

The Coming King

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[0 : 0 0] Zechariah, chapter 9, I'm going to read the whole chapter. The oracle of the word of the Lord is against the land of Hadrach, and Damascus is its resting place.

For the Lord has an eye on mankind and on all the tribes of Israel, and on Hamath also, which borders on it, Tyre and Sidon. Though they are very wise, Tyre has built herself a rampart and heaped up silver like dust and fine gold like the mud of the streets.

But behold, the Lord will strip her of her possessions and strike down her power on the sea, and she shall be devoured by fire. Ashkelon shall see it and be afraid.

Gaza too and shall writhe in anguish. Ekron also, because its hopes are confounded. The king shall perish from Gaza. Ashkelon shall be uninhabited. A mixed people shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of Philistia.

I will take away its blood from its mouth and its abominations from between its teeth. It too shall be a remnant for our Lord. It shall be like a clan in Judah, and Ekron shall be like the Jebusites.

[1 : 1 0] Then I will encamp at my house as a guard, so that none shall march to and fro. No oppressor shall again march over them. For now I see with my own eyes.

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. I'll 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. As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope. Today I declare that I will restore to you double. For I have bent Judah as my bow. I have made Ephraim its arrow.

[2 : 1 4] I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece, and wield you like a warrior's sword. Then the Lord will appear over them, and his arrow will go forth like lightning.

The Lord will sound the trumpet, and will march forth in the whirlwinds of the south. The Lord of hosts will protect them, and they shall devour, and tread down the sling stones.

They shall drink and roar as if drunk with wine, and be full like a bowl, drenched like the corners of the altar. 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. For how great is his goodness, and how great his beauty. Grain shall make the young men flourish, and new wine.

For young women. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word, and we pray that as we look at this passage now, which promises the coming king, we pray that you will teach us, and encourage us, that you will help us to see the glory of your king, Jesus.

- [3 : 26] Amen. So as we've seen, King Candlelight, he's not the king worth following. And as we look around the world, don't we see the same thing that Sir Grobbalot found at Holiday Kids Club, that actually, that there is no king worth following.
- No one who's worth putting all our trust in. But the doctor spoke of another king, one that rescues, one that's good, one that's just and true, one that's easily ignorable, for now. But one day, the Bible says that every knee is going to bow before this king.
- And this wonderful news is for everyone. It's for King Candlelight, and the doctor's off telling him about it now. But it's wonderful news for all of us. There is a king who's just and right and true, who's humble and who's good, and he comes to rescue.
- Isn't that fantastic news? But it's also news that's important not to ignore, though many do. This king does rule the world. He is bringing his kingdom in.
- And so, as we've been doing at Holiday Kids Club, this morning, we're going to look at what the Bible says about this king worth following. I'm going to do that from Zechariah chapter 9. I'm going to preach God's Word from Zechariah chapter 9.
- [4 : 41] At the end, I'm going to give you an opportunity to respond to this news of King Jesus by trusting in Him and becoming one of His people, if you're not already, which means that you can be in His kingdom forever.
- So do consider, as we look at God's Word, if this is something that God is putting on your heart. And what I'm going to do is, you should have one of these cards. If you don't have, someone will come around and pass these out later on.
- And I'm going to ask everyone to fill out one of these cards. And just let us know that you've been here, if you've got any comments. And if you have either prayed a prayer to follow the Lord Jesus or are interested in hearing more, then you can fill that out and let us know.
- So, if you're just joining us, the thing you need to understand is the Old Testament speaks in terms of nations and temples and physical things, but the promises are fulfilled in the New Testament spiritually.
- Far bigger and far better than what could have been imagined. So, God's people in the Old Testament were the nation of Israel but are now Christians everywhere who follow the King.
- [5 : 51] The temple, God's house, in the Old Testament was stone and wood and gold and so on, but now, it's God's people. God lives in us. And God's enemies are those who, from every nation, reject the rule of God's King Jesus and the devil and death itself accounted amongst God's enemies.
- And so, we're looking at the Old Testament but the promises that are in here apply to us spiritually. So, there's three parts to this chunk.
- This is chapter 9. So, verses 1 to 8, God the warrior comes marching down, defeating the nations around God's people to end up guarding his house. Then there's a promise, the King who comes and then there are God's people as His warriors.
- I'm particularly just going to focus on the middle chunk of the promise of the King. If you do want a fuller explanation of this whole chapter, you can check out my sermon from last year at Unichurch which is on YouTube if you look at the Unichurch channel.
- So, so far in Zechariah, there's been two themes that have been running through the whole book. Firstly, God is angry with the nations with a great anger and then secondly, God is very jealous for His people.
- [7 : 06] He's angry at the nations because they fight against Him and they reject Him. They sin with great evil, they seek to destroy His people and He's jealous for His people because they've been oppressed and harassed, they've been humiliated and He cares for them.

So, very quickly, verses 1 to 8, there's a picture of God and His judgment coming upon hostile nations near God's people. God will go from north to south and judge and destroy His enemies.

But, there's a surprising element in God's conquest of His enemies that in verse 7 there, God has a remnant of His enemies that join His people and you end up getting counted amongst them.

So, even in God's terrible judgment, there's some who join themselves to Him and are saved. And then, God will come and will guard His temple.

That's the first eight verses, very briefly, God the warrior will destroy His enemies, guard His temple and bring some of His enemies to be His people. That's the promise that was given in Zechariah's day which is about 500 years before Jesus.

[8 : 18] Then, verses 9 to 13, there's this promise of the arrival of the king. It's a promise of a future king who will come to Jerusalem. Now, this in itself is huge to have such a promise.

Let me show you why. To understand this promise, you've got to understand the context. King David, it was about 400 years before Zechariah's day, he was the greatest king that God's people ever had.

He's the one who killed Goliath with a sling, he's mighty in battle, he wrote stacks of songs of praise to God. In 2 Samuel, chapter 8, it says this, David reigned over all Israel doing what was just and right for all his people.

Wow. Imagine a government that did what was just and right for all their people. Wouldn't that be something? Isn't that the dream? David was a great king, he was the greatest.

But here's the thing, God made a promise to David. A promise there would always be a king from David's family on the throne, ruling his people forever.

[9 : 24] The true king, the king worth following, would come and would somehow rule forever. And the whole Old Testament could be summed up as the quest for the king.

Where is God's chosen king who's going to rescue and rule his people with righteousness and with justice forever? And so, do come along and join the Knowing God course that we have starting in August.

This will be signing up for, join the quest for the king yourself. Look at a Bible overview. So, there's this great promise.

There is this forever king who's coming. But there's this problem. You've got this big promise, there will be a forever king from David's family, but 450 years after that promise is made, Zechariah's around and there is no king.

And, they're not allowed to have a king. Right? Israel has become this vassal state of Persia, they're not allowed to have a king and they've got a governor instead and so it seems like God hasn't kept his promise.

[10 : 27] Right? It's failed. But here, Zechariah is proclaiming to the people, no, this promise still stands. This promise that God made to David still stands, it will happen.

The very good king, the king worth following is coming. He will reign over his people and he's going to be even bigger and better than you imagined.

So have a look with me, verse 9. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king is coming to you.

The Davidic king will come to Jerusalem, which is on top of Mount Zion, and that will be a time of rejoicing and shouting. That'll be a time of victory and restoration.

God the warrior will bring his promised king. And what's this king like? Righteous and having salvation is he. Humble and mounted on a donkey, on the colt, the foal of a donkey.

[11 : 30] Not mighty and victorious is he, not conquering and regal is he, but what's the key description of him? Righteous. What does that mean?

Always doing what is right. It means being just and fair and true. It means ruling by God's standard. It means being incorruptible. It means punishing evil and rewarding good.

It's everything that we always wish our national leaders had. But we're always rightly cynical because of the nature of politics and human hearts. But this king is righteous.

It's good news. He always does what is right and just for his people. King comes righteous and having salvation.

Salvation from what? Well, salvation from enemies but primarily salvation from God's judgment in that God judges sin in all people, all nations.

[12 : 32] He judges idolatry where we worship other gods apart from him or where we say there is no God. He judges us where we disregard him and his ways, where we claim to be kings ourselves.

He judges our sin towards others as well whether it's greed or corruption, sexual immorality, violence or other things. All these things mean we are facing God's righteous anger and judgment.

But this king comes with salvation. This king comes with a way of escape from the judgment of God. And he's humble and mounted on a donkey.

The promised king, the king that we've been waiting for is not his proud conquering hero but he's humble and gentle. He's not riding on a war horse but a young donkey. The king worth following is different from all the other kings of any nation ever.

Which is weird, isn't it? Because a humble king actually makes no sense, does it? A king needs to be proud of his nation, certain in his strength, confident in his diplomacy. Humility in a king is like a red rag to the bulls of the nations around, isn't it?

[13 : 44] A humble king is a stupid idea, it's going to get a king killed, it's going to get his nation destroyed. But this humble king trusts in God who's the mighty warrior who has taken up guard at his house, who is watching over his people.

So we have here this promise of this radically different king, this true king that back then was still one day going to come. And so then, 500 years after Zechariah got this message from God and proclaimed it to the people, the king does come.

Jesus, what does he do? He deliberately goes and gets a donkey and he rides it into Jerusalem as a sign, which is understood by all the crowds at the time, that he is the promised king, he is deliberately fulfilling this prophecy here, saying, I have come to bring in the kingdom of God, I am the righteous king who's come to rule.

He comes with salvation for anyone who accepts his rule. The quest for the king ends when you find Jesus, the very good king with power to save.

And so, Matthew 21 tells us what happened. Let me read it to you, Matthew 21, verse 1. When they drew near Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, go into the village in front of you and immediately you'll find a donkey tied and a colt with her.

[15 : 18] Untie them and bring them to you. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, the Lord needs them and he'll send them at once. This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, say to the daughter of Zion, behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mount it on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks and he sat on them. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road and others cut branches from trees and spread them on the road.

And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

And when into Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up saying, who is this? And the crowd said, this is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee. Hosanna to the son of David.

This is the king they've been waiting for from David's family to fulfill the prophecies, to save them, to bring in lasting peace and blessing. Hosanna is a cry of yay, but literally also means save.

[16 : 36] So the king would restore the glory of God's people, he would save them, but his glory would far exceed that of David or of any other king and he's recognised by the crowds as that very good king, as the son of David.

So what's the expectation of this king? We're back to Zechariah chapter 9, have a look at verse 10, in verse 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 and his rule shall be from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth.

The weapons of war will be cut off, there'll be this lasting peace and how does he bring about this lasting peace? Through ruling. The king speaks peace to the nations and it's not a piece of live and let live, it's a piece of ruling over all the nations.

His rule shall be from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth, it's speaking of worldwide dominion of God's king. That's the expectation. The humble king has come and yet somehow he will bring his rule and his peace to the whole world.

And really, at its heart, that is the good news of Christianity. God's king rules the world and he is righteous and he is humble.

[18 : 03] But he is king. And the only way that you can have peace yourself is to submit to this wonderful king and have him as your king. So in Jesus' day, that's the expectation, that this king has come on a donkey, he is going to rule the world.

And so the people are cheering and they're waving palm branches, right? The messianic era has come, Hosanna, yay! But just one week later, the king's enemies have arrested and crucified their king with a mocking sign above his head that says the king of the Jews.

Thorns twisted together to crown him, a purple robe put on him in mockery as they hit and spit on him. He claimed to be the king and they threw it in his face as they mocked and murdered him.

Where's the worldwide peace now? Where's this everlasting dominion? The humble king riding on a donkey just looks like the weak king who's pretty easily beaten up and killed.

Looks like his enemies have just won. He doesn't look like a king worth following. Again, it looks like God's promises haven't come true. It looks like another failure in the quest for the king.

[19 : 29] But the promises in Zechariah just keep getting even bigger. Have a look at verse 11 and 12. As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope. today I declare that I will restore to you double. And the New Testament makes it clear that actually this is fulfilled in Jesus as well.

This expectation that he died. It's this great picture of restoration, freedom from prisoners, from waterless pits. They're called to return with hope for God declares he will restore to them double.

Why? Verse 11, did you see that there? Because of the blood of my covenant. God will rescue his people because he made a covenant with them, a binding promise and because he is a God who keeps his promises.

It's not because they're good but because blood was shed to bind God and his people in unbreakable covenant that he would be their God and he would bring them blessing. And Jesus, on the night that he was betrayed to be crucified the next day, we read it before, he took the cup and he said, this is the blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

[20 : 50] That is, God has bound himself to us in a new covenant, a new promise, not because we're good but because of the righteousness of our king. God has bound himself with the blood of Jesus Christ who comes with salvation at the cost of his life.

His blood is poured out for many for the forgiveness of our sins. He died the death that we deserve, he took our place in God's judgment so that we could be forgiven.

It's the blood of his covenant which means we can be rescued and restored back to God. Behold, your king is coming to you righteous and having salvation is he.

It's Jesus' death which means that people can be right with God. It's his death which means that nations can be saved. It's his blood which means we can be part of God's covenant.

His promise to save and to bless us. And you see the irony that it's actually the very rejection of the king who comes riding in on that donkey to shouts of praise.

[21 : 56] It's his rejection that actually means that he does come with salvation. He had to die in our place so that we could live with him forever.

Jesus has died. His blood brings forgiveness and peace. But where is this peace? Where is this worldwide dominion?

There's conflict there between nations. There's conflict close at home in families and between friends. Where is this peace? The king has come. He's died.

He's risen from the dead. He is ruling now with all authority in heaven on earth. death. But he hasn't crushed his enemies yet. There's a time of amnesty now.

A time where some enemies can become friends. He's not brought about his full and final world peace yet. But one day death and the devil will be destroyed.

[22 : 53] And now is the time for people to turn from being his enemies to become his friends. He's doing it now. He's bringing about his final world peace now and he's using his people as his weapons to bring peace.

Zechariah 9, have a look at verse 13. For I've been Judah as my bow, I've 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.

This is God's people are the bow and the arrow and the sword of judgment in the hands of the warrior God. And the battle language continues in verses 14 and 15. And the key here is that it's God who fights, God who protects, God who gives the victory.

And there's lightning and trumpet and whirlwinds and completely unstoppable, undefeatable God. The Lord of armies protects the sons of Zion. They should devour the enemy, sling stones become gravel underfoot for them to walk on.

And so it's this picture of a king who has warriors or knights who fight for him, but it's God who is with them and fights for them. But what do we do with such warrior language from the Old Testament now?

[24 : 12] Not just it's God the warrior with judgment upon the nations, but his people as agents of judgment. Surely we don't think Christians should go wage war. No, not at all.

But rather, there's two points that I'll try and briefly unpack. Firstly, the victory of the king who comes in humility is through the judgment and destruction of his enemies.

That is, heaven is only heaven if people who reject the king are shut out from it. Can you imagine heaven if there were people in there who rejected God? It wouldn't be heaven anymore, would it?

But actually, by shutting people out and judging them is how God brings about his kingdom. Secondly, Christians are the weapon in God's hands.

We are the agents of bringing about God's kingdom and the way that he wields us, as we see in the New Testament, is through words. We proclaim the king has come.

[25 : 16] We proclaim the king has defeated death. He rules now and you can be part of his kingdom. We proclaim there is peace available, the greatest peace of all.

It's peace with God. We proclaim that now is the time to turn back to God. For there's a day coming when the king who came riding on a donkey will return to judge all people.

We come proclaiming the word of God, which Ephesians calls the sword of the spirit. That's what rescues people from sin and the devil and death. God has actually transferred us from a dominion of darkness into the kingdom of his son.

We've got redemption, we've got forgiveness. We don't bring about God's kingdom with weapons. He himself said his kingdom is not of this world. Rather, Ephesians 6, our battle is against rulers, authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

And we conquer these enemies of God, how? By trusting Jesus and by proclaiming his words. that's what sets people free from these forces.

[26 : 48] So Revelation 12 says, and they have conquered him, the devil, by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they love not their lives even unto death.

The blood of the lamb and the word of the testimony, that's how we as Christians conquer. So not drenched in the blood of our enemies that we've fought at all in any way, but drenched in the blood of Jesus who sacrificed himself for us, in whom we have the victory by holding fast, relying on him, living in him and proclaiming him as our risen king.

That's what defeats the spiritual forces of the devil and that's what rescues people. But it's also what judges people. If people hear of King Jesus but reject him, they reject the amnesty and the peace from the humble king who died for them, they reject his blood and so their blood is on their own heads.

Jesus will rule but only those who trust him will be in his kingdom. It's through God's word being proclaimed about King Jesus, that's how his kingdom comes.

And so verse 16 and 18, God will bring peace and goodness and flourishing and plenty. On that day the Lord their God will save them as the flock of his people.

[28 : 12] They shall be like jewels of a crown, they shall shine on his land. But that plenty and that goodness only comes about through the destruction of his enemies and the establishing of his kingdom.

But the king himself has come and died in the place of his enemies so that any who choose can be his friends and be part of his kingdom.

for how great is God's goodness and how great is his beauty. And so the invitation is for you. Having now heard of this very good king, righteous and just, humble and having salvation, will you trust him?

You won't find anything or anyone better to put your trust in. His kingdom will rule to the ends of the earth and you're either one of his people or you'll be destroyed as one of his enemies.

The blood of Jesus was shed so that yours could be spared and he rose from the dead and he now offers you life forever. Will you take it? Will you enjoy the rescue and the restoration, the peace and the blessing that comes from God and live in the very good king's kingdom forever?

[29 : 31] Will you become one of his subjects, one of his warriors who will proclaim him as your king? I'm going to give you an opportunity now if you'd like to respond to the good news of King Jesus to do that now.

I like to keep things simple, here is how to put your trust in the Lord Jesus, it's also called becoming a Christian, A, B, C, so three things to do, so A, admit that you've sinned, you've rejected God and you've not listened to him, you've sinned, B, is believe that actually Jesus is the humble king, he died for you so that your sins could be forgiven, and C, choose to follow him as the risen king who's alive forever, listen to him and follow his ways.

They're the three things to do to be a Christian, if you'd like to do those now, I'm going to pray a prayer and you can pray quietly in your head with me to the Lord Jesus and be saved, it's not based on anything that we do, it's based on trusting the Lord Jesus and anyone who trusts him is part of his kingdom immediately.

So I'm going to do that and then in a moment we've got these cards here and I'm going to ask everyone to fill this out, if you prayed the prayer for the first time you can tick that, if you're like I'm interested but I'm not ready to pray yet, I'd like to find out more information, that's great, don't pray this prayer, if you're already a Christian, praise the Lord, you don't need to pray this prayer either, if you want to keep thinking about that, we'd love to keep talking and helping you think about this.

But let's pray together. Dear God, I admit that I've sinned, that I've not listened to you, that I've done the wrong thing, that I've rejected you as my King.

[31 : 33] I believe that Jesus has died in my place, he's taken my sin and died for it, that I might be forgiven and restored to you.

God, I choose to follow Jesus as my King, knowing that he is alive forever, he is ruling forever, I choose to listen to him and follow his ways.

please help me to do this. Amen. And the promise of Jesus is that anyone the Father draws to him, he will never turn away, but he keeps those who are his safe.

So what I'm going to ask everyone to do now is to pull out one of these cards and a pen and the welcomers are going to come up now and give you one of these if you don't have one, and a pen if you don't have one.

So if you want to just raise your hand if you need them and someone will come along. And this is a great opportunity just to communicate that you're here and let us know if you've got any comments or if you've got any thoughts there.

[32 : 42] If you've prayed the prayer, we'd like to know that. If you'd like to become a Christian but you need to actually talk about it a bit more, tick that box there. If you want to find out more about Jesus, you can. I mentioned the Knowing God course.

That one is we're going to do a whole Bible overview and understand what the Bible actually says. So that'll be a great one to come along to. And if you'd like to join us here regularly at church, we'd love to know that and get in touch with you regarding that as well.

If you've got any other thoughts or comments or prayer points, you can stick those on the back. Take a couple of minutes to fill that in and then in a couple of minutes, we'll sing together our last song.

Oh yeah, there is a QR code as well, so you can scan that. If you'd rather fill it out on your phone, you can do that as well. All your information will be kept private and just used for contacting you and so on.

But we'd love to hear from you. Thank you.