

Jesus is King. Those are controversial words these days, because there are some who want you to believe that saying those words make you some kind of a lunatic, a threat. Some kind of domestic terrorist bent on destroying America and everything in it. And all because we say Jesus is King. But it's true, Christians. Jesus is King. Let no one scare you into saying otherwise. Because as Jesus rides into Jerusalem in our Gospel reading for today, he shows that he is indeed the king, and he has come to claim what belongs to him.

Because God once made a promise to David long ago, a promise we hear in 2 Samuel chapter 7. He said: "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." So God had promised David, then, that a son would be born to him, one from his own body, one who would take his place. And his kingdom, God said, would last forever. And it's really easy to get excited about that promise. When was God going to do this? When would the promised Son of David come?

And when David's son Solomon became the king, people were wondering that same question. Is the kingdom going to be established today? In fact, we hear in 1 Chronicles chapter 28, God said to David: "It is Solomon your son who shall build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. I will establish his kingdom forever if he continues strong in keeping my commandments and my rules, as he is today." Now, God certainly chose Solomon to be king after David. But notice that word "if." His kingdom would continue "if" he stayed strong, "if" he kept his commandments, "if" he kept his laws. That word "if" shows that the promise was not fully completed yet, that the promised Son of David had not yet come. Because there being an "if" shows that there's still something uncertain about Solomon. But when the promised Son of David would come, there would no longer be an "if." And we can see that very clearly through the history of Israel after Solomon. Because Solomon himself in his old age turned away from God, following after false gods because of the influence of his foreign wives. And his son Rehoboam split the kingdom into two by his actions, splitting it into a northern and a southern kingdom. And all of the line of David in the southern kingdom that came after Rehoboam, the vast majority of them were godless men. Men who didn't believe in God, men who went after idols instead. And then the Babylonians came and destroyed the kingdom, so that there was no longer the kingdom of Judah. All of these things showed, Christians, that the promise had not yet been fulfilled. There was still something else to come, something more that would happen. The Son of David was still on the way.

And that's what the prophets also said, moved by the Holy Spirit. Because Jeremiah in our Old Testament reading for today talks about the righteous Branch which would be raised up for David. And this Branch would reign in righteousness. He would bring justice. He would be called "the Lord is our righteousness." He would fulfill the promise made to David. His kingdom would never come to an end. And Jeremiah made those prophecies in the days of the kings, even while the kingdom was still there. And Zechariah also, who we heard quoted in our Gospel reading for today, points to the coming of this king. He says: "Behold the king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey." He would come into Jerusalem to claim his own. And his kingdom would last forever. And all of the prophets said the same thing. They pointed towards the one who was to come. Because when he comes, they said, the kingdom will be established forever. When he comes, they said, he will rule with a rod of iron. When he comes, they said, the

nations would bow down before him. When he comes, all peoples would serve him. And so Israel was looking eagerly for the coming of the Son of David. When would the Messiah come?

And so when Jesus rides into Jerusalem, Christians, he is making a clear and unmistakable claim: "I am that King. I am the long promised Son of David. I have come to claim what belongs to me." And we see that in everything that he does. Because Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, just like Zechariah said that he would, but also because donkeys were the animals of kings. In 1 Kings chapter 1, for example, we hear this: "Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David's mule and brought him to Gihon." And 1 Kings tells us that at Gihon Solomon was anointed as king. He is riding a mule to his coronation. So Jesus coming on a donkey is not just showing his humility. He is showing that he is, in fact, a king, the one who is greater than Solomon, the long promised Son of David.

And the crowds also show that he is the king by their actions, because they lay their coats on the ground and palm branches from the trees. And this is a sign that they were receiving him as king. Because Jehu in the Old Testament was received in the same way. When he was proclaimed the king of Israel, we're told that: "In haste every man of them took his garment and put it under him on the bare steps, and they blew the trumpet and proclaimed, 'Jehu is king.'" So, putting your cloaks on the ground like that is a way of saying that we submit to the one who is coming to us. We are preparing his way. We are rolling out the carpet before him. It also shows that he is the king.

And even how he comes into Jerusalem shows that he is the king, Christians. Because David long ago was once driven out of Jerusalem by his son Absalom. But once Absalom died, David came back to Jerusalem by crossing over the Jordan River, passing by Jericho, passing by the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem. The exact same path that Jesus is now following. So even in the way that he comes to Jerusalem, he is saying: "I am the Son of David, walking in his footsteps, doing exactly what he did." Jesus could not be clearer about what he wants to say. "I am the king, and I am here to claim what belongs to me."

But how will we react, Christians, to the coming of the King? How will we receive him today? Because the crowds which followed after him receive him as a king. They shout: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" They know that he is the king coming to claim his own. But the city of Jerusalem doesn't feel the same way. We're told in verse 10: "When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, 'Who is this?'" They're not asking that because they have no idea who he is. Jesus is too well known for that to be the case. Rather, they are asking, who is this man to us? Should we receive him? Will he be our king? And we're given the answer very clearly, Christians, because not a few days later on Good Friday, Jerusalem will cry out: "Crucify him, crucify him!" to Pilate, rejecting him as their king. So the crowds received him, but Jerusalem rejects him. What will we do today? Will we receive him as the king? Because he has come to claim what belongs to him.

Because, Christians, Jesus comes to claim you. You belong to him. He comes to claim your thoughts. He comes to claim your actions. He comes to claim your words. Everything about you. Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 10: "We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised

against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ." Take every thought captive to obey Christ. We belong to him, body and soul. So will we receive him? Will we acknowledge that he is the king over our actions, over our words, so that we have the mind of Christ in the way that we deal with one another? Or will we say that we don't want a king, that we want to be our own master, to do whatever we please? Christians, may that not be our answer! May we receive him today, and say that Jesus is King over our lives.

But Jesus also comes as King to reign over the nations, to reign over all people, including our nation. Jesus says in Matthew chapter 28: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." That is all authority. That's not just spiritual authority. That's not just authority in the Church. That is all authority, including political authority. Because Jesus is the King of Kings, Christians. Jesus is the Lord of Lords, the one to whom kings must answer. Governments will bow before him. Presidents and senators and representatives will bend the knee before him. Because Jesus rules over the nations with a rod of iron, and all who will not kneel will fall. Psalm 2 says: "Now, therefore, O kings, be wise. Be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him!" So Christians, Jesus is King over this nation too, and his victory will be complete. And woe to the nation which does not want to serve him! That nation will fall. But blessed indeed is the nation whose God is the Lord. They will be blessed in Jesus Christ.

So Christians, our king comes to claim what belongs to him. Let us not be afraid to say that Jesus is King, because he is the King of everything. Let us pray that our nation would turn to him, that our nation would call him King. Let us pray that our nation would no longer turn away from him. Let us pray that America would bend the knee before him. But above all, Christians, let us turn to him today and say that Jesus is King of us. That Jesus is King of our words, that Jesus is King of our lives, that Jesus is king over everything about us. Because he has come to claim us as his own. So let us shout our hosannas and go out to greet him, because Jesus is King of everything!

Let us pray. Lord God, heavenly Father, you have set your Son, Jesus Christ, as King to reign over all things. We pray that you would help us to follow after him and to acknowledge him as our King, so that we may do what is pleasing in your sight. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.