

Series: Hidden Life

March 25, 2018

Title: Hidden King

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Text: Mark 11:1-11

The King's Highway

Jericho to Jerusalem:

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Jesus' final journey began early in the morning in Jericho, a city beside the Jordan River on the eastern border of the Jewish homeland. His destination: Jerusalem, the royal city and home of the great Temple. The journey would take all day, covering 18 miles and an elevation gain of 3300'.

It was also a potentially dangerous journey, with the road from Jericho traversing the canyons of the Judean desert before arriving at the villages on the eastern side of the Mount of Olives. Jesus had told a story about a mugging on this very road, one in which the victim was left to die by his attackers. While his Jewish countrymen had avoided helping him, a man from another ethnic group, the Samaritans, came to his aid, putting the man on his own donkey and getting him down the mountain to safety.

Bartimaeus:

It's no wonder, then, that the crowd of pilgrims traveling with Jesus was annoyed when, just as they were leaving Jericho, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus interrupted their journey, crying out: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Didn't he know that every moment counted today? Moments lost early in the morning could turn into hours lost along the way, with the horrid possibility of being ambushed in a desert canyon when night fell.

But Bartimaeus could sense that this was his chance. His only chance. He had heard of the prophet named Jesus of Nazareth and the miracles that He had performed. Now this same Jesus was just a few feet away, heading up the road to Jerusalem. It was now or never.

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Mark 10:48 NIV

Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." (Mark 10:49 NIV) The beggar threw aside the cloak he had spread out to catch coins, jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. Such was his faith, he must have known he wouldn't need to beg for pennies ever again!

Then he and Jesus had a little conversation:

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Mark 10:51-52 NIV

"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."

"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

The King's Highway:

Mark began the story of Jesus with words from the OT prophet Isaiah:

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Mark 1:3 NIV

"a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"

The wilderness that Isaiah was speaking of was that same wilderness that Jesus and His companions were setting out to traverse on their way to the royal city of Jerusalem. Isaiah foresaw the day when the desolate road through this wilderness would become the King's Highway.

And unbeknownst to Jesus' companions, it was the blind beggar who recognized the King. He was the one who called out "Son of David, have mercy on me!" King David's long-awaited Son had finally come. The King was on the King's Highway. Before long, Isaiah's words would come to pass:

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Isaiah 40:4-5 NIV

Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.

And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Mark tells us that Bartimaeus joined the pilgrims on the road to Jerusalem. He had literally come to see the glory of the LORD. And now he followed his King on the King's Highway.

A Colt for a King

The colt:

The prophet Isaiah had predicted the King's Highway. Another prophet named Zechariah described the King's arrival at the royal city:

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Zechariah 9:9 NIV

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem!

See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

As He approached Jerusalem for the final descent down the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples on ahead to fetch a colt:

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Mark 11:2-3 NIV

"Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'"

Every little detail of Jesus' planned entry held a clue to His Kingship:

- Just as Zechariah had promised, God's King would come "gentle and riding on a donkey..."
- It would be a colt that had never been ridden, since animals devoted to a sacred purpose must never have been put to ordinary use.
- Even the fact that the colt was tethered was significant, in that it recalled an even more ancient prophecy – one made by Jacob over his son Judah:

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Genesis 49:10-11 NIV

"The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.

"He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch;"

All clues to Jesus' true identity: God's long-awaited Savior King.

Hosanna!

Jesus' royal entrance was not lost on the pilgrims who traveled with Him:

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Mark 11:8-10 NIV

Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted:

"Hosanna!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

The beggar's cloak was but the first of many to adorn the King's Highway that day. Their cries announced – to those with ears to hear – that the Son of David who had mercy on a blind beggar was now making His royal entrance on Zechariah's promised colt.

Hidden King

The Hidden King:

To find the Hidden Life that is your true identity, you will need to find the Hidden King. Remember what Paul wrote:

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Colossians 3:1-3 NIV

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

The “real you,” the person God always intended you to be, is a person you could never discover or ever become on your own. We’re all like the blind beggar sitting on the side of the road. All we can hope for is that someone will toss a few coins our way.

To find our true Life, our Hidden Life, we must first find Jesus – just like Bartimaeus did. Even though he couldn’t see Jesus, he knew Jesus wasn’t far away. And so he put everything he had into making sure that Jesus knew he was there! “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

And with those words, Bartimaeus announced that the old road to Jerusalem had become the King’s Highway.

Now it’s our turn. It’s our turn to be willing to be the weak and needy people we actually are. It’s our turn to say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

And then, when He has healed us and made it possible for us to follow Him, we will see the many clues that point to the Hidden King. We will see why He rode a young donkey into the royal city. We will see that the Warrior King of the tribe of Judah came to defeat a far greater enemy than any political foe.

This is the King of an upside-down Kingdom: One in which a Cross becomes a Throne and a cemetery becomes Paradise – the long-lost Garden of Eden. It’s a Kingdom where blind beggars become royal heralds and donkeys become mighty steeds. It’s the only Kingdom where you are set free from all of the false kingdoms of this world.

Like Jesus, we are called to live this Hidden Life in the here and now. We follow in His steps. Only when God has made all things brand new will the Hidden King and our Hidden Life be fully revealed:

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Colossians 3:4 NIV

When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Until then, all we need to do is follow the King wherever He goes.