

The David King
(2 Samuel 7, Matthew 21)

The Triumphal Entry

Turn to Matthew 21. This is Palm Sunday, by which we mean the Sunday before Easter Sunday. In Mark's Gospel, it seems that it is one week before Easter that Jesus rides donkey into Jerusalem.

Mark doesn't say anything about Palm branches, but John's Gospel says that when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, the people waved palm branches.

So, 'Mark' plus 'John' equals 'this is Palm Sunday'. Let's read what happened on Palm Sunday in Matthew 21.

Matthew 21:1-11 *As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away." ⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: ⁵ "Say to Daughter Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" ⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest heaven!" ¹⁰ When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" ¹¹ The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."*

In this story, Jesus did something most unusual for him: he declared himself to be king. Jesus knew about the prophecy in Zechariah 9, about the king coming to Jerusalem gently and riding on a donkey. By going out of his way to make sure he rode into Jerusalem on a king, Jesus was declaring himself king. He did it quietly, though, which *was* like him.

The people put their cloaks on the donkey for Jesus to sit on, and a very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and Jesus rode over their cloaks.

In 2 Kings 9 (vv6-13) we read a story about a prophet who told Jehu that God was making him the next king if Israel. When the soldiers found out about that prophecy, they immediately threw down their cloaks on the steps, for Jehu to stand on or sit on.

By putting their coats down for Jehu to sit on or stand on, they were submitting to Jehu as king. The coats were symbols for the people themselves, and by putting the coats down for Jehu the people were saying, "we agree that you are over us, and we submit to you."

That's why the crowds do this for Jesus. And the question for us here is, would we put down our coats for Jesus to ride on? Understand that this is not about our coats at all, it is about ourselves. That's what this Scripture invites from us.

And the people praise Jesus also with their words: *"Hosanna to the Son of David!"*
"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

In spite of all this, the people do not know that Jesus is declaring himself to be king, they probably know the prophecy in Zechariah but they don't realize it is being fulfilled. And they do not realize what their words mean, or what throwing down the cloaks means.

At the end of the story, when the whole city is stirred by the big fuss, and ask the crowd what it means, the crowd does not say this is the king. No, he the prophet from Nazareth.

They don't get it. In Luke, right after this story Jesus weeps, because Jerusalem "did not recognize the time of God's coming to you." In John, it says that even the disciples did not figure this event out until after Jesus had died and risen.

So, in this Triumphal Entry, Jesus knows that he is the king, the Son of David, and that he's telling everyone this by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. But no one else in all that crowd has any idea what they are doing, or what it means.

Today we sang songs to Jesus the king, and did other Palm Sunday things, and had a good time. Did we get it? That Jesus is the King? Happy noise is a good thing, but not enough. I'm not sure we get it. How could that crowd do all those good things and not understand what they were doing? I don't know, but that *is* what happened.

I think our best move is to humble ourselves before God, and say, "we're not sure we get it, but don't want to miss it; please have mercy and lead us to the truth."

The King in Israel (2 Samuel 17)

This sermon is also a part of our series on OT turning points. What we call Palm Sunday, and the Triumphal Entry, flow out of God's promise to David about his descendants being kings. And that is part of a long story, and I want briefly go over the whole story today.

The story is not over yet. We're waiting for more. But Jesus coming into Jerusalem on a donkey is an important part of that same story.

Moses led Israel well, and after him Joshua led Israel well, too, but after Joshua there was no good leader for a long time. Different judges would lead Israel for a time, or at least a part of Israel, but they were not willing to do things God's way, as Moses and Joshua.

The last 5 chapters of Judges tell two long and awful stories of how far Israel had strayed from God's ways. In those stories, other nations are not destroying Israel. Israel is destroying itself. The Israelites are violent and horrible to each other.

In those last 5 chapters of Judges, four times we read, "There was no king in Israel," and twice it adds, "Everyone did what was right in their own eyes." They needed a good leader, and did not have one.

In the beginning of 1 Samuel, Eli was the high priest at the Tabernacle, which was at Shiloh. But his sons, who should have been priests after him, did not follow God.

1 Samuel 2:12 says, *Eli's sons were scoundrels; they had no regard for the LORD.* A few verses later, after describing their sins, it says this: *This sin of the young men was very great in the LORD's sight, for they were treating the LORD's offering with contempt.*

So the boy Samuel, who Eli more or less adopted, became the priest at Shiloh. Samuel was a priest, and also a itinerant judge. He would travel from town to town in Israel, and solve their problems for them. He had sons, but they were not like him.

1 Samuel 8:1-5 - *When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as Israel's leaders.* ² *The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba.* ³ *But his sons did not follow his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.* ⁴ *So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah.* ⁵ *They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have."*

So God chose Saul to be king over Israel, and Samuel anointed Saul to be king over Israel. Saul began, but when the pressure was on, Saul would not do things God's ways.

In 1 Samuel 13, after Saul had been under pressure and had done what he should not have done, God said told him that he had been planning to make Saul's son king after him, but since Saul disobeyed, God would not do that.

If Saul had changed his ways then, perhaps this would have changed. There are other stories in the OT of God saying things like that to people, and then they changed their ways, and when they changed, God changed his mind. That did happen.

But Saul did not change. In 1 Samuel 15 Saul again disobeyed clear instructions from God, and this time not under pressure, but just to make himself more wealthy.

At the end of that story we read this: (1 Samuel 15:10-11): *Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel: ¹¹ "I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions." Samuel was angry, and he cried out to the LORD all that night.*

It seems that as Eli had unofficially adopted Samuel as his son after his sons were failing, so Samuel sort of adopted King Saul, after his sons were failing. Even though Samuel knew that Saul would not obey God, this was difficult and painful for Samuel.

It was for God, too. But where Samuel was thinking about Saul, the LORD was thinking about all Israel, who needed a leader that would aim them toward him.

So the next chapter of 1 Samuel begins this way (1 Sam 16:1): *The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."*

That begins the Scripture that Deniece read last week, about David being anointed. And David did things God's way, even when he was under pressure. The rest of 1 Samuel tells that story, and the beginning of 2 Samuel tells the same story.

Saul and his sons were killed in battle with the Philistines, and David became king of Israel, and still did things God's way. Later in his life, David sinned badly, more than once, and brought trouble on himself and others by this.

But he never lost this determination to be a man of God. We can see it from what he did right, and we can see it from how he acted when he knew he had done wrong. He went to God and confessed, agreed that he'd sinned, and asked for mercy, and then obeyed.

This is my prayer for all you young people in this church. I try to pray twice a week for every person by name that attends this church regularly, young and old. It does not happen twice every week, but there aren't many weeks it doesn't happen at least once.

My prayer for every one of you girls in this church, naming each of you, is that God will put in you a hunger to be a woman of God. And for each of you boys, that God will put in you a hunger to be a man of God. David is a good example. I know there are lots of others of you praying, too. Don't stop.

Shortly after David became king, he brought the ark of God to Jerusalem, and the ark was in a tent there. Then we get to 2 Samuel 7, which is the turning point in the history of Israel, an important Scripture, and the background to Jesus' Triumphant Entry into Jlm.

There is play on the word "house" in this Scripture. The English word "house" usually means a building that people live in, but "house" can also mean a line of ancestors and descendants, seen as a single family.

So the "house of Neufeld" by that definition would be all the Neufelds before me, parents and grand parents going back, and all the Neufelds to come, children and grandchildren and so on. "House" is not used this way of ordinary families, but in English it is used of important families, the "house of Stuart" or the "house of Windsor," royal families.

The Hebrew word "house" can be used the same two ways, a building to live in or a family line, and those two meanings are important to this Scripture.

One other thing to listen for: God's wants his people to have a good ruler, someone who will be a good shepherd for his people. What God does with David is not just about David. It is about God's *people*. He wants his *people* to have a godly leader.

Sam 7:1-17 *After the king was settled in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ² he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent." ³ Nathan replied to the king, "Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you." ⁴ But that night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying: ⁵ "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?' ⁶ I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. ⁷ Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" ' "*

⁸ *"Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. ⁹ I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. ¹⁰ And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning ¹¹ and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.*

"The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: ¹² When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by human beings, with floggings inflicted by human hands. ¹⁵ But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever." ¹⁷ Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.

David wanted to build a house for God, and God said "no." But God was immensely pleased that David wanted to do this, and so God said, "I will build you a 'house', a family line, and that 'house' of David will last forever."

But David's 'house' did not do that well. He had several sons that were no better than Eli's sons or Samuel's sons. David's son Solomon started well, but lost ground, disobeyed, and Rehoboam, Solomon's son, was even worse.

Eventually David's line got bad enough that God had had enough, and about 400 years later God sent the Jews into exile, having been conquered by the Babylonians.

The prophets predicted this ahead of time. They saw it coming, and told Israel that this would happen. They said that David's 'house' would be cut off. But at the same time they predicted a future king, from David's line, a great king, who came to be known as the Messiah, the Christ, which means "anointed one."

Here's a prophecy from Isaiah, given before the Babylonians had come, about the great king that would come much later. We use this at Christmas, but Isaiah is not thinking about Christmas. He's thinking about God's promise that someone from David's 'house' would rule forever.

Isaiah 9:6-7 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Isaiah 11:1-3, 10 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. ² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD— ³ and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. . . .¹⁰ In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, the Jews around him knew all of this. Jesus knew all of this. By riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, Jesus was telling everyone, "I'm the one." Zechariah, another prophet, predicted the Messiah coming in that way.

They knew all of this, but they still didn't get it, didn't recognize it when it happened. Not even the disciples, who had come to see that Jesus was that Christ.

"The nations will rally to him," the root that comes out of the stump of Jesse. That's us Gentiles, here today, celebrating Palm Sunday, Jesus the king.

And so Matthew and Luke are clear that Joseph, who became husband of Mary, was a descendant of David. Mary's Joseph was part of the 'house of David'. There was no real descendant of David who could lead God's people the way God wanted them led.

Eli adopted Samuel because Eli's sons failed, and Samuel adopted Saul because Samuel's sons failed. In the same way, God put his own Son in David's line, for Joseph to adopt, because David's sons also failed.

God wants his people to have a godly shepherd king, who would last forever. Humans could not produce a line like this. Every human 'house' failed. So God has given us Jesus of Nazareth, son of David, Lord from heaven, the Good Shepherd.

His task is to lead all his people in the right way, to protect them and take care of them. That's his task, which he has always done wonderfully, and he is *not* finished. Our task is to recognize him, and to put our coats down for him to ride on. A king can only do his task as his people honour him as king and obey him. He's loyal. He gave his life for his people. Where else would we go to find such a King, such a Shepherd? Hail King Jesus