

The King Arrives

Matthew 21:1-11

If you have never heard the name Abraham Kuyper, you should have! He was a great leader of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands, founded a University, and served his nation as the Prime Minister. He died a hundred years ago in 1920.

I refer to him for his unusual practice of preparing messages. He sat before the text he was to preach and would pay special attention to what he found to objectionable to himself – and so would fine-tune that part of the message to his audience, thinking they too would have similar problems as he.

When it comes to the three offices of the Savior – Prophet, Priest and King – people can go pretty far with Jesus being their teacher as well as their sacrifice for sin. But it is His kingship that appears most intolerable. What? Bow my knees to a King? The motto of our fallen race is “Let us cast off their cords!” from Psalm 2.

All four Gospels record the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem as the Sunday before His resurrection. The King Arrives, and the King is to be Rejected. And Lord willing, we will see next Sunday – the King Risen!

We find in Matthew 21 two promises fulfilled, one from Zechariah and his riding on a colt, and one from the Psalms and Hosannas to the King.

But there is more here than meets the eye. Jesus rides a whole avalanche of God’s purposes ripening richly before us.

The King Arrives! Let us join the children's choir, whom Jesus said were they to cease their praises, the very rocks of the earth would shout forth! Oh how God's Word can never fail! Heaven and earth can pass away, but not the Word of the Lord!

Let us begin with the **MARVEL OF HIS KINGSHIP** as a King in the Davidic Line!

A Savior King was promised all the way back to Genesis 3:15 – one who would fight for us and crush Satan's head. In the family of Abraham, old Jacob bows low before death and blesses Judah with the scepter never to depart from that tribe.

In the wilderness, the wicked prophet Balaam can't help himself to bless Israel and say: "The Lord his God is with them, the shout of a king is with them!" And Moses makes provision for the king to come – as surely a king is part of the answer to the mess in the days of the Judges.

So along comes David. David who wants to build the Lord a house. And instead, the Lord unites his house, his throne, and his Son with that of David. Exceedingly great and precious promises are made to him and his line. Here is one of many: ² *For I have said, "Lovingkindness will be built up forever; in the heavens You will establish Your faithfulness."* ³ *"I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant,* ⁴ *I will establish your seed forever and build up your throne to all generations."* (Psa 89:2-4)

So they lived happily ever after, right? Wrong! That is the remarkable thing! Centuries later, Jeremiah and Ezekiel are given front row tickets to the end of the long dynasty of David's house. They see the last king

carried off to Babylon! So no more of David, right? Wrong! We hear much of David again. Let them speak for themselves!

Repeating words from chapter 23, Jeremiah says 10 chapters later:

¹⁵ *'In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth. ¹⁶ 'In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety; and this is the name by which she will be called: the LORD is our righteousness.'* ¹⁷ *"For thus says the LORD, 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; ¹⁸ and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man before Me to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings and to prepare sacrifices continually.'" (Jer 33:15-18)*

And Ezekiel:

34:23-25 ²³ "Then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd. ²⁴ "And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David will be prince among them; I the LORD have spoken. ²⁵ "I will make a covenant of peace with them and eliminate harmful beasts from the land so that they may live securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.

We could say more of Daniel's revelation of a Kingdom to be given to One like the Son of Man. And what Isaiah said – *the government will rest on His shoulders; ⁷ There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this. (Isa 9:6-7)*

Zechariah also – after the exile and still no king on the throne, writes:
¹² "...*Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the LORD.* ¹³ *"Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices."* (Zec 6:12-13)

And then one more as we turn to the dawn of the New Testament:

³⁰ *The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.* ³¹ *"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.* ³² *"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; ³³ *and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."* (Luk 1:30-33)*

We must say how remarkable that this hope for the Messiah as the "Son of David" was retained. Israel had fallen into such dark and deadly traditions. But at least two things kept the hope alive: the great promises that defied reason, and the powerful presentation of John the Baptist who made a way for this King.

These hosannas for the king have been building – turn now to the arrival itself and...

THE MAJESTY OF THIS KING.

Here is the day the Lord has purposed and now brought to pass! He comes into the city with his armies of angels at his back, the rod of anger in his hand, and the wrath of God in his voice, to overthrow the

Romans legions, cast out all of the pagan idols, and bring the riches of Solomon back to fill the streets with silver beyond measure, right!?

Nope – lowly, meek, gentle Jesus rides in, so unlike the kings of this earth! He rules in righteousness, grace, peace and overflowing good. The reasons for singing Hosanna to this King are more than the combined stars above and sand below.

Let us name just a few found strewn around the scene –

- a. First, ***His supernatural personhood*** as He is riding an unbroken colt of a donkey. He is the one who as Matthew records is the prophet Jesus, in verse 11. They surely intended not just his teaching but His signs, His miracles. Why, even his rejecters could not deny them! He had healed every kind of illness, cast out kinds of demons, He had forgiven all sorts of sins and protected those taken in transgression. He had even raised the dead! And don't forget how He had fed thousands who then sought to take and make him King. But He refused that action. But not now, not in humility.
- b. See then secondly, ***His humility***. Children loved him. Jesus is never said to smile or laugh, but there should be no question that Jesus was full of joy and peace and infectious goodness! His yoke was easy and light, carrying those who received Him! His scepter is love, grace, peace! See Him leave his own peace and His own joy as He invites us to His love, His kingdom and His throne! What king does that?
- c. Lastly ***righteous, holy***, He loved the law of God. See Him immediately cleanse the temple. Look at that! Jesus got violent! In a good way. Most violence is wrong. Most violence is bad wrong! But violence to stop violence is necessary at times. Jesus did so!

There is a new answer to WWJD! What Would Jesus Do? He casts out evil from His Father's House! Divine violence rescued the oppressed, the weak, the helpless! How he demonstrated true zeal for God, for God's Law, for God's Temple, for God's People. And old Puritan put it this way: There are three things God loves in this world: His Truth, His Worship, and His People. And it is hard to say which He loves best!

So these three things shine through: His supernatural power, loving humbleness, burning hot righteousness.

Come now to today and...

OUR MODERN NEED FOR SUCH A KING.

Like the Jews, we have forgotten and lost much. Look at how they had lost the prophetic office in the first century! Little different than in Jeremiah's day, where the prophets prophesy lies and the people love it to be so! Or look at the priestly office – selling their wares in the temple! The only prophecy we have is from the crooked priest Caiaphas. And he was a puppet of Rome – put in office not by Israel but by Caesar. He was despised by the people of the realm as a total compromiser! So the proverb of the day was: 'the further from Jerusalem, the closer to God; and closer to Jerusalem, further from God!' Even their magnificent temple had been built Herod the Great – or better, Herod the Awful, who killed his own family members!

And yet there still was a sense and need of the promised King, the Savior King. **We too are a people who have lost the truth – the prophetic Word.** There is no truth any longer. Look at our leaders – willing to lie and break their oaths! In the universities, truth is relative.

Radicals today are saying truth is a form of oppression! There are no absolutes! Even math is a form of white racism!

And where are our **priests**? Our nation finds little or no need of a sacrifice, because we have no sin! Our imperfections are handled by therapy or technology. We are all good people bringing in Utopia. As one critic of our religion said: We serve “a God without wrath brought men without sin into a Kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a Cross.”

But how we need this King! The modern mind does not want to bend the knee – that is weakness! Christianity makes people dependent rather than independent; it saves the poor and foolish rather than sterilizing and annihilating them.

We need a King like Jesus not only to rule us but to protect us from monsters like Marx and Darwin, from Freud and Margaret Sanger, from Judge Blackmun and Peter Singer! Social Engineers.

Let us look to ourselves now. The text says: “Your King is coming to YOU.” What does it mean if Jesus is your King?

APPLICATION:

To be sure, if he is your King, He must be your Prophet and Priest too. If Jesus is my Savior, my Lord, my Mediator, His supernatural place in my life will reflect these offices of His.

If Jesus is my prophet – my thoughts, my outlook, need to be steeped in His Word, his truth. He has been given the highest crown of earth for his golden rule as a teacher. Let us be a people of truth.

If He is my priest – it is his blood that atones for my sins! Not by hiding our sins, dismissing our sins, or cleansing our own sins by our efforts or rituals. This really is the watershed of being a true Christian or not: accepting his vicarious death on the cross.

But what about my King? Dear God, rule me in all things, in my will and practice! Not my will but Yours be done! The Light of Prophet Jesus for my thinking, my mind; the Love of Priest Jesus for my desires, my heart, purified; and the Law of Potentate Jesus for my feet, my hands, my life – ruled and overruled by Him.

And this is no slavery, no mere outward forcing of us. We have his Law written on our hearts. We live by grace. We grow in holiness by His Spirit! He is in us. His not merely our imitation and motivation, but your habitation and inundation. You are in Him and He is in you!

Oh what a King to make us willing in the day of His Power! Oh what a King who makes us kings! Revelation 5:10 says: "He has made us **kings** and priests to our God!"

What does that mean?

The Lord Jesus infinitely excels all earthly kings--in that **He makes all His subjects kings!** He has a crown of glory for every subject! Oh, what a glorious King is this!

Oh, it is better to be a poor member of Christ--than the head of a nation! How infinitely happy are all Christ's subjects! They are all kings, all heirs, all favorites, all sons!

Alas! where is there such a king to be found--who makes all his subjects kings?

There are many kings who **undo** their subjects--but Christ makes His subjects kings!

There are many kings who make their subjects **beggars**--but Christ makes His subjects kings!

There are many kings who put their subjects **to death**--but Christ died that His subjects might live!

There are many kings who give their subjects **titles**--but Christ gives all His subjects heaven!

Now, beloved, here is the excellence of our King--**He makes all His subjects kings**--and gives them all crowns of glory!

(William Dyer, "Christ's Famous Titles")

Prayer: renew us in the image of Christ, according to knowledge in our minds, righteousness in our hearts, and holiness in our lives.