

God: My God, my God, He cried out, Why have you forsaken me? The Law's curse legitimised His Israel's rejection: how could He be God's Messiah, Davidic King, and God's long sought prophet like Moses, if He was hung on a tree. All He could be was an imposter. In our sins was also our death.

What kind of King?

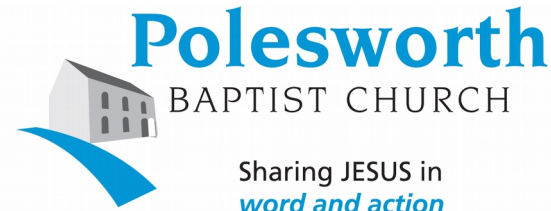
A servant of love, a suffering servant of God and man.
God becoming man to undo the pride desire of man to become like God.

A servant giving His life as a ransom for many; paying the price that would set us free, undoing the devil's work.

Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday not in the pomp and power of a King coming to claim His throne but in humble obedience to suffer His cross.

All this still seems foolish to many, but God was pleased through this foolishness to save those who believe, As John tells us though His own did not receive Him, all who believe in His name have become children of God.

By His death is our life. The destiny for which God created us has become our inheritance. He is the king who gives His life for His people. As Psalm 118 says God has done this and it is marvellous in our eyes. The Lord does not give us over to death. Jesus Christ is the gate of life through which the righteous may enter. Give thanks to the Lord, God's suffering servant for He is our salvation. Amen.



Palm Sunday
28th March 2021
Matthew 21:1-11

What kind of king is this?

May the Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life speak into your spirit, for it is by the Spirit that your spirit lives and gives life to your soul and body.

We have a question to answer: What kind of king is Jesus?

How can we begin to answer that? The deep answer goes back to before your life, before all our lives, before all earthly life, back before creation. It's about the eternal God who is life in Himself. The God, who Jesus tells us, is spirit. The God of holiness and love who chose to create us just so He could know us, and we could know Him.

God made us in love for love. This is the eternal context of human life. As Paul tells us in Ephesians, God the Father chose us in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight in love. Before anything physical was made God predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ. All people were meant to be born as God's children.

In His love-gift of creation God made us as physical beings, and gave us the highest honour of making us in His own image. And as physical beings He made a physical creation for the context of our lives. And having made us in His own image He, the Sovereign King of heaven and earth, gave us authority, as we read in Genesis 1:28b to rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every living creature that moves on the ground. God delegated His rule of the earth to us. He made us His Stewards or Governors. A ruling in His name which depended on and flowed from our own obedience to Him.

We had one rule to keep but we didn't keep it. Breaking one rule may not sound so much. But think of this. In 1872 it became an offence to be drunk in charge of carriages, horses, cattle and steam engines. In 1925 that rule was extended to being drunk in charge of any mechanically propelled vehicle on any highway or other public place. In recent years, for which I've found data, between 1979 and 2016, **24, 880** people were killed by drunk drivers on British roads.

One rule. One rule broken. Thousands of lives destroyed. Thousands of families plunged into grief where there had been joy. Never in all subsequent human life has the disobedience of so few breaking just one rule caused more sorrow than

was done that day in Eden, when human beings reaching up in pride, seeking to be like God, betrayed their King. From that moment on God's children were no longer at peace with God and each other. No longer in easy intimate togetherness. No longer at home with God. No longer His children. We lost life in the Kingdom of light for exile in the dominion of darkness.

Yet God promised that an offspring of Eve would crush the serpent, who is the devil and in that victory destroy the devil's work. But what child of Eve, stricken in sin, walking in disobedience could do that? What son of Adam could undo the consequences of the sin of our pride? What man could rescue us from the power of the Prince of this world and restore us to our creation inheritance of being God's children? A kidnapped hostage needs someone on the outside who is willing and able to pay his ransom. But what human could do that when every one is themselves a hostage, in need of the ransom payment?

The answer revealed in Scripture was in God becoming a man like us. As we had sought in prideful desire to reach up and become like God, so God in Christ stooped down to become a human being. God in Christ becomes a Son of Man to redeem us from the devil's dominion.

Paul tells us Colossians 1:12 God the Father qualified people [ie He acted on our behalf] to enable us to enter into our inheritance in the kingdom of light. How did God qualify us? Not by recognising our good qualities like a spiritual character appraisal. Not by anything we are or did. None of us can boast of that. God did it in and through and by Christ. Christ acted in love and holiness. For love of us He came to rescue. In Holiness He overcame our captor, for Christ did not sin. He lived as a true, obedient human being and child of God His Father.

Christ, contrary to our pride, humbled Himself. Though He was God with God He made himself nothing, as Paul tells us, in Philippians 2, by taking the very nature of a servant. Coming as Jesus tells us in Matthew 20v28 not to be served, but to serve. And give His life as a ransom for many. Unlike us Jesus never sinned, He never entered the Devil's dominion of darkness.

In obedience He served His Father, doing only what His Father showed Him to do and saying only what His Father gave Him to say. Always fulfilling the Law by keeping the greatest commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your mind." The first & greatest commandment.

In His service loving God and us, keeping also the law to "Love your neighbour as yourself." for as He said, all the Law and the Prophets, that is all scripture hang on these two commandments.'

Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday as the Son of Man fulfilling love, love for His Father and love for us His neighbour by humbling Himself to death on a cross! And on that cross He loved His enemies, praying for those who persecuted Him saying, "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." By such love and prayer, He tells us, we may be sons of our Father in heaven.

In humility God's merciful answer to man's vaulting pride came into His Kingship capital not in pomp and power but gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey, caring even for that young creature, by ensuring her mother came along beside her.

In humility the Son of God came to kneel at the feet of the sons of men to wash them, not expecting them to sit at His feet and wash them.

In humble obedience the almighty king came to freely surrender Himself to the earthly power of Rome. Under that power God's Righteous One let Himself be crowned with thorns, the flower of man's rebellion against God, for the ground [Genesis 3:17b-18] is cursed by Adam's sin, producing thorns and thistles.

In Eden we lost the glory of God and discovered that we were naked. In fear and surely also shame we hid ourselves from God, who kindly made us garments of skin to clothe us. Jesus came to be crucified knowing that would mean He would be stripped naked, His shame exposed to the world. While those who crucify Him fulfilled the words of psalm 22:18: They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

Above His head, the state nailed it's legal justification for killing Him, saying: This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. Beneath His feet the subjects of His Kingdom insulted him, saying 'You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!'

And the rulers of His people also mocked Him saying, 'He saved others, but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, "I am the Son of God."' In these mockings and tauntings the creator of mankind was rejected by mankind.

And He was also rejected by His heavenly Father. The source of all blessing was exhibited before the Jews and the nations as one cursed by God, for it says in Deuteronomy 21:23 if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, [he] is accursed by God. I said earlier that Jesus did not suffer our darkness, but on the cross all our sins were laid on Him and darkness came upon Him. In that curse Jesus suffered our exile from