

King Jesus | Mark 11:1-11 | 21 & 25 March 2018

The Triumphal Entry of Christ into Jerusalem at the beginning of the Passover festival is rooted in Old Testament prophetic voices. One is heard in Zechariah 9:9.

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,
humble and mounted on a donkey.

Isaiah also lends credence in 62:11.

Behold, the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth:
Say to the daughter of Zion,
“Behold, *your salvation comes*;
behold, his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.

An earlier statement is found in 2 Samuel 14:4 relating to “Hosanna.”

When the woman of Tekoa came to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and paid homage and said, “*Save me, O king.*”

Regarding the declaration “Son of David” 2 Samuel 7:1-3, 12-16 reveals the following.

Now when the king [David] lived in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.” And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you.”

“When the king’s 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*. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. *Your throne shall be established forever.*”

N. T. Wright, *How God Became King*, (Harper One, 2011).

The gospels speak a good deal about the “kingdom of God” as, in some sense or other, a present reality in the ministry of Jesus... Through the ascension of Jesus, “seated at the right hand of the Father,” Jesus was the Father’s right-hand man, in charge of the whole world. But in our own day the “ascension” is just a way of saying that Jesus “went to heaven when he died.” To speak of him “sitting at the Father’s right hand” has become simply a fancy, perhaps even a fanciful way of saying “he entered into a very splendid and glorious position.” We have been lured, perhaps by our embarrassment at the literalistic sense of Jesus flying up like a spaceman to a “heaven” located a few miles up within our universe, into

ignoring the real meaning both of “heaven” (which is not a place within our universe at all, but God’s place, intersecting with our world in all sorts of ways) and of the ascension itself, which is about the sovereignty of Jesus as the Father’s accredited and appointed agent. We have, as a result, understood the ascension in vague terms of supernatural glory, rather than in the precise terms (as in Matt 28:18; Acts 1:6-11) of Jesus’s authority over the world. In fact, the ascension, for many people, implies Jesus’s absence, not his universal presence and sovereign rule. And this time it isn’t only Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John who will raise objections; it’s Paul, Hebrews, and Revelation as well. They all think that Jesus is already in charge of the world. (Check out, for instance, 1 Cor 15:20-28; Heb 2:5-9; Rev 5:6-14.) That was what they understood by “God’s kingdom.” 15-16

The early Christian writers were, of course, setting forth an eschatology that had been inaugurated, but not fully consummated; they were celebrating (Paul is quite explicit on this point in 1 Cor 15:20-28) something that has *already happened*, but at the same time something that *still has to happen in the future*. They believed themselves to be living between Jesus’s *accomplishment* of the reign of God and its full *implementation*. But the eschatology in question was not just the personal or “spiritual” eschatology of so much Western thought (“going to heaven” in the future, but with a taste of “heaven,” of “eternal life,” already in the present), but the social, cultural, political, and even cosmic eschatology of Matthew, Paul, Revelation, and of course—perhaps above all—the fourth gospel. New creation itself has begun, they are saying, and will be completed. Jesus is ruling over that new creation and making it happen through the witness of his church. 162

“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!” Mark 11:10

Hosanna = Hosanna

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The cry **Hosanna**, which is addressed to Yahweh in Ps 118:25, expresses the prayer that God will grant help and success. Similar expressions occur repeatedly in the Psalms... The cry of Ps 118:25 is first given a settled liturgical place only in post-biblical Judaism, in which the Hallel-Psalms (113-118) are sung on the high days of the feasts of the Passover and Tabernacles [4th – 5th century A.D.]. 682

In the New Testament **Hosanna** occurs only in the story of the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. According to Mk 11:9 f. the crowd greeted Jesus with shouts of jubilation that began and ended with **hosanna**. The introduction **hosanna** is followed as in Ps 118:25 by “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” and then the Messianic significance of this is brought out in the next verse: “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” **Hosanna** then returns in “**Hosanna** in the highest” with its summons to strike up songs of praise in the heavenly heights. By adopting the **Hosanna** which was familiar to every Jew the Evangelist wants to emphasize that every Messianic expectation has now been realized. Whereas Luke leaves out **hosanna**, which would not be intelligible to Hellenistic readers, and replaces it by the hymnal “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Lk 19:38), Mt shortens and changes the Marcan original. The cry “**Hosanna** the Son of David” now precedes the quotation from Ps 118:25, and then “**Hosanna** in the highest” follows it, Mt 21:9. In place of the phrase about the coming dominion of our father David there is now reference to the Son of David, cf. Mt 21:15. Praise and salvation are to be ascribed to Jesus, who as the “Son of David” has fulfilled the promise of Israel. The

cry “*Hosanna* to the Son of David” is in Mt taken up by the children who greet Jesus with jubilation in the temple, Mt 21:15. When the chief priests and scribes protest, Jesus justifies the conduct of the children on the basis of Ps 8:3, showing thereby that children are a model and image of true discipleship. 683-684

King = *Basileia* (Luke 19:38)

Kingdom = *Basileus* (Mark 11:10)

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Old Testament: In the LXX the words of this root are very frequent, mostly as translations of Hebrew derivatives of the root ***malak***, *to be king, to reign*. In contrast to the NT the term ***basileus***, which appears frequently in almost all the books and especially in the historical writings, is far and away the most common. ***Basileia*** occurs comparatively rarely (400 times) and not until Daniel does it begin to have a meaning of its own beside ***basileus***. It is also important to observe that the words are used first and foremost for earthly kings and their secular government, and only secondarily of Yahweh’s kingship. This means that the concept of Yahweh’s kingly rule can only be presented in connection with the Israelite monarchy... The Israelites continued for two centuries after the conquest of Canaan to function as a sacred confederation of tribes with a central sanctuary. 373-374

The new and distinctive factor, compared with the Rabbinical view of the kingdom of God, is not simply that it is coming, but that it is inextricably bound up with the person of Jesus. As W. G. Kummel puts it, “It is the person of Jesus whose activities provoke the presence of the eschatological consummation and who therefore stands at the center of his eschatological message”. The future rule of God has already in the person of Jesus become a reality in word and deed. The coming, imminent kingdom of God is already present in Him. 383

New Testament: Jesus preached the kingdom of God neither solely as a present reality nor exclusively as a future event. Rather, he was aware that the future rule of God was present in his actions and in his person. He spoke, therefore, of the future kingdom, which would suddenly dawn, as already realizing itself in the present. Thus the nature of Jesus’ eschatology is probably best described by the expression “an eschatology in process of realization.” 384-385

The kingdom of God is utterly transcendent and supernatural: it comes from above, from God alone. When God’s kingdom comes, the hungry will be filled and the sad will be comforted (cf. the Beatitudes, Mt 5:3-10; Lk 6:20 ff.). It demands that men should love their enemies (Mt 5:38-42; Lk 6:27 f., 32-36), and they will be as free from care as the birds of the air and the lilies of the field (Mt 6:25-33; Lk 12:22-31). Here again it is Jesus himself, in whom alone the future kingdom of God is present, in whose words and deeds that kingdom has already appeared. It has come already, in that Jesus seeks out the company of tax-collectors and sinners, offering them fellowship at table and so promising them forgiveness of their sins. As the king invites to his feast the beggars and homeless (Mt 22:1-10), as the father’s love receives back again the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32), and the shepherd goes out after the lost sheep (Lk 15:4-7), as the woman searches for the lost coin (Lk 15:8-10), as the master out of the goodness of his heart pays the labourers hired at the last hour the full day’s pay (Mt 20:1-15), so Jesus goes to the poor to give them the promise of forgiveness, “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:3). Only sinners, who know what it is like to have a great burden of guilt (Lk 7:41-43), can appreciate the remission of sins

through the goodness of God. For “those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick” (Mk 2:17). 386

The distinctive feature of Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom of God is not therefore that he brought a new doctrine of the kingdom, or that he revolutionized people’s apocalyptic and eschatological expectations, but that he made the kingdom of God inseparable from his own person. The new thing about Jesus’s preaching of the kingdom is “He himself, simply his person.” 386

Kingdom of God and Kingdom of Christ. Evidence that the kingdom of Jesus Christ is in the NT view the same as the kingdom of God is also to be seen in the fact that in parts of the NT outside the synoptic tradition both expressions are found together, sometimes God being named first, and sometimes Christ. Thus it is equally acceptable to speak of “the kingdom of Christ and of God” (Eph 5:5) and of the world dominion “of our Lord and of his Christ” (Rev 11:15). The rule of Christ and the rule of God are in other words identical. When the rule of Christ has become established, it is taken up into the rule of God (Rev 5:10; 2:4, 6; 22:5); at the end of time Christ hands back to the Father the kingdom he has received from him (1 Cor 15:24-28). 388