

Why the regal entrance into Jerusalem?

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 12:12-13

Preached on: Sunday, December 7, 2014

I'd like to invite you to take your Bibles this morning and turn to John's Gospel, chapter 12 as we resume at least in some measure, our study of this amazing chapter. We're going to be in verses 12 through 13 for a very brief time and then I'm going to back away from that. I've entitled my discourse to you this morning "Why the regal entrance into Jerusalem?" It's interesting that our verse-by-verse study of John has now converged with the Christmas season at this unique place, the triumphal entry of Christ and I know from experience that many Christians really have no understanding of the significance of this event, moreover, many do not understand how it relates to the Christmas story. There is much confusion in the church today, especially in Reformed circles where Augustinian eschatology, Roman Catholic eschatology, continues to somehow be batted around, where people are confused about whether or not we are living in the kingdom now. Has the church replaced Israel or is there still a place for Israel? How does this relate to Jesus ascending the throne of David and so on and so forth. So it is for this reason that what I would like to do is use this text as a launching pad to give you the big picture of the kingdom of God and our King, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So let me read this passage to you and then we will begin to address this amazing subject. John 12, beginning in verse 12.

12 On the next day the great multitude who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel."

I wish to look at this passage in light of the issue of the kingdom of God and the wonderful, glorious King Jesus by examining four different elements. I want to give you an overview, first of all, of the kingdom of God, very briefly. Secondly, the promised King and his kingdom. Thirdly, the King's regal entrance into Jerusalem. In other words, how does that fit into all of this? Why is that so important? Why is it that all three evangelists, all three Gospel writers include this beyond John. And then finally, the King's second coming and the establishment of the kingdom.

Now, before we get into this, I must say that I am about to violate every principle of homiletics. You will probably not be able to take notes very well with this because I am going to give you a lot of material rather rapidly and I would encourage you if you want to jot down some notes, that's fine but I would encourage you to just sit back and listen and try to get the big scheme of God's redemptive purposes as they relate to the kingdom

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and if you want to get the details, usually by about Monday, the transcript is put online and you can read every word in detail.

So, first of all, let's talk about the kingdom of God. You must understand this as it is presented in Scripture. There are two separate but not distinct kingdoms revealed in Scripture with two aspects or two phases of the one rule of our sovereign God. First of all, there is the universal kingdom which refers to the extent of his rule. But then secondly, there is the mediatorial rule or mediatorial kingdom that refers to the method of his rule. We know in terms of the universal kingdom, that from all eternity there has existed a dominion of God. He is sovereign over all things, although right now he is allowing Satan to temporarily be the ruler of this world as a part of his great plan of redemption. But as we look at Scripture, we can read for example in Psalm 103:19 where the Psalmist says, "The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, And His sovereignty rules over all." That's the universal kingdom. Likewise in Psalm 145:13, "Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom."

But beyond the universal kingdom, there is also what we would call a mediatorial kingdom that God has established where he rules through divinely chosen human representatives who rule and speak on his behalf and who represent the people before God. This began all the way back with Adam. In Genesis 1:26 we read, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish,' and so on. And throughout history, we witnessed the divine government upon the earth through a variety of mediators who work on his behalf, men who served in three basic capacities: prophet, priest and king. The prophet and the priest and the king were all consecrated. They were all set apart by God for their respective offices and were mediators between God and man. Prophets spoke the truth of God. The priests brought man's burdens and sins to God. They interceded between God and man. They provided sacrifices and so forth. Then kings ruled man for God. We see this especially in the mediatorial rulers of the theocratic kingdom of Israel. These three offices all pointed to Christ, the anointed one, who would one day be the perfect embodiment of all three. We can look back in Genesis 14 and we read about Melchizedek which means "righteous king." He was the king of the pre-Israelite Jerusalem, at that time called Salem, in the days of Abraham. In Genesis 14:18 we read that, "he was a priest of God Most High." El Elyon, the sovereign Lord, the one true God whom Abraham also called Yahweh.

Then with Abraham and later in both Isaac and Jacob, the mediatorial idea began to take a concrete form historically and we see how God spoke directly to these patriarchs who in turn mediated the divine will to the people, albeit not always perfectly. Later Moses became the first mediatorial ruler in the theocratic kingdom of history. He was authorized to stand before Israel "instead of God," Exodus 4:16. And Moses, according to Scripture, is presented as a type of Christ who alone, as I said earlier, will eventually be the perfect

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embodiment of God's mediatorial ruler in the messianic kingdom yet to come. Over the course of history, other mediatorial rulers were set in place. There were leader judges of Israel from Joshua to Samuel, men who were chosen by God, who were invested with regal functions, who were empowered by the Holy Spirit. Then God established a monarchical form of government whereby he mediated the rule of his kingdom through various kings. Some of these kings were godly kings, most of them were not and because of their persistent rebellion in sin and the persistent rebellion and sin of the people, the Old Testament records chronic cycles of tragedy and triumph, of judgment and captivity and so forth.

So in order for the kingdom of God to truly bring him glory, he set into motion that which he had predetermined in eternity past, something that would remedy these problems, that would remedy the issue of Satan, sin and death and his remedy, of course, was the promised Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior King. We see God making this promise to one of his mediatorial rulers, King David. This brings us to the second point we want to address: the promised King. In 2 Samuel 7, God made a covenant with David that was really a reaffirmation of the regal terms of the Abrahamic covenant, but also with the addition that the ultimate provision of those covenantal rights would be permanently attached to the historic dynasty of King David. God spoke to David through his prophet Nathan in 2 Samuel 7:16 and he said this, "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever."

Now, as we look at Scripture, we know that the ultimate fulfillment of this promise has been interrupted for a season but it will eventually be fulfilled in a future earthly kingdom when a restored Israel will once again be the covenant nation it was intended to be. That covenant that God gave David and ultimately to his people Israel, contained four elements. Number 1: that his name will be made great, ultimately the name of the greater son of David, the Lord Jesus, the Messiah. Secondly, that God would provide for Israel, ethnic Israel, a place, a home of their own. Thirdly, that Israel would be given rest from all of her enemies. And finally, that a royal dynasty and kingdom would be given to David forever.

Now, this was precisely what the people were longing for that first Christmas when Jesus came to earth. Now obviously, they didn't recognize him as their King but that's what was on their mind. The Old Testament prophets predicted the coming Messiah, the King of Israel, would be a member of the human race in Genesis 3:15; that he would be of the seed of Abraham; that he would be of the tribe of Judah; that he would be a rod from the family of Jesse; a branch out of the royal line of David; born at the village of Bethlehem in the land of Palestine; and born of a mother who would be a Jewish virgin. Many different passages predicted the coming mediatorial ruler, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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What did the angel Gabriel tell the Virgin Mary who was betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David? In Luke 1:31, Gabriel said, "You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." As we look at the New Testament, we see how it opens with thrilling announcements of the kingdom. They were given to Zacharias, to Mary and Joseph, to the shepherds, to the Persian kingmakers, the Magi. In Luke 1, it was celebrated in the song of Elizabeth and in Mary's Magnificat, her prayer of praise. In Luke 2, we read of Simeon who was among them who waited for the consolation of Israel, a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel which, by the way, were words from Isaiah 42 and 49, passages that are set in a regal context. Luke 2 also describes the 84-year-old prophetess, Anna, who according to verse 38, "continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.."

Then later on, John the Baptist, the great prophet, the last of the Old Testament prophets according to Matthew 3:2, goes out to the people and says, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In Scripture this is also called the kingdom of God and certainly it expresses God's spiritual rule over those who belong to him but in its fullest sense, it is a kingdom that awaits a yet future physical literal fulfillment. In fact, the very first words of Matthew's Gospel began with a genealogical record supporting his descent from the royal line of David. Matthew 1:1, "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham," and so forth. In Isaiah 9:2, the prophet says, "The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them." Then later in verse 6 he says, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us." We've seen all of the but what he goes on to prophesy has not been completely fulfilled. He went on to say, "And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this." Beloved, this is what we await. This is the triumph we await.

Now, what did Jesus, the Incarnate King say about his kingdom? Well, in the synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, he spoke of himself as the bridegroom. He told the Pharisees in Matthew 9:15 that, "the bridegroom was with them." Now, that's an interesting statement. You see, this figure appears in Isaiah 61 as well as Isaiah 62, chapters that are dealing with a future day when the messianic kingdom of Israel will again be married to the Lord. Isaiah 62:5, "As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So your God will rejoice over you." It is fascinating, the same imagery is found in the

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prophecy of Hosea who prophesied against the nation of Israel whom God had cast off because of her unfaithfulness. Yet in restoring love, God said to them in Hosea 2, beginning in verse 19, "I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, In lovingkindness and in compassion, And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the LORD." Then he promised in chapter 3, verse 4, "For the sons of Israel will remain for many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar and without ephod or household idols. Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king," referring to the Lord Jesus, "and they will come trembling to the LORD and to His goodness in the last days." In John 3:29, we read how John the Baptist told the people that they should greatly rejoice because the bridegroom was among them.

Now, you must understand that when Jesus came, he was fully prepared to establish his earthly kingdom as the prophets predicted. It was first announced to Israel alone although believing Gentiles were also promised to be beneficiaries of the kingdom age. In John 1:11, however, we read that, "He came to His own," and what happened? "His own did not receive Him." Jesus said in Mark 1:15, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." You see, this announcement of the kingdom required Israel to make a decision to repent and to believe in their Messiah but they would have nothing to do with him. Had they done so, he would have established his earthly kingdom but that wasn't a part of his plan ultimately, though they were still held responsible for their unbelief.

Now, many today will argue that he was merely offering a spiritual kingdom, the rule of God in the heart. But dear friends, such an announcement would have been folly to them because such a rule of God in the heart was something they had always recognized. That wasn't what they were looking for. That was not what was promised in the Old Testament if you read it with the normal meaning of language and not try to spiritualize it. You see, what Jesus was offering them was God's mediatorial kingdom on earth through the reign of Messiah, the constant theme of Old Testament prophecy. But such a kingdom on earth has always been conditioned. God's promises to Abraham had to be received by faith and those promises were established in history at Sinai, subject to Israel's willingness to obey God.

So what happened? Well, they rebelled and the kingdom was temporarily withdrawn and postponed on earth. So Jesus came to offer himself to Israel as their promised Messiah King and establish the kingdom if they would repent but they refused despite all of his miracles that would authenticate both his message and his person. And as we go on through the chronology of the New Testament, we see the battle lines are drawn early on in his ministry. We see it beginning especially in the initial cleansing of the temple and there he made his first public assertion of his messianic rights. In John 2:16, he says,

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"stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise. His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for Thy house will consume Me.'" That tide of opposition continued to mount over the course of Jesus' ministry as the Messiah King offered the kingdom to Israel but the climax of this rejection occurred when the Pharisees attributed his miraculous works to Satan in Matthew 12 and from that time on, the offer of the immediate establishment of the kingdom on earth was withdrawn. It's at that point that we see the focus of Jesus' ministry being more upon his death and upon his resurrection. Topics, by the way, that were not the central focus of his teachings from the very start of his ministry and he also begins to speak more of his second coming.

So beginning in Matthew 13, Christ sets forth the mystery form of the kingdom through a new series of parables. You'll recall at that time, he deliberately confused the hardhearted and unbelieving multitudes as an act of judicial hardening. The parables to them were just confusing parables but for the disciples, he would follow up with expositions. You will remember in Matthew 13:10 and following, he says, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but to them it has not been granted." And at that time, he began with the parable of the sower and the seed that would ultimately reap a harvest at the end of the age, he says. And in the period of sowing and growth in the present age in between, he speaks of developing a body that he called children of the kingdom, literally sons of the kingdom. When the son of man comes to establish his kingdom on earth by means of a harvest judgment, the lawless one will be taken away, he tells us in that parable, and the righteous will be made to shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

It's in this context that he begins to announce a new thing and this new thing is the church, a body of believers. A body of believers invested with special authority even in the future kingdom of heaven, those who would be the spiritual nucleus of this future kingdom. In Matthew 16:15 and following, Peter gives that great testimony that Christ is "the Son of the living God." And Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build My church," and he says, "and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Keys biblically speak of authority and stewardship and so what he's saying is that now the church will become the temporary stewards or custodians of the truths of the kingdom. Jesus described this in Matthew 21:43, "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation, producing the fruit of it," referring to the church which, by the way, Peter described as a holy nation, 1 Peter 2:9. But this will also, we know from other passages, include a repentant and regenerated nation of Israel living on a renovated earth with her Messiah in harmony with all of Old Testament prophecies. Because Israel rejected her Messiah, the mystery phase of the kingdom was ushered in as the church became the temporary, not the permanent but the temporary replacement of Israel as the new custodians of truth. The body of Christ, where Jews and Gentiles are described as heirs together, Paul says, and sharers together in the

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promise in Christ Jesus. But I must re-emphasize, it is my fervent understanding of Scripture that Israel is never absorbed into the church. It remains distinct from the church as an ethnic people and as a nation, they still have a prophetic future. If you don't see that, you're going to be so confused with hundreds and hundreds of passages of Scripture that you would have to deny the normal meaning of language and say, "Well, I know that's what it says but that's not what it means." Friends, I'm sorry, I do not have apostolic authority to tell you that what God says isn't really what he means but I know what he means.

So the present church age must be seen as a part of the ongoing fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy that culminates in the messianic kingdom. The church shares in the promises of Israel but not in their unique identity as a nation. Israel was God's unique focus of redemption in one dispensation in the Old Testament while the church, consisting of both Jews and Gentiles, has been his focus since the rejection of the Jews but ultimately God's focus is going to return once again to Israel during the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ when all of God's remaining covenant promises to Israel will be fulfilled literally including promises of earthly blessings and an earthly messianic kingdom. Prophetic literature is filled with the pivotal role Israel will play during that time.

So, after having come to his own and being rejected and after announcing the mystery form of the kingdom that will exist in the church age, he begins to explain his death and his resurrection in more detail, a topic that his disciples didn't want to hear, didn't understand, didn't want to understand. Matthew 16:21, "From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day." Again, the cross was not the central theme early on in his ministry because Jesus was offering himself as the messianic King of Israel which they refused.

Now at this time, the disciples are worried, "What's going to happen to us?" And so our merciful Lord reassures them that his impending death will not in any way cancel out the promises of the earthly kingdom and to show them that its establishment would be in association with his second coming as the King of kings, he takes them to a mountain and he peels back his flesh and they see his glory in his transfiguration. There they witnessed the ineffable glory of the King, a foreshadowing of the kingdom of God. And you will recall that at that point, there was the appearance of two mediatorial rulers: Moses who was a ruler, and Elijah who was a prophet. Actually, Moses was a prophet as well. And they appeared but then they disappeared when the Father speaks out of the cloud of glory, "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased, listen to Him." Now, why did Moses and Elijah suddenly disappear at that moment? Because in their place will come

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the ultimate ruler and prophet. You see, the glorious appearing of the Messiah will some day supersede all other authority, all other prophets, priests and kings.

Then we have a fascinating text in Matthew 19:28. There he is giving further assurance that the kingdom promises are not going to be abandoned. He's trying to assure and encourage his disciples who were wondering, "Well, what's going to happen to us? What's going on here?" And he's going to promise them a special place in his coming earthly kingdom which, by the way, I might add before I even read it to you, this is one of many passages that refute what I believe to be the error of replacement theology, of amillennialism, of supersessionism, of Augustinian eschatology, Roman Catholic eschatology, that somehow the church has replaced Israel permanently and they are permanently and forever disenfranchised, that all the blessings, all of the promises that were given to Israel in the Old Testament, are now to be realized spiritually in the church.

Well, what did Jesus say in Matthew 19:28? "And Jesus said to them, 'Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'" Now, what is he saying? Well, "Those of you who have followed me, you disciples that are worried about what is going to happen to you, in the regeneration," a term in the original language that means the re-creation and in this context it refers to the re-creation or the renewal of the earth in the messianic age when the earth will be returned to Edenic splendor, what Paul described that we're longing for in Romans 8:18 and following. "In the regeneration, in the re-creation, when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne." Well, what's that? Well, that's the throne of David that was promised to Mary. We see it all through Scripture. When he sits on that throne of David on his glorious throne and again, this is the throne of David that he will one day ascend and rule over the house of Jacob and according to the Old Testament prophets, especially like Ezekiel 36 and 37, this will be a nation that is restored and unified literally back into the 12 tribes. He says, "You shall also sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Not only will the twelve apostles rule primarily over Israel in the messianic age, but other New Testament passages tell us that we too, the saints of God as part of the church, will rule over the rest of the world. It's an amazing thought.

So what can we glean from just this passage? That number 1: one day planet earth is going to be re-created. That's pretty easy. That's pretty obvious. Secondly, that the glorious throne of David from which Jesus will rule and reign is connected with a re-created, renewed earth which is one text that abolishes this idea that somehow we're living in the kingdom now. By the way as a footnote, in Matthew 25:31, Jesus says, "He will sit on His glorious throne," when he comes again in glory at his second coming and judge the nations of the earth. Those things have not happened yet. But also from this text we can glean that the nation of Israel is going to be restored and unified, once again,

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refuting this fanciful notion that the church is Israel, that the church is spiritual Israel. Then we can also see from this passage that the apostles will rule over a restored Israel in this re-created earth. By the way, this was a solemn promise that the Lord made to them at the Last Supper. In Matthew 22, beginning in verse 28 he says, "You are those who have stood by Me in My trials and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." I want to be charitable here but, dear friends, how anybody can see out of a passage like this and some of these others that Israel and the twelve tribes of Jacob and so forth is just a spiritual way of speaking of the church, that is just beyond me.

So the Gospel records Christ reassuring the disciples that his impending death does not mean that the kingdom is going to be canceled but only that it's going to be postponed and later established in connection with his second coming. Now, chronologically what happens next? Jesus comes and he raises Lazarus from the dead. Boy, that gets a lot of attention. He then withdraws to Ephraim as we have been studying for a few days. He's there with his disciples and then he goes north. He crosses over into the region of Perea. He joins in with the large pilgrim bands making their way to Passover. And one of the things that he did along the way was give them the parable of the ten minas in Luke 19 to help them understand why the kingdom is going to be delayed because obviously he knows they're confused about this. In fact, the purpose and occasion of the parable is disclosed in verse 11 of Luke 19. Here's what it says. "He went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately." So he's saying, "I've got to correct this." And if we study this parable which obviously we don't have time to do, the parable illustrates Christ who would soon depart to receive his kingdom and would later return to execute judgment upon the citizens who rejected him at his first coming, obviously referring to the nation of Israel, that will obviously maintain its enmity toward him until he returns to earth to rule and finally manifest his kingdom. Also, about five months prior to this triumphal regal entrance into Jerusalem, we see how the Lord sends out 70 messengers ahead of him. They go out to herald both the kingdom and the coming of the King. According to Luke 10:1, they were sent out only where the King himself would travel on his final journey to Jerusalem. And what was their commission? Well, according to verse 9, to heal those in those cities who were sick and say to them, "The kingdom of God is come near to you." And you will recall they were to wipe the dust off their feet to those who rejected this message and then warn them of the inevitable judgment that would befall them.

This brings us number 3: to the King's regal entrance into Jerusalem. Here's why he comes into Jerusalem: to officially and finally offer them the kingdom which we're going to study in great detail at a later date. The Gospels record this mock coronation of hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people that come out to meet Jesus as the

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messianic King of Israel in perfect fulfillment of prophecy. By the way, it's interesting that Zechariah prophesied the precise manner of his arrival some 500 years prior. Zechariah said that he would "come riding upon the colt, the foal of a donkey." The prophet Daniel predicted the precise day when he would arrive. He said in Daniel 9:25, "from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks." In other words, there would be 69 weeks of prophetic years of 360 days each which adds up to 173,880 days and precisely on that day, the Lord Jesus Christ rode into Jerusalem to offer himself as the Messiah, the King of Israel.

Just a few days before his crucifixion, Jesus gives his last and longest eschatological discourse in Matthew 24 and 25, revealing a period of time and some of the events that would take place before his departure and return in power and great glory. By the way, that same chronology and the events correspond with the pre-kingdom judgments of Revelation 6 to 19. And in his Last Supper as I have alluded to earlier, the kingdom was heavy on his mind and he says, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes." Then he went on to give them further encouragement. In verse 28, "You are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." And you will recall, during the final indignities of the mock trial that he had, the Lord once again renewed his regal claims and his messianic office. In John 18:33, Pilate says to him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" We read in verse 36, "Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. Pilate said to Him, 'So You are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.'" Then later on the cross, Pilate would write over Jesus' head, "This is the King of the Jews."

Well, then we conclude with an understanding of the King's second coming and the establishment of the kingdom. After Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, he comes again to his disciples and he meets with them for 40 days and what did he teach them? According to Acts 1:3 he says, "To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God." Then in great anticipation of the coming kingdom on earth and not knowing the time, the disciples asked what I'm sure you would have asked and what I would have asked, "Lord, is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" Now folks, if the church has permanently replaced Israel, this would have been the perfect time for the Lord Jesus to make that abundantly

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clear but he said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." Then you see that amazing event unfold that gives them enormous hope with respect to the return of the Messiah, King Jesus in verse 9, "And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.'"

I'll not take time to read the numerous passages that the Spirit of God has given us with respect to his second coming but, friends, you know that when he returns, it will be in power and great glory unlike his first coming. Beloved, when he returns again, the promises that the angel Gabriel made as God's messenger to Mary will finally be fulfilled. Let me remind you of that again. This is how it fits into the Christmas story. He said in Luke 1:32, "The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

Well, what about the unsaved Jews today? Well, Paul speaks of this, it was a great concern of his and in Romans 11:26 we read that at that time, "all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins." Oh child of God, please understand on the basis of Scripture, one day Satan is going to be bound when the Lord returns and Jesus will reign upon the earth for 1,000 years according to Revelation 20. And the long promised mediatorial King of Israel will finally rule from his glorious throne in a glorious kingdom on earth. This will be an intermediate kingdom that will be the consummating bridge between human history and the eternal state. Summarizing God's covenant with David, the Psalmist says this in Psalm 132:11, "The LORD has sworn to David A sure oath from which He will not turn back," and here's what it was, "One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne."

Folks, we are anticipating that event. Zechariah tells us in chapter 14, verse 9, "And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one." How I long for that day, don't you? Then as we look at Scripture, we see that he will then hand the kingdom over to God the Father and the messianic kingdom will be merged into the universal kingdom, the eternal state. Beloved, these are the truths that unlock the mystery of history. These are the truths that tell us the who, what, when and why of our existence. These are the truths that the world mocks. And I hope you

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Why the regal entrance into Jerusalem?

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 12:12-13

Preached on: Sunday, December 7, 2014

understand that these are the truths that the Spirit of God is giving to you through his Servant, through his Word.

My friends, Jesus is coming again to establish his kingdom consistent with Old Testament prophecy and Jesus has commanded us to live in constant readiness for his return. We are to be a maranatha people, a people whose hearts are exuding hope because the Lord is coming and yet all too often we live as if none of this is ever going to come true. So I ask you: are you prepared to meet the King of glory? In view of the constellation of prophetic signs of the end of the age, especially as they relate to Israel, we simply must cultivate an ever growing sense of spiritual urgency to be about the ministry and the mission the Lord has entrusted to us. What does that look like for you? It's incumbent upon every believer to be serious about calling others to board the ark of safety before the deluge of judgment engulfs the nations of the world.

Oh dear friends, ponder these great truths especially during this Christmas season where we celebrate the Incarnation of the King of glory and I hope that you will see how the Christmas story fits into the triumphal entry which will fit into the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah King who will establish his kingdom. May we all echo the ardent longing of the saintly Samuel Rutherford who once said, "Oh, that Christ would remove the covering, draw aside the curtains of time and come down. Oh, that the shadows in the night were gone." Amen.

Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for your revelation to us that gives us some clarity, some understanding of all that you're up to and, Lord, as we review it, we are reminded that you have loved us in such a way as to condescend to our lowly estate and to save us by your grace and to make us joint heirs with your Son. Lord, the glory that awaits us all because of your mercy, your love, your grace, your faithfulness, is absolutely astounding. So Lord, may we live in light of these truths. May we be a people that exude the hope of maranatha, that the Lord is coming. And Father, for those that know nothing of the Savior, who hear all of this and think that this is merely the rantings of a fool, myths of some old book, O Lord, nothing we can do can change them, it must be your power that causes them to be born again. Lord, may you save them by your grace we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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