A Royal Arrival

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[0:00] Mark chapter 11, Mark is the shortest of the Gospels. I told you before that he writes most like a man. He don't give a lot of details. He just gets to the point and moves on.

And he does that quicker than anybody, any other Gospel writer that we have in the New Testament. And I believe part of that is because he's in a hurry to get to the cross.
Well, almost half of that book, the Gospel of Mark, is made up of that journey to the cross. And that culmination begins in our passage today in Mark chapter 11.
Jesus has taught. He has trained. He has prepared. He has warned. And now he's left Jericho and made his way toward Jerusalem.
And our passage tells us that he is climbing up one side of the Mount of Olives. And when he reaches the top, he'll have an amazing view of the Temple Mount.
[0:59] However, before he reaches that area, his arrival is celebrated. I want you to see that. It's in Mark chapter 11, beginning in verse 1.

It says this. Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied on which no one has ever sat.
Untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, Why are you doing this? Say, The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately. And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside the street, and they untied it.
And some of those standing there said to them, What are you doing untying the colt? And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it.
And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, Hosanna!
[2:09] Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David. Hosanna in the highest. As he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple, and he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple, and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went on to Bethany with the twelve.

This triumphal entry, is what this is often called, is powerful and meaningful. However, it is not the only arrival that we see in Scripture concerning the Lord.
Before Jesus ever entered Jerusalem with shouts of Hosanna, he entered quietly in a cattle stall in Bethlehem. There were no royal processions there.
There was no earthly throne there. There were no crowds that lined the streets there. Yet they had been preparations made for his arrival.
For the Lord sent prophets to prophesy of his coming. He sent angels to announce that he was coming. He sent shepherds to greet him upon his arrival.
[3:24] And that was his first arrival. Now, there's three other arrivals of Jesus in the Gospels, and I want to look at those three this morning.

And when we look at all three of those, we see an even more complete message that is somewhat in our passage today. I want to point out that those other three arrivals of the Lord that are talked about in Scripture, because with each, there are preparations.
Number one, John the Baptist prepared the way for the arrival of the Lord. We found this in Mark 1, 1-8, and it says this, The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet, Behold, I send my messenger before your face who will prepare your way.
The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.
John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the

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forgiveness of sins.
And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist.
[4:42] He ate locusts and wild honey, and he preached, saying, After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I'm not worthy to stoop down and untie.

I have baptized you with water, but he'll baptize you with the Holy Spirit. Now I want you to understand it was John's responsibility to announce the arrival of the Lord.
Much like royalty is announced as they enter into a banquet, or much like a crowned beauty queen is announced when she walks out on stage, or like when you prepare a place for somebody who's coming to visit.
John's job was to prepare the way of the Lord. Now how did he do that? He did that in a few ways. One is he gave the gospel of repentance.
He told people that they needed to walk away from their sins. If there were hindrances in their life or priorities in people's lives that keep them from being everything that they need to be for God, then they must lay those matters aside, lay them at the feet of Jesus before they can come to him.
[5:46] Coming to Christ is actually the process of us surrendering our baggage to him. And I am thankful for that because most people don't want your baggage.

They don't want to know about your baggage. They don't want to deal with your baggage. Christ receives it. And he takes care of it as well.
He also humbled himself to the Lord. He told them that Christ was the mighty one. He told them that he was unworthy to untie the sandal of Jesus.
In other words, I'm not even capable of touching his feet. John the Baptist never pointed to himself. He not only told them, he showed them.
He simply pointed to Christ. He made it his mission to let people know of the opportunity in Christ.
And then the third way that he did it to prepare them was he sent them to Jesus for answers.
[6:54] After John the Baptist was imprisoned, some of his followers came to him and there were questions that came up. John the Baptist himself even had questions. And for those questions, he sent them to Christ for answers, which is exactly what John always did.

He was always pointing people to Jesus. And when they got to Jesus, Jesus complimented John the Baptist and said he was the greatest man born of a woman.
And yet, any and everyone born of Christ could be even greater. John prepared people for the Lord.
And I want you to be clear this morning.
Like John, we are to prepare the way for the people to come to the Lord. Now, how do we do that? Well, we love on them.
We shine for Jesus before them. We sow salt. You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink.
[8:01] But if you put salt in his oats, you'll make him thirsty enough to want to drink. God's called us to be the salt of the earth. And John announced the arrival of the Christ.

That third arrival, the second one I want to really emphasize today, is the one we find in our passage today. And that is that Jerusalem celebrated the arrival of the Savior.
It speaks of Bethphage. It speaks of Bethany. Bethphage means house of figs. It was a village that was close to Jerusalem. We don't exactly know where it was.
Bethany, however, is on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. It's about two miles from the Temple Mount. And as Jesus traveled from Bethany toward Jerusalem, he would ascend the Mount of Olives, where that magnificent view of the Temple Mount would dominate that area.
And the way that Jesus entered that area was a powerful message. Now, why did he make the entrance that he did? Well, he came in on a colt.
[9:09] And by the way, colt there means young donkey, okay? But he came in on a colt because it was prophetic. It says in Zechariah 9, verse 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, humbled and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the fowl of a donkey.
You may not be familiar with Zechariah. I may not be that familiar with Zechariah. But I'm going to tell you, the people of that day, when they saw Christ coming, they were familiar with the prophetic message from Zechariah.

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Paving the way with garments and branches is a proclamation of royalty. And we see that in 2 Kings 9, verse 13, a great example of that, when King Jehu came through.
It says, Then 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. Now we get that same kind of atmosphere here.
[10:15] And it says they took leafy branches that they had picked and laid them down. John tells us that those are palm branches. And that speaks of royalty that comes in peace. It's kind of like rolling out a red carpet of sorts.

They called out to him, Hosanna, which means save us, we pray. It was a proclamation of the Savior. They also said, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
That phrase is originally spoken of those that were approaching the temple for worship. So here it is to announce that Christ is the Messiah.
Now, of all the ways he could have come, why come in this triumphal entry? Well, early in Mark, we saw how sometimes he would heal someone and then he would tell them, don't tell anybody.
And he needed time to teach and to train his disciples. He had more lives to touch. He had more truths to teach.
[11:19] He had more hearts to change. But when we get to Mark chapter 11, it's time. He had already told his disciples in the last two chapters, three different times, that the time was coming.

And now he's proclaiming the time is announced and this kind of entrance does just that. It's very possible that those that day that cried out, Hosanna, save us, are the same ones that just in the weeks follow would say, crucify him.
Many are fickle followers. Actually, within that week, they would say that. Many are fickle followers. John tells us that some of them were not true followers.
And when Jesus Christ returns, the true sheep, as Matthew 25 says, the followers of Christ will be separated from the unrepentant goats, those without Christ.
And every knee will bow. Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. He came on a donkey in peace.
[12:30] He'll come on a white horse as conqueror, proclaiming victory and pronouncing judgment. And the way he came sent a message, a powerful prophetic message and a powerful proclamation of the way that he was coming.

Now, I want us to look at the next arrival. And that's one that's still in the future. And that is that we prepare our hearts and lives for the arrival of a conqueror.
Now, it helps us when we read Scripture to understand how a conquering leader made his return during the days of the Roman Empire.
When a Roman general returned after a conquest, he would ride at the head of a procession of his warriors. Many times with shackled prisoners of war that would be shackled walking in as the conquered enemy.
And as well, there would be an extravagant display of the spoils of the battles, the jewels of the crown of those enemies, the former possessions of those enemies.
[13:43] In contrast, when Jesus makes his triumphal entry, he enters on a donkey, a symbol of peace. Not a war.

He comes in humility. He does not come with pride. He does not come with warriors or prisoners. He comes with an entourage of fishermen, a ragtag bunch of common folk whom he has healed and set free.
But my friend, they're trophies. They're trophies of his grace. Not bloody violence, but unremitting love. But my friend, the triumphal entry is not the last time that Jesus will come because Jesus is coming again.
Now listen, we can debate all the details and discuss all the details about that return, but I want to be clear, his return is evident. It is clear and it is plain.
And I want you to notice from Scripture some things about it. One is Jesus is coming visibly. Revelation 1 verse 7 says, Behold, he's coming with the clouds and every eye will see him, even those who pierce him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him, even so, amen.
[15:03] Now listen, there are those who are always trying to spiritualize the second coming of Christ, as if some event in history has already spoken of it, or some spiritual talk about when we go to heaven.

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I want to be clear. We do go to meet Christ when we die. But as the angels said as they watched the Lord ascend in Acts 1 verse 11, this Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.
I want to be clear this morning, folks. Jesus is coming and you and I and everyone else will know it. He is coming visibly. Not only that, but Jesus is coming victoriously. Revelation 19 verse 11 through 13 says this, Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, the one sitting on it, called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.
His eyes are like flames of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He's clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he's called is the word of God.
[16:20] There's your white horse, friend. That's the symbol of victory, of honor, of conquest. It says he has eyes of fire. That means he can see everything.

It says that with many crowns he has conquered all. That's the reason we sing the song, Crown Him with Many Crowns. The blood that is upon his robe speaks of his conquest.
It speaks of that illustration and revelation of the winepress judgment that is mentioned in this passage. My friend, he is the word, the revelation, and the reality of God.
And Jesus is coming. He's coming visibly. He's coming victoriously. Jesus is also coming vengefully. I want you to see this in verse 14. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.
From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he'll rule them with a rod of iron. He'll tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.
[17:30] On his robe and on his thigh, he's name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. My friend, vengeance is mine, says the Lord.

The winepress points to how Christ takes care of that. Now, let me just be honest with you this morning. We don't like that kind of talk. We don't feel comfortable with that.
However, I want you to be clear this morning. You need to know why Jesus submitted himself to the cross. It was not in weakness.
It was in meekness. It was not for his sake. It was for our sake. He died so that we could live. Evil did not win that day.
Christ went to hell and proclaimed victory that day. And one day, when Christ returns, all of victory will be made known.
[18:30] Do I believe he's a God of love? Thank God I know he is. Do I believe he's a sovereign and holy God that deals with sin? I know that he is. And listen, I can't just preach the love of God.

I can't just preach the wrath and judgment of God. If I preach one or the other, those are both half-truths and half-truths are lies.
The reality is, in his love, you can be saved. Do you need grace? You can have it. Do you need mercy? Submit to it. However, I want to be clear that if you choose to refuse the offer of the Lord Jesus, if you deny his offer, if you turn down his hand, if you spurn it, if you refuse it, if you deny it, you'll face his wrath and judgment.
To be blunt, you'll have hell to pay. Justice will reign. Christ will return. And all with him, and all for him, and all surrender to him, and all saved by him will win.
So what should we be doing? Like John the Baptist did, we ought to be warning people of the devil's lies. And we ought to be introducing them to Jesus.
[19:58] Just point people to Jesus. Like those on the side of the Mount of Olives, we ought to be laying all that we have at his feet, calling on him to save us, and giving him praise.

And like Revelation warns us, we ought to be ready for his return. You can watch the news all you want to, friend. I promise you, there's nothing holding the Lord Jesus back from coming except his Father.
We need to look for it. We need to learn of it. We need to long for it. Even so, Lord Jesus, quickly come. And when he does, it'll be a royal arrival.
Now my question to you is this. Are you ready? Are you ready? You may be like that little boy sitting in the back of church that day. And the preacher said, how many of you want to go to heaven? Raise your hand. Hands went up all over the room. But everybody's hand didn't go up. So he asked it again like preachers do. How many of you want to go to heaven? And everybody raised their hand except that little boy.

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[21:06] And he said, boy, you don't want to go to heaven? He said, well, yes, sir, I want to go to heaven. But I thought you was getting off a bus right now. I don't want to go now. My friend, are you ready?

Whenever he calls and tells us to go, are you ready? You can know that you are if you've surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus.
If you know that your life is pointing people to Christ. If you know you're honoring the Lord with every breath that he gives you. We ought to live every day as if it was the last one.
Because the reality is, it could be. It could be for one of us. It could be for all of us. We need to live in the eminence of the return of Christ.
And if you've never accepted the Lord Jesus, it's not a threat. That is just the truth. You need to give your life to the Lord Jesus today. Maybe there's something, and you know you're a Christian, but there's something that's hindering you.
[22:16] And you'll walk from being everything that you need to be for the Lord. And the reality is, if you faced him today, you'd be ashamed of things you're doing in your life today. Repent of that.

I'm thankful that he loves you enough to accept you as you are. To mold you and make you to be what he'd have you to be. But today, get that right before the Lord.
Maybe you've not been living a testimony before others, and you realize your life don't point to Christ.
You're a Christian today, but you say, you know, my testimony is not very strong. I believe in the days in which we live, what we need more than anything else.
I want you to hear me. More than any. A lot of people got solutions for America. It's about more common than elbows. What we need in America is the Lord Jesus Christ, proclaimed and honored and pointed to.
[23:21] May that reflect our lives. Lord Jesus, I love you, and I thank you for the opportunity you give us today to worship you. I ask God that you'll help us to respond to you in obedience as you speak to our hearts and lives today.

In Jesus' precious name, amen. Thank you.

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