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Rejoice Greatly!

Zechariah 9.9-13

Series: Holy Week 2023

The Village Church

April 2, 2023

I. Palms or Ponies

- A. If ever there was a case of a people doing the very best of things for the very worst of reasons, Palm Sunday was it
- B. Jesus road into Jerusalem on the first day of the week – Sunday
 - 1. Most likely on the day when the lambs were being brought into Jerusalem for the Passover celebration
 - a. The lambs were to be kept for three days and observed for any defects in order to be cleared for the unblemished Passover sacrifice
 - b. And likely there were hundreds of lambs pouring into Jerusalem from the surrounding area
- C. Jesus had arranged for the disciples to acquire a donkey on which to ride (**Matthew 21.1-3**)
 - 1. He had given explicit instructions on where to find the donkey
 - a. The donkey was with its colt – verifying it had not been weaned, and therefore ridden and used as a beast of burden
 - 2. They brought it to Him
 - a. Mounted Him on it
 - b. And into Jerusalem He came
 - 3. Riding in the midst of a multitude of lambs
 - a. Rode the Lamb of God
- D. The people responded by selecting a symbol
 - 1. Matthew says they spread their clothes on the road (**Matthew 21.8**)
 - a. And that they cut down tree branches and laid them down on the road before Jesus
 - 2. John says they were palm branches (**John 12.13**)
 - a. Hence the tradition that we use palm branches
 - b. And celebrate – Palm Sunday
- E. The people rejoiced!
 - 1. Hosanna to the Son of David!
 - 2. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!
 - 3. Hosanna in the highest! (**Matthew 21.9**)
- F. That is the best thing they could have done!
 - 1. Messiah was coming into Jerusalem!
 - a. If there was ever a time to rejoice, this was it!
- G. But the Messiah they expected was not the one they celebrated

1. Because the last time palm branches were used in a celebration like this was when Simon Maccabeus rode into Jerusalem
 - a. He overran the Syrian citadel in Jerusalem
 - b. Throwing out the Gentile foreigners
 - c. And exerting full Judean control over the region
2. He was hailed then as a Messiah figure
 - a. Regaled with shouts of Hosanna and the profligate distribution of palm branches
- H. So when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, they took Him to be the next military conqueror
 1. The next Simon the Maccabee
 - a. The One who would expel the infidel occupiers – the hated Romans
- I. So palm branches were the chosen symbol of the people
 1. They did the very best thing they could
 - a. They celebrated, rejoiced over the entrance of the King!
 2. But they did it for the worst of reasons
 - a. The true King was coming
 - b. But not as a military conqueror; not to reestablish the Judean kingdom
- J. Jesus chose another symbol
 1. He did not choose a palm branch
 - a. He chose a young donkey
 2. Military conquerors rode into the vanquished cities on horses, not donkeys
 - a. Jesus chose a donkey
- K. Matthew – eventually at least – understood that
 1. He made the connection
 2. **Matthew 21:4–5** (NKJV) —
 - a. 4 All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:
 - b. 5 “Tell the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.’ ”
- L. Why, then, don’t we call it “Donkey Sunday”

II. Text

- A. **Zechariah 9:9–13** (NKJV) —
 1. 9 “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
 2. Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
 3. Behold, your King is coming to you;
 4. He is just and having salvation,
 5. Lowly and riding on a donkey,
 6. A colt, the foal of a donkey.
 7. 10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off.
 8. He shall speak peace to the nations;

9. His dominion shall be ‘from sea to sea,
 10. And from the River to the ends of the earth.’
 11. 11 “As for you also, Because of the blood of your covenant,
 12. I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.
 13. 12 Return to the stronghold, You prisoners of hope.
 14. Even today I declare That I will restore double to you.
 15. 13 For I have bent Judah, My bow, Fitted the bow with Ephraim,
 16. And raised up your sons, O Zion, Against your sons, O Greece,
 17. And made you like the sword of a mighty man.”
- B. And as we unpack this text we will see that we have even more reasons to celebrate the coming of this King, our Messiah, than the Jews could ever dream of in Jerusalem on that day

III. The Effusiveness of Praise

- A. Zechariah 9:9 (NKJV) —
1. 9 “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
 2. Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!...
- B. This is effusive praise; uninhibited celebration!
1. Holy exuberance
 2. This is storm the court when your number 15 seed defeats a number 1 seed!
- C. How does our praise of the Holy One stack up that kind of holy exuberance?
1. I’m afraid we’re much too timid in our praise; much too restrained
 - a. We’re afraid of being labeled fanatics
 2. Of course, in our culture it’s ok to be labeled a fanatic when you’re with 15,000 other fanatics in a basketball arena
 - a. But this is church!
- D. But listen to the prophet
1. Rejoice!
 - a. But how?
 2. Greatly!
 - a. With strength and power – that’s the meaning of the word
 3. And then, Shout!
 - a. Really?
 - b. Yes, really!
 4. This Messiah deserves such praise
 - a. Why?

IV. Your King is Coming!

- A. He’s *your* King!
1. We’ve heard such dismal and destruction rhetoric in the political arena in recent years
 - a. “Well, he’s not *my* president”
 - b. That was said by the opposite partisans in both of the last two administrations

- c. Truth be told, yes, whoever it is, he is *your* president – even if you didn’t vote for him
 - d. Because he’s the president of these United States of America
 - 2. But in this case – if you are a believer in Jesus – this indeed is *your* King
 - a. He’s the One you’ve been waiting for; longing for
 - b. He’s the King God promised in the line of David
 - c. He’s the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant
 - 3. **Zechariah 9:9** (NKJV) — 9 ... Behold, your King is coming to you...
 - a. Not some foreign conqueror
 - b. Not some infidel imposing their satanic will on you
 - c. No! Your king; the One who is the great object of your greatest hopes and desires
 - 4. Why such great hopes in this King?
 - a. Well, just listen to what the text says about Him!
- B. **The Just King**
 - 1. **Zechariah 9:9** (NKJV) —
 - a. 9 “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
 - b. Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just ...
 - 2. Our King is just – righteous
 - a. And that is something that can’t be said about any human ruler before or since
 - b. No king has been just
 - c. No president has been just
 - 3. In fact, it’s hard to remember a president in my lifetime who hasn’t been scandalized or accused of something
 - a. And even if they haven’t, no administration has been truly righteous
 - b. Not like this King
 - 4. He is the just King, the righteous King
- C. **The Saving King**
 - 1. **Zechariah 9:9** (NKJV) —
 - a. 9 “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
 - b. Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
 - c. Behold, your King is coming to you;
 - d. He is just and having salvation...
 - 2. This King has come to save!
 - a. Not a city from an oppressive occupier like Rome
 - b. But a people from their slavery in sin!
 - c. An even worse and more oppressive occupier of our souls!
 - 3. Jesus, the Messiah, came to “save His people from their sins” (**Matthew 1.21**)
 - 4. We rejoice greatly, we shout
 - a. Because His is the Saving King
- D. **The Humble King**

1. **Zechariah 9:9** (NKJV) —
 - a. 9 “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
 - b. Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
 - c. Behold, your King is coming to you;
 - d. He is just and having salvation,
 - e. Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.
2. Jesus’ chosen symbol – a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey
 - a. Not a horse
 - b. Not palms to lay down honoring the conqueror
3. But One whose character is meek and humble
4. **Matthew 11:28–30** (NKJV) —
 - a. 28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
 - b. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me,
 - c. for I am gentle and lowly in heart,
 - d. and you will find rest for your souls.
 - e. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”
5. What king is like that? What president is like that?
6. But your King is like that; our King is like that!
7. We rejoice, we shout
 - a. Because our King has come
 - b. And He is a humble King

E. **The King of Peace**

1. **Zechariah 9:10** (NKJV) —
 - a. 10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
 - b. And the horse from Jerusalem;
 - c. The battle bow shall be cut off.
 - d. He shall speak peace to the nations...
2. Under this King, under His reign, there will be no more need for the weapons of war for the people of God
 - a. Ephraim – one of the sons of Joseph; a prominent tribe of Israel, came to represent the northern tribes
 - b. Jerusalem – the capital of Judah; represented the southern tribes
 - c. The divided people of God would finally find themselves united
 - d. No longer fighting each other
3. But even more – fighting no one else, either
 - a. For this King, your King, “shall speak peace to the nations”
4. This coming King is the King of peace
5. **John 14:27** (NKJV) —
 - a. 27 Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.
6. No earthly ruler can give the peace that Messiah Jesus gives
 - a. Pax Romana – enforced peace; military suppressing any conflict or uprising

- b. Only Messiah Jesus can give the peace that passes understanding
 - c. Give peace even in the midst of turbulent times of cultural upheaval – as we are in now
- 7. Remember Melchizedek?
 - a. From Genesis 14 – priest of God Most High
 - b. To whom Abraham gave a tithe following his conquest of the kings who had overrun his nephew Lot's territory
 - c. Hebrews identifies him as a type of Messiah Jesus
- 8. **Hebrews 7:2** (NKJV) — 2 ... first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,”...
- 9. We've already seen in this Zechariah text, our King is the king of righteousness
 - a. Now He's identified as the King of Peace!
- 10. We rejoice greatly because He is the King of Peace!
- F. **The King of the Nations**
 - 1. **Zechariah 9:10** (NKJV) —
 - a. 10 ... 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.'
 - 2. **Isaiah 49:6** (NKJV) —
 - a. 6 Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel;
 - b. I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.' ”
 - 3. Your King, our King, is no parochial king; no regional monarch; no city-state potentate
 - a. There is no end to His Kingdom; no boundary to His territory
 - 4. We rejoice greatly because He is the King of the Nations
- G. **The Covenant King**
 - 1. The King who fulfills the covenant of grace – in all of its dimensions
 - a. The Abraham covenant which promises, not just land, but to be a blessing to all nations; and through whose seed would come Messiah
 - b. The Davidic covenant which promises a perpetual and eternal Kingdom of righteousness and peace
 - c. The New covenant which promises, through the Spirit of God, the personal transformation of everyone who would ever believe in Messiah Jesus
 - 2. **Zechariah 9:11** (NKJV) —
 - a. 11 “As for you also, Because of the blood of your covenant,
 - b. I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.
 - 3. Messiah Jesus, King Jesus, fulfilled that in His death on the cross on our behalf
 - a. “This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is poured out for you” (**1 Corinthians 11.25, Luke 22.20**)

4. God keeps His promises – the only true Promise Keeper
 - a. Your King is the Covenant King
- H. **The Victorious King**
1. **Zechariah 9:13** (NKJV) —
 - a. 13 For I have bent Judah, My bow,
 - b. Fitted the bow with Ephraim,
 - c. And raised up your sons, O Zion,
 - d. Against your sons, O Greece,
 - e. And made you like the sword of a mighty man.”
 2. This may seem to contradict the part about the King of Peace
 - a. Here we see God making Judah and Ephraim into weapons of war
 - b. But we see the fulfillment in the New Testament
 - c. The people of God, the Church, has it’s own weapons
 - d. The armor of God
 - e. The Word of God
 - f. The prayers of God’s people
 3. Which are arrayed against every stronghold
 - a. **2 Corinthians 10:4** (NKJV) — 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds...
 4. So that ultimately the Church of Jesus Christ will prevail
 - a. **Matthew 16:18** (NKJV) — 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
 - b. **Romans 8:37** (NKJV) — 37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.
 5. Your King, our King is the Victorious King
 6. We rejoice greatly because He is the Victorious King

- V. **The Message of Hope**
- A. All of this leads us to “rejoice in the hope of the glory of God” (**Romans 5.2**)
 - B. **Zechariah 9:12** (NKJV) —
 1. 12 Return to the stronghold,
 2. You prisoners of hope.
 3. Even today I declare
 4. That I will restore double to you.
 - C. Our glorious celebration on this Palm Sunday is meant for a hopeful people
 1. Maybe your not hopeful today
 - a. With the way the world appears to be going
 - D. But Your King, our King, has come
 1. The Just King
 2. The Saving King
 3. The Humble King
 4. The King of Peace
 5. The King of the Nations
 6. The Covenant King

- 7. The Victorious King
 - E. How can you not be a people of hope with a King like that?
 - F. We are building a community of forgiveness, purpose and *hope* in Jesus Christ
 - 1. That's who we are
 - G. Because we have such a King!
 - H. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
 - 1. Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
- VI. When Handel wrote the Messiah, he wrote one particularly effusive song of praise, one exuberant song
- A. And it is this very text
 - B. You may still have a hard time breaking through the glass ceiling of exuberant praise
 - 1. So I'm going to ask Jean to rejoice greatly for us all
 - 2. Please join in spirit as she sings this text