

Your King comes to you!

Text: Zechariah 9:9-10 for 3/25/2018 by Pastor Bolwerk

⁹ 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. ¹⁰ I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

Imagine, for a moment, that you are living in an ancient kingdom where a king had full power and authority over all who lived in the land. Now, imagine that the king wanted to talk to you. Do you think the king would travel from his palace to where you live just to speak to you? Do you think he would contact you ahead of time to find out what time was most convenient for you to meet with him? Of course not! He's the king, the supreme authority and ruler over all the subjects of his kingdom! If the king wants to talk to you, you must go to him. And you cannot just show up whenever you want. You must come at the exact date and time he specifies. He's the king, and you must do what he tells you to do or face his anger and possible punishment.

God tells us in his word that the Messiah, the coming Savior, would be a King. So, it would make sense if we expected the Messiah to act like a worldly king. We could picture this king being strong and powerful and maybe even a little rough around the edges, especially if he is going to lead his armies into battle, and fight to protect his kingdom. It would seem logical if this king demanded that we come to him and do things his way if we want to be saved. We would expect that because that is how the kings of this world act.

As the prophet Zechariah points ahead to that coming Savior he shows us a King who acts very different from the kings of this world. We might even say that this King acts the opposite of how we would expect a king to act. Zechariah tells us ...

Theme: Your King comes to you!

- I. He comes to you gently.
- II. He comes to you with peace.

Zechariah says **"See, your king comes to you [...] gentle and riding on a donkey"** (v.9). That seems like a strange way for a king to approach his subjects. Normally we would expect a king to come with power and dignity and, perhaps, a little pomp and circumstance. Plus, knowing how the people of Israel often acted toward their King we would not expect this King to be coming to them gently. God is Israel's real King, and you don't have to look very far through the Old Testament to see how the people of Israel rebelled against their 'King of kings.'

This is rather surprising when you think about all that God did for the people of Israel: He rescued them from their slavery in Egypt. God gave them the land he promised to them through Abraham. And once they were in the land God even helped protect them from their enemies, and he provided them with every good thing they had.

And how did Israel respond to God's goodness? God said to his prophet Samuel, **"[...] they have rejected me as their king. As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods"** (1 Samuel 8:7-8). The people rebelled; they turned away from their God and King and worshiped other gods.

God is also our true King. And our King didn't just rescue us from some earthly enemy. Our Lord rescued us from Satan himself and from eternal death in hell. God is also continually working to guard and protect us. God gives us every good thing.

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So how have we responded to our King's goodness? Too often we have done what God's Old Testament people had done: we have forsaken our True King for other gods. What kings do we like? What other kings have we set up in their hearts? What kings do we think will serve our needs? There is the king of money. How often have we looked to this king will solve all our problems and fulfill all our needs? How about sports? How many times have we been drawn into worshiping this god and king that our nation has so completely embraced, especially during March Madness, or Super Bowl Sunday. Or what about entertainment? Which do you hold in your hand more often: A Bible or the T.V. remote? And if all other kings fail there is always the king of 'self.' Isn't that what we have been taught, to rely on ourselves, to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps? Oh, sure we may let God rule our "faith" as long as king 'self' gets to rule the rest of my life.

We have rejected our King, and like the people of Israel we have rebelled against him. What we deserve is what they deserved. Our King should come to us in anger and wrath. Our King should come to us in the terrors of his holy justice, punishing us with the eternal torment we so rightly deserve as a bunch of rebellious traitors. That's what God our King should do. We should certainly not be surprised if he did react to us that way.

But he doesn't. No, our King comes in a way that is the opposite of how we would expect him to come. Our King comes to make us the opposite of what we are. Zechariah says, "**See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey**" (v. 9). Our King comes to us gently bringing to us what is 'right.' What does he bring that is right? He brings himself. Our King, Jesus, comes to us to give us the "rightness" that we need. Our King lived his entire life in this world doing what was good and right in God's eyes. Then he promises us that his righteousness is now ours through faith in him.

And then our King does even more. Our King gently comes bringing salvation. Instead of coming to bring us punishment, our King comes to take away our punishment. Christ our King willingly lays down his life for his subjects to save them, not from an invading army, but from their own sinfulness. King Jesus gently rode into Jerusalem to die. He went to the cross and faced his Father's wrath for us. It was there on that cross that he paid for our rebellion and false worship. It was there that our King fought his greatest battle to save us from our sins. It was there our King made us right with God.

This King of ours turns away God's wrath instead of bringing God's wrath upon us. Our King spares us from God's punishment and brings us salvation. But he also brings us something else. Your King comes to you! He comes to you with peace.

Peace is something we need. Peace is something all people need because sin causes people to not only rebel against God, but also to rebel against each other. Zechariah points out the sinful tools people use to wage war against each other: "**chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow**" (v. 10). We use similar tools to wage war against God and our neighbors. We use the chariot of lust which drives us to pursue the things that we want. We ride the war-horse of pride. We like to ride upon the back of this beast so we can look down upon others as if we are somehow better than them before God. And there is also the battle bow of selfishness. With that bow we shoot deadly words at others to hurt and manipulate them, all so that we can get what we want.

But our King comes to us to bring peace, and he does that by taking away our tools of war. The King strikes at the source of our 'warring' desires: He strikes at our sinful hearts. His law strikes our stony hearts taking away our chariots and war-horses and breaking our battle

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bows into pieces. Then his gospel heals our broken hearts. Jesus cleans away the death and decay of our 'warring' selves by washing us clean in his holy, precious blood. Finally, our King fills our hearts with his unselfish love. It is a love that gives us peace.

Our loving King comes to rule over us so we may have peace. Zechariah writes, **He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth** (v. 10). Christ our King makes peace between us and God the Father. Jesus gives us his own righteous life so that we can have a right and peaceful relationship with his Holy Father.

Jesus brings us peace in so many ways. Our King brings us the peace of his forgiveness. The guilt of our sins no longer has to weigh on our hearts, or keep us awake at night, because our King has won for us the forgiveness of all our sins.

Our King comes to us with his peace in times of trouble. What trouble or difficulty are you facing right now? Bring those problems to your King! He understands the difficulties you face in this life because he lived in this world of sin and faced those same problems. Since he understands your problems he knows how to help. Your King has the power to help you, and he uses his power to do what is best for you.

One day our King will return to give eternal peace to all those he rules over. It's true that our King brings peace to the hearts of his believers throughout the world, but the peace that his subjects have is not yet perfect. Believers in this world still face a daily struggle against sin. But it won't be that way forever. One day our King will return in power and glory. On that day he will gather all his followers to himself, perfectly purifying them from everything sinful. And then he will rule over them with a peace that will never end. That is something we can all look forward to. We can look forward to living in Jesus' eternal kingdom.

Living in a kingdom: It sounds like something from a fairy tale. Yet, we do live in a kingdom, and Jesus Christ is our King. He is not some fear-mongering war lord who demands that we bow to his every whim. Instead, he is humble and gentle, and he comes to us. King Jesus gently comes to us bringing us the gifts of salvation and peace. Cherish those gifts as you serve your King, patiently waiting for the day when he gives to you the eternal peace of heaven. Amen.