

Rejoice! See, Jesus!

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[0 : 00] We'll turn back to the second passage we read as we continue our studies in the prophecy of Zechariah, selected passages from that prophecy.

And let's read again verse 9 from Zechariah 9, where we read, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! These expressions that really tell of the church, daughter of Zion, daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king is coming to you, righteous and having salvation as he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

And really from that verse, we can take four aspects of what we see in that verse in relation to the Lord Jesus.

In our first psalm, we were singing and rejoicing to our king. And we see very much here the reference to the king in foretelling of the Lord Jesus and his royal reign.

[1 : 13] We'll explore that in more detail in a moment. But not only is Jesus royal, not only is he majestic, he's righteous. And again, that's emphasized there in that verse.

Behold, your king is coming to you, righteous. And then having salvation. In other words, the rescue act of Jesus on the cross. Only the righteous saviour, only the one who came to bring his people in from darkness into light.

Only he is the true righteous one, the true rescuing one, the one who brings salvation. I couldn't think of another R for the fourth point. But the humble Jesus, well, it seems so clearly in the passage as we read in Matthew, Matthew's Gospel 21, one, the fulfillment of what Zechariah prophesied and certainly that Matthew referred to.

And I pray that, you know, as we look at this passage again, that we will do what Zechariah commands us to do, to rejoice, to rejoice greatly, to rejoice and to see Jesus.

But, you know, it's one of these, what I call, one of these straitjacket myths. That it's only at certain times of the year, maybe Easter time or maybe at times of communion, it's only then that we can really think about or preach about the final days of Jesus on earth before his crucifixion.

[2 : 41] But remember the message of the cross and what immediately preceded Jesus dying on the cross. That message isn't for only for certain times of the year.

It's not just for a set time, you know, in a particular church calendar. It's for all times. It's for any times, especially when the Lord's people need to be encouraged to look to the Lord Jesus.

To look to him who was prophesied to come, the one who came, the one who came as king, the one who came as the righteous one, the rescuing saviour, the humble saviour, the humble servant. There's no particular set time that we have to consider the coming of the Lord Jesus or certainly the events prior to his crucifixion. But, of course, we do so to look to our saviour.

And if this morning, many of you are in the building this morning, you remember we were being reminded of the saviour who brings his comfort, his compassion, his rescuing, his salvation.

[3 : 48] We saw that in the rescue of Peter when Peter was on the water and sinking, Jesus stretching out his hand and saving him when Peter cried out, save me.

Well, in this afternoon service, we want to be further encouraged in looking to Jesus, to see the greatness of Jesus, even that greatness that this Old Testament prophet foresaw in his vision of the coming of the saviour.

So we might say that today we've been given a double reminder of the grace and the love and the comfort, the glory, the power of Jesus.

And so if that's the case, then surely it's time well spent in our worship, the more that we're being led by God's Word to fix our eyes on Jesus.

And yes, to look on his wonderful face, because surely the more that you fix your eyes on Jesus, the more that you do that by faith and in love to him for what he's done for you, then yes, the things

of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace.

[4 : 59] So as we're here to worship, as we come before God to worship him, as we dwell on the person and the work of the Lord Jesus, well, we're just going to associate this one verse to help us in our worship.

But of course, when it's just one verse, we need to understand where this verse has come from. It doesn't just appear out of nowhere, because we need to know a wee bit about the background, the context in which these words were given.

Well, let's just think then, where are these words coming from? Well, Zechariah the prophet. We met with him a few times, as it were, in the last few Sunday evenings.

Remember, he's a prophet who lived about 500 years before Jesus came from heaven to earth. Zechariah was a prophet. His ministry was largely centered in Jerusalem.

And he was there to encourage the returned exiles, exiles who had been exiled from Judah to Babylon, and these exiles who'd returned. And Zechariah was one of the two prophets who were there to encourage God's people there in their return to Jerusalem.

[6 : 13] And we didn't have time to read chapter 8. It's a quite difficult chapter, I suppose. But certainly in chapter 8, we're given the clear, or the message anyway, that God was speaking through Zechariah, God giving his promise, that God was blessing his people, that God would bless his people in defending them from their enemies.

And God would do so to ensure their peace and their, well, their true contentment in this time of abundance. And so then we come to chapter 9, this first part of chapter 9, and there's further encouragement to God's people.

And that encouragement's seen in these prophetic words. Because these words speak of judgment in God's enemies, and that God will save his people.

God's going to save his people from their enemies. And that note of victory, that word of victory, it reaches its, if you like, its crescendo, its high point in telling of the imminent arrival of a king.

In fact, not just a king, but you see in the passage, middle of verse 9, your king, your king, the one who's come for his people, he's come to save his people.

[7 : 31] And it's that point, really, that we can sort of begin to probe this passage and realize that who Zechariah is speaking of, ultimately, is the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's the great encouragement that we're given from this word, this particular portion of God's word. That encouragement to see the glory of the Lord Jesus, and that glory that's expressed in these words of prophecy.

And so we begin then with Jesus as the royal king, the royal Jesus. But then you might say, well, how on earth do we get from the words here, behold your king, to the Lord Jesus?

How do we do it? Well, we've mentioned it already. The clue is in that expression, your king, your king. Because you go back to other Old Testament passages, when God announced himself to Israel, and God announced himself to Israel as your king.

You go to Isaiah 43, verse 15, for example, where God announces himself to his people. I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your king.

[8 : 45] You go to another passage. When Samuel spoke to Israel about God, he spoke to the people of God as your king. So you can merge these references to God.

You can put them alongside Zechariah's words, and we see here that they surely are telling of the one to come, the one who's come to save his people, his church, his people, and has come as your king.

The king that was promised, promised to God's people. The king who's a divine king. And the king with all the attributes of divinity of God, the Lord.

Of course, Jesus himself, the true king of Israel, the true king of his people. So here's Zechariah telling, foretelling, telling of a future king, a promised Messiah.

A king who'd come with all the credentials of God. One who'd come to God's people in triumphant victory. And so in the context, in the context of this theme before us, we're seeing here God's promise of deliverance and God's promise of protecting his people.

[10 : 02] And so we can confidently say, yes, this is about the Lord Jesus. This is the one who is the Son of God. The Son of David, the human ancestor of King David.

And this is the one of whom it was said of David's successor, the royal successor, the divine successor, that that successor, the Lord Jesus, his reign would reign forever.

Remember what one of Jesus' disciples said. Nathanael said to Jesus, Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel. And the more, you know, that you dwell in what Zechariah is telling us here about the King to come, the more I think you can be encouraged to do what Zechariah said right at the start of this section, to rejoice.

To rejoice. To be glad. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Rejoice. The church of God's people. Rejoice that the King has come.

He's come to deliver his people. He's come to deliver you and to bring you into his kingdom. He's come to be your King and to reign in your heart forever.

[11:16] And you know, in a world where, I suppose, royalty, present day royalty is either overhyped or maybe even dismissed as out of date, the royal King Jesus can never be overhyped.

He is the divine King, the eternal King. And certainly, his royalty can never be dismissed as outdated. He is the eternal one, the eternal King.

And so, he is King Jesus. And he must reign. And he does reign. And for you who are his, you know that he reigns in your heart and he subdued you for his grace and glory.

But I ask you, is he your King? Is he your King? Does he reign in your heart? Or do you have another King who's ruling your life? Money, possessions, self, the King of self.

You see, these aren't kings, these are imposters. but only Jesus is King. Only he can be and must be King because it's his reign that never fades, never destroyed.

[12:26] Money, possessions, self, will all be destroyed, but not King Jesus. He's the eternal one, the eternal King. And notice, secondly, he's the righteous King, the righteous Jesus.

Because as we reign, behold, your King is coming to you righteous, righteous. Now, people at that time when they first heard Zechariah proclaim these words, I think they'd been quite puzzled, quite startled.

I mean, they'd been told of this great King to come, but somebody who's righteous. Because certainly at that time, kings were anything but righteous. So often, the kings at that time were, ancient kings were cruel, were vicious, they were overpowering, they were, well, lacking in every quality that makes up righteousness.

But Jesus is never cruel, he's never unfair. He's always righteous because of who he is. He's holy. He's divine. He's God the Son.

And this aspect of the King being righteous, well, it's not just in Zechariah we find this. Jeremiah, the prophet, lived about a hundred years before Zechariah.

[13:40] He said this, Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I'll raise up for David a righteous branch. And he'll reign as King and deal wisely and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

And that righteous branch, that branch coming from the family of David, that righteous king is Jesus. He's righteous.

He's righteous in his goodness. He's altogether righteous in his love and his grace and his mercy. He's altogether righteous in his utter obedience to his Father's will.

And you can serve him. You can serve him as king because he's righteous. Your king, as we read here, your king, you can worship and do worship your king.

He's worthy to be worshipped because he's righteous. And he's worthy of all praise. Because he's righteous. His righteous character shines through in the hearts of his people.

[14:45] His righteousness shines through, of course, in his word. I mean, even the centurion, the centurion who stood at the cross when Jesus was being crucified, that centurion who'd seen, we might say, everything, just this war-weary soldier, probably desensitized to pain and suffering.

But when he saw Jesus, he saw Jesus' righteousness. We're told that in Luke 23, 47, the centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, Surely, this was a righteous man.

And let's, together, together, each one of us praise God. Praise God, the Father, for sending God, the Son, the Lord Jesus, and know him as the one who's truly righteous.

He's the righteous king. And if you've given your life to the Lord Jesus, then you know him as your king. And you'll know that when he comes again in his glory, when he comes to bring in the new heaven and the new earth, he's going to come to set up his kingdom, his everlasting kingdom.

And you who are his, you're going to dwell in that kingdom. You're going to be where Jesus reigns forever. You're going to be where his rule is altogether righteous. where there'll be no injustices, no unfairness, no cruelty, no more tears, because our Lord reigns, because our Lord who's righteous

reigns.

[16:18] He's the royal Jesus. He's the righteous Jesus. But then, remember, he's the rescuing Jesus. Behold, your king is coming to you righteous and having salvation.

So the king who's going to come to his people will have salvation. In other words, he's going to show that he's the one who's come to save, who's come to rescue.

Of course, that's what the name Jesus means. It means save or salvation. As you know, as we saw some weeks ago, the equivalent Hebrew name for Jesus is Joshua.

We saw that in a previous passage in Zechariah. But here, we're told the king will come. And he'll have salvation. He will be the saviour and is the saviour of his people.

And so never, ever lose sight of what we're seeing here about the cross of Christ. Because what we're reading here of Jesus, the righteous king, who's coming to bring salvation.

[17:19] He's come to bring salvation for sinners such as me and such as you. And he came to do that in that great rescue act, freeing sinners from the power of sin.

And the message is there in Zechariah 9.9. The righteous king has come to save his people. He's come to live out what his name means. He's come to live out the name, the meaning, salvation. And that salvation can be yours if you would but do what Zechariah tells us here, to behold your king, to rejoice.

And behold, behold really just means look. Look intently at Jesus. Look on King Jesus and ask him, ask him, reign in my heart. And you'll know that salvation that he brings.

You'll know that great salvation. You know, when Jesus met with Zacchaeus, for example, remember little Zacchaeus and Jesus changed that man's heart.

[18:25] Remember what Jesus said to Zacchaeus. Today, salvation has come to this house. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

I'll pray that you'll know that salvation in your life. That you'll know it, that salvation is only found in the Lord Jesus. And only because of what he did for you and for me on the cross there at Calvary. We can say this, that the death of Jesus on the cross, that was and that is the greatest rescue act of all time. because it was that rescue, that rescuing of his people, that rescuing you from sin's power, from Satan's clutches, from death's grip, all because of the king who was prophesied to come and through his spotless righteousness, through his great work of salvation, he freed you who are his to give you new life and to set you free.

and that's truly cause enough to join with Zechariah, to rejoice greatly, to shout aloud and behold Jesus, the king.

And of course, finally, the wonder of Jesus being king, the wonder of his being king and his great work of salvation is that he came as the humble Jesus, the humble Jesus, righteous, and having salvation as he, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

[20:04] You know, we're saying just a moment ago that the idea of a king at that time, a king being righteous, certainly would have sounded very strange to those who first heard these words. But how much even more the thought of a king, the words of a king being humble and riding on a donkey.

Because to describe a king at that time, a king being humble, it would have seemed really a contradiction in terms. And even the very word that Zechariah uses here for humble, it doesn't just mean lowly, it really means something like being poor and afflicted, somebody who knows suffering, somebody who knows deprivation.

These were things that kings at that time generally weren't associated with, whether in Zechariah's day, or Jesus' day, or even our own day. Just the other day I was reading of a royal wedding of all places in Russia.

I'm told that it was the first royal wedding in Russia for I think it was 127 years. If you know your Russian history, you'll know why that was the reason.

Anyway, a relative of Tsar Nicholas II, as you know Tsar Nicholas was executed by the Bolsheviks in 1918. Anyway, this relative, this fairly distant relative I suppose, but this relative, this 41-year-old lawyer called Grand Duke Georgi Mikhailovich Romano, and I think it was yesterday he married an Italian woman, Victoria Victoria Bettarini, and with the royal occasion, or the supposed royal occasion, it was a grand affair, there were hundreds of guests, the wedding ceremony took place at St. Isaac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg, and as the article read, the couple will wed amid a lavish two days of imperial pomp and ceremony, complete with Fabergé wedding rings, royal guests, and

a banquet.

[22 : 06] And that's a sort of even a distant monarch, as it were, he's not even an acting head of state, and yet all that pomp and ceremony in relation to supposed monarchy.

Of course, that's far, far from the humble character of the Lord Jesus, the Lord of Lords, and the King of Kings, the one who came being humble, mounted on a donkey and a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Kings at that time, when they rode an animal, it was a war horse, a triumphant horse, coming into town, celebrating victory in battle, showing that they were who they were, the king.

But the king of whom Zechariah speaks here, he's riding on one of the humblest animals, the donkey. It's an animal that wasn't associated with any kind of triumph or victory.

It was an animal that was intended to speak of relative poverty, but not the king. that's how Jesus is described here of coming into Jerusalem and fulfilled as we read in Matthew's gospel, humble, riding on a donkey.

[23 : 25] So what do we make of this in relation to Jesus? Well, yes, we're seeing here, yes, this is the Lord of Lords, this is the king of kings, but he's come as that humble servant.

Jesus himself said, I'm gentle and humble in heart because Jesus left the splendor, the glory of heaven and he came to earth in human form and Paul wrote of that to the church in Philippi and being found in appearance as a man, he, Jesus, humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.

And when Matthew wrote, we read there in Matthew 20, 21, and he wrote of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. The words that Matthew used were a direct prophecy from Zechariah's prophecy and that fulfillment of that prophecy showing that Jesus was making that most visual of statements about who he is and why he came.

Because he came, he didn't come as a political king. That's not what being the Messiah was about. He wasn't going to bring in some kind of political restoration to Israel getting rid of the Roman occupiers.

No, Jesus came into Jerusalem riding on a donkey to show that he was a man of peace, that he was humble, that he'd come to be alongside his people.

[24 : 55] He'd come to identify with his people. Yes, he came as king, but he came as a servant king. He came to do the will of his father, to be obedient, even obedient unto death, death, and the cross.

And so to see Jesus and to recognize him as the humble servant who's come to serve and give his life, and give his life for many, surely there's a consequence for you who claim Christ as your savior. And surely that's this, that you live a humble life, that you live a humble life of service, that you'll be willing to do, as somebody wrote just the other day, that you'll be willing to stoop down for the sake of others as you care for them and serve them.

Because that's exactly what Jesus did himself, that's exactly what Jesus calls his people to do. We read that, for example, in another section of Matthew's Gospel, Matthew 20, 26 to 28, Jesus speaking these words, but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave.

Then these words, even as, or just as, the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Jesus telling us to be humble even as he was humble.

[26 : 24] And Paul, the Apostle Paul, he echoed these words. You read in Ephesians 5, 2, where Paul commands the church to walk in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Humble service, walk in love as Christ loved us. There's another, one more portion of Scripture, Peter, Peter who knew the love of Jesus, who walked with Jesus on earth, and Peter writing these words in his first letter, chapter 2, verse 21, for to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example so that you might follow in his steps.

This is the royal Jesus, the righteous Jesus, the rescuing Jesus, the humble Jesus. But do you know this Jesus?

Do you follow this Jesus? Do you love this Jesus? And do you do it with all your heart and mind and soul and strength? Or is he just a good man who lived 2,000 years ago, maybe who we might think about maybe, well, occasionally on a Sunday and maybe even twice a year communion time?

But no, he's infinitely of more worth than that, because he's worthy of all praise from hearts that can't but rejoice in knowing the Lord Jesus who came as the royal righteous rescuing humble Jesus.

[27 : 59] So rejoice in your heart and the knowledge of who Jesus is. Do it even for the remainder of this day, this week, this month, this month that's just begun, or this year, because you'll do it, you know, from all eternity, because Jesus has come to save.

And you can rejoice again with the apostle Peter. As we heard, Peter saw Jesus physically. He saw Jesus with his physical eyes.

But Peter called on those who haven't seen Jesus with physical eyes. And he said these words again in his first epistle, chapter 1. Though you have not seen him, you love him.

Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy. That's inexpressible, filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

All because of the king who came, the righteous one, the rescuing one, the humble servant, the humble Jesus. Amen.

[29 : 09] And let us pray. Our Lord, our God, our heavenly Father, you who sent your one and only Son for us, he who came to show forth his glory, his glory as king, who came in all righteousness, who came as that spotless, sacrificial lamb of God, who came to give his life for us, who came in service, who came to bring salvation to his own.

Lord, help us to see Jesus, to see no one else but him, and to serve him with all our heart, to be humble servants of our Savior and Lord.

So hear us, Lord, as we continue in worship before you now. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.