

March 28, 2021

“The Coming of the King”
Zechariah 9:9-11

FCF: Missing the true King

PROPOSITION: (anchor) The King has come.

(magnet) He is worthy of our great praise.

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

The British evangelist Rico Tice tells of a time when he was invited to meet friends at an upscale restaurant. Arriving early, he waited outside the main dining room. Standing next to him was a young man who looked vaguely familiar, but Rico thought nothing of it. After five minutes of awkward silence, another man came around the corner and said, “Ah, William, there you are. We’re in the private dining room.” William? It was Prince William! Rico had been standing within an arm’s length of the future King of England and had failed to recognize him.

For Rico Tice it was a bitter disappointment to miss the chance to talk with and greet his future king. But for those who fail to recognize Jesus’ true identity, it matters far more than that.

SCRIPTURE READING: *Zechariah 9:1-17*

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON INTRODUCTION:

It was March 29, AD 33. The Passover crowds and inhabitants of Jerusalem were filled with expectation. Jesus and His disciples were on the Mount of Olives, across the Kidron Valley from the city. And down He came, across the valley and into that city, riding a donkey. It was clearly intentional. It’s the only time we read of Jesus riding anything and not walking. Why? He was openly declaring His kingship to the crowds, coming into Jerusalem much as Solomon had years before. The people began to publicly acclaim Jesus as king. Not Caesar but Jesus.

The city was shaken. It’s hard to overstate the political and religious volatility incited by Jesus’ actions. Yet Jesus did not refuse the praise of the crowds. He accepted it. In the accounts of Matthew and John, they make clear this was all connected to Zechariah’s prophecy 500 years before - a time in which the people would rejoice greatly and shout aloud in response to the coming of such a King. When we bring all this together, what do we see? The King has come. And He is worthy of our great praise. The King has come. And He is worthy of our great praise.

Why? Why such praise? Why such rejoicing and loud shouting? Because of two things. First, the greatness of the King. And, second, the greatness of His kingdom. Let’s look at these.

I. THE GREATNESS OF THE KING

First, the greatness of the King. Who is He? What is He like? (**READ Zechariah 9:9**)

A) The Mystery of His Person

Let’s start with the mystery of His person. This King is unlike any figure ever known.

1. A divine warrior

Reading vv.1-8 and 12-17, it’s clear this is a divine warrior. We read a list of nations that had invaded Israel from the north. Now it is the Lord who sweeps down so as to defend His people.

2. A human ruler

Yet this divine warrior is a human ruler. This is God's "servant the Branch". A clear distinction is made ("I" in vv.1-8, "he" in vv.9-10, "the LORD" in vv.12-17). And he is riding on a donkey.

B) The Beauty of His Character

Who is this? We have the mystery of His person. And then the beauty of His character.

1. Righteous

He is described as "righteous" - unlike so many others, this King truly conforms to God's law.

2. Saving

He "(has) salvation" - He is the One through whom salvation comes. And in the ancient Near East, for a king to enter a city on a donkey meant he was not a conquering king on a warhorse but a returning king, one come to reclaim what was rightfully his. Which was a welcome sight.

C) The Pattern of His Approach

Then there is the pattern of His approach, the manner of His arrival.

1. A particular mission

His is a particular mission. He is "your King" and has come "to" or "for you".

2. His personal tenderness

His is a particular mission undertaken with personal tenderness. Twice, the appeal is made to a "daughter" - a relational, feeling way of referring to the people, with a protective longing felt.

All of this - His person, character, and approach, points to the greatness of this King.

Illustration:

How great? Julian the Apostate was the Roman emperor after Constantine the Great. He renounced the Christian faith and tried to restore paganism in the empire. Knowing the Bible's prophecies about ancient Babylon never being rebuilt, he sent his armies into Mesopotamia to prove it wrong. On June 26, 363 A.D., in the course of a battle against the Persians, Julian was struck down. His dying words were ([READ quote](#)), "*Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean.*"

Application:

The greatness of this King is real. It frees us to have deep courage, countering our fearful outlook and responses. Why is this good news? Think of the many ways our fear shows itself.

Let me give you three. First, control. Things seem adrift and askew. The car is heading into the ditch so we seize the wheel of our circumstances. Our fear makes us want to control. Second, anger. Having lost control and feeling under threat, we lash out. Think back over our posts, rants, and outbursts over the last few months. So our fear can lead to anger. Third, withdrawal. We feel unsure and unsafe so we pull back. Not just from certain situations but our relationships. Many of us are glad for social distancing. Our fear can make us withdraw.

What would happen to our fear and all its ugly fruit if we believed in the greatness of our King? Friends, I have some good news. The King has come. And He is worthy of our praise.

II. THE GREATNESS OF HIS KINGDOM

Which brings us to the greatness of His kingdom ([READ Zechariah 9:10-11](#)).

A) *A Universal Peace*

Zechariah speaks of a universal peace that is to come. It's quite astonishing.

1. An end to war

An end to war - all instruments of war used by and against Israel are to be done away with. Elsewhere we read that swords will be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks.

2. A new message

An end to war and a new message proclaimed. "Peace" (shalom) - wholeness, flourishing, the way things are meant to be. "To the nations" - beyond anything the UN could ever dream of.

B) *A Sovereign Rule*

Zechariah speaks of a universal peace that is absolutely ensured by a sovereign rule.

1. Absolute extension

This is an absolute extension. It goes out over all the earth, to the most distant remote places.

2. Without exception

An absolute extension without exception. There is no corner, cave, inlet, or island that escapes the reign of this King. An absolute extension of His rule without any exception of any kind.

C) *A Sure Promise*

All assured and ensured by a solemn promise - "the blood of my covenant with you."

1. God's covenantal faithfulness

This is the Lord's covenantal faithfulness, an absolute guarantee sealed in blood, harkening back to an ancient unilateral promise made by the Lord to Abraham that He would take the covenantal curse upon Himself, one day sending His Son to bear what we deserved upon a bloody cross.

2. Our deep assurance

That's how we can know all this will be. And that gives us the deepest assurance imaginable.

The King has come, is coming, and will one day fully and finally usher in His kingdom.

Illustration:

I wonder if we really grasp this. There is a great line in Disney's original *Aladdin*. Towards the end, just as everything seems to be going sideways, Aladdin tricks Jafar into wishing to become more powerful than Genie. Remember what happens? Jafar gets his wish and Aladdin mocks him ([READ quotes](#)) "You wanted to be a genie? You got it! And everything that goes with it. Phenomenal cosmic powers...itty bitty living space." And Jafar is shackled and sucked down into a black genie lamp. It's the climax of the film and a pretty funny moment.

Application:

Is that our view of the kingdom? Have we so hemmed Jesus in? The greatness of our King speaks to our fearful outlook and can bring great courage. The greatness of His kingdom

speaks to our little gospel and should bring a wider scope of concern. Scholars have noted that these words of Zechariah were so surprising that they were largely neglected, even by those who awaited the Messiah. What of us? What of us who declare ourselves to be His disciples? The greatness of His kingdom speaks to our little gospel and should bring a wider scope of concern.

What, after all, is the gospel? Yes, it tells us of the possibility of a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. But, left to itself, that is a rather individualistic message that falls far short of the whole of what the Bible says. It's not only a message of individual salvation but of cosmic redemption. God, in His grace, has rescued us from judgment and is going to restore creation so that we can enjoy this new life together with Him forever. Friends, that is the gospel.

Jesus has come as the King to make us and the whole world right. This is what we can anticipate and should hope for. This is what our King desires and is working towards. And, when you think about it, this tells us a great deal of what we should desire and work towards as well. It tells us what arenas we are to enter and how we are to engage in those arenas. This is why, historically, Christians have given themselves not only to missions but mercy, pursuing holiness and founding hospitals, concerned not only for spiritual needs but societal issues, proclaiming not only the message of justification but the call for justice. The Bible is clear on this. You'd have to take scissors to the pages not to see it. Such is the greatness of the kingdom.

This is the gospel. The King has come. And He is worthy of our great praise.

CONCLUSION:

The third in C. S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* is *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Edmund and Lucy return to Narnia with their cousin Eustace. There they accompany King Caspian on a voyage to find the seven lords who were banished when Caspian's Uncle Miraz stole the throne. This journey brings them face to face with many wonders and dangers as they sail towards Aslan's Country at the eastern edge of the world. One of the many places they visit is Coriakin's Island. Coriakin is a wizard charged by Aslan to guide the Duffers in wisdom. But Coriakin's subjects proved to be so dim-witted and stubborn that he had to cast a spell that merged their two legs into one. The Duffers found this to be so awful that they used his magic to make themselves invisible. They saw their guide as a tyrant, though he meant only their good.

The confusion as to the character and purposes of their ruler is what throws life on the island all askew. The reader of the story finds themselves laughing at such foolishness. But it does raise a question. Do we know who our Ruler is, what He is like, and how life in His realm is meant to be? When we don't, our lives will be all askew as well. How much are we like these Duffers - dim-witted and stubborn, hopping about on one leg? It might be worth considering.

Friends, I have good news. The King has come. And He is worthy of our great praise.

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