

Introduction...

When God set out to redeem his creation from the Fall, His ultimate purpose was to take what He had once created as good and to completely restore it to a state of sinless glory. His plan was that the entire universe would once again be free from sin and once again under His glorious and benevolent rule. Then He would hand that rule over to another, His only Son and Heir to the throne, who would rule over all things as King of kings and Lord of lords.

This morning we have gathered to worship Jesus Christ our Prophet, Priest and King. Perhaps, this morning the image of Jesus that is most easily called to mind is the image of Him as a newborn baby nestled in a manger. He didn't come into this world in the majesty of a king; his birth was as humble as they come. He wasn't born in Jerusalem, the Kings' city, but in Bethlehem where the shepherds lived. At His birth, He traded a king's robe for peasant rags.

This is definitely not the way you would expect the story to go for the Son of God and king of all the world to come into the world; but this will be the theme of His rule.

Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Our King has to rescue the poor by becoming poor. He has come to heal the broken, the lame, the blind, and the outcast by being broken and cast out in our place. Jesus has come to rule with a heart for the lowly and with the desire to make sinners into sons.

Transition...

The story of Jesus' rise to kingship is the story of the Bible and it is a progressive journey from the brokenness of the Garden to the glory of the cosmos restored; and on that day we will see Jesus in this way...

Rev 19:11 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

But how does that story actually unfold? How do we get from the curse in the Garden to the restored rule of our resurrected King? That is the story that we will be studying this morning and it begins all the way back in the Garden with a promise from God.

Sermon Focus...**I. God Promised a King**

Even before the fall in Genesis 3, we see something of God's design for a King to rule over creation. He gave Adam and Eve the command to, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and **have dominion** over...every living thing that moves on the earth (**Gen 1:28**)."

To have

dominion means to rule, it means to exercise authority over the things that have been made. It was part of God's plan for mankind that we rule God's creation but instead we bowed our knee to sin and have been **dominated by it** ever since.

But in the promise of God to restore creation He made it clear that one day He would send a king to rule. In **Genesis 12**, God spoke to Abram and called Him to be the father of His people. He promised to give Abram a great name, to give him a great land, and to make his family a great nation. God also promised to give Abram a son and then He promised that through that son, one day God's people would have a king. ***Soon a king would come!***

They had their first opportunity during the period of the judges. At that point, Israel had taken possession of the Promised Land but they were being threatened by the surrounding nations. The theme of the book of Judges is what I call the cycle of stupidity. The cycle began with the people enjoying peace and God's blessing, but then rebellion occurred and idolatry as well. They would be given over to bondage and then would cry out for mercy. He would hear and raise up a deliverer, a judge, to save them ***only to have the cycle repeat itself.***

So, one by one God raised up judges to lead their armies, fight their enemies, and protect their land. But just a few cycles in and the people of Israel came up with a plan that they thought would keep them from falling into the hands of their enemies. In **Judges 8:22-23**, The people request that Gideon establish himself as their king.

Gideon had led their armies against the soldiers of Midian and had been victorious so the people want to exalt him as their king. But Gideon refused saying, "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the Lord will rule over you."

Gideon's son Abimelech, did lead them as a judge for a short time but only in a small region and his rule was nothing like the king God had promised. **But, God had promised and it wouldn't be long now. Very soon a king would come!**

II. Kings Come and Kings Go

It was Samuel who would serve as Israel's final judge and near the end of his life the people begged him for a king. Like Gideon before him, Samuel wasn't excited about the idea of appointing a king for the people. **Of course, he knew that God had promised to send Israel a king but the problem was that they didn't exactly want the kind of king that God had promised them.**

The people demanded of Samuel, "Now appoint for us a king to judge us ***like all the nations.***" Israel did not want a righteous king to come in and lead them in faithfulness to God, they wanted a champion king, a war-lord to rule and strike fear into their enemies. They did not want to be faithful to God's covenant; they wanted to be like the other pagan nations around them.

The short rule of Saul...

In response, God tells Samuel, "Go ahead and appoint them a king...They have not rejected you, they have once again rejected me." The period of the judges comes to a close when Saul is chosen to be king of Israel. But his place among the people of God would be short-lived.

Saul's rule as king started well. He gave glory and credit to God for Israel's victory over the Ammonites. But his first major blunder came in **I Samuel 13** when he took upon himself the office of Priest. He disobeyed the command of God and he found out that his days as king were numbered. **God wants His people to have a King, but only the right king will do.**

David the improbable champion...

Enter David the one who would become the shepherd-king of God's people. We first meet David in **I Samuel 16** as the youngest son of a herdsman of Bethlehem, named Jesse. God sent Samuel, to anoint young David to be the future king of Israel and when that anointing took place the Spirit of God rushed upon David. This anointing would be put to the test in the very next chapter as David, the shepherd boy anointed king stood in the valley of Elah to face the giant, Goliath of Gath, the champion of the Philistine army.

For forty days this seemingly invincible man would come out into the valley between the two armies and he would mock Israel and defy their God, while the people of Israel trembled in fear.

But, God's anointed king, who appeared weak and insignificant, in his zeal for the glory of God he strides out into the valley to meet his enemy. "He fights for the people knowing and trusting that the battle belongs to the Lord. David stands alone as the one in the place of the many, and through him God works salvation for His People."¹¹

David wasn't a perfect king, but he foreshadows Christ more clearly than any other.

Regardless of what some modern Christian authors might say about you and I taking on giants, we are not the heroes in this story. We are not David, we are Israel. Jesus is the true and better David whose victory becomes his people's victory, though they never lifted a stone to accomplish it themselves.

David the father of the future Messianic king...

After his battle with Goliath David quickly became all the rage in Israel. The people made up songs about him and he was elevated to first place in their hearts even over Saul the reigning king. At the age of thirty, David took over in Israel as God's anointed king and the favor of the Lord went with him in all of his efforts.

He led the army into battle against the Philistines and he defeated them to secure Israel's borders. He captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites and made it his own capital city. He brought the Ark of the Covenant into the midst of the people and dreamed about building a grand sanctuary around it; but God said, "No!" God would not allow David's blood-stained hands to build His temple, His house.

But this wasn't God's final word to David. In **2 Samuel 7** God made a covenant promise to David...

2 Samuel 7:8...I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. ⁹ And I have been with you wherever you went...And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰ And I will appoint a place for my people Israel...And I will give you rest from all your enemies. **Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house.** ¹² When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, **I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.** ¹³ **He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.** ¹⁴ **I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.**

While David was a good king, He was not **the** King. God's purpose was not fulfilled in David but would be fulfilled through David. The King that God will one day send to rule over His people will come from the tribe of Judah, from the line of David. He will build a house for God and His rule will last forever. **This is God's plan. Very soon now and Israel's true king would come.**

¹¹ G. Goldsworthy, According to Plan pg. 166.

III. Our Promised King Arrives

David died in 971 B.C. and 1000 years had come and gone. But as the New Testament opens we hear that the promise made to David was about to come to pass. In **Matthew 1** we see the genealogy of Christ that begins with Abraham, continues through David and results in Jesus. The entire New Testament is established on the fact that Jesus is the focal point of all redemptive history and He is the heir to the throne over God's people.

In Luke's gospel account, we read that not only is the genealogy in order for Christ to be the long-awaited king; but God sent a messenger (an Angel) to make it very plain who Jesus is. Look with me at **Luke 1:26-35**.

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary... ³⁰And he came to her and said, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, ***and you shall call his name Jesus.*** ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. ***And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,*** ³³***and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end...*** The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

The King that God had promised His people had almost arrived. He was in the womb, a miracle in itself, because this king was the very Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit. But even before He was born He had a name, **"you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins (Matt 1:21)."**

Jesus was a very common name among Jewish males in the first century; the 4th most popular name behind Simon, Joseph and Judah. If you grew up in first-century Palestine, odds are you would have known a boy named Jesus.

But the reason this name was so popular was that it meant something wonderful? *Jesus* is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name *Joshua* and Joshua is the combination of two words that when put together mean, "Yahweh Saves." This little boy, born of a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit, bore the name "Yahweh Saves." God had saved Israel in the past and the day was approaching when He come and save them again, for good.

Thirty years pass and the name Jesus of Nazareth is well known throughout Israel. He had proven Himself to be a prophet, mighty in word and deed. He had proven Himself to be a faithful teacher of God's word. He had declared Himself to be the Son of God and if you had ears to hear, He claimed to be the long-awaited hope of Israel, their promised Messiah and King.

In **Luke 19** God's promised King is standing on the doorstep of Jerusalem. The King to end all kings had made His way to the city but more importantly all of history has been leading up to this moment when the Son of God would enter the city where He will rescue fallen humanity from sin.

The people of Israel have been hoping for God to raise up a King to lead their nation out of oppression and into freedom and prominence. They have prayed for such a king, longed for such a king and God has indeed sent them a king. **But his posture is not what they expected.** Jesus hasn't come as a warrior King firing arrows into enemy lines, instead He has come as a humble prophet whose words pierce people's hearts. **Israel expected a conquering king and God sent them a sacrificial savior.**

As the disciples complete the final leg of their journey into Jerusalem, the city of Kings, they are not prepared for how this journey will end. Their sights are set on a throne but Jesus is focused on the mercy seat. They expect that they would soon see Jesus wearing a crown of gold but in just a few short days they will see Him wearing a crown of thorns. The disciples are filled with hope on Sunday as Passover week is set to get underway, but by the end of the week they will be filled with grief and fear. **But make no mistake...their King had finally arrived.**

Before He goes in, Jesus tells His disciples to go and get him a donkey. **Now, why does Jesus want to ride the last mile and half on a donkey?** He has been walking for three years and now all of a sudden, He wants a donkey? This request has to do with fulfilling prophecy. In fact, almost everything we see in the triumphal entry has to do with fulfilling prophecy.

The prophet Zechariah let us know that when the Messiah came, one of the identifying marks would be that He will come into the city of Jerusalem in a unique way,

Zech 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

So, Jesus' riding in on this colt is actually fulfilling an OT prophecy made about Him. Five hundred years before Jesus arrived in the city, Zechariah predicted that the messiah would come in this way, and here He is for all to see. **The King to rule all kings wouldn't come on a great white stallion, but on a colt, the foal of a donkey.**

Jesus is no ordinary king. He is humble and gentle, willing to set aside His Kingly right in order to take on the role of a sacrificial servant. Jesus comes as our king and then He humbles himself to be our servant. **This is a picture of the gospel to us.** When we sin against our God, we are doing the opposite of what Jesus does here. When we sin against God, we are like servants trying to put ourselves in the place of the king. We have no right and no authority to rebel against our creator but we do.

But when Jesus came He flipped the script. He came as our king but He put himself in the servant's place. So that He could die for our sin and rescue us from ourselves.

35 And they brought it (the colt) to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. **36** And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road.

In **2 Kings 9:13**, the men of Israel took off their outer garments (cloak) and laid them on the ground for Jehu the newly anointed king of Israel to walk over. This might seem like an obscure bit of OT history but to the disciples this is an honor afforded to a king in celebration of his anointing.

37 As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, **38** saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

Jesus is riding on a donkey, His disciples are laying their garments on the ground in front of Him, and now the people are singing and celebrating the coming of the King. This phrase, "blessed is He who comes...." is taken directly from **Psalms 118**, which is a Messianic psalm, and it means that this crowd is acknowledging Jesus to be the Messiah.

Jesus is being welcomed into the city as the promised *Son of David* and this title is known by all of the Jews to refer to the ultimate King, the promised and final King, the Messiah. **Jesus is the rightful king of Israel but His ruling crown will have to wait.**

IV. Christ Our King Returns

As our great High Priest (**Heb 4:14**) Jesus had another task to complete; to offer the sacrifice that would atone for our sin. He was that sacrifice. He was our true Passover lamb. He entered the Holy Place to offer His own blood as atonement and He poured it out upon the mercy seat...every last drop.

The king we needed was not the king we deserved. He came to die and by his death he bought our freedom. In Heaven, they sing a song about Jesus,

Rev 5:9...“Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, ¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

Today, Christ rules as our king from Heaven and His rule is a spiritual one. His rule is grounded in his work of redemption and all who believe in Christ are citizens of His kingdom. He rules over the church as our Savior, He reigns in the hearts of His people by the Holy Spirit, He governs His people by His Word, and the day is coming when our king will return to rule over all the earth in glory.

Conclusion...

The day is coming when a window will open in the sky and the white war horse of heaven will come bearing the One who is, Faithful and True, whose name is King of kings and Lord of lords.

This morning we find ourselves living in the time in between Christ's first and second coming. **The King Has Come and His Return is Imminent.**

He is coming again, as the king over all kings. King of Israel, king of all the nations, king of nature and the universe.

Until he comes again, there is a day of amnesty and forgiveness and patience. His posture now is humble and meek riding upon a donkey; at his return, he will sit atop a white war horse holding in his hand a rod of iron. He is ready to save all who receive him as Savior and who worship Him as King.

Which King will you have?