

**“Your King Comes, Bringing Salvation”**

Zechariah 9:9-17

Pastor Jason Van Bommel

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, your king is coming to you;

righteous and having salvation is he,

humble and mounted on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

<sup>10</sup> I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim

and the war horse from Jerusalem;

and the battle bow shall be cut off,

and he shall speak peace to the nations;

his rule shall be from sea to sea,

and from the River to the ends of the earth.

<sup>11</sup> As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,

I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

<sup>12</sup> Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;

today I declare that I will restore to you double.

<sup>13</sup> For I have bent Judah as my bow;

I have made Ephraim its arrow.

I will stir up your sons, O Zion,

against your sons, O Greece,

and wield you like a warrior's sword.

<sup>14</sup> Then the LORD will appear over them,

and his arrow will go forth like lightning;

the Lord GOD will sound the trumpet

and will march forth in the whirlwinds of the south.

<sup>15</sup> The LORD of hosts will protect them,

and they shall devour, and tread down the sling stones,

and they shall drink and roar as if drunk with wine,

and be full like a bowl,

drenched like the corners of the altar.

*16 On that day the LORD their God will save them,  
 as the flock of his people;  
 for like the jewels of a crown  
 they shall shine on his land.  
 17 For how great is his goodness, and how great his beauty!  
 Grain shall make the young men flourish,  
 and new wine the young women.*

### **Reading the Scripture with Eyes of Faith**

Expectations are everything.

On that first Palm Sunday, 2,000 years ago, in the Kidron Valley outside the walls of Jerusalem, the crowds gathered with their palm branches and their shout of “Hosanna!” as they celebrated the coming of their king, who was riding in on the colt of a donkey to save them. Jesus heard their cry, “Hosanna!” which means “Save now!” He was riding in as their king, just as prophesied in Zechariah 9, and He was indeed bringing them salvation. They were praising their king, bringing them salvation, and He was indeed their king, bringing them salvation. But there was a huge problem: What they were expecting and what Jesus was coming to do were two very different things. What they meant by their words and actions and who Jesus actually was and what He was coming to do could not have been more different. Why?

At the heart of their problem, the people of Israel had been conditioned for generations not to read the Scriptures with eyes of faith. Instead, they read their Bibles with a worldly, self-interested mentality. The Bible is inspired by God in such a way that we need eyes of faith and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to see it rightly. If we read it selectively, in a self-interested and worldly way, we will consistently fail to understand what God is really saying in His word. Zechariah 9 is a great example of this. You can see this as a political promise of rescue from oppressive nations and nothing more, and you’ll miss the gloriously greater good news of this chapter.

#### **I. Your King Comes, Bringing Peace**

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!  
 Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!  
 Behold, your king is coming to you;  
 righteous and having salvation is he,  
 humble and mounted on a donkey,  
 on a colt, the foal of a donkey.  
 10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim  
 and the war horse from Jerusalem;  
 and the battle bow shall be cut off,  
 and he shall speak peace to the nations;  
 his rule shall be from sea to sea,*

*and from the River to the ends of the earth.*

Zechariah 9:9 announces to Jerusalem the coming of their long-awaited king, who comes “*righteous and having salvation.*” This king is “*humble and mounted on a donkey.*” It was not unusual for kings in the ancient world to ride donkeys. It was a suitable royal mount. Yet if the people of Jerusalem expected Jesus to come into Jerusalem to overthrow the Romans, his donkey mount should have told them that He wasn’t arriving to be a conqueror making war on the Romans. When kings came to make war and conquer, they rode a war horse, often a white stallion. When they rode a donkey, they came in peace, to make peace. And that’s precisely what Zechariah said this king was coming to do.

So, who is this king? Zechariah has already introduced him, earlier in the book. In Zechariah 3 and 6, He is called “the Branch.”

*“<sup>8</sup> Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are a sign: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch. <sup>9</sup> For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.”*

So, Joshua the High Priest is a sign of the coming Branch, who will come and remove the iniquity of the land in a single day. Joshua the High Priest? Does that sound familiar? Jesus’ Hebrew name is the same name as Joshua – Y’Shua.

Then, in Chapter 6:11-13, this Joshua shows up again:

*Take from them silver and gold, and make a crown, and set it on the head of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. <sup>12</sup> And say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. <sup>13</sup> It is he who shall build the temple of the LORD and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne. And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”’ (ESV)*

So, Joshua the Branch is crowned and enthroned. He is the coming king, and thus when we get to Zechariah 9:9, the coming king promised is the Branch who is the fulfillment of the sign of Joshua the High Priest-King. He comes riding a donkey to bring peace, but what kind of peace does He bring?

### **a. The Peace We Need**

Well, as with many things in life, what we think we need and what we actually need are not the same thing. We tend to be deluded by the immediate crisis in front of us, as the Jewish people were deluded by the Roman occupation into thinking that their greatest need was for political independence. But if they were to gain political independence and not cleansing for their sin, this would do them no eternal good whatsoever. If you’re on a train heading over a cliff to a sudden, fiery stop at the bottom, does it really matter if you’re sitting in first class or locked in a cattle car?

The peace we need, first and foremost, is peace with God. Thus, when God first promises the Branch in Zechariah 3, He promises that with the coming of this king, God would “*remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.*” Unless our sin is removed, we can have no peace with God, and unless we have peace with God, any other peace is a temporary, meaningless peace.

### **b. How the King Makes Peace**

The king makes peace for us as Joshua the High Priest and as the spotless Lamb of God. Jesus the King rode into Jerusalem bringing peace only because He also rode in as Joshua the High Priest carrying His perfect sacrifice in His own body. I Peter 2:24 says, “*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.*”

This is how the Lord removes the iniquity of His people in a single day. As Isaiah prophesied two hundred years before Zechariah:

*“he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed.  
All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have turned—every one—to his own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.”* - Isaiah 53:5-6, ESV

To remove our sin and make peace with God required Jesus to become sin for us, to be cursed and condemned in our place. He had to bear the penalty of the wrath of God in our place.

Here is what Colossians 1 says about how Jesus made peace for us with God:

*For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

*And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him (Colossians 1:19-22, ESV)*

## **2. Your King Comes, Bringing Resurrection**

Once the king makes peace by the blood of His cross, He brings freedom for His people:

<sup>11</sup> *As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,  
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.*

<sup>12</sup> *Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;  
today I declare that I will restore to you double.*

a. By the Blood of the Covenant

God promises that, because of the blood of His covenant with His people, He will bring resurrection, He will “set free your prisoners from the waterless pit” – that is, set us free from death itself. Jesus Himself was raised from the dead as the first-fruits from the grave, and we hear echoes on Zechariah 9:11 in the benediction from Hebrews 13:20-21:

*Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (ESV)*

God’s covenant with His people – the eternal covenant – is the covenant of redemption, in which God the Son agreed to lay down His life for His people and God the Father agreed to accept the life of the Son of God as the payment for the redemption of His people. Since death is the consequence of sin, once the payment for sin was made and accepted, death was overthrown. Jesus rose from the dead and secured the resurrection unto eternal life of all His people. This is why Jesus came:

*Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. (Hebrews 2:14-15, ESV)*

So, we’re set free not only from death itself but also from the slavery of the fear of death. People live in bondage to the fear of death and will take all sorts of extreme measures to deny or delay death or deaden the pain from the fear of death. King Jesus, by the blood of the covenant, sets us free!

### **b. For the Prisoners of Hope**

Then, God says, “Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.”

This is a strange sounding verse. He’s addressing these exiles who have returned to Jerusalem and yet are still not truly free. They are back in the Promised Land and in their home city, but they are still prisoners, awaiting true freedom. God is telling them to trust Him and wait for Him, for while they are prisoners, they are prisoners of hope.

We, too, might feel forgiven and still trapped. If we trust in Jesus, we know we are free from guilt and condemnation, but we are still sinners who are going to die one day, aren’t we? Don’t you still feel like a prisoner some days? God wants you to know you are a prisoner of hope. As God says:

*For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. (Romans 8:22-25, ESV)*

God will restore to us double, freeing us from both sin and death, making us both perfectly holy and eternally alive. This is our sure and certain hope as we live this life.

### 3. Your King Comes, Gathering His People

So, verses 9-10 focus on the king who makes peace, which points us to the cross, and verses 11-12 focus on freedom from death, which points us to resurrection, which we wait for as prisoners of hope. Then, as we look at the rest of the passage here in Zechariah 9, we get imagery of the joy of the gathering of God's people, with language that points us to outpouring of God's Spirit at Pentecost, as well as the joy of the final ingathering:

*13 For I have bent Judah as my bow;  
I have made Ephraim its arrow.*

*I will stir up your sons, O Zion,  
against your sons, O Greece,  
and wield you like a warrior's sword.*

*14 Then the LORD will appear over them,  
and his arrow will go forth like lightning;  
the Lord GOD will sound the trumpet  
and will march forth in the whirlwinds of the south.*

*15 The LORD of hosts will protect them,  
and they shall devour, and tread down the sling stones,  
and they shall drink and roar as if drunk with wine,  
and be full like a bowl,  
drenched like the corners of the altar.*

*16 On that day the LORD their God will save them,  
as the flock of his people;  
for like the jewels of a crown  
they shall shine on his land.*

*17 For how great is his goodness, and how great his beauty!  
Grain shall make the young men flourish,  
and new wine the young women.*

#### a. Sending His Spirit

Think about what happened on Pentecost: God appeared in wind and fire over His people. He poured out His Spirit on His people and as they were filled with the Spirit, they began to speak in other languages they had never studied, but they also acted so joyful and excited that those who saw them accused them of being drunk, even though it was only 9:00 in the morning.

Once His people were filled with the Spirit and were filled with joy, they were able to boldly proclaim the truth of the Gospel right in the middle of Jerusalem, where Jesus had been killed on a cross some 50

days earlier, preaching the hope of the resurrection to the very same crowd of people who had shouted for Jesus' crucifixion. They were filled with the joy of victory, even in the face of their enemies from whom they had been hiding in fear just moments earlier before God appeared over them and poured out His Spirit.

### **b. Gathering His People**

But then, what happened? As Peter boldly preached the Gospel, those gathered to hear him were cut to the heart, and they cried out, "*Brothers, what must we do?*" That day, God saved 3,000 people, who were baptized and added to the church. God was gathering His people, people who had come from all over – "*Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians*" (Acts 2:9-11) At least 15 different people groups from present-day Iraq and Saudi Arabia to Turkey, Greece, Egypt, and Rome were all represented in that group that God gathered in as His own.

So, God saved these 3,000 "*as the flock of His people,*" gathered from the nations, and then sent out to the nations with the Good News of salvation – forgiveness of sin and resurrection from the dead. This is still the work God is doing all around the world through the proclamation of the king who brings salvation.

So, we see that if we read the Scripture with eyes of faith, we will see a beautiful tapestry of redemption and hope, focused on Christ -

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!*

*Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!*

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*humble and mounted on a donkey,*

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*he shall speak peace to the nations;*

*his rule shall be from sea to sea,*

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*16 On that day the LORD their God will save them,  
as the flock of his people;  
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Through His promised king, God brings us what we truly need: peace with God through the forgiveness of our sins, release from the prison of death and slavery to the fear of death, joy and strength in the indwelling Holy Spirit, and a place among His people as His very own treasured possession forever!

### **How Great is Our God!**

What can we say in response to this message of salvation, peace, and freedom fulfilled in Jesus Christ? We praise God for the greatness of His goodness and His beauty, the beauty of His salvation.

*For how great is his goodness, and how great his beauty!  
Grain shall make the young men flourish,  
and new wine the young women.*

We are blessed in Him forever. Grain and new wine speak of the ongoing feeding of God's people, which is reflected in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper, in Christ's ongoing and truly satisfying nourishing of His people, by faith in this life and in the reality of fulfillment forever!