

Jesus' Triumphal Entry Palm Sunday

Luke 19:29-44
Zechariah 9:9-10

The Old Testament Background

Coming of the King to Jerusalem, Zechariah 9:9-10

The King is presented entering the city of Jerusalem in triumph. This vision has a twofold fulfillment. In the shorter term it is fulfilled in the first coming of Christ, but in the long term it also includes the Second Coming of Jesus and the Millennial Kingdom. Matthew quoted these verses from Zechariah in 21:1-5, in his account of Jesus' triumphal entry. He came to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, exactly one week before His resurrection. The text may also be found in Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; and John 12:12-19. What has been called His "triumphal entry" was really Jesus' "triumphal exit" as confirmed by Luke 9:30. It was a foregleam of His future second coming which will be His real triumphal entry when every knee shall bow before Him, Phil 2:10. In His first coming He came as the suffering servant, Isa 52:13-53:12, to die for the sins of all. The second time He will come as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Rev 19:11-16. Both of these prophecies are blended into one in this word from Zechariah.

In Zechariah we are introduced to the coming King in 9:9-17. Verses 9-10 present seven characteristics of the coming King.

Seven Characteristics of the Coming King

1. Messiah's coming will be cause for rejoicing, v. 9a - Set in the context of the conquests of Alexander the Great who was ruthless and sometimes despotic, the announcement of the coming King, the Messiah, begins with an outburst of joy and reemphasizes the prophet's earlier words of 2:10. This is very similar to the message of Zephaniah (3:14-20, esp. vv. 14-15) in 625 BC, who wrote about a hundred years before Zechariah's prophecy. In fact the whole passage in Zephaniah is a wonderful parallel to Zechariah chapters 8 and 9.
2. Messiah's coming will fulfill God's promises, v. 9b. Zechariah declared, "Behold your king is coming to you!" This declaration planted the seeds of God's promise so both Matthew and John declared, "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,'" (Matt 21:5), and "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is

coming, sitting on a donkey's colt," John 12:15. This allowed Jesus to clearly be identified as the Messiah. This is so much true that Paul declared in 2 Cor 1:20, "For all the promises of God in Him *are* Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us."

3. Messiah's coming will inaugurate His reign of righteousness, v. 9c - Here the word sometimes translated "justice," is actually צְדִיק *tsaddiq*, which means "righteousness," one declared innocent or guiltless. Since He is צְדִיק, He will be able to inaugurate a kingdom that will reflect His character. So, the result will be a reign of righteousness in a righteous kingdom where everyone does the right things.
4. Messiah's coming will bring the "endowment" of His salvation, v. 9d. Use of the passive form וְנוֹשָׂע, *wenosha* here connotes "having salvation," NKJ, but the passive form is closer in meaning to the NAS "endowed with salvation." It is reminiscent of the message of the angel who said to Joseph, "You shall call His name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins," Matt 1:21. Even before His birth God made clear that the purpose of His coming was to bring His endowment of salvation to the lost, Luke 19:10.
5. Messiah's coming will be in humility, 9d. Actually the word אָנִי *ani*, tells us that He will experience the humility of affliction. He was brought low in bearing the cross by being subject to suffering as a criminal, that He might take upon Himself our sins and nail them to the cross, Col 2:14; 2 Cor 5:21. He endured the shame of the cross that He might enable us to experience forgiveness and salvation, Heb 12:2.

He did not come on a white steed of the conqueror, but on the back of a donkey. This prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus' so-called "triumphal entry," in Matthew 21:1-11. There Matthew quotes Zechariah 9:9, before Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on the Sunday before His resurrection and clearly applies the fulfillment to what happened that day. His humility is demonstrated not by the steed He rode but His willingness to come to Jerusalem and submit to the humiliation, suffering, and shame of the cross, Phil 2:7-8. This was really not His "Triumphal Entry" but His "Triumphal Exit" and prelude to the real "Triumphal Entry" presented in Revelation 19:11-16.

6. Messiah's coming will bring peace, v. 10ab. In the Ancient Near East, the donkey was the preferred mount of princes, Judg 5:10; 10:4; 12:14, kings, 2 Sam 16:1-2, and leaders, Gen 49:11; 2 Sam 19:26; 1 Kgs 1:33). So Jesus did not come into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday as a conqueror, but as the "Prince of Peace," Isa 9:6. When Jesus was near His departure, He said to the disciples, "Peace I leave

with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," John 14:27.

7. Messiah's coming will confirm His universal dominion, v. 10c. The word "dominion" is מִשְׁלָּה *moshel*, from the same root idea of a "parable," or a "similitude." Scholars have struggled with the use of מִשְׁלָּה here in their trying to understand the relationship of "dominion" to "parable" and "likeness." This world will come under His "dominion" and with the coming of the Messiah it will be a kingdom in the "similitude" or "likeness" of its King! His dominion shall extend to all parts of the world in defiance of the opposition that sought to put an end to it by His death on the cross. His gospel shall be preached to the world and be received among the nations, so that *His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth*, as was foretold by David, Ps 72:8, see also 72:8-11. The Gospel shall be carried from one country to another, until all of the out-of-the-way corners of the world are enlightened and blessed by it, Dan 4:3; Matt 25:34; Luke 22:29-30; Jude 1:25. And then the kingdoms of this world will come under His מִשְׁלָּה "similitude," and be transformed into the character of its King, Rev 1:6; 11:15!!

For additional information, see the Excursus on "Kingship in the Ancient Near East," "The Kingship of Yahweh," and "Kingship in Israel," Barker, pp. 664-665.

In summary I share with you the words of the Messianic Jewish scholar Alfred Edershiem about Zechariah 9:9-10:

It is foreign to our present purpose to discuss any general questions about this prophecy, or even to vindicate its application to the Messiah. But, when we brush aside all the trafficking and bargaining over words, that constitutes so much of modern criticism, which in its care over the lesson so often loses the spirit, there can, at least, be no question that this prophecy was intended to introduce, in contrast to earthly warfare and kingly triumph, another Kingdom, of which the just King would be the Prince of Peace, Who was meek and lowly in His Advent, Who would speak peace to the heathen, and Whose sway would yet extend to earth's most utmost bounds. Thus, much may be said, that if there ever was a true picture of the Messiah-King and His kingdom, it is this, and that, if ever Israel was to have a Messiah or the world a Savior, He must be as described in this prophecy - not merely in the letter, but in the spirit of it. And as so often indicated, it was not the letter of the spirit of prophecy - and of all prophecy - which the ancient Synagogue, and that rightly, saw fulfilled in the Messiah and His Kingdom. Accordingly, with singular unanimity the Talmud and the ancient Rabbinic authorities have applied the prophecy to the Christ. Nor was it quoted by Matthew and John in the

stiffness and deadness of the letter. On the contrary, as so often in Jewish writings, two prophets - Isa. 52:11, and Zech. 9:9 - are made to shed their blended light upon this Entry of Christ, as exhibiting the reality, of which the prophetic vision had been the reflex. (Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. Vol II. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1971, pp.370-371).

New Testament Fulfillment

Jesus came up the road from Jericho where He had spent some time in the house of Zacchaeus. He came to Bethphage, which means "house of figs," a village near Bethany, which means "house of dates." Both villages are on the east side of the Mount of Olives. They are on the outskirts of Jerusalem and the first villages you would come to on the road up from Jericho to Jerusalem. Jesus spent time here with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, John 11:1ff, and it was also the home of Simon the leper, Matt 26:6. Just when He came to Bethphage and Bethany is not clear. But He was there on Sunday morning, the first day of the week.

1. Jesus commanded the disciples to get a colt- Luke 19:30-31

- Fulfilled the Messianic prophecy of Zech 9:9-10, presented above.
- Jesus fulfilled all OT prophecies - the coming King, 2 Cor 1:20.
- Luke 19:28-35 - colt was a sign of royalty and humility, 1 Kgs 1:33.
- The disciples brought the young donkey that had never before been ridden. He sat on the animal and led him over the hill and down through the Kidron Valley into Jerusalem.
- Horse was an animal of war, Exod 14:9; the donkey was a beast of burden Gen 22:3; 42:26, thus associated with peace.
- While this was not a "triumphal" entry, as it has been called, it indeed was a **Royal Entry** in which Jesus was overtly asserting His claim to be the Messiah, the Son of God, Savior, and hope for all the human family.

2. The people sang; Luke 19:36-40; Ps 118:25-29 - Messianic Psalm

When is acclamation inappropriate? When is applause and acclaim out of order? The answer is, when it is disingenuous or there is some ulterior motive. The people had hoped for a political Messiah - Jesus was not!

- Jesus used the admiration of the people to force the Sanhedrin and priests to make a decision about His Messiahship.
- Jesus was reprimanded by the Pharisees, Luke 19:38, but He answered, "I tell you, if these [people] become silent, the stones will cry out!" (Luke 19:40)
- The peoples' acclaim shows us the desire to arrange our own fate.
- Their acclaim shows desire for a human king, a political solution
- Palm branches used with Feast of Tabernacles, Lev 23:40; Neh 8:15; John 12:13, and laid at Jesus' feet to signify a royal victory, Rev 7:9

- The chant of the people carried over to the next morning when Jesus went to the Temple and the children shouted "Hosanna (save now please) to the Son of David," Matt 21:15, an overtly Messianic chant identifying Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus made no attempt to restrain them.

3. Jesus wept over Jerusalem - Luke 19:41-44

His mission was finished but Israel was still unsaved because they did not recognize Him! Do you?

- Shows compassion of God for His People, the Jews. He literally "burst into tears" saying "Would on this day you, even you, had known the things that pertain to peace!" see Luke 11:47-51.
- Shows Israel's failure to accept Jesus as their Messiah. They wanted a Messiah of their own making. They wanted an earthly Messiah who would be a political deliverer, bringing prosperity, peace, and freedom from care, THE GOOD LIFE! Theirs was a materialistic hope that had no real interest in the things of spiritual and eternal value.
- Shows Jesus' recognition that the people had no understanding of the consequences of sin. As 19:43-44 state, severe judgment was very near and they were totally unaware of the consequences of sin. The Roman Emperor ordered the entire city to be leveled; in fact, these verses paint an austere picture that predicts accurately what happened 38 years later with the siege of the city led by the Roman General Titus.
- Shows God's willingness to pay the price for the sin of Jew & Gentile. Note the closing line of this passage, "because you did not know the time of your visitation," meaning "you did not recognize the season when God, in His grace, visited you in the person of His Son and Savior, Jesus Christ."

4. The people were in reality choosing a sacrifice, not a king.

- Exod 12:3-6 The paschal lamb was chosen on the tenth day, then kept four more days until the fourteenth day, which is Thursday. Finally the lamb was slain at twilight, after sunset, literally "between the two evenings," and technically on Friday.
- On Palm Sunday cheering crowds sang "Hosanna" and proclaimed Jesus their King. But where were those voices on Thursday? Then the same crowd yelled, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Perhaps many of those who joined the chant on Palm Sunday indeed were in the crowd on Thursday and either they joined the chorus to "crucify Him," or even worse they stood by and said nothing.
- News Flash! The world would still crucify Jesus! It has been nearly 2000 years since the leading of the Savior to Calvary. Satan still has not abandoned his goal to supplant God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Satan's time is near and his antichrist message louder and clearer than ever. If Christ

were to come again to walk among us in human flesh there would still be mobs crying out for His execution. There are many who reject the exclusive claims of the biblical record which says, "This is the stone which was rejected by the builders, which has become the chief cornerstone, nor is their salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved," Acts 4:11-12.

- Here is the question of the hour! It is the same question Jesus asked His disciples at Caesarea Philippi, (Matt 16:13-20)—"Who do you say I am?" It is an unavoidable question. You have to answer it! Even if you choose to walk away in silence, you have answered it already, John 3:18.