

**ZECHARIAH 9 : 8 – 12**  
**HE COMES TO RESTORE !**

<sup>8</sup> I will camp around My house, because of the army,  
 Because of him who passes by and him who returns.  
 No more shall an oppressor pass through them,  
 For now I have seen with My eyes.

<sup>9</sup> “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!  
 Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation,  
 Lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.

<sup>10</sup> I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem;  
 The battle bow shall be cut off.  
 He shall speak peace to the nations;  
 His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

<sup>11</sup> “As for you also, because of the blood of your covenant,  
 I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

<sup>12</sup> Return to the stronghold, you prisoners of hope.  
 Even today I declare that I will restore double to you.

As you arrived at church this morning, what if you saw rain clouds—not storm clouds—moving in from the west? And you saw on your phone radar that in about twenty minutes rain would begin for much of the day, one to two inches covering a wide spread area north and south? Do you think the visiting before service would have been subdued and humdrum, or spirited and cheerful? I think the latter. It is Palm Sunday, the day on which crowds of adults and children welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem at the beginning of Passover week. They greeted Him as the promised Messiah—the One “Anointed” and Appointed to save—with palm branches of victory and peace, with their cloaks covering the dust of the road and streets, and with shouts of *Hosanna, to the Son of David! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord! (Matthew 21:9)*. Hosanna means “Come save us now!” Matthew tells us that this was a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy from Zechariah, “*Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation! Lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey*” (today’s text). We go back to Zechariah’s prophecy this morning to see the background and the context of these words, and see how well they applied to Psalm Sunday, and to us today and every day.

Zechariah lived about 500 years before the birth of Jesus. It was the time after Cyrus, king of Persia had freed the Jews—the people of ‘Judah’—from captivity in Babylon. They had been exiles in Babylon for seventy years. About 40,000 returned (Ezra 2:64); some stayed behind. Those who returned sought to rebuild the Temple for worship, the city of Jerusalem, and to re-inhabit the countryside. The task was large; but even more challenging with the discouragements and interference from the neighboring peoples, who did not want Judah and Jerusalem restored and strong again. Also armies from other nations marched through the land—it was a good travel route. Prophets Haggai, Zechariah, Ezra, and Nehemiah each were used by the Lord to encourage the people. They pointed the people ahead to the Messiah/Savior to come. These prophets were each given words inspired by the Holy Spirit, to write down for God’s people then, and us today.

Our text is from Chapter 9:8-12. In verses 1-7 Zechariah tells the people that God would turn the tables on their oppressive, idol-worshiping opponents. The regions to the north, Hadrach and Hamath, and the mighty cities Damascus, Tyre, and Sidon—that is, Syrian and Phoenician peoples—would be brought low. To the west were the Philistine cities of Ekron, Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Gaza. They too would be humiliated, their proud bloodlines mixed, and some would even turn to the Lord of the people of Judah in faith!

As the text begins, Zechariah says from God, *I will camp around My house, because of the army, because of him who passes by and him who returns. No more shall an oppressor pass through them, for now I have seen with My eyes.* God is always involved, but now He would be immediately involved “with His own eyes.” His angel armies would intervene; His returned-people of Judah would be safe in their labors to serve the Lord. The Lord would “camp” around them. The sign on the four-lane expresses it well, “Don’t camp in the left lane.” The Lord camps around His children. You too! Psalm 34:7-8 says, “The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them. Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!” Do you suppose it was an accident that there were no injuries, fatalities, or homes lost in Wednesday’s fire? The Lord steps in. Rejoice!

*“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Zechariah speaks to the daughter of Zion and the daughter of Jerusalem; that is the inhabitants of Zion and Jerusalem. Zion and Jerusalem are two different names for the same city. The term Zion is especially used to mean all God’s Old Testament People, His Old Testament believers, His Old Testament Church, the “Invisible Church”--Invisible because God alone looks into the heart and knows who are His. Zechariah said to them, in their “fix,” Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation! A joy!*

Instead being pushed and harassed by the others, Zechariah says, *Your King is coming to you. He has justice and salvation.* This current business is going to stop. Your own king will take charge *He is just and having salvation.* He will not let the others steamroller over you. ----- Do you today ever feel like life and life’s forces are steamrolling over you? Are the elements and the people of this sinful world, as well as your Old Adam, your own sinful nature, oppressing and harassing you? You are safe! You too are part of His Church, His New Testament Church. Your King is coming to rescue you. He will not be, and is not, an earthly king—no servants, no soldiers. He comes *lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.* How is such a one going to succeed? Imagine if there were trouble this morning in Lemmon. A gang had overtaken the town, a gang of bike riders, armed with high-powered weapons. You hear that a rescuer coming, perhaps a Reserves commander and his unit or a full-fledged U.S. Military unit. What relief and what joy to know! But upon arrival, it’s just one man, not with a tank, but with a little motor scooter—“Ying-ying-ying”—unarmed no less. Meanwhile the gang is waiting with their big bikes—“Vroom, Vroom!”—and weapons. That scene is parallel to our King entering Jerusalem. He did not come with weapons to defeat the Roman soldiers. He was coming for a spiritual battle with sin and Satan. He would humbly give up His life to die, but would rise in victory and glory on the third day! In Him you are safe!

*“I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; the battle bow shall be cut off.* Physical fighting shall be over. He comes to His Old Testament people and New Testament people to battle sin, death, and Satan. He will win! *He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.* Jesus brings peace of heart and conscience—peace that passes all understanding—for all the world. Not an earthly peace. He overrides the effects of sin and sinners against you on this earth—as He sees fit. But sin and sinners will continue to wage against you on earth. Your Old Adam will wage war against your New Man all your life. But there is peace in Christ. Forgiveness, Resurrection, and Life Eternal before God in Heaven, because of Jesus Your King who came to take charge.

Perhaps there were some in the Palm Sunday crowd who were thinking only in terms of Christ bringing physical and earthly rescue and peace. Even that would be an occasion for emotion and joy! When earthly oppressors are against you, you are glad to know the Lord is at your side. But it’s bigger than that! You rejoice to know that your losing battle with sin and death has been reversed. You have a spiritual Savior and King—the crucified and risen Jesus!

Zechariah relays from God, *Because of the blood of your covenant, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.* By Christ’s blood of atonement for your sins, your captivity to sin and death is over. *I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.* What a helpful picture! Can you imagine being held captive in a huge pit, perhaps a gravel pit, without water—none? How many days could you endure? Maybe you could catch some rain, or get a little moisture from plant juice. But the picture would be bleak. You would die. But your King comes successfully to free you from that death! “Hosanna! to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” You’re free through Jesus, your King, who came to give His life and then to rise for you!

The Lord says, *Return to the stronghold, you prisoners of hope.* Don’t give up hope! Christ is your sure hope, not just a “maybe” hope. In Him you have access to complete safety—“A mighty fortress is our God, a trusty shield and weapon.” The one who comes on a donkey’s colt, without a weapon, is more powerful than all the forces of Rome stationed at Jerusalem and than all the forces of Satan. He wins by surrendering! The fellow on the motor scooter without a weapon overcomes all the gang on the big bikes. The Lord did allow the Old Testament believers to rebuild the Temple and Jerusalem, safe from their oppressors. Even greater, He open heaven through Jesus! He says, *Even today I declare that I will restore double to you!* Instead of being an outcast and lost, you are saved. You are blessed with double blessing! In the Old Testament the family’s oldest son, who would carry-on the family heritage and line, received a double blessing (Deuteronomy 21:17). In Jesus, double blessing is for you! Forgiveness, resurrection, life forever!

Such is your joy today on Palm Sunday! It’s not just that “rain!” is coming, but that your King “reigns!” over His Church and each member of it, leading you safely through this life into His eternal Kingdom, unhindered by any opposition!

Amen! So be it!

Pastor Kanzenbach---