

The Coming King

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, this evening with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read in the book of the prophet Zechariah and chapter 9.

Zechariah chapter 9, and if we read again at verse 9. Zechariah 9 and verse 9. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem.

Behold, your king is coming to you, righteous and having salvation as he, humbled and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

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 speak peace to the nations. His rule shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.

And so on. You know, as we continue coping with COVID and witnessing the race between the virus and the vaccine and learning to look and live beyond lockdown, needless to say, all that's happened over the past 18 months has had an impact upon us.

[1 : 21] Because whether we want to admit it or not, living according to all these rules and regulations and restrictions, it has affected us. It has affected our relationships and our responsibilities.

It has left us feeling distant and sometimes detached. It has caused us to become maybe insular and introverted. It has made us also lethargic and in some cases lazy.

Maybe you don't feel like that at all, but you know, sometimes that's the way I feel. We also know that the past 18 months has had an impact upon our mental health.

But for most of us, it has left us feeling flat. It has left us feeling flat. Whereas we learn to look and live beyond lockdown, we do so feeling that we're learning to look and live just in limbo.

Because things haven't gone back to the way they were. Things haven't gone back to normal. And we're all trying to adjust to this new normal. And yet this funny feeling of flatness, it has made us all feel, or myself anyway, it has made us all feel apathetic and absent, indifferent and isolated, worn and weary, lazy and lethargic.

[2 : 43] But you know, what's remarkable is that as we turn to Zechariah chapter 9 this evening, we see that the Lord's people living and looking beyond lockdown in Babylon, they had the same or similar feelings of flatness when they were living in their day and generation.

They had those feelings of flatness, leaving them feeling apathetic and absent, indifferent and isolated, worn and weary, lazy and lethargic. And as the Lord's people learning to live and look beyond lockdown in Babylon, they had all these feelings of flatness.

And what they were encouraged to do, and what we're being encouraged to do this evening, is look to the coming King.

Look to the coming King. That's what we're being encouraged to do. Look to the coming King. And you know, Zechariah chapter 9, it's neatly split into two sections, with verses 1 to 8, emphasizing the authority of the King, and verses 9 to 14, drawing attention to the arrival of the King.

And there are our two headings this evening, the authority of the King, and the arrival of the King. The authority of the King, and the arrival of the King.

[4 : 04] So first of all, the authority of the King. Now we'll just read again from verse 1. The oracle of the word of the Lord is against the hand of Hadrach, and Damascus is its resting place.

For the Lord has an eye on mankind, and on all the tribes of Israel. Now as we've discovered in our study of the book of Zechariah, alongside his colleague and contemporary Haggai, the prophet Zechariah, he was called, commissioned, and commanded to comfort and challenge God's people with God's word, as they began living and looking beyond lockdown.

The Israelites, as you know, they had spent 70 years in lockdown in Babylon, due to the rebellion and rejection of the Lord. But by God's grace, this returned remnant, they came back to the promised land of Israel, to rebuild and restore and renew and rededicate their lives to the Lord. And as we saw in chapters 1 to 6, the Lord spoke to this returned remnant through eight nighttime visions. And these eight visions from Zechariah, they were to remind and reassure this returned remnant that even though they were still unsettled and uncertain and unsure about their future, the Lord was still with them.

Then as we went into chapter 7, the returned remnant, they had a question about fasting. But as we saw, what was remarkable about that chapter was that the Lord turned the question about fasting into a lesson about covenant commitment, where the Lord asked the returned remnant, are you committed to the Lord?

[5 : 53] Are you committed to me? Do you have covenant commitment? But the reason the Lord asked this returned remnant about their covenant commitment was because in chapter 8, the Lord declared his covenant commitment towards this returned remnant.

The Lord emphasized that he's committed to his covenant people. He's committed to his covenant promise. And he's committed because the Lord is the covenant king.

He's a covenant making and a covenant keeping God. But now as we move on into Zechariah chapter 9 and the following chapters, this forms the second half of the book of Zechariah.

And when it comes to the book of Zechariah, many people consider the second half of the book to be the better half. Because there aren't so many unusual visions as there is in the first half of the book.

They would say that the second half is more Christ-centered than the first half. And we're becoming familiar with the terms of first half and second half with so much football on the TV at the moment.

[7 : 07] But you know, what we need to understand about the second half of the book of Zechariah is that it was written 15 to 20 years after the temple had been completed.

Now you remember that this return remnant who were now living and looking beyond lockdown in Babylon, they had returned in the year 537 BC.

And you remember that they returned with excitement and enthusiasm and eagerness to get to work and to clear the rubble and restart the restoration project of rebuilding the temple.

But what happened was that the return remnant, they ran into problems. And they left the temple. It was lying derelict and desolate for 15 years.

That was until the prophet Haggai, he issued a call to rebuild in August 520 BC. The work on rebuilding and restoring the temple then began the following month on the 21st of September, 520 BC.

[8 : 09] Zechariah then followed with a command to repent in November of that same year, 520 BC. Then three months later, on the 15th of February, 519 BC, which was five months into the restoration project of the temple, that was when Zechariah received his eight nighttime visions.

And then just over four years later, on the 12th of March, 515 BC, the returned remnant, they finally rebuilt, restored, renewed, and rededicated the temple to the Lord.

But now as we come into the second half of the book of Zechariah, which, as we said, it was written about 15 or 20 years later or after the temple had been completed, we see that the year is now around 500 BC.

But what makes dating the second half of the book of Zechariah more difficult is that there are no reference points. There's no mention of King Darius in the second half of the book.

He's mentioned many times in the first half and we're told what year he was reigning. And these are all reference points. But now we come into the second half, it's a lot more vague as to the years, what's happening.

[9 : 33] But we know from history that at this point, the temple is now complete. And the return remnant, they have been back in the promised land of Israel for the past 35 years.

But the walls of the city of Jerusalem, they're still in ruins. And they'll remain in ruins for another 40 to 60 years until Ezra and Nehemiah arrive on the scene.

And you know, for this return remnant, the temple may have been rebuilt and rededicated to the Lord, but things weren't back to normal yet. Things weren't back to the way they were before lockdown.

Because the glory of the Lord hadn't returned to the temple. The walls of the city of Jerusalem, they were still in ruins. And this people, they were now becoming restless.

And because of this, they had these feelings of flatness. They had feelings of flatness. Things weren't the way they were. They hadn't gone back to normal. And they're becoming restless and feeling flat.

[10 : 43] And it leaves them feeling apathetic and absent. Indifferent and isolated. Worn and weary. Insular and introverted. Distant and detached. Lazy and lethargic.

And as they're learning to live and look beyond lockdown, they have all these feelings of flatness. But you know what I love about the second half of the book of Zechariah?

Is that when the Lord speaks to his people, you know, the prophetic word from the Lord through his prophet, it's not a call to rebuild. And it's not a call to repent. It's a call to reassure.

A call to reassure. Zechariah, my friend, he was to reassure the Lord's people that the King is coming. The King is coming.

My friend, the Lord issued a call to reassure his people saying, you need to remain steadfast in the silence because the King is coming. You need to remain steadfast in the silence because the King is coming.

[11 : 48] And you know, that's the message we need to hear tonight too. Because even though our church may only be open for the morning service on the Lord's day, and even though we're now able to see one another and gather together, although it's with a two meter distance from one another, and even though we're permitted to sing behind masks, as you know, it's still not the same.

It's not like it once was. Things haven't gone back to normal yet. It's not the way we once enjoyed it before lockdown. And like it was for this returned remnant, things haven't got back to normal yet.

Yes, it's great to see one another. And it's good to be together. And it's good to sing together again. But I don't know about you, but there's still this feeling of flatness.

This feeling of flatness. Now, I know that we should never go on feelings. Because as the German reformer Martin Luther, as he reminds us, feelings come and feelings go, and feelings are deceiving.

He says, My warrant is the word of God. Not else is worth believing. We can't go on feelings. But you know, when we feel flat, and when we feel that the Lord is silent, and we feel that we can't feel his presence, or we feel that he's not speaking to us directly, or even as we learn to live and look beyond lockdown, and this, what we've called the new normal, you know, what can happen, like it did with this returned remnant, is that we can become apathetic and absent in our attendance in church.

[13 : 32] We can become indifferent and isolated from individuals. We can become worn and weary in our worship and in our witness. We can become distant and detached from other disciples.

We can become lazy and lethargic and lukewarm in our love for the Lord. We can become careless and casual in our commitment to our King. But you know, my Christian friend, we need to remember, in all these things, the world is watching, and the witnesses are watching.

And they can see when there's a contradiction in our confession. They can see when we're everywhere during the week, but living in lockdown on the Lord's Day.

They can see how we live in freedom Monday to Friday. We're super busy on Saturday, but, oh, we're living in lockdown on the Lord's Day.

They can see when we're apathetic and absent in our attendance to church. They can see when we're indifferent and isolated from individuals. They can see when we're worn and weary about our worship and our witness.

[14 : 44] They can see when we're distant and detached from other disciples. They can see when we're lazy, lethargic, and lukewarm in our love for the Lord. They can see when we've become careless and even casual in our commitment to our King.

My friends, sometimes when we feel flat and we feel that the Lord is silent, rather than becoming restless, we need to be steadfast in the silence.

We need to remain faithful during those feelings of flatness because, as the Lord reminded His people in this passage, the King is coming. The King is coming.

And you know, that's what Martin Luther sought to emphasize when he said, feelings come and feelings go and feelings are deceiving. My warrant is the word of God.

Not else is worth believing. And Luther emphasized this because he went on to say, though all my heart should feel condemned for want of some sweet token, there is one greater than my heart whose word cannot be broken.

[15 : 51] I'll trust in God's unchanging word till soul and body sever. For though all things should pass away, His word shall stand forever.

And you know, that's Zechariah's message for us tonight. Remain steadfast in the silence and remain faithful during those feelings of flatness because the King is coming.

The King is coming. Remain steadfast in the silence and remain faithful during all those feelings of flatness because the King is coming.

And you know, the thing about this coming King is that He has all authority in heaven and on earth. And you know, we see that being expressed in the opening verses of this chapter because Zechariah, he explains what will happen to all these different cities in Israel, Gentile cities in Israel. You know, in the first half of this chapter, Zechariah describes the authority of the coming King. Of course, the coming King is King Jesus. He is the Lord of hosts which Zechariah, he has been describing him throughout his prophetic book.

[17 : 09] He's the one who was on the red horse among the myrtle trees. He's the Lord. He's the Lord of hosts. He's the Lord of the armies. He's the one who keeps covenant.

He's the covenant King. He's the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God. He's the Lord Jesus Christ. But you know, as our catechism reminds us, Christ our Redeemer, he executes his office of a King by subduing us to himself, by ruling and defending us, and by restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

And that's what we see happening in the first half of this chapter. The coming King, he comes to rule and restrain all his and our enemies, and he does it with authority.

He does it with authority. You know, in verses 1 to 4, Zechariah, he draws attention to the Gentile cities that are in the northern kingdom.

And he just names a few. Hadraf, Hamath, Damascus, Tyre, and Sidon. And we're told in verse 4, but behold, the Lord will strip her of her possessions and strike down her power on the sea and she shall be devoured by fire.

[18 : 29] Then in verses 5 to 8, Zechariah mentions more Gentile cities, but this time from the southern kingdom of Judah. And he mentions Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, Ashdod, and Philistia.

And the Lord says through his prophet in verse 8, I will encamp at my house as a guard so that none shall march to and fro.

No oppressor shall again march over them for now I see with my own eyes. You know, many people, they assume that this prophecy from the lips of Zechariah was actually fulfilled 150 years later around 356 BC.

And they believe it was fulfilled because that was the time when Alexander the Great, he extended his empire from Greece all the way to the border of India. It's said that Zechariah's description here, it closely corresponds with what Alexander the Great did to these cities in the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel.

But of course, there's no doubt that what the Lord did through Alexander the Great is just what he did with the kings like Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus and Darius.

[19 : 50] There's no doubt that the Lord used Alexander the Great as an instrument in order to bring to pass his perfect plan and purpose. But you know, my friend, this prophecy could only be fulfilled by the coming king because in verse 8, there's a promise of protection for the people.

There's a promise of protection. It says, then I will encamp at my house as a guard so that none shall march to and fro.

No oppressor shall again march over them for now I see with my own eyes. What we need to note there is that the Lord's house isn't the restored and renewed temple.

The Lord's house in verse 8 is the church. And what the Lord was promising this returned remnant who were living and looking beyond lockdown, what he was promising then was that the coming king, Christ our Redeemer, he will execute his office as a king by protecting his church.

But more than that, he will sovereignly subdue all these Gentile nations, these Gentile cities, these Gentile regions in the northern and southern kingdom of Israel and he will bring them all under his authority.

[21 : 14] He will bring them all under his rule and his reign and he will do it from Jerusalem, from my house. He will do it beginning at Jerusalem.

It's all about his church. You know, is that what Jesus said? I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And that church, said Jesus, it will be built beginning at Jerusalem and it will spread out to Judea, the northern and southern kingdoms and on into Samaria and on further and further to the uttermost parts of the earth.

And tonight in Barbos, my friend, and beyond, the church of Jesus Christ is still being built because he, the king, is sovereignly subduing all his and our enemies and he's bringing them under his authority.

He is bringing sinners to their knees. He's bringing sinners to see their need of a saviour. Our king, my friend, he is one who is sovereignly subduing all his and our enemies.

But you know, as we see in the second half of this chapter, the authority of the king, it all began with the arrival of the king. The authority of the king began with the arrival of the king.

[22 : 41] And that's what we see secondly, the arrival of the king. So, the authority of the king and the arrival of the king. The arrival of the king. Look at verse 9.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king is coming to you. Righteous and having salvation is he.

Humble and mounted on a donkey on a colt, the foal of a donkey. You know, next to Isaiah 53 and its description of the suffering servant, this verse in Zechariah chapter 9 verse 9 it's one of the most well-known prophecies in the Old Testament.

And as you know, it's quoted in Matthew chapter 21 and it was quoted on the day that our calendar now refers to as Palm Sunday.

It's the day on which this verse, which was prophesied 500 years earlier, it was finally fulfilled when Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem riding on a colt.

[23 : 50] And you'll remember on the first Palm Sunday, there were crowds of people and they were all lining the road towards Jerusalem and they were spreading their cloaks on the road and they were spreading palm branches on the road and the crowds were going before Jesus and they were following behind Jesus and they were all singing Hosanna, which means saviour or salvation.

they were singing Hosanna, Hosanna to the son of David, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest.

And on the first Palm Sunday in Jerusalem, the crowds were singing, the crowds were rejoicing at the arrival of the king. The king has come, the king has come, they were saying, he was a king of righteousness, he was a Melchizedek, a king of righteousness, but he's also a king of salvation because he's called Hosanna, he's called Jesus.

He was called Hosanna or Jesus or salvation because he was the king who had arrived with salvation and he had come to save his people from their sins.

He was the son of man who came to seek and to save the lost and they're all saying, the king has come, Hosanna, the king is here. But more than that, he was not only the king of righteousness and a king of salvation, he was also a king of peace.

[25 : 20] And that's why the arrival of the king was on a colt. Because when a king rode into a city on horseback, it was a symbol of war.

The king is arriving to bring war. But when the king rode into the city on the back of a donkey, it symbolized peace. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.

Shout aloud, O 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 that's what the arrival of this coming king was all about. The king, King Jesus, he was going to rule with righteousness. He was going to secure salvation for sinners.

He was going to provide peace for his people. And he was going to do it not by an act of exaltation. No, it was by an act of humiliation.

[26 : 21] It was going to be an act of humiliation. But you know, this daughter of Zion that's mentioned here in verse 9, or this daughter of Jerusalem, which refers to the return remnant, they had failed to see that this was an act of humiliation.

because for many years, right up until the time of the disciples, the disciples for many years, they couldn't understand what Jesus was talking about because the Jews thought that this coming king was going to be a conquering king.

They thought he was going to be a warrior king, just like his descendant, King David. They thought that the coming king was going to come and overthrow the oppression of all these empires that have been ruling and reigning over them for centuries.

They thought that the coming king would finally sit upon the throne of King David in the city of Jerusalem, which was the city of King David. They thought that this coming king was going to have an earthly king, be an earthly king with an earthly kingdom and political powers.

They thought that this king was coming to bring war, but he was coming to bring peace. The crowd, the crowds, they were singing for the wrong reason.

[27 : 41] They were singing for the wrong reason. They thought that the coming king was going to rule with righteousness and secure salvation for sinners and provide peace for his people.

They thought he was going to do it by an act of exaltation, not by an act of humiliation. But as you know, this coming king, he wasn't going up.

When he entered Jerusalem, he was going down. He was going down, down, down, because he had come from the crown to the cradle, to the cross.

The coming king was going to rule with righteousness. He was going to secure salvation for sinners. He was going to provide peace for his people, not by his exaltation, but by his humiliation, by his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross.

This coming king, my friend, he was going to establish his kingdom, not by force, but by his faithful obedience to his father's will. And as we read in the following verses, the coming king will speak peace to the nations of the world.

[29 : 00] His rule shall be, we're told, from sea to sea, and from the river in the north down to the ends of the earth. His rule, we're told, is from east to west, and from north to south.

He will set the captives free. He will give hope to the prisoner, we're told. He will protect his people. He will defend his people. And the coming king says that he will do it all because of the blood of my covenant with you.

He will do it all because of the blood of my covenant with you. Of course, by reading that with our New Testament spectacles on, we know that the blood of the covenant refers to the blood of Jesus Christ, who in that spiritual sense, he entered once into the most holy place, not by the blood of bulls or of goats, but by his own blood, securing an eternal redemption for us.

And even when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, you remember what he said, this cup, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. My friend, the coming king was going to rule with righteousness.

He was going to secure salvation for sinners. He was going to provide peace for his people through the blood of his covenant. And as Zechariah says in the closing verses of this chapter, he says, on that day, the Lord their God will save them.

[30 : 36] He will save them as the flock of his people. For like the jewels of a crown, they shall shine on his land. For how great is his goodness, and how great his beauty, grain shall make the young men flourish, and you wine the young woman.

For like the jewels of a crown, they shall shine on his land. And you know, my friend, for a people who were learning to live and look beyond lockdown, and for a people who had this funny feeling of flatness, because things weren't back to normal yet.

Do you know Zechariah's prophecy here? It was, it gave to them a very exciting and a very encouraging prospect. It reminded them to remain faithful.

Remain faithful, because the king is coming. The king is coming. And you know, we know, we know that the king, the coming king, came.

We know that the coming king came, and he faithfully fulfilled this prophecy and many others. But as we said, this prophecy about the authority of the king, it began with the arrival of the king.

[31 : 57] It began when he arrived in Jerusalem, riding on a colt, on Palm Sunday, which, as you know, it was an important week, because it was the final week of the life and ministry, of Jesus.

And you know, when you read it in the Gospels, from one Sunday to the next, everything changed. From one Sunday to the next, everything changed.

And it changed not only in the experience of Jesus, but also in the experience of this whole world.

Because from one Sunday to the next, in one week of history, this world changed.

because the hope of salvation came to lost and broken sinners like you and me. You know, you read it in the Gospels, we see on Sunday afternoon, on Palm Sunday, Jesus, he entered Jerusalem riding on a colt.

And everyone is there singing Hosanna. They're all singing Hosanna. and then on Monday and Tuesday, Jesus is teaching in the temple and he's facing opposition.

[33 : 11] By Wednesday, you have Judas and he's planning to betray Jesus. On Thursday night, Judas betrayed Jesus and then the disciples all deserted him.

In the early hours of Friday morning, Peter is denying Jesus. And Jesus is brought before Pilate and he's mocked and beaten and given a crown of thorns.

And what's remarkable is that the crowd who were singing Hosanna on Sunday, they were shouting crucify him, crucify him, by Friday.

And they got what they wanted. Because at 9am on Friday morning, Jesus was crucified at Calvary between two criminals. At noon, the light of the world, it was distinguished and became dark as he bore our sin in his own body.

At 3pm, Jesus cried, it is finished. It is finished. And then later that evening, the body of Jesus was buried in a borrowed grave.

[34 : 20] Jesus had a funeral service with only two people present. On Saturday, it was the Jewish Sabbath, the day of rest. rest. And then on the following Sunday, there were women standing at the empty tomb with an angel saying to them, he is not here, for he is risen.

He is not here, for he is risen. Do you know, from one Sunday to the next, everything changed. This world changed.

This world as we know it, it completely changed because salvation came into the world. Hope was born through the cross of Jesus Christ.

Sin was dealt with. Death was defeated. The grave was conquered from one Sunday to the next.

But you know, it should also be a reminder to us that from this Sunday to next Sunday.

We don't know what will change in our lives. Who knows what this week ahead will bring for any of us? Who knows what we will be facing by next Lord's Day?

[35 : 39] The Lord knows. Of course, this King knows. That's why, my friend, that's why we always encourage you.

that's why we always urge you to trust this King with your life, but also to trust him with your death.

We don't know what will happen from one Lord's Day to the next, one Sunday to the next. But we're asking you to trust him with all your heart.

Trust him with your life. Trust him with your death. my friend, the coming King came. But the coming King, he is coming again.

And that's what this passage is encouraging us with. He is coming again. He will vindicate his people. He will bring victory because he has won the victory.

[36 : 40] He's coming again. Therefore, we need to be ready. Therefore, says Jesus, be ye also ready. For at an hour when you think not, the Son of Man will come.

My friend, the coming King came. And the coming King is coming again. So you make sure you are ready. You make sure you are ready when he comes.

Because he is coming. The King is coming. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to thee for the hope that thy word gives to us.

That every promise that is in thy word, the promises of the Old Testament, that they are all yea and amen in Christ, that they have been fulfilled in thy Son, Jesus.

and even the promises of the New Testament that are yet to be fulfilled, that they have the assurance and they come with the assurance that they will be fulfilled by this King.

[37 : 55] This King will not leave one jot or tittle left undone, but that he will work all things together for good to those who are the called according to his purpose.

Help us then, we pray to trust this King, to trust him, to live for him, to trust him with our life, to trust him with our death, to trust him knowing that he knows the way that we take and that when he has tried us, we shall come forth as gold.

Oh Lord, bless us in the week that lies ahead, a week that we know is unknown to us, but known to our King, our King who is sovereign, our King who is supreme, our King who is doing all things well.

Help us then, we pray, to submit to him, to surrender to him, to live lives that seek to bring glory to his name. Go before us, we pray, keep us, we ask, for we ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake.

Amen. Well, we're going to bring our service to our conclusion this evening by singing the words of Psalm 118. Psalm 118 in the Scottish Psalter version, we're singing from verse 16 down to the verse marked 21.

[39 : 16] Psalm 118 and verse 16. The right hand of the mighty Lord, exalted is on high. The right hand of the mighty Lord doth ever valiantly.

I shall not die but live, and shall the works of God discover. The Lord hath me chastised sore, but not to death given over.

We'll sing on down to the verse marked 21 of Psalm 118 to God's praise. The right Christ.

The right hand of the mighty Lord, exalted is on high.

The right hand of the mighty Lord, the Lord, exalted will ever valiantly.

[40 : 21] I shall not die but live, and shall the worst of God discover.

The Lord trans and Come to me, there is all righteousness, then will I enter into them, and I the Lord will bless.

This is the gate of God by it, the just shall enter in.

Thee will I praise, for thou be first, and thou hast my safety be.

Thee will I praise, for thou be first, and thou hast my safety be.