

October 19, 2025
Return: The King is Coming
Zechariah 9:9-17
Vernon Advent Christian Church

Introduction...Context...Zechariah, as a contemporary of Haggai, calls on the people returning from exile to repent of the evil ways of their fathers and to return to God. He reassures them that, yes, God will establish His kingdom but they have to be a people who are ready to receive the kingdom that is to come. Which brings us to Zechariah ch. 9.

In the first part of ch. 9, we see that God will eventually judge Israel's enemies. (9:1-6) But vs. 7-8 promise that God would also show mercy to a remnant among the nations. And he would do this by taking away their idols, making them a part of his people, and bringing them into his presence.

But the question becomes, how can God just cleanse people from idolatry like that? Well, our passage today will supply the answer: God will do all these things through the coming of one special King in Israel. So let's read about his coming. You can remain seated today as we will break this section down into two parts. The first is 9:9-11. [Read 9:9-11]

The way vs. 9 begins, it seems the whole world should be on the edge of their seats, waiting for this King's arrival. Vs. 9 begins with a call to rejoice, [Read]

And, it's not merely that the king is coming to them, he's also coming for them. He comes for the people's benefit. He doesn't come like other kings, who just want the power at the people's expense. This King pursues the best interest of his people, "Behold, your king is coming to you." If there's anything we need, most of all it's for God to show us favor despite our rebellion against him. That's what this King comes to do. He comes to show us favor when all we deserve is judgment.

And this is really the overarching hope bound up with all the promises in Scripture in relation to this King. This King is the offspring of a woman, promised to Eve, that would one day come and show us favor by crushing the Serpent's head (Gen 3:15). This King is the offspring of Abraham who would one day come and show us favor by giving many peoples a right standing with God. (Gen 12:3) This King is the offspring of Judah who would one day come and show us favor by establishing a plentiful kingdom (Gen 49:11). And this King is the offspring of David who would one day come and show us favor by reigning with perfect peace, a kingdom and reign that will last forever. (2 Sam. 7; Isa 9:6)

Notice, the word is spoken to them as if he's already on his way, and that's big news for a people still sitting under the oppression of evil and still sitting in the guilt of their sins. When all seems lost... "Behold," Zechariah tells them, "your King is coming to you." God set him apart as their King. He is their hope, and though his coming is still in a future day, the point is the effects of his kingdom were worth celebrating now in the present. The certainty of his victory was occasion to shout aloud with joy.

Let's look next at this King's character, what's he like? Lots of kings throughout history have come, but not many of them are worth rejoicing over. What will this King be like?

First of all, the King is righteous. That's a big deal for Israel to hear, especially coming out of the exile. You may recall that Israel's kings didn't have the greatest track record. And even their best kings, like King David and King Josiah, had their own sinful and rebellious moments. None of them could sit on the throne and reign forever, because none of them were righteous on their own. We have all sinned and fall short of God's glory (Rom 3:23), and, therefore, we all deserve death and God's judgment.

This King, however, would be different. This special King would himself be righteous. He would uphold God's moral standard. He would obey God's will fully and this King would reflect God's character perfectly on earth.

Second, the King is described as "having salvation." Because he is a King who obeys God completely, God chooses to vindicate him. So, God's salvation, salvation from what? From God's judgment and wrath. God's salvation comes with this King because he's the only one that God is pleased to vindicate. His obedience alone is worthy of honor and reward.

Third, he is further described as humble. First of all, there's no greater act of humility than when the God who dwells in the unsurpassable glory of heaven stoops to come for sinful man. But there's even more bound up with this humility. The Hebrew word here can also be translated, "poor or afflicted." And this further develops the kind of humility seen in this King. He doesn't come for his people while clinging to the privileges of royalty. Rather, this King becomes poor for the sake of his people. His path of obedience will lead him to become poor and experience affliction. He will choose the uncomfortable road of suffering, if it means showing his people favor.

It says that he comes "humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." The point is that when this King comes he will not come to make war against mankind but to bring peace. He will not advance his kingdom with military power and violence, at least not yet, but his coming will be a peaceable mission.

Which leads us into what the text says this king would actually do. We've looked at his arrival; we've seen his character. Now what will he accomplish?

First off, he will bring peace to all nations. Vs.10 says, [Read]

You may remember that at one point in Israel's history, Israel became a nation divided against itself. Israel was split into the northern and southern kingdoms, represented here by the names Ephraim and Jerusalem. But notice that these two names stand parallel to one another, suggesting that the King's rule will establish unity once again in Israel. God's covenant people would no longer be divided but made one.

But this peace wouldn't be limited to Israel; God's rule through this king would encompass all peoples, "he shall speak peace to the nations." Not just a cessation of war, but peace with God.

And, we're told, he will liberate prisoners on the basis of a new covenant. Vs. 11, [Read]

Zechariah is using this pit as a symbol of exile; it's a reminder of their captivity under God's hand of judgment. And in some sense it shows them once again that their exile really isn't over all the way. Yes, they've returned from to the land, but that was just the first stage in their rescue from exile. Other things still had to happen if they were going to experience true liberation. You see, other than their earthly enemies, enemies like sin and death still

loomed over their souls. But what God is promising here is their final deliverance from that captivity.

You see, God had entered into a covenant with Israel in which if they obeyed and followed after God, he would bless them and be in their midst. But if they chose to reject him, he would expel them from the land of promise and into the hands of their enemies.

And we know that Israel couldn't ever keep their end of the covenant. So God provide a way to appease his wrath by setting up the sacrificial system so that the people's see could be covered by the shedding of the blood of animals. But this had to be done repeatedly, year after year.

Zechariah seems to envision a day when better blood would be spilled in association with this King's coming, pointing towards a new and better covenant, if you will, where even the shackles of sin and death would be shattered once and for all. This is the blood of the new covenant that Jeremiah prophesies about (Jer. 31) and that Jesus references during the Last Supper when he says, "this is my blood of the new covenant."

These are the reasons for all of God's people to rejoice at this King's arrival. He comes for their benefit to bring peace to the nations and to liberate them on the basis of a new covenant. There's only one King who has the character to actually accomplish all of this, and His name is Jesus. Jesus alone fits the bill. John says so himself in John 12:16, the NT reading for today, that these things were written about Jesus.

And these first few verses speak of his first advent when Jesus came meek and lowly to seek and to save the lost. He did not come with military might, establishing his Kingdom with force. No, he came a baby born in a manger, born to die a death he didn't deserve so that all who put their faith and trust in him would be reconciled to God in a right relationship that we could never achieve for ourselves.

No, he didn't come with might and power at his first advent. But church, there is coming a day when he will. For your king is coming again! This time, not humble and riding a donkey, but on a white horse as the King of Kings and the LORD of Lords, to vanquish all his enemies and to establish his Kingdom.

That's the cool thing about prophecy in the OT. In the same passage, we see both the first advent of Jesus in vs. 9-11 and then in vs. 12-17 we get a glimpse of the second advent, when Jesus comes again, and showing us several things his people will share in when he brings the final day of victory. Let's read of these things beginning in vs. 12...[Read 9:12-17]

What does it look like when God's people share in God's victory?

First of all, when God's people share in God's victory, they experience his protection. We see this initially at the beginning of vs. 12 when it says, "Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope." A stronghold is a place of refuge, a place to flee to for protection during battle.

And isn't it great that he doesn't just call them "prisoners," but "prisoners of hope"? It's a title full of promise: their chains won't bind them forever. God will break them, and when he does, they'll have freedom to return to their stronghold, which is the LORD himself, their only place of refuge.

We also see that his people experience his protection in battle. Look at the depiction of God as a victorious warrior in vs. 14-15.

We know that God himself is invisible, but at certain points he chose to pull back the veil, so to speak, and make his glory visible in human categories. One of the ways he does this is by revealing himself as an unstoppable and fierce Warrior against his enemies.

The language here, “The arrow like lightning,” “Marching in the whirlwind,” and the trumpet sounding, come together to depict God coming as a Warrior. He’s mounted on a chariot that kicks up a mighty whirlwind with a trumpet announcing his arrival. This is an unsettling depiction of God; and it flies in the face of a lot of popular teachings that want God to be more palatable to our liking. But our understanding of God can’t be determined by what we, or the culture around us, says is acceptable or not. Our understanding of God must come from his revelation in Scripture.

And if God is such a Warrior, then this is terrible news for God’s enemies. You cannot stand in his way. God is a fierce Warrior against those who hate him. But this is good news if you belong to God’s people, because all of God’s might works to protect you. That’s what vs. 15 says that he will do for his people: “The Lord of hosts will protect them.” The question is, “Do you belong to God?”

You’re not born into his family automatically, you know? We’re all born guilty and as enemies to God. The question is: do you trust in Jesus Christ as your only hope of salvation? Do you understand that you are a sinner in need of God’s grace? Have you taken Jesus at his word, that he alone is Lord? And has his lordship changed you? If not, then you’re still God’s enemy, and the Bible says you will eventually meet His wrath.

I don’t warn you as someone who has it all together. I only warn you as someone who used to be God’s enemy too; and I want you to experience life that is only found in Jesus. The Bible says that while we were still enemies, God reconciled us to himself through the death of his Son. (Rom 5:12) Trust in him, and these promises are yours too.

Second, when God’s people share in God’s victory, they experience his success in battle. That’s why they’re promised a great victory in vs. 15. You get this picture of them eating and drinking in celebration over their enemies. It says, “They shall eat [“devour” in ESV], and tread down the sling stones.” The sling stones represent the enemies slinging the stones at them. God’s people will walk all over them, so to speak, and then eat in celebration.

It also says that “they shall drink and roar [or “make noise”] as if drunk with wine.” That’s not to promote drunkenness. It’s simply a poetic way of saying that a party will be happening in light of God’s victory. His people will share in His victory.

Third, when God’s people share in God’s victory, they will experience the care of the true shepherd. Vs. 16 says, “On that day the Lord their God will save them, as the flock of his people.” This brings the picture of Israel’s desperate condition full circle. At one time they were like defenseless sheep. Every nation devoured them. But now God was standing over them as their shepherd.

We all desperately need God’s shepherdly care. Sheep are not the smartest in the animal kingdom and constantly need guidance, just like we do. Isaiah compares us all to sheep when he says that “We all like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way.” (Isa 53:6) In other words, we do what we want instead of following the Lord’s word.

And more than that, sheep are vulnerable. They're vulnerable to being led astray by false shepherds. They're vulnerable to attacks from predators. So whether it's because of our own rebellion, or because of other people's rebellion, we're desperate for a shepherd to save us. So, God's Messiah, our True King, will also be our Good Shepherd who leads his people.

When God's people share in God's victory, they experience his abundant blessings. Vs. 16 compares them to "jewels of a crown" that "shall shine on his land."

It's quite common for the Bible to associate precious stones with the beauty of God's presence. We see precious stones in the Garden of Eden. We see them on the priests' ephod, or breastplate, when they enter the Holy Place, and we even see them associated with John's vision of the heavenly Jerusalem in the book of Revelation.

These precious stones appear on a crown, which is also an image that Isaiah uses to describe God's people in God's presence. He says in Isaiah 62:3 that Zion would be a "crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God." Hold that thought...

This "land" is the land of the future, restored Jerusalem, where the Lord's presence so transforms his new city that everything becomes holy. Everything reflects the glory of God brightly and fully. When the final kingdom comes, everything will reflect God's worth. He will be the true King, and the glory of his royalty will also shine from his people.

The end of vs. 17 says that "Grain shall make the young men flourish, and new wine the young women." That might not thrill you all that much, but we have to understand the language of the Bible. Zechariah is using the categories of the old covenant to speak of the future abundance of God's kingdom. If Israel didn't have grain and wine under the old covenant, that meant that they were under God's curse for disobeying him.

But when God's people share in his victory, one of the things that they will experience is a reversal of that curse. To possess the final kingdom would be to possess, not a cursed land but a blessed land. Joel 2:24 says that "the threshing floors shall be full of grain; the vats shall overflow with wine and oil." For the grain to prosper the young men, and for the new wine to prosper the young women, was for the prophet to be saying that the people's curse would finally be over. The curse that the Law held over them would finally be gone, and God would delight in blessing them abundantly.

All of these things give us reason to rejoice as God's people! Rejoice, O Church, for your righteous and humble King has come to you defeating the power of sin and death. And the King is coming again for you, to establish His eternal Kingdom where we get to share in it with all of its blessings, namely, eternal life with God himself. So let's rejoice and let our lives reflect these truths. May God help us. Let's pray.

Benediction: "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen." – 1 Timothy 1:17