



All through Matthew's gospel there is the promise that the kingdom of heaven is drawing near, and it becomes increasingly clear that God's kingdom will follow a very different pattern to those of the world- Christians often describe it as "upside down", as God exalts the weak and humbles the strong.

In Matthew 21:1-9 shows us who Jesus is, and what his authority is like- we see Jesus riding into Jerusalem, presented as the king for this new kingdom of heaven.

He is king.

Matthew describes Jesus' triumphal entry in similar terms to those of a military ruler entering his capital to the acclaim of the nation. He quotes Zechariah and the Psalms to make it clear that this is God's promised Messiah taken alongside the rest of Matthew it's clear that Jesus is proclaimed as Lord.

He is a different kind of king.

Despite the triumphal entry it's clear that Jesus doesn't fit the mould of the military ruler- rather he's prophesied by Zechariah as a bringer of peace, lowly and riding on a donkey despite his righteousness and victory. Just like the kingdom of heaven the promised king is inverted- his strength lies in his dependence on the Father, and his victory at the cross looks like weakness to the world.

He comes in judgement on Jerusalem.

We'll see more of this in the rest of the series, but here we see that the city doesn't know him yet, the rulers and the priests haven't shown up to welcome him. The context of the Old Testament scripture that Matthew quotes also hints in this direction.

Here are some questions for your group.

- Read over Matthew 21:1-9... How does Matthew portray Jesus as contrasting with other rulers?
- In verse 5 Matthew links Jesus to the coming king prophesied by Zechariah, and in verse 9 the crowd quotes Psalm 118. Scan over Zechariah 9:9-17, and Psalm 118... what else is tied up in these prophecies, what is this king like?
- How do the disciples, the crowd and the city react to Jesus in this passage?
- In verse 10 and 11 all the people of the city are stirred up by the commotion, asking who Jesus is. How can we live in such a way that we show our friends, neighbours, colleagues or family what kind of King he is? Does our worship of him spill over so that they can see it and ask?
- If Jesus is this promised king what implications does it have for our day to day lives? How does it affect:
 - The way that we pray
 - The way that we approach evangelism
 - The way that we spend our money and resources
 - Anything else...
- Pray for each other in this, and worship the king together!