

Psalm Sunday

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Preacher: Rev.Prof. F. Dalrymple-Hamilton

[0 : 00] Greetings of Scripture this morning. The first one is found in Zechariah chapter 9, and there at verses 9 and 10. Zechariah being the second last prophet in the Old Testament.

So if you go to Malachi and look at the one before, you're there. Chapter 9, verses 9 and 10. Verse 9.

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 command peace to the nations.

His dominion shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. And then in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 21, beginning to read it, verse 1.

Matthew 21, verse 1. And when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tied and a colt with her.

[2 : 03] Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, The Lord has need of them, and he will send them immediately.

This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell the daughter of Zion, behold, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass.

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. They brought the ass and the colt, and put their garments on them, and he sat thereon.

Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road, and others cut branches from the trees, and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before him and those that followed him shouted, Hosanna to the son of David!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest! And when he entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, Who is this?

[3 : 13] And the crowd said, This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee. Amen. May the Lord bless those these readings.

May he be to his praise and to his glory. For a short time, to Zechariah chapter 9, verses 9 and 10, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you, triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass.

When we come to look at the book of Zechariah, if a survey was taken as to the least popular books to preach on, this one would come top of the list, because it is difficult to interpret.

Zechariah, along with Haggai and Malachi, ministered to the people of Judah in Jerusalem, after they had returned from the exile in 536.

[4 : 21] Haggai with Zechariah are mentioned together in Ezra chapter 5, verse 1, and are responsible, their ministry that is, for the rebuilding of the temple.

Now this chapter 9 has no date whatsoever, but is simply introduced with a heading that states it is an oracle, the word of the Lord.

And the subject of this chapter is the judgment of the surrounding nations about Israel. So the nations that are detailed, as you'll read there in 9, chapter 9, the land of Hadrach, Damascus and Hamath, Phoenicia and Philistia.

And the result of the judgment is that their cities are laid waste and incorporated into the people of God. And the end of the process is that the Lord will protect his people and cause his king to enter Zion, who will then establish a kingdom of peace over the whole earth.

Firstly, let's think of this. The coming of the king. Lo, your king comes to you.

[5 : 50] The expectation of the coming one is built in to ancient Judaism at this time, and it's also part of Orthodox Judaism today.

They're looking for the coming one. We get it in Isaiah chapter 59. He will come to Zion as Redeemer, and to those in Jacob who turn from transgression, says the Lord.

It's also to be found on the lips of John the Baptist when he was in prison. He sent his disciples to ask Jesus, Are you the coming one, or should we look for another?

And Jesus then goes on to say, You tell John what you have seen and heard. The lepers are cleansed. To the poor the gospel is preached.

The dead are raised. The sick are healed. When we come to Zechariah chapter 9, what is clear is that two comings of Christ are seen together.

[7 : 08] That is his first coming, and then the second coming. He shall reign. His dominion shall be from sea to sea.

So the prophet describes the manner of Christ coming as, Your king comes to you, humble and riding on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass.

And we read there in Matthew's gospel that the disciples went and did as Jesus directed them.

They brought the ass and the colt and put their garments on them, and Jesus sat there on.

As you read the gospel of Matthew, you will find that time and time and time again, he refers to the readings, the prophetic words of the Old Testament, usually with a formula that it might be fulfilled, that which was spoken by the prophet saying, and then follows the quotation.

But there are other aspects of this prophecy that we get in Zechariah 9, 9 and 10 that remain unfulfilled, but will be fulfilled when he turns to this earth as Lord and King of all nations.

[8 : 33] So the two comings of Christ are together in verses 9 and 10 of Zechariah 9. There is just this one word of Old Testament prophecy.

So given that is the case, how does this first coming of Christ affect us this morning as we seek to worship God in spirit and in truth?

It is true that on this occasion that was fulfilled on the first Palm Sunday that Christ came and was acclaimed as the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee.

And so what is being said here is your king comes to you. But there's a very real sense in which that is true this morning.

Jesus Christ is in this service and he comes to you and he comes to me. And the question is how are we going to receive him?

[9 : 46] Now the Gospel of John states this. He came to his own people but his own people did not receive him.

Now this chapter in Matthew 21 is important because it shows the initial reaction of the people.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Some few days later the same people were shouting out crucify him. His own people did not receive him.

But he wore a crown of thorns for you and for me. So the tragedy of that first Palm Sunday is a tragedy of rejection.

And we have to learn from that. When your king comes to you and to me do we still receive him as lord and crown him as king?

[11 : 03] Let's move on. The attributes of the king. Your king comes to you triumphant and victorious is he humble and riding on an ass and on the colt the foal of an ass.

So the manner of his coming is described in these three words triumphant victorious and humble. But the truth is that many of the English versions have actually concealed what is meant by these three words.

And if you want a version that's literal and tells you exactly what the text says the new American standard version is the one that does it. And it translates it like this.

Behold your king is coming to you he is just and endowed with salvation humble and mounted on a donkey.

Now that text tells us that these attributes belong belong to the person of the king rather than to anything external.

[12 : 26] Think of the first one. He is just. This comes from the Hebrew noun zadik meaning just righteous right or correct.

He is the one who is just and righteous in character. Indeed in Peter's sermon in Acts 3 he says this Jesus whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate when he had decided to release him but you denied the holy and the righteous one and asked for a murderer to be granted to you.

And Jesus in his confrontation with the Pharisees said which of you convinces me of sin? He is the just one the one who is completely righteous the one who comes to you as Lord and King. The second term is rendered by the American Standard Version as endowed with salvation. Now this comes from a Hebrew verb yashah.

[13 : 58] Now yashah is the verb that produces the name Joshua. In Hebrew it's hoshiah but Joshua meaning the saviour or the deliverer.

The Greek equivalent is Jesus. That's where it comes from. And so what we find is that the idea of the noun redeemer is never applied to Jesus in the New Testament but the saviour the noun saviour is.

God has brought to Israel a saviour just as he has promised. He is endowed with salvation because of who he is.

He is the saviour. The third term rendered by the American Standard Version is humble. And this comes from a verb which means to be bowed down or humble.

Means to be overwhelmed by want, wretched or humble. for all of who Jesus was and is, he is the personification of humility.

[15 : 30] And when Paul writes to the Philippians, he says this, have this in mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, although he was in the form of God, did not count a quality of God a thing to be grasped after, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

So when we think of the attributes of the King Jesus, we see him as one who is just and righteous, one who is the Savior in all that he does, and one who at the same time is clothed with great humility.

This is the one who came on the first Palm Sunday and the one who comes to us this morning. But there's another truth here, and that's the dominion of the King in verse 10.

His dominion shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. So here is the great hope. Jesus Christ as King will come again and he will rule over all the earth.

Now in Zechariah chapter 14, which we will consider two weeks this evening, the Lord your God will come and all the holy ones with him and the Lord will become king over all the earth.

[17 : 31] The coming one. You find it too in the book of Revelation chapter 11. The seventh angel blew his trumpet and there were loud voices in heaven saying the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.

He shall reign forever and ever. not just the words of a text been incorporated into Handel's great hallelujah chorus king of kings and lord of lords.

But you don't have to wait until the second advent to experiencing Jesus Christ as king. You can experience that right now.

the psalmist he expresses the truth like this. The Lord is king forever and forever. The nation shall perish from his hand.

You get it also in the prophecy of Isaiah. A king will reign in righteousness. In Jeremiah the Lord is the true God he is the living God and the everlasting king.

[18 : 57] But on his first coming Jesus shunned this title. So we read in John 6 perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

And this theme of Jesus and the king or being the king is taken up by Pilate. In the interview he has recorded in John 18 he says are you the king of the Jews?

The accusation is made in Luke 23 verse 2 we found this man perverting our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar saying that he himself is Christ and a king.

From this moment Pilate becomes very interested in this use of the title in reference to Jesus. Since in John 18 and 19 it forms the basis of how he questions Jesus.

Finally it is the case Pilate had a title written in Hebrew Greek and Latin and placed on the cross it read Jesus of Nazareth the king of the Jews.

[20 : 37] And the gospel writers are at pains to show us that Pilate had an inkling of what was going on here. On the one hand there are these religious leaders and he knows from personal experience that they can cause trouble.

Indeed if you were posted to Judea into Jerusalem as the procurator as he was that was the last thing you wanted.

But on the other hand his wife sent to him I have nothing to do with that righteous man for I have suffered much concerning him in a dream.

And so he's caught at a crossroads. And in Matthew's gospel realizing this crossroads he then says what shall I do with Jesus the king of the Jews.

And in this service that is the question that is being asked. The book of Revelation tells us king of kings and lord of lords.

[22 : 04] What does that mean? What does it mean to have Christ as king of your life? It means that you've given up the right to make your own plans your circumstances you're saying he is the king directing your steps.

King of kings. kings and lord of lords. Thomas wasn't there the first time that Jesus appeared to the disciples and refused to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead.

But he was there the second time and Jesus said to him put your hand in my wounds and do not be faithless but believing.

And it's recorded that Thomas said in response to this my lord and my god.

Thank you.