

Title: The Book of Mark: Part 32, The One True King

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Passage: Mark 11:1-11

Big idea: Jesus fulfills the characteristics of the one true king that we are called to worship.



We are continuing on in our series in Mark, looking at Mark 11:1-11.

Before we dive into the scripture and go verse by verse, I would like to take a look at our past. For those who are followers of Christ, we have a shared history when we enter into relationship with God. We have a rich history that is extremely important for us to know, that adds to our personal discipleship and enriches us in our relationship with God.

The passage of scripture is a very well-known passage, celebrated in Palm Sunday and Passion Week as Jesus enters into Jerusalem. To really appreciate this account of Scripture we need to be conscious and appreciate all that has happened leading to this moment.

So, we are going way back many centuries ago. God created everything in the universe within six days and on the 7th day, He rested. His apex creation was humanity, Adam and Eve. There was a beautiful garden, called Eden, where everything was taken care for them by God.



The arch enemy, Satan, comes to tempt Adam and Eve and they fall into sin. This causes a cataclysmic rupture within the relationship between humanity and God. Adam and Eve must leave Eden and begin to live in a world that

has been contaminated by sin. But before their banishment from Eden, God makes a promise in Genesis 3 that there will be a reconciliation between God and humanity, that the relationship would be healed. As years and decades go by, the earth is full of people and in Genesis 6 the heart of humanity was full of evil. There was only one family, led by Noah, that was righteous in the land. As a result, God brought judgment onto the people and purified the earth with the great flood.



God cleansed the earth saving Noah and his family in an ark. God gives a beautiful promise at the end of the flood account in which He puts a rainbow in the sky as a sign of the promise that God will not destroy the earth by water. As the population grows people of similar language and culture come together.

During this time God continues to want a relationship with humanity so that we could be redeemed. In Genesis 12 God calls a person named Abram, later known as Abraham and calls him and his family out of Ur, Mesopotamia (Iraq). God tells him that he has a promised land for him and his descendants and that he would be a blessing to all the people of the earth that out of him would come the great blessing.

Then Abraham moves towards the land of Canaan and that is where he settles. Abraham has a son named Isaac, Isaac has a couple of children, one of his sons is Jacob. You maybe have read within the Bible many times where it has the phrase of “the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”. These are the patriarchs of the faith. Jacob has many sons, and later is renamed Israel. From him comes the 12 tribes of Israel.

The family moves to Egypt due to famine in the land. There is a Pharaoh there that is good to them. However, over a 400-year period, a new Pharaoh comes and enslaves the Israelites. The people of God, the children of Israel cry out to God and ask for a deliverer. And in Exodus 3 Moses was raised up as a prophet to deliver the people out of Egypt and into the promised land known as Canaan, that God promised to Abraham long before. Leadership goes from Moses to Joshua, then from Joshua to the Judges and then to the Prophets.

When Samuel was the prophet of Israel the people came and demanded from Samuel that Israel have a king to rule over them (1 Samuel 8). A king like all the other nations around them. Israel was not supposed to be a monarchy it was supposed to be a theocracy, in which God was the one that was the head of the nation of Israel.

Samuel went to God and God said no, but the people persisted. Then God granted to them a king. God basically said, if the people want a king like all the other nations, then fine I will give them a king like all the other nations. So, God picked a person named Saul to be the first king of Israel.

The tribes of Israel coalesced and became the kingdom of Israel. At first it seemed like a good idea, however the first king of Israel saw was quite corrupt, spiritually. I find it interesting that the people said we want a king like all the other nations. All the other nations had kings that were corrupt and went against the living God. Be careful what you wish for!

The idea of kingship and monarchy came into play during this time. As a result of Saul turning against God, God chose a successor of Saul, David. A shepherd boy, an unlikely choice becomes king and is the best king of Israel. David had a heart after God and was rewarded for it. God promised that David's descendants would always be on the throne of Israel (2 Samuel 8). Time goes by, David is king of 40 years, David passes away, his son Solomon becomes king for 40 years. Unfortunately, after king Solomon's death a horrible civil war took place in Israel.

The 10 northern tribes of Israel coalesced, and they broke away from the other two and called themselves Israel with the capital called Samaria. They not only broke away physically, but they broke away spiritually from the living God and turned to worship false gods and idols.

Every single king in the northern kingdom did not follow God. Even though God raised up prophets like Elijah, Amos, and Hosea, to tell the people to turn to God, the kings and the people continued to be evil. And 19 evil kings later, the northern kingdom of Israel was taken over by the Assyrians in 722 BC. The population was scattered throughout the region not to be heard from again.

However, the southern kingdom known as Judah was a little better than the northern kingdom, not by much. They had 20 kings and only 8 were good, the rest were evil and did not follow the living God. Even though God raised up prophets like Joel, Micah, and Zephania, to tell the people to turn to God, the kings and the people continued to be evil. As a result, the southern kingdom of Judah was taken over by the Babylonians and Judah with its capital of Jerusalem fell in 586 BC.

The people were then exiled to Babylon. God spoke through prophets like Daniel and Ezekiel. The Lord protected the remnant and brought them back to the land of Israel under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The people rebuilt the walls around Jerusalem and God spoke through prophets like Haggai and Malachi and showed his grace.

However, all of a sudden, the voice of God was silent. There were no more prophets on the scene. One year went by, then two years, then 10 years go, and for 400 years there is silence.

Then, in the fullness of time, God spoke through an angel and set in motion the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of a Messiah, a Saviour, the birth of a Great King. One who came from the line of David and who would be forever the King of the people.

And today we look at the passage of scripture in which this King arrives in Jerusalem.



¹ As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, ² saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'"

⁴ They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, ⁵ some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" ⁶ They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. ⁷ When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. ⁸ Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. ⁹ Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

"Hosanna!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

¹⁰ "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

¹¹ Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

Mark 11:1-11

All the Gospels, Matthew 21:1-11, Luke 19:28-44, John 12:12-19 and this passage in Mark, record this event.

This is not just a simple passage of Scripture that has been written, but what we are seeing is prophecy unfolding. And what we see here and what we will be looking at today is Jesus.

BIG IDEA

Jesus fulfills the characteristics of **the One True King** that we are called to worship.



So, let's dive into the scripture. Mark 11 is the third section of the Gospel Mark and begins the biblical account of Jesus' last week on earth before the cross.

Mark 11:1-2, "As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 'Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.'"

Jesus and his disciples are approaching Jerusalem going uphill through Bethphage and Bethany. The Mount of Olives is directly east of Jerusalem and from the summit you can view the city, especially the temple mount. Jesus gives direction to two unnamed disciples for a mission.

Jesus said to them to go to the village, which is believed to be Bethphage, and gives some interesting instructions. These instructions may sound strange and probably is to the disciples, but all of it was to fulfill this prophecy:

Zechariah 9:9, "Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Daughter refers to Israel and Jerusalem the city. It is for the people, telling them that it is a day of great rejoicing because their king comes to them. And the king is described as righteous and victorious. Some versions describe him as righteous and having salvation. He enters lowly meaning he is humble, riding on a colt.

This prophecy was very well known to the Jewish people. And they were waiting for a king, one like those of ancient Israel. Most kings would come in riding a horse, but in this instance, Jesus comes in as king riding on a donkey colt.

The prophecy in Zechariah has much deeper ties to Genesis 49 where Jacob gave a blessing over his son Judah.

Genesis 49:10-11, "The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his. He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes.

It was deeply rooted in the Old Testament, Jewish mindset, that a king would enter Jerusalem as the Messiah. This colt was never ridden, which is significant. The principle in the Jewish culture was that no one was allowed to ride on the king's donkey or horse. Only the king could. This colt was specifically prepared for Jesus as king.

Mark 11:3, "If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'"

With those instructions he gave to the disciples Jesus adds that if anyone asks you why they are doing this, they should respond that the Lord needs it. Jesus already knows what is going to happen, that there is a colt that is prepared for him and that individuals will question them.

And that is exactly what happened in verses 4-6

Mark 11:4-6, "They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, some people standing there asked, 'What are you doing, untying that colt?' They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go."

Mark 11:7, "When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it."

As the disciples brought the colt to Jesus, people threw their cloaks over it. This is primarily for functional purposes, to make it more comfortable for Jesus to sit on the animal.

Mark 11:8, "Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields."

The reaction of the people is actually quite spontaneous. Some put their cloaks on the ground, other branches down. Jesus was basically getting a red-carpet treatment as he was entering into Jerusalem. It was an act of royal homage. A son of David was coming in as a king. The practice of throwing down garments has its roots in the Old Testament. In 2 Kings 9:13 when Jehu who was anointed king over ancient Israel, enters the city, the people blew trumpets and took off the outer garments creating a path to proclaim him as king. That same ritual happened again when the people laid down their garments in front of Jesus.

As Jesus is on the donkey, there are people all around him shouting in joy. They believe that this is the person that was promised to overthrow the Roman Empire that is enslaving the Jewish people at this time.

Mark 11:9, "Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, 'Hosanna!' 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

Hosanna literally means "save now", but it became a simple exclamation of praise. The people were saying the right thing, but they did not understand the spiritual salvation that Jesus the king was about to give them.

They then say "blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" which can be attributed to Psalm 118:25-26 Which was used during the feast of Passover.

Psalm 118:25-26, "Lord, save us! Lord, grant us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you."

This was a customary greeting or blessing that pilgrims would utter when entering Jerusalem for the feast. But what they are saying in Mark's passage has more of a deeper messianic meaning. For Jesus is literally coming in the "name of the Lord".

Mark 11:10, "'Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!' 'Hosanna in the highest heaven!'"

In verse 10 they are shouting blessed is the kingdom of our father David. The people are wanting desperately for an earthly messianic kingdom that was promised to be led by David's sons. One that was political. When they are crying out Hosanna, it is related to the coming kingdom and does not directly refer to Jesus as a Davidic king. The crowd proclaims the kingdom and not of the king himself who is Jesus. They are missing the mark.

From verses 1 to 10 we have this great feeling around what is happening as Jesus is coming into Jerusalem. People are waving branches, they're putting their cloaks down, there is shouting and proclaiming Jesus as the son of David, they are thinking that this is the guy that will change everything.

But then we move to verse 11 which almost seems anti-climatic:

Mark 11:11, "Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve."

When he came into the city, he went to the temple area. The crowd had quickly left him and only the disciples remained with Jesus. Mark emphasizes that Jesus looked around at everything. But we have to remember he's not doing this as a tourist, Jesus has been there before. This time it is different, Jesus is coming in as the Sovereign Lord, the One True King, who is carefully looking over the temple to see if it was fulfilling its divine purpose. It is basically an examination of the institution of the temple and to see if it needed to be cleansed and purified. Jesus does not go forward for the hour was late and he left and spent the night in Bethany.

As we have gone through the verses of this passage, we can then take a greater look at the characteristics of the "One True King".

Sovereign over all

In verses 1-6 we see how God is so intentional, that He has prepared what needed to happen on his entrance into Jerusalem. Mark writes in detail, intentionally to show that God has authority over all things. For all of this was to happen before the incarnation of Christ. It was recorded back in the prophecies of the Old Testament.

We see Jesus' sovereignty and authority in this. No one has this much sovereignty. The kings of this world, presidents and prime ministers of this world may think they have this power, but that is false. The only one that is sovereign over all of these things, of all of our lives, all of our futures, in a loving and caring way is Jesus. And only Jesus.

When your world is an absolute chaos God is sovereign over all, He is in control.

Humble

In verse 7, it states that Jesus sat on a colt. Why is this significant? Because he is the king and chose to come on an animal, a certain animal, a donkey to show his humility. This is the type of king Jesus is. Let's go back to the incarnation, the Christmas story. How was the king born? Was he born in a palace? No, He was born in a feeding trough. He came from a humble family. He walked around in humility. He comes into Jerusalem as a humble king. As I mentioned before in Zechariah it speaks about him coming 'lowly' which means humble, and righteous and victorious.

When you look further into Zechariah 9:10, the verse following, God says he will take away the chariots and the war horses from Israel. Coming in on horses was seen as a war like state. But Jesus comes in humility to proclaim peace to all the nations. And the peace that he is proclaiming is the redemption of humanity with God.

Compassion for people

The people are spreading their cloaks and branches on the ground for Jesus as he enters Jerusalem. The people are actually misguided in this. They believe that Jesus is coming in to overthrow the political government, but what Jesus is really doing is overcoming the kingdom of darkness and bringing the reconciliation of humanity to God because of the compassion he has for humanity. He loves his creation. Even though His creation is absolutely misguided. Earlier in the book of Mark we looked at the rich young ruler and when Jesus looked at the man, he loved the man. He was full compassion knowing that this man was misguided, but he is about to make a way for reconciliation because of the compassion he has for humanity.

He sees the crowd and has compassion over them, he loves them. There's so much compassion, Jesus is about to die on a cross for all of their sins.

Throughout the Gospels we see God's compassion: Jesus healing the sick, Jesus feeding the multitude, Jesus talking about life with God and following God only. Compassion is found throughout Scripture. In Isaiah 49:13, it calls for all creation to rejoice and sing for joy for the Lord has comforted his people and has compassion on those who are afflicted. We are the ones that are afflicted with sin that separates us from God. But God is there to show great compassion.

Power over sin

The praise that the people give in verses 9-10 references a part of Psalm 118:25-26 as mentioned before. But, verses 18-24 give us more insight into why there is praise:

Psalm 118:18b-24, "He has not given me over to death. Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous may enter. I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation. The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. The Lord has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad."

This all speaks of the cross and what is about to happen, about salvation and the power over sin. This is what this King is going to do, what this King has done for us. The greatest power that the King can wield is not against a worldly regime, but it is power over sin and conquering the kingdom of darkness, the devil, and his demons. For this One True King has power over the sin which entangles us which impedes us from having relationship with God.

Restores us to God

In verse 11 it shows how Jesus went into the temple courts and looking at everything.

There is some significance to this last verse. Jesus' triumphal entry began at Bethany at the top of the Mount of Olives. It looks across the Kidron valley down to the city of Jerusalem. In 586 BC when Jerusalem was destroyed and the people were exiled to Babylon, God had given a vision to the prophet Ezekiel in Ezekiel 11:23.

That vision was that the glory of God had left the temple in Jerusalem, departed the temple from the east side of the city and ascended above the mountain east of it, that is the Mount of Olives. The glory of God, the presence of God, is in Jesus. John 1:14 states that the "Word became flesh and dwelt among the people" and here we have the glory of God, which is Jesus in flesh, now come back to Jerusalem.

Hebrews 1:3 describes Jesus as the brightness of God's glory. Jesus descended from the Mount of Olives to enter the holy city.

In 586 BC the glory of God left the temple, but when Jesus came the glory of God came back.

But this glory exists today! Not in a temple made by man, but in temples that are made of flesh and blood, us! The Bible is very clear that when a person becomes a Christian the presence of God, the glory of God himself, God the Holy Spirit, comes in lives within the believer.

1 Corinthians 6:19 "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?"

This is the restoration of the fellowship between humanity and God. So, we come full circle here. God had fellowship with humanity in the book of Genesis and now Jesus, and only Jesus, now restores us to God permanently because of the cross. Salvation means we are restored and sealed by the spirit of God forever and ever. This is what the One True King does.

And when you look at the Bible from beginning to end, from Genesis to Revelation, from the Old Testament to the New Testament, you see these attributes of the One True King everywhere.

Far too often, Christians just look at the New Testament and they discard the Old. That is a tragedy. That is being a poor student of the Bible.

There are those who will just concentrate on the New Testament, and they could care less about the Old. We cannot do that. It is impossible to understand the God of the New Testament without understanding that He is the same God of the Old Testament.

There are those who say that the Old is a God of judgment, but the New Testament is a God of love and grace. I question if they have read the book of Revelation. There you see God's judgment. The Old Testament is full of displays of God's grace. God delivered the children of Israel from oppressing nations many times over and over. We see grace in the very first book of Genesis in which Adam and Eve said before God. What did God do? God could have easily said "OK I'm going to start over", but he never did. God showed us his grace in Genesis when he instills the salvation through Jesus Christ, the One True King.

Throughout every book of the Bible, we see the One True King that we are called to worship.