

The Perfect King – Part 2: The Example

Description

12 The next day a vast crowd of those who had come to the Passover Feast heard
13 So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him. And as they w
14 And Jesus, having found a young donkey, rode upon it, [just] as it is writt
15 Do not fear, O Daughter of Zion! Look! Your King is coming, sitting on a do
16 His disciples did not understand and could not comprehend the meaning of the
17 The group that had been with Jesus when He called Lazarus out of the tomb a
18 It was for this reason that the crowd went out to meet Him, because they ha
19 Then the Pharisees said among themselves, You see how futile your efforts a

John 12:14-19 AMPC

Part 1 of this series focused on the children Israel's desire for a human king to rule over them in a secular position, different from the "priestly" judges who God had chosen to lead them since they had occupied the promised land. From the time of Saul the first king of Israel, God's people had experienced a rollercoaster of leadership that guided them in and out of the will of God for centuries. It was these experiences combined with the invasions from foreign nations, and the observation of neighboring nations that had strongly impacted, and obscured the children of Israel's understanding of not only what a king is, but ultimately THEIR king, the messiah. Centuries of bad rule by misguided men, and a lack of God's voice had caused the children of Israel to create an image of the messiah that more closely resembled their dysfunction and fantasy, rather than God's plan. While the children of Israel was looking for a king that would lead them in physical battle against their current occupiers, Rome, God instead had a perfect king that would liberate them spiritually, mentally, and physically. Lets evaluate the verses above to gain a clearer understanding of our perfect king, and what his example means for us.

Jesus Sits Atop The Young Donkey

At first glance this may seem trivial, or just another symbolic fulfillment of old testament prophecy, but lets really look at what this action meant. In the old testament, the donkey was often used to symbolize the flesh, or man's uncontrolled, stubborn, and wild nature. A donkey by nature may not be as large as a horse, or a mule, but it is known for its strength and ability to carry a burden. It takes time to tame a donkey, and for it to develop trust with a human, so to read these verses and see Jesus not only sitting on, but also riding a donkey that had never been ridden before, or that he'd encountered. I believe that this image of Jesus is meant to show his kingship and that he is the messiah not only through another miraculous work, taming and domesticating a young donkey on initial encounter, but also that symbolically Jesus is taming the flesh. Jesus sitting atop the donkey is him conquering that which prior to this point has operated without restraint, and uncontrolled in our lives. The flesh is stubborn, irrational, seeks to preserve the way things are, and is resistant to change/structure. Jesus is showing us that when we are submitted to him and the will of God, we will be able to conquer that which previously prevented us from experiencing the fullness that he has for our lives.

A Vast Crowd Shouted, Hosanna, The King of Israel!

Prior to Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, he had resurrected Lazarus before a large group of people in Bethany. Before resurrecting Lazarus, Jesus had performed numerous miracles that had captivated the people's attention, and their disdain/envy. When we arrive at the scene in the main text, the people appear to be celebrating Jesus' entry, which I believe can be attributed to 2 reasons; they'd seen the resurrection of Lazarus, and they'd heard of his previous miracles with a hope that they'd see him do more in the holy city. Jesus however, knowing the hearts of the people, did not allow himself to be influenced or distracted by their praises. A true king sees through the actions and words of their people to remain faithful to the purpose they've established, AND to address the actual needs of their people. Jesus having experienced the fair-weather antics of the Israelites was not swayed by their praises in this moment, because rather than working for the approval of the people, he operated out of affirmation from God who ultimately established Jesus' purpose. A true king doesn't get caught up in the mood or sentiment of the people in the moment, knowing that their love and attention sways with the tide. Jesus was fully aware that some of the same individuals who praised him on Sunday, would be the same voices who condemned him on Friday.

Wrap Up

Jesus was not only Israel's, but also all of humanity's messiah and chosen king. Another thing to note about the passage above, is that Jesus rode into Jerusalem fully aware of what awaited him. I'm not advocating for people to go on suicide missions, or voluntarily subject themselves to unnecessarily difficult situations for exaltation from others, rather I am pointing out that purpose and assignment trumps all. Jesus knew what awaited him, he knew the hearts and motives of the people, yet he was obedient to the plan and purpose of God. Jesus knew that the praise, adoration, and even scorn of some would only be temporary, however the judgement of the father is eternal. God's approval should be our highest priority, and our priorities are reflected in our actions. Jesus showed himself worthy of the designation as messiah and king because of his obedience to God's plan over his desire for man's approval/affection.

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