Text: Luke 19:28-40

**Introduction**

“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

That’s what the crowds were saying about Jesus as he entered Jerusalem on the donkey. Now what the crowds say in the gospels is often just wrong. Jesus often hurries his disciples away from the crowds. He will call out them asking why they came. He’ll tell them “if they have ears to hear” – and the reader is left to imaging that not many do. But in this case the Pharisees are right there and they are offended at what the crowd is saying. The demand that Jesus do what he often does – rebuke the crowd. But Jesus tells them in this case that if they were silent, the stones would cry out. So we have to assume that their message is correct. We have a statement of what Jesus is – a King. And we have a statement of what he has come to do – establish Peace in heaven…peace and glory in the highest.

**King**

Maybe I’m wrong, but I think we have a language barrier that people even 150 years ago would not have had. The idea represented by the word King. We live in a world without kings. Even thinking about that word for me brings up in my head School House Rock. Splishin’ and a Splashin’ over the horizon what can it be…a free country…with the refrain and “no more kings…no more kings…instead we are going to have a President.” But the reality is that an American President, far from Presiding, is closer to what that would King meant than the King of England, who merely Presides over the government. The essence of a King in the right to reign.

You can debate where that right comes from. Does it come from the iron price – conquest? William the Conqueror over Harold Godwinson. Does it comes from blood and lineage? Or is it a divine right, derived from God, having the mandate of heaven? And if it is mandate of heaven, it comes with heaven’s expectations. Regardless of how the right is established, the essence is a right to reign. Our Presidents establish that right by claiming more votes according to how the founders set the rules up. One of the reasons that last 8 years were so…interesting. As two losers in a row set up resistance and refused to honestly grant the right. That experience of the last 8 years I think can be instructive on a small scale to the status between Heaven and Earth. Satan has refused God’s legitimacy. Every sinner is a participant in that refusal. The King’s law has been broken. The King’s peace has been disturbed.

Now the earthly experience of such revolutions is that if the King is powerful enough, those disturbers are quickly put down and made example of. Which if we are in the least bit contemplative causes a problem. Either God isn’t powerful enough, which would simply bring the question of how you could call him God? Or God’s ways are not our ways. The Kingdom of God means something different than what we think of as King. The Reign of God comes in a different way.

It is worth thinking for a second the different ways that human rulers can be good or bad. It is also worth mentioning in passing that Kings and Queens just are different. The methods of successful queens are much less, I’d say two. Elizabeth the First was the Virgin Queen. Playing various male advisors and ministers off each other. Vicotria was the opposite. Mother to 9 of her own Children and mother to the Empire. And like most men who will do anything for their mother, her advisors and ministers acted likewise. But Kings have wider paths, both for success and failure. The Roguish man of action – Andrew Jackson or Henry the Fifth can inspire loyalty and great deeds. The cool architect. Caesar Augustus or someone quite different but still successful if you dig past the later propaganda - Calvin Coolidge. Or if you’d like to look someone up – Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore. Or biblical – Solomon. Moral rocks – Abraham Lincoln or Louis IX – St. Louis. Tough for a preacher to bring up are those great men whose reigns are remembered but who were far from good. Say Henry VIII, or The Sun King of France, or Bill Clinton. Because you have the flip side. Men who were good, but as the Chronicles say of King Stephen, they did no justice. Maybe a Jimmy Carter. Their reigns are marked as terrible regardless of personal character.

**Christological**

When Jesus talks about the Kingdom of God, the Reign of Heaven. When he comes to Jerusalem riding a donkey. What Kind of King are we looking at?

He is not one afraid to exercise authority. “Go get the donkey, and if anyone asks you, tell them, The LORD has need of it.”

We don’t emphasize it these days. But there is something of the roguish man of action about what he does. He sets his face to go to Jerusalem. His disciples can’t believe it, but eventually pledge things like Thomas, “Let us also go that we might die with him (John 11:16).” And when he challenges them if they want to leave him they respond, “where would we go?” Shakespeare’s Henry at Agincourt owes something to that scene from the gospel.

Moral rock would be taken for granted. “He taught as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.”

But none of those are the core of the Reign of Jesus.

The Old Testament image was never those. Saul was a head taller and handsome – a King from central casting. And terrible. David could play the conqueror and rogue and architect and even moral rock in his repentance. “Create in me a clean heart…”. But he was chosen as a shepherd. The King of Israel was to be the Shepherd to the people. The mandate of heaven was to lead the people in the ways of peace. Which made David’s betrayal with Uriah a terrible break with the covenant. As Nathan the prophet tells him, “the sword shall never depart you house (2 Sam 12:10).” Far from gathering the faithful and sheltering them under his peace, David sent the foreigner to die so that he might take his wife.

The Jesus who presents himself as King to Jerusalem is the one who comes to establish peace in Heaven. Satan would be thrown out, no longer able to accuse the people of God. All Israel would be gathered into one sheepfold. All his sheep would hear his voice and they will not be snatch out of his hand. And all this is accomplished not by Kingly pride or military might or any of the ways we see Kingly success. All this was accomplished by the one act that created a people – that cross. The King as the nation reduced to one. The King who offered himself that he might shepherd his people into a good land flowing with milk and honey. A reign that would have no end.

**Moral**

That leaves the line about glory.

“Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me (Ps. 50:15 ESV)”

Ask the King. How do you glorify a King? Ask him for something he wants to give. And it is not like we don’t find ourselves in trouble all the time. Ask Jesus. He desires to deliver you.

Now remember – you are asking a King. And not some two-bit Caesar, but he Lord of Life. His deliverance might not be exactly what you expect. Maybe you are not quite desperate enough to turn it all over. Maybe you still think you can work it out yourself. Keep the glory to yourself. But if you’ve tried that. Ask the King. Give the glory to the highest.

**Eschatological**

Because all glory is eventually his. All glory in heaven, and on earth and under the earth. Every knee shall bow and tongue confess.

That first time the King came in peace. Jesus came to shepherd his people. Today he still leads us in the paths of righteousness for his name sake. And the glory is hidden in the stories of his people – of how he has delivered us. His glory is hidden under the cross.

But the day comes when that glory shall no longer be hidden. When the full number has come in, and the rebellion is put away. When the King of Peace is also the King of Glory. Revealed to all.

Today we welcome the King under the cross who has given us peace with Heaven. Tomorrow we see the fulness of the Glory.