feast of the Passover for Him to come. Jesus comes at just the right time – in a strange way, perhaps – riding on a donkey. A strange site it must have been to those who might have been a bit confused over the whole matter. A strange site indeed – and I would imagine there were those who were a bit skeptical.

Would you be skeptical of a king who was riding into your city – especially riding in such a strange way? In the day of Jesus they wanted it – they wanted a king to lead them into victory against their enemies. They wanted a war-horse king and not a donkey riding king. They wanted a savior – but not a savior of their sins. They believed they already had that in the law. If they kept the law perfectly, that's all the saving they would need. And now (they would

say) we need a Messiah – not for our salvation – but for our safety, for our livelihood, for our commonwealth.

The children of Israel wanted a Messiah/King. The problem was, they wanted the wrong kind of king. I'm convinced that not much has changed for us today. We want a king... a king that will help us live prosperously – who will make us strong. We want a leader to make us rich or live comfortably or even at times give us what we don't deserve – and give us freedom to do whatever it is that we want all at the same time. What we really need is a Savior/King, but the world doesn't think so.

“Give me the kind of king that prospers us in the ways of the world,” we hear being said time and time again. “We don't need a king to save us from our sins – that kind of king is a king of tyranny and dictatorship. That kind of king tells us that there is only one way to heaven and that is the way that Jesus is making. That kind of king we don't want because there is nothing given that I really need. That kind of king will tell me that there is but one truth, one way, and I don't think so.”

The kind of king that descends His throne from the top of the Mount of Olives in all humility – riding on a donkey – will soon ascend to a new throne called Calvary. This throne is made for a king like Jesus – a king that says, all truth and authority and power comes through me – your servant. The world doesn't want it. The world wants to get rid of Him. The world doesn't want to believe in one way to life – or believe that salvation comes only through Him.

Why do we? Why do we want to get rid of our servant King Jesus? Why do we act as if He doesn't matter or that the truth and life of Jesus only should play a small role in our lives? Why do we put in our time for the Lord here – for an hour a week – and then live otherwise for the rest of our time? Why are we giving in to the worlds “lack of” desire to see a need for our King who comes off that Mount of Olives to enter a righteousness for you that means more than anything in this world? Our laziness, our busyness, our complacency, drives a wedge between us and our Lord who comes. Beloved in the Lord, your King comes. Don't miss Him. Don't ignore. Don't make the coming King your second or third priority on this day or any other.

Beloved, your King comes. Imagine that you are there as He is coming. Today you are there when He comes. He comes here. That's why our kids sing Hosanna and so do we. That's why we process in today with palm branches. Our King comes. He descends the Mount of Olives right to where you happen to be. He comes to where poor miserable sinners worship and live. He comes and He brings something special. He brings His humble service which results in your everlasting life. He brings a life of giving – a life that is a gift – a life that continues to serve you His precious child.

Your King comes and He is a fighter. He does wage war. His fight – and ours everyday as well – is against sin, death and the devil. He wages a war of truth in a world that doesn't much care to hear the truth. Beloved, stand at the roadside with Jesus and come along with your fellow believers with Jesus. Come to His supper on Thursday. Come to His crucifixion on Friday. Come and keep vigil with us on Saturday. And then come to celebrate His triumph at Easter. Beloved, see how He loves you. See where our Lord takes you. Come and see – Your Lord comes. Hosanna in the Highest. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.