

**Palm Sunday  
March 29, 2015**

*"King Jesus Goes to War on a Lowly Donkey"*

**ZECHARIAH 9:9,10**

---

**R**ejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. <sup>10</sup> I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River.

Imagine for a moment that there is a homeless man standing outside the gates of the White House in Washington, DC. He is shouting, "I am the president of the United States. Somehow he jumps the iron fence, races across the lawn, gets into the front door, runs into the oval office and sits in the president's chair shouting loudly, "I am the president of the United States of America." The security guards finally catch him, throw him to the ground, handcuff him and haul him away.

On this Palm Sunday we see another homeless man. He is riding into Jerusalem on a donkey and proclaiming he is the Savior of the world. He is not mentally ill or deranged. He is God's Son, the creator of the universe, riding into Jerusalem and going to war against the twin enemies of sin and death. The people don't laugh at him. They don't think he is strange. They welcome him with palm branches and shouts of "Hosanna, blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord." You see, these people knew their Old Testament. They knew the great prediction of the prophet Zechariah that their King, their Messiah and their Christ would come to them riding on a donkey, on a colt the foal of a donkey.

By riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, Jesus is drawing a line in the sand and stepping over that line. He is proclaiming to the world that he is the one to save you and rescue you. Let's take a closer look at King Jesus going to war on a lowly donkey. He is the ultimate king and his kingdom is the ultimate kingdom.

**The ultimate king**

There is no king like Jesus. He rides into Jerusalem on a lowly donkey to show us he is the only one who can save us. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt the foal of a donkey." The hands of Jesus that hold onto the donkey. They are the hands of God that created the world. They are the hands of God that will be nailed to the cross of our sin. These hands of Jesus will keep the nail marks after he rises from the dead. There is no king in all the world who is anything near our King. His hands will hold you close to him and protect you with his love whatever problems and troubles you may experience. Jesus said of his sheep, "No one will pluck them from my hand."

God told his Old Testament to rejoice greatly and shout loudly when they saw their Messiah coming to them riding on a donkey. The people knew that someday they would have a

king who was greater than King David and greater than King Solomon. When John the Baptist drew large crowds of people to the Jordan Valley the people asked him if he were the Christ. They were eager for the Messiah to come. They were ready to dance around for joy, and shout out loud, and sing from the psalms and wave palm branches if John the Baptist were the one. Jesus crossed the line when he rode into Jerusalem on this donkey and the colt the foal of a donkey. He proclaimed to the people "I am your King and I am your Messiah who is going to war for you."

How do we know that Jesus is the ultimate king for us? We know he is our King going to war for us because he is the one who fulfills the prophecies of the Old Testament. Notice how specific the prophecy is. It says that Jesus will ride on a donkey, on a colt the foal of a donkey. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a young donkey, a colt that had never been ridden before. The people knew what to look for. A single donkey, an old donkey, a war horse or mule, a fancy chariot, or sedan chair on the shoulders of strong men would not have fulfilled this remarkable prophecy. Jesus is crossing the line. He is making it as clear as the bright sun that was shining this past week that he is the Messiah.

Permit an illustration that I pray will help us appreciate this amazing truth. If my brother Roger comes to visit me and I ask you to pick him up at the airport here in Santa Maria because I can't be there, you will want to know how to recognize. I could tell you that he is almost as tall as I am, has less hair on his head, is ten years younger and more slender, that still won't give you what you need to recognize him. However if I tell you that he will be wearing a sweat shirt with the name of our hometown Ixonix on it, then you won't have any time recognizing him because it is such a strange name. Jesus did not wear a special shirt that had Messiah or King of Kings written on it. Instead he carried with him hundreds of Old Testament prophecies he fulfilled including riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, colt the foal of a donkey.

"See your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey." Your king comes to you. A girl is sad on her birthday because it seems her family has forgotten her birthday. But when she comes home from school she sees the house full of balloons and streamers and banners that say "Happy Birthday" with her name on the banners. Your king comes to you. You can stand with the people of Jerusalem and shout out "Hosanna in the highest." You can say "That's my king who is riding into Jerusalem to go to war for me. He is going to battle against my problem of sin and take care of it. He is going to conquer death for me so I can live forever. That's my Jesus."

Jesus rides to go to war. He goes to war by being righteous and perfect. Jesus did not inherit the sin from Adam that has corrupted our lives once again this week. His temptations were real just as the pain on the cross was real. Jesus was righteous when he prayed as he was being nailed to the cross, "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." Jesus was righteous as he took care of his mother Mary. He told John to take care of her as he was dying on the cross. His righteousness is my only hope of being righteous before God.

There have been so many times when I was not as kind and considerate to my parents as I should have been. There have been so many times when I have thought badly of people instead of praying for them. "Foul and foul of sin I am, I am all unrighteousness." Jesus went to war for me and you to give us his righteousness. I agree with the hymn writer

who said, Jesus went to war so the words of Isaiah 61:10 could be your words and mine, "I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness."

Jesus went to war on a lowly donkey to provide us with salvation. The crowd in Jerusalem shouted "Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Hosanna means save us. They wanted Jesus to save them from their troubles and problems of life. They wanted Jesus to lift them out of poverty and usher in a kingdom here on this earth where God's people would rule the world. That's not my Jesus. That's not your King. Our King is so much greater. Our king will look into our hearts and see the sins that separate us from our God. He sees shameful sins that make us cringe. He sees things in us that are hidden and hard to see, yet they cause us to lie awake at night. Jesus went to war to remove the punishment for our sin. "We all like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Our King is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Someday we will be in heaven with our King. We will stand around with people from all over the world. We will wear white robes and hold palm branches and we will shout for joy, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb." Our King went to war to win salvation for us. Our King went to war because he is the Shepherd who rescues the lost.

### **The ultimate kingdom of peace**

Because Jesus is the ultimate king, he is able to establish the ultimate kingdom of peace. Here is how this is described by the prophet Zechariah. "I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth." Jesus is the ultimate King because some day there won't be the fighting and bloodshed we read about in the Old Testament or hear on the news every day. As Isaiah says then the wolf will live with the lamb. Then nations will pound their swords into plowshares. When Jesus comes in glory there will be a new heaven and new earth. Our love for each other will be perfect. In heaven my love for people will be perfect and their love for me will be perfect. God will wipe away all tears from our years.

There is another peace our King brings us right now. When Jesus brings you into his kingdom and you believe in him for your salvation, you have peace between you and your God. Jesus went to war to provide us with peace between us and our God. He rides into Jerusalem on a lowly donkey so he can be nailed to a cross. When he died, the veil in the temple was torn in two to symbolize that this barrier between us and our God has been removed. Colossians chapter one tells us that Jesus reconciled "to himself all things... by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." The first thing Jesus said to his disciples after he met with them in the room where they were hiding was, "Peace be to you." He then showed them his hands, the nail marks in his hands. Some day in heaven when we see Jesus face to face we will see these nail marks that won the peace for us.

This Holy Week and this Easter, Christians all over the world will join together to celebrate how Jesus won the victory for them and how he gives us peace that this world cannot

give. As predicted by Zechariah Jesus will proclaim his peace to the nations. His rule in the hearts of people will extend from sea to sea, from ocean to ocean. Wave your palm branches. Shout your hosannas. Dance around for joy. King Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a lowly donkey. King Jesus won the victory for us. Nothing will ever separate us from his love. Amen.