

The Better King
Hebrews 7:1-3

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There's a parable about the donkey that carried Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. When the donkey awoke the next day, he walked into town and strutted in front of some people gathered at a well.

They didn't notice him and just went on drawing water. He was shocked! The day before they waved palm branches as he approached.

The crowd had shouted out "*Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD,*" but now someone slapped him on the side and ordered him to move.

So, the donkey moved on to the market hoping maybe they'd remember him, but nobody paid any attention to him.

He strutted down the street, still no one seemed to notice him. Hurt and confused, the donkey returned home to his mother.

His mother smiled and said, "*Foolish child. Don't you realize that without Jesus, you're just an ordinary donkey?*"

Now, that's just a parable, but it points to something very important. The donkey felt that the praise and the attention he received the previous day was for him instead of Jesus.

Without the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, that donkey was just an ordinary donkey. Our text today points out that God had this planned from the beginning.

Last week we learned that long before Jesus was born of Mary, Melchizedek appeared in Genesis and God used him as a portrait of Jesus.

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Melchizedek, King of Salem, Priest of the God Most High. His name means *“King of Righteousness.”* Yet he is also king of Salem. Salem means “peace,” so he is the *“King of Peace.”*

Melchizedek was a King of righteousness and a King of Peace. That’s who Jesus was born to be.

When you read about Melchizedek, you should be seeing Jesus because God intended you to see Jesus in who Melchizedek was.

Jesus was born to be a King, and not just any King. He was born to be a better King and a greater King than any other ruler who’d ever come before or who’d ever come after.

Revelation 19:16, *“On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords.”*

Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 9:6, *“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*

And as a result, Philippians 2:10-11 tells us, *“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

One day, every king and every ruler will bow before Jesus, and they’ll confess that He is Lord to the glory of the Father. There is no king on earth that has ever been as great as Jesus!

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But what makes Jesus greater? What makes Him better than other kings and rulers of this world? Well, He's greater because of WHO He is and WHAT He can give.

Hebrews 7:2 says, "*He's the King of righteousness.*" What does that mean?

It means that, not only is He completely righteous, which no mortal king could ever be, but He can make you righteous! Now, that's no small thing because God has made it clear.

Romans 3:10, "*There is no one righteous, not even one,*" and Romans 3:23, "*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*"

So, we're not righteous, and if we're not righteous, how's Jesus ever going to make us righteous? Well, the answer is that Jesus came to give us His righteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:21, "*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*"

You and I are not righteous. We've NEVER done anything that would make God say, "*Hey, that person deserves heaven!*"

But God loved us so much that He sent His only begotten Son to die in our place, to give us His righteousness, so that we might have everlasting life.

Someone once noted that when a baby lamb's mother dies in childbirth that new-born lamb desperately needs the care of its mother since without a mother that lamb will die!

Why not give the lamb to another female sheep who had lost their lamb about the same time? Well, that won't work.

Every lamb has its own unique scent. A mother sheep recognizes her own lamb by its scent, and if a lamb doesn't have the right scent, she will reject it.

So, what can be done with a hungry orphaned lamb? Down thru the centuries, what shepherds have done is to take the skin of a lamb that has died in birth and wrap it around the motherless lamb like a sweater.

Then the "clothed" lamb is presented to the mother of the dead lamb. She sniffs the lamb, recognizes the scent, and accepts the lamb as her own.

If that baby lamb doesn't "smell" right, it'll be rejected, and because of our sin, we don't smell right to God.

Isaiah 59:2, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear."

Like orphaned lambs, we'd be destined to die, but God loved us so much that He provided a remedy to our predicament: He gave His Son, the Lamb of God, to die on the cross for our sins.

Jesus, the sinless Lamb died in our place so that we could be *"wrapped up in Jesus."* We take on His righteousness, His smell, if you will. That's why Galatians 3:26-27 is so powerful.

"So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."

When we accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we were wrapped in His righteousness so we would smell like Jesus in the presence of the Father.

Jesus is the King of Righteousness because He gave us HIS righteousness. No other earthly King could have done that.

Without the righteousness of Jesus the King, we are just ordinary sinners.

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But Jesus isn't just the King of Righteousness, He's also the King of Peace.

Hebrews 7:2b, *"then also, 'king of Salem' means 'king of peace.'" Just like Jesus gave us His righteousness so also, He gives us His peace.*

I used to think that peace was an absence of conflict, or quarreling, or war. In fact, one resource I read stated that *"Peace is the absence of hostility and violence."*

But Jesus said in John 14:27, *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."*

And John 16:33, *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

The peace of Jesus is NOT the absence of conflict. The peace of Jesus is the presence of Jesus. Jesus is the King of Peace, and when He lives in our heart, we will have peace.

As Jesus covers us with His righteousness, He fills us with His peace. He's the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace. Without the King we're just ordinary people and we're a mess.

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Lastly, Jesus is the King of an everlasting Kingdom. Years ago, I ran across an observation about Jesus and the Kings of this world.

The kings of this world are born in palaces; Jesus the King of Kings was born in a stable. Earthly kings are outrageously wealthy; Jesus was born into poverty.

Some earthly kings thought themselves divine; Jesus was divine, He was God in the flesh. Many earthly kings put their rivals to death; Jesus allowed Himself to be put to death for others.

Earthly kings built buildings; Jesus built disciples. Earthly kings used and abused people; Jesus healed people. The kingdoms of earthly kings will one day no longer exist; but Jesus' Kingdom will last forever.

The Kingdom of Christ lasts forever because Jesus lasts forever. Hebrews 7:3 tells us Melchizedek *“Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.”*

Jesus lives forever, but earthly Kings, no matter how important or good they may be, they're all going to die.

Ramses II was a famous Pharaoh of Egypt. In fact, he's called Ramesses the Great, often regarded as the greatest, most celebrated, and most powerful pharaoh of the New Kingdom, but he died.

When his mummy was sent to France in the 1970s, they had to issue him a passport since French law required every person, living or dead cannot enter the country without a valid passport.

Therefore, Egypt was forced to issue a passport to the Pharaoh, 3,000 years after his death. The date of birth reads 1303 B.C. and the issue date is September 3, 1974.

There was a line on the passport that asks his occupation and this is what they put: "King (deceased)." Ramses was dead... but Jesus lives!

Now, why is that important? Well, when an earthly king dies, presuming he was a good king, any good that he might do for you died with him.

He can't protect you; He can't provide for you; He can't intercede for you. He's dead!

But Hebrews 7:25 us that Jesus *"Is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them."* Jesus is alive and He always lives to make intercession for us.

Romans 8:32, *"He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"*

Jesus can do miracles in our lives because our King is alive to protect, provide, and intercede for us.

Therefore, instead of saying, *"Lord, I don't know how I'm going to do this."* Say, *"Lord I can't wait to see how You do this."*

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Conclusion

There's one more thing I noticed about earthly kings. If you lived under the rule of an earthly King, you'd have no choice.

You wouldn't get a vote as whether or not that King/Emperor/Pharaoh ran your life. They'd be in charge whether you liked it or not.

By contrast, with Jesus you have a choice. You can choose to believe He is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

You can choose to believe you've sinned and you need to change your life.

You can choose to declare that Jesus will now be your Lord and Master, and you can choose to be buried in the waters of baptism or you can choose not to.

You can choose not to believe that Jesus is the Son of God; You can choose not to believe you've sinned and need to change; You can choose not to give your entire life over to Him.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS!