

Zechariah 9:9,10. 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.

Your King comes.

Having salvation.

Proclaiming peace to the nations.

The Father directs his dear daughter's eyes to some place off in the distant horizon and speaks words of supreme hope and blissful peace and victory. *See your King comes to you! Rejoice, greatly! Shout and sing my dear daughter! Behold! See, your King comes to you! Righteous and having salvation.* The Father speaks of peace for his daughter. Peace that extends to the whole world. From the river to the ends of the earth. The picture is one of wonderful joy, and yet it comes in a form that is a bit unexpected. The King comes, but he is King that is noticeably different. He comes riding not on a mighty steed, but on a donkey. He comes in humility. He will bring a peace like none other. Never again will the nations trample on his people and cause her pain. Never again will the horrors of war and conflict threaten her home, her peace, her security and safety. The chariots will be dismantled. He will break the battle bow. There will be peace as far as the kingdom extends. The King will not only defeat her enemies, but he will chop up the instruments of war for good. Never again, will anything threaten her. The King will come with safety, security, for his dear child. With tenderhearted love, the Father gives his beloved daughter this picture of peace, of victory, of salvation.

The Father speaks his tenderhearted words of promise, to his dearly loved daughter. See, Your King comes to you. He comes as a humble servant. He comes to save us. He comes to bring us peace.

Oh, how wonderful the message of comfort, of peace! This is a message that human hearts need. This is the message that human hearts crave. This weekend, hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets of major cities and marched. They shouted, they chanted, "Never again."

No matter your opinion on the politics of the issue, a deep-rooted wish for parents throughout our land, is to be able to tell their sons and daughters, "never again, will

tragedy, and murder, and war, and conflict, will shatter your peace, disturb your mind, or your life.” Oh, how deeply we wish would can say that, promise that, and make good on that promise.

Living in a sinful world, there is much that keeps us from making or keeping such a promise. Laws and legislature may or may not help. There are steps that we as a society ought to take to make our schools, our homes, our neighborhoods, our world safer. What exactly those steps should be is a highly uncertain path that is heavily debated. Even with the most excellent of plans and policies, peace is guaranteed, perfect peace is unattainable in this world of sin. And so no matter what happens in the next few months or years, this much is true; violence and pain will remain as long as sinful hearts beat inside sinful people. War and crime, no matter the weapon or instrument, have plagued the people of this world and will continue to leave its indelible stain. Ever since Cain in rage picked up a weapon to kill his brother, violence and hatred has plagued our society, and that bloody stain has sunk deep into the very fabric of existence here on earth.

Can we honestly say, to our children, “Never Again!” Only when we look to the King who will bring us to his perfect kingdom of heaven. To see Jesus riding into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday is also to catch a glimpse of the one who will come again on the Last Day to bring eternal salvation and peace. That is the twofold prophecy that Zechariah delivers in stunning detail and is fulfilled in Christ. The King comes as a servant to die for our sins. He will come again to bring the perfect peace of heaven to all those who believe.

Your King comes. Having salvation. He proclaims peace to the nations.

Listen as the Father speaks his tenderhearted words of promise. To his dearly loved daughter he says, ***Rejoice! O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you...*** The people of Israel, of Judah, and Jerusalem had seen their share of war. Ransacked and taken captive by Babylon, the people sat in captivity for nearly 70 years. Now under the rule of Cyrus, some were allowed to return to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. Others, however, were hesitant to return for at the time there was still no wall around the city. The people were frightened by such uncertainty. Unsure of their safety, they were uneasy to say the least; frightened by the thought of attack, and injury, and death at the hands of their surrounding enemies. Through his prophet God assured his people of his protection, and of his power. He would protect his people. He would restore their temple, their city, and their land. Through his prophet the LORD also took this opportunity to lift their eyes to the King unlike any other who would come and establish a kingdom of peace that surpasses all understanding.

What stirring words of promise and encouragement, of joy and victory and peace that God delivers through his prophet! ***Rejoice! O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you...*** He delivers much need words of

encouragement to his people. Words of hope and comfort. Do not sit in fear and angst and anxiety. Rejoice! See your King comes! There is joy in the coming Messiah! Behold, the sure hope of everlasting victory and peace that I give to you! ***Rejoice! Shout! Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your King comes to you.***

However, it is instantly clear that this is a different kind of King as Zechariah's vision of the joy to come might have seemed a bit peculiar to those who heard it from his lips; but for us (as we have both the prophesy and its fulfillment) it makes perfect sense. Some 500 years after Zechariah writes these words, Jesus would in come in perfect fulfillment of this prophecy. He would come riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. And the people of Jerusalem would rejoice in his coming and shout his praise.

Who was this King, however? Before describing his means of transportation, the prophet clues us in on some important details about this one-of-a-kind king. Righteous and having salvation is how he was described. Jesus would be good and right in every way. Blameless and pure, not a hint of wrongdoing, not a speck of scandal would be found in or around this King. And he comes with this innocence to deliver his people, to give us his righteousness, to take away our sin. This one of a kind King and Savior comes with eternal salvation, to make us right with God, to open heaven to all who believe. He comes into Jerusalem and as the multitudes, the women, and the children, all shout Hosanna, "save us", even they would not fully appreciate how he had indeed come to save them. On a donkey he rides as he comes to do the important work of bearing our sins and paying for each one of them in full. He comes in humility to give himself for us. He comes as King who truly has the best interests of his people in mind, and so he brings only what he could bring: eternal salvation.

The next few days we will once again recall the depths of our Savior's love. We will see how he fulfilled the plan of salvation. God took on flesh. The King of the universe would bear and wear our shame, as insults were heaped upon him, a mock crown and robe were fashioned for him, and a sign meant to punctuate his shame was posted above his head. Fists and taunts and thorns all left the mark of burden and sorrow on his brow. But he comes in such a way, in such deep humility, because he comes as our servant as our Savior so that he would save us from shame, save us from sin, from damnation, from ourselves, as he saves us from this world that we have broken. He promises to deliver us from this life and bring us to his kingdom of heaven so that we might reign with him. See your King comes into Jerusalem. He goes to his cross. He comes to take away our sin. He comes to make us right with God and to open heaven for you and me.

This is not an honor we deserve. This is not something that you and I have earned. We are part of the problem. Violence boils in our hearts. We are cruel and hurtful to those around us. And yet he comes to us. He comes, and we cry *Hosanna! please, save us*, for we too are in desperate need of saving. The enemies of this world frighten and

terrify. The sinful desires of my heart plague us daily and bring disharmony to our lives. The devil seeks to drive us to despair and hopelessness. Who could save us from this world of trouble, or hurt, of anger and pain? *Behold! See Your King* comes to you righteous and having salvation. *Rejoice!* Shout and be glad, sons and daughters of the whole earth. For his kingdom extends to you and me. His kingdom extends to all nations. And to his kingdom he proclaims peace.

Rejoice! O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you... To rejoice and shout is to celebrate hope and victory! Think of a fan filled with exuberance that his or her team came out on top. Watch and listen to the crowds gathered in March, who shout and scream in the arena, who might even roar and bellow at the television in their own home as they burst into jubilant cries when their team advances in the tournament and prevails as champion. To rejoice, to shout, knowing that the victory which was so longed for will soon be realized is to get a mere meager taste of the joy that awaits those who believe in Jesus. For the King who came once to save us from the vile enemies of sin, and death, and the real punishment of hell, promises a future that our hearts yearn for: a future of unparalleled and unending peace for all nations. ***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.***

To a world that is hurting under the weight of tragedy he proclaims unending peace. To a people who are aching under the terrible weight of war, frightened and made uneasy by violence and crime, our King comes and lifts our eyes to the unceasing harmony of heaven. ***10 I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken.*** Guns or arrows, chariots or fighter planes, none of them will be needed ever again, not even to protect; for peace will prevail. God promises to tear down, take away, even chop into pieces the instruments of war, as one day a kingdom of peace will be realized in all its beauty and tranquility.

The one who came in humility to be our Savior, will be the one who comes again in glory to take us to the peace of heaven. For his perfect life and death and resurrection opens that kingdom to us. As he fulfilled his promise to come in humility, he will fulfill his promise to come in glory.

With words of tenderhearted encouragement, he lifts up our eyes to the cross and to the clouds, to the King who came in humility and who will come again in glory. The Father speaks to you, his beloved sons and daughters, and he gives this promise, and in this glorious way he announces to you, “*never again*”. While troubles in this world will continue until the end of time *never again* will your sins, and death, and hell conquer and condemn you for your King comes, righteous and having salvation. While troubles in this world will continue until the end of time, a time will come when war and violence and crime will *never again* trouble God’s people. See your King comes bringing salvation and proclaiming perfect peace. ***9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you!... Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. Hosanna in the Highest! Amen.***