

King Jesus

Mk 11:1-11 with additional readings from Psalm 118:15-26 and Zachariah 9:9

1. Have we already spoken about headings?

On this occasion the header in the NIV is right. The passage is about Jesus as king, although that word is not in the text.

Jesus does not speak about being king, but everything here points to him being king: the riding on the fowl, the newness of the animal, the cloaks, the branches, the mentioning of David, the allusion to Zechariah (!!) and the setting in Jerusalem. Jesus claims his throne, his city, his people.

This becomes crucial later: Jesus is crucified as king of the Jews (Mark 15:2, 9-13, 18, 26, 32).

So we see that Palm Sunday = the entry of the king in his capital city.

But the story ends with no action... yet. That's why many will have been disappointed.

Mark's readers understand the event: it's like a Roman triumphal entry – but different because Jesus rides on a donkey! Donkeys are unsuitable for warfare.

2. What kind of king is Jesus? Last week we heard that his role is to serve, not to lord.

Jesus could have entered quietly – or on a horse. But he chooses a middle way. He performs a parable, as the prophets had done.

What kind of king is he? There is much misunderstanding about this. The Jewish leaders fear him, they don't want to recognise his authority. His followers probably expect immediate action, like David had done. Yet Jesus comes to clear the temple, to teach and then to die.

So we have a paradox: who people think Jesus is ↔ who he really is

A warrior king like David ↔ the servant king

For us the question is: do we form a Jesus who suits us, or do we accept the biblical picture?

3. What kind of king?

- Merciful, kind, open to children
- Someone with real power, so more like a PM or a president than like the Queen
- At present tolerant ↔ in the future judge
- Spiritual realm ↔ local realm
- Non-violent ↔ army
- One who knows our circumstances intimately
- One who wants full control of our lives

It's a privilege to serve this king! Are we looking to him for nice experiences? Or to serve him? In this light, not being in church if we can come is not an option!