

Worship Material
What kind of king is Jesus?
Materials from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 24th March

Begin with an opening prayer

Jesus, King extraordinary,
you call us to fight with you against the world's evils,
but you also promise us peace and reconciliation.
As we seek to understand you better,
give us courage to follow your example,
patience to keep working at self-control and peace-making,
and thankful hearts for the power for good your love brings.
Amen.

Read Mark 11:1-11

Bible notes

In their waiting for the fulfilment of the new covenant, and their anticipation of a new leader from God who will set them free in the way they experienced freedom at the Exodus, God's people have particular ideas about their expected Messiah. Mark writes for a Jewish audience who will be aware of the weight of expectation; he doesn't explain this but sets out clearly the kind of Messiah he perceives Jesus to be:

- An animal that is designated to be ridden by a king should not be ridden by anyone else, hence the note that the colt has never been ridden. A military leader would ride a horse, but Jesus rides a colt, a young donkey, as spoken of by Zephaniah, demonstrating that his leadership will not be overthrowing the ruling forces with an army.
- The spreading of cloaks on the ground was the way in which the people would declare their new king and their allegiance to him and, by inference, a vote of no confidence in the existing ruler.
- The waving of palm branches was used in the celebration of victory, and to honour royalty.
- The shouting of 'hosanna' – 'save!' – was an expression of both deliverance and praise. The verse from Psalm 118 reinforces this.

Jesus appears in control of this event; he has made the necessary plans and makes this public entry into Jerusalem with the minimum of fuss and in a non-

threatening manner. He looks at the Temple, and then leaves without event or challenge. It is the response of the people that raises the stakes here, and this gives us some sense of the volatile situation in Jerusalem ahead of the imminent celebration of the Passover, the ultimate freedom festival recalling the exodus from Egypt.

Prayer

Almighty God, we praise you for calling disciples to follow Jesus, for their lives and their witness, for their successes and failures. We praise you for the way you reveal yourself to us through people and events, through noise and silence, through light and dark. We praise you for revealing yourself to us through Gospel stories, the writings of the prophets and the letters written by your early followers. We praise you for revealing yourself to us in the ordinary events of life and the extraordinary events and encounters that amaze and startle us. For all of this and so much more we praise you, O God; in the name of Jesus, King of kings.

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

As the crowds gathered to welcome and celebrate the coming kingdom of freedom, peace and justice, so we lay ourselves before our donkey-riding King, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let his vision be our vision, his Kingdom be our kingdom, his call be our call, his journey be our journey, and his life, death and resurrection be our salvation. Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Amen.