

SERMON THOUGHTS ABRIDGED

I KINGS 1:33-37

ASCENDING THE THRONE ON PALM SUNDAY !

“Take with you the servants of your lord, and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and take him down to Gihon. There let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel; and blow the horn, and say, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ Then you shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, and he shall be king in my place. For I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah.”

Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king and said, “Amen! May the Lord God of my lord the king say so too. As the Lord has been with my lord the king, even so may He be with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David.”

It’s a significant day, when a new ruler takes over the government—whether elected, or appointed, or in keeping with a certain right-of-succession. We can view Palm Sunday in terms of Jesus coming to Jerusalem (the capital) to take over the kingship of God’s people! He was not coming to take political reigns of a physical kingdom. He was coming to take the kingship of the spiritual kingdom of all the children of God, those who look to God for mercy, forgiveness, resurrection, and life in His Son the Savior of the world. Jesus’ path to kingship has similarities to that of Solomon in the Old Testament. Perhaps the incident of Solomon in our text is familiar to you. Perhaps not.

BACKGROUND: King David was the best Old Testament king the people of Israel had. He ruled with might and kindness. His might was based on trust in the Lord. Even before he was king, David slew Goliath, the God-defying Philistine. Yet David also ruled with kindness and love as a shepherd caring for his sheep. David had been a shepherd. He is the author of the 23rd Psalm, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” To King David God promised that the King coming to rule God’s people forever would come from David’s own family! Although give such great honor, David was not sinless. He learned first hand the sorrow of following a godless path. He became involved in adultery with a woman named Bathsheba. He saw to it that her husband Uriah was murdered through an innocent looking military battle. David proceeded to marry Bathsheba. But God knew what was going on. Through Nathan the prophet, David was led to mourn his sins, and was assured of the peace of the LORD’s merciful forgiveness. David rejoiced in that forgiveness, trusting in the promise of the Savior to come.

By the time of our text, King David was old and frail. Already he had promised that his successor on the throne would be Solomon, the second son of Bathsheba. (Now there’s an amazing fact. God allowed, willed, that the second son from this marriage, that started out under such wicked circumstances, would become the next king on the throne, AND the heir through whom the Savior would be born! How great is God’s grace.) Meanwhile, David’s son Adonijah, from a different wife, was at that very time setting himself up as king. He with his friends and backers were celebrating his new self-assumed kingship. King David learned of it and instructed that Solomon be installed as the new king. (David, as did many of the Old Testament men of prominence, practiced polygamy; they reaped sadness for it and from it. Actually Adonijah was a full brother of Absalom, if you remember Absalom. Absalom was the son who used war to try usurping the kingship from his father. He died with his head caught in a tree. Regarding both of these sons, the Bible says David did not discipline them, but let them do as they willed. Parents, it’s your God-given role to train your children, to correct bad behavior and teach good behavior. Absalom and Adonijah both came to ruin.) Solomon was the one chosen to be king.

Do you see some parallels with Palm Sunday? At Jesus time, who was it that was God’s designated ruler over the hearts of His people? Jesus. But who wanted to be the leaders? The chief priests, the scribes and the self-righteous Pharisees. They wanted someone of their kind to be ruler. They could not tolerate Jesus. They planned to get rid of him. But the God Father had sent His Son for this mission. There would be no if’s, and’s, or but’s.

In our text King David told his chief aides, Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah, to place Solomon on David’s own mule and lead him outside the city to the fresh-water spring Gihon. Gihon was the source for much of the city’s water needs. At Gihon, he was to be anointed king and hailed as king. It certainly was appropriate that the new king would be installed at life-giving water supply for the city. He rode his father’s own mule, a humble beast of burden, not a mighty war-steed. Solomon, his father’s own choice, would be a king of peace. Peace is a blessing for every nation. In fact his name Solomon, “shah-lo-mo,” is derived from the Hebrew word “shalom”—Peace!

Likewise Jesus, our King of Peace, entered Jerusalem riding upon a humble donkey. He did not come for physical battle, to mow down, His enemies. He came in peace. He came to surrender! What an unlikely move for a hero and great King. Surrender?! Suffer apparent defeat? But not to fear, the Father in heaven deliberately included this in His plan for Jesus to attain the throne. He would give up Himself into death and victoriously rise again as only God could do—to redeem, buy back, sinners from the clutches of their sins, all of which deserve death before God. Jesus is the fresh-water spring of life for new spiritual life and eternal life in heaven. Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well, “*Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life*” (John 4:13). Forgiveness and fresh life in the Lord, our Palm Sunday-Good Friday-Easter Sunday King!

King David told Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah to “anoint” Solomon as king over Israel. Israel’s kings, Israel’s prophets (messengers of God), and Israel’s priests (offerers of the sacrifices at the temple) were “anointed” for their special positions. A specific recipe of olive oil mixed with fragrances and spices (see Exodus 30:22-25), was commanded by God for this purpose. This anointing, pouring anointing oil onto their heads, set them aside for their work and brought God’s blessings upon their important offices. You already know the Hebrew word for the “Anointed One.” It’s “Messiah!” The Old Testament people were waiting for this Anointed One—the king, the prophet, and the priest over God’s people forever. They longed for the days of the MESSIAH. You also know the New Testament, Greek word for Messiah, or Anointed One. It is CHRIST. All mean the same. Jesus is our Anointed Savior.

Similar to the custom used with Solomon, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the Anointed One, to receive the kingship, by His suffering, death, and resurrection. Did Jesus ever get “anointed” with anointing oil? We are never told that He did. But we are told, “*God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power*” (Acts 10:38)! This anointing surely refers to His baptism at age 30 by John the Baptist at the Jordan River. *When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*” (Matthew 3:16-17). Indeed Jesus was Anoint-ed, Messiah-ed, Christ-ened to be our King! The Holy Spirit was with Him throughout His entire ministry and mission.

David told his aides to *Blow the horn, and say, ‘Long live King Solomon!’* A few verses after our text, the words say, *The people shouted Long live King Solomon. And the people played the flutes and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth seemed to split with their sound.* Shall we say the place was “rocking”? They were very excited to have Solomon as their new king. Benaiah said, “*Amen! [So be it!] As the Lord has been with my lord the king [David], , even so may He be with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David.*” This was Benaiah’s thankful wish that the Lord bless His people with even a greater king than David.

The Palm Sunday crowds at Jerusalem did similarly. “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest!” Hosanna means “Save us!” They were shouting “Come save us now!” Matthew tells us, “*All the city [Jerusalem] was moved, saying Who is this?*” (Matthew 21:10). It was a high day. It was the one time, Jesus accepted praises from the crowds. He was about to claim His throne. He was about to become the true King of God’s children, their Savior, Rescuer, and hero, clasped in their hearts by faith.

Solomon was welcomed to the palace and there sat on the throne , all according to his father David’s will. Jesus’ path was similar, but a bit different. According to His Father’s will, Jesus first was condemned as worthless and guilty by the earthly courts, nailed to a cross to die, and buried as useless. But He arose on the third day in victory! And forty days later He visibly went up—ascended—into heaven. There He is seated on the throne at the right hand of God. All to our great joy! In Him you are safe! In Him you have the best King! Welcome Him today Palm Sunday, on the verge of Good Friday and Easter Sunday, welcome Him at every worship service or personal Bible reading as He showers you with His life-giving water of life. “Hosanna! Come save us now!” Palm Sunday to Easter, the greatest Christian week and holiday!

So be it! Amen.

Pastor Kanzenbach---