

## Zechariah 9:9-10

Through the past weeks of Lent, we've been doing some **mountain climbing**. We've been struggling with our **emotions**, and fighting against our sinful **nature** - striving toward a mountain top where we will find **rest** and **refreshment** - where we will receive **forgiveness** for our sins, eternal **life**, and **salvation**. Today we don't quite **complete** the climb, but we do reach a **plateau**. The events of Palm Sunday bring us a **break** from the suffering and agony which Jesus endured throughout the weeks of the Lenten Season. They give us a cause for **celebration**, as our text tells us, "*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! See, Your King Comes To You.*" Palm Sunday is a time for **intense** joy, for **irrepressible** joy - a time for jumping up and down and laughing with **glee** - a time for singing **praises** and shouting **hosannas**, because **Your King Is Coming**, and He is a King who is **righteous, gentle, and powerful**.

Zechariah was a prophet who was always giving **encouragement**, and here again he is encouraging the people to rejoice **greatly** - to shout for **joy** because their **King** is coming. But when Zechariah wrote these words, the people didn't **feel** much like rejoicing. They were being held **captive** in a foreign land by the **Babylonians**. Now, although you and I probably **can't** relate very well to their **captivity** in a foreign land, I'm sure that we **can** relate to their **feelings**. There are certainly times when **we** don't feel like rejoicing **either** - perhaps when we have received some **bad news** about **ourselves**, or a member of our **family**, or one of our **friends**. In that same vein, I also thought about those people who are being **held captive** as prisoners of **war**, as well as those who at times are held captive by **terrorists** even during times of **peace**. Some of these prisoners in the **past** endured **long** periods of time having virtually **no** freedom, and being supplied with only **minimal** provisions of food, lodging, and health care. Under such circumstances **they** surely wouldn't have felt like **rejoicing**. Well, that's the way the **Israelites** felt - only the feeling would have been greatly **multiplied**, because **they** had been held captive for **70 years!**

Now although they didn't **feel** like rejoicing, there was actually great **reason** for them to rejoice. The **King** who was coming to them was **righteous**, and He possessed **salvation**. This King had **obtained** that righteousness by placing Himself under the law, in order to fulfill **all** of its demands - taking upon Himself the **sins** of all mankind, as well as the **punishment** which those sins deserved. Therefore, Jesus possessed salvation for **all**. His deliverance wouldn't primarily be

a deliverance from the captivity in **Babylon** - although that would **also** come about. But rather, the deliverance which Jesus brought would be a deliverance from the captivity of **sin**. The approach of a righteous King who brings eternal **salvation**, ought to bring great joy to **everyone**.

But the Israelites weren't **impressed**. They could see very little evidence from Zechariah's prophecy that this King would be capable of **bringing** such salvation. After all our text says He was "*gentle and riding on a **donkey**, on a **colt** the foal of a donkey.*" This King wasn't **rich** and **proud** and **haughty**. Rather, He was **humble** and **poor** and **afflicted**. How could such a King **help** them? If we take just a moment here and look at the Palm Sunday **fulfillment** of this prophecy, isn't that exactly what many of the people thought about **Jesus**? He didn't come riding into Jerusalem as a mighty **warrior**, riding on a great **war horse** and leading a powerful **army**. Instead, He rode on a **donkey's colt** - a simple **pack** animal. In order to **further** emphasize Jesus' great poverty, remember that He had been born in a **barn**, slept in a **feeding trough** for the animals, and was raised as a lowly **carpenter's** son. Even the donkey and the colt upon which Jesus was riding weren't His own - they had been **borrowed**. Jesus didn't even have a **home** which He could call His own. And yet, this was the form which Jesus had **chosen** for Himself. The Apostle Paul wrote, "*He made Himself **nothing**, taking the very nature of a **servant**, being made in **human** likeness.*" Yes, Jesus is **gentle**, kind, considerate, and generous. But that doesn't make Him any **less** a **King**. Let's make a **comparison**.

Some of you may be familiar with the cartoon The Wizard of Id. If you are, then you know that the **king** of the make-believe land of Id is very **greedy**, **stingy**, and **selfish**. He's always trying to find ways to **increase** the **taxes** in the land in order to add them to his **own** coffers. Consequently, all the people **hate** him. Actually, there is a "Robin Hood-like" character called The Lone **Haranguer**, who constantly **persecutes** the king. In fact, his sole purpose in life seems to be calling the king **names**. Such a **self-serving** ruler doesn't have many **friends** - even if he is only **make-believe**. However, **our** King is just the **opposite**. Jesus is a **real** King - a King **in** history, and a King **over** history. And Jesus is **loved** by His people, because He **isn't** greedy and selfish. Instead, He is **kind** and **gentle**. At the same time, we need to be careful not to underestimate His **power** because of His mild **demeanor**. Jesus is certainly no **pushover**. He is a **powerful** King.

The people who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem had no doubts about His

power. Even though He didn't **outwardly** appear to have great power, the people greeted Him as a **conqueror** shouting, "*Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!*" They knew that the strength of Jesus' kingdom didn't lie in **worldly** things, for they had heard the power of His **Word**. Jesus didn't need the backing of a great **army**, or an arsenal of conventional **weapons** to be used for warfare. In fact, we hear Jesus say, "*I will **take away** the chariots from Ephraim and the **war-horses** from Jerusalem, and the **battle bow** will be broken.*" You need to realize that Jesus wasn't removing these weapons from the **enemies** of Ephraim and Jerusalem in order to render them **powerless** against His people. Rather, He was taking them away from **His people themselves!** Why would He **do** that - for the same reason that He would **not** remove the thorn in the flesh from the Apostle Paul. The Lord told Paul, "***My grace** is sufficient for you. **My strength** is made perfect in **weakness**.*" Jesus wanted to **remove** those things which might cause the people to take their confidence away from **Him**. He was doing it for their own **good**, lest they should cut themselves off from **God** by trusting in the strength of the **world**.

**Jesus** was their powerful **protector** - their wall of **fire** against their enemies - and He would send His **angels** as horses and chariots of fire to **guard** His people against all danger. If only they would **seek** Him! If they would seek the Lord, He would be **found**, even in far off Babylon, for God had promised, "*Even if you have been banished to the most **distant** land under the heavens, from there the Lord your God will **gather** you and bring you **back**.*" God had **promised** that He would **deliver** His people from Babylon - and He **did**. God had **promised** that He would be their powerful **protector** from harm - and He **was**. God had **promised** - **Your King Is Coming** - and **that** happened too. Jesus **came** with **righteousness**, **humility**, and **power**. Jesus **came** giving **peace** - the peace of **God** which surpasses all understanding - peace which the world **cannot** give.

Today, as we rest on the Palm Sunday **plateau**, we rightfully **rejoice** in that promised **peace**. But our joy won't be **complete** until we reach the **top** of the mountain, and until the work which Jesus rode into Jerusalem to **do** is **finished**. We don't have long to wait. Good Friday and Easter Sunday are just around the corner. There we will hear again how our Savior **died** on the cross of Calvary to pay for all our sins. There we will hear how He **rose victorious** from the grave to assure us that we have peace with God. **Then** our joy will be **complete** - **won't** it?

Actually, there's still one **more** segment of the journey - the **home stretch**.

For the Bible tells us that **Your King Is Coming - again!** He is coming on the Last Day - to bring you into the eternal dwelling place in heaven which He **earned** for you. It is then that the final words of our text will be fulfilled, "*His rule will extend from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.*" On the Last Day, Jesus will take us **out** of this vale of tears, to be with Him forever. Then our joy will **really** be complete. **Your King Is Coming.** Come **quickly**, Lord Jesus. Come quickly. Amen.