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## A New Kind of King: The Significance of Palm Sunday *A Commentary by Jason Curry*



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There is no shortage of references to the term king in the bible. There were prominent and influential kings such as Abimelech King of Gerar, and Pharaoh King of Egypt. There were also wise and benevolent rulers like King Solomon. 1 Kings 5:12-13 states: "And the Lord gave Solomon wisdom as he promised him." There were even imprudent kings whose divine authority was contested by the people. In I Chronicles 10:13 we may read: "So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit to inquire of it."

The primary role of the king was to serve the state as protector, warrior and judge; therefore, it is not surprising that these characteristics of kingly leadership did not square with the common and contemporary under-

standing of Jesus a king. Nevertheless, when Jesus rode into the city of Jerusalem, in love, and in thanksgiving, in praise and in adoration of Jesus, the people cut down branches of palm trees and laid them in the streets for the royal procession (John 12:13). As far as these people were concerned, a new kind of king had entered the city.

Theologically, Jesus was a new kind of king. He spent three long years teaching and preaching parables about the kingdom of heaven, and he told individuals we they must do in order to received eternal life. Historically, Jesus was a new kind of king. The prophet Isaiah had predicted his coming years before he was born. Isaiah 9:6 states: "And they shall call him Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace." Relationally, Jesus was a new kind of king. He didn't

just mingle with the powerful and influential people of society. Instead, Jesus chose to spend his time with the neglected, marginalized and alienated people of his day. Yes, in a company of prostitutes, and drunkards, and tax collectors and robbers Jesus said: "Whosoever shall lose their life for my sake shall find it." Jesus refused to ride in on a horse of war; instead he traded it in for a donkey of peace. He refused to allow spears to be by his side; instead branches of palms trees welcomed the new king to his throne. Yes, a new kind of king came to town. He was a king that inspired the lyrics to a famous spiritual: "Ride on King Jesus, No man can hinder me. Ride on King Jesus, No man can hinder me. He is the King of Kings. He is the Lord of Lord, Ride on King Jesus, No man can hinder me." Amen.