

## Zechariah 9:9-10

- <sup>9</sup> 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.
- <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 to the ends of the earth. <sup>(NIV)</sup>

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### A DIFFERENT KIND OF KING

If you stood today at the place where Jesus began his Triumphant Palm Sunday journey on the Mount of Olives, do you know what you would see. You would be looking across the valley at the city of Jerusalem, but as you looked down you would see thousands of white boxes. You'd be looking at a Jewish cemetery where over 150,000 people are buried, all with their feet facing Jerusalem. They are positioned this way, because of a mistaken belief that the Jewish people have. They believe that their Messiah will come, raise them from the dead, walk through the Beautiful Gate in Jerusalem and begin his reign on earth. Being buried on the spot where he is said to return, will give them a front row seat to the Messiah's reign. They believed that they will be able to be the first ones to follow the Messiah into the capital city.

Unfortunately for them, they missed it. They failed to recognize and refuse to accept the fact that the Messiah-King already came. He already made his way from the Mount of Olives, into Jerusalem through the Beautiful Gate. He entered Jerusalem in our Gospel lesson on that First Palm Sunday, to the waves and adulation of the people, but it didn't last. How soon rejoicing turned into rejection. How quickly cheers turned to jeers!! So soon the hails of "Hosanna!!" turned into the cries of "Crucify!!!" The people rejected Jesus because they were looking for a different Kind of King. They wanted freedom but not the kind that Jesus brought. The realization that caused them to reject Jesus is the same one that prompts our praise this morning as we celebrate that we have a **Different Kind of King**. The king that God sent might not have been the Kind of King that the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jews wanted, but he was the kind of King that they needed and the kind of king that sinners like us need, too. Today we praise God for sending us a **Different Kind of King**. Our king is different in the way he comes and he is different in the way he conquers.

#### 1. Different in the Way He Comes

When kings travel from place to place they do so with grace and grandeur. They don't ride in the back of a pick-up truck, they ride in style. They come with an entourage of advisors and attendants. They come with security personnel. They come in motorcades, with police or military escorts; they don't mess around. Humility is not in the king's vocabulary.

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Later this month, there will be a royal wedding in England. The wedding between Prince William and Kate is estimated to cost the British people 48 million dollars, and that is besides the vast amounts that are sure to be paid by the royals. It's also being reported that this is a scaled back version of a celebration because of the faltering British economy. 50+ million dollars is the royal family's idea of scaled back!!! And that is for a guy who is 2 generations from the throne. This is how kings make appearances, but not so with Jesus. He is a **Different Kind of King**.

The entrance into Jerusalem that day cost nothing. The donkey was borrowed, the streamers for the parade were home grown, the coats they brought from home. If anyone deserves a 50 million dollar display, it's the Messiah-King, Jesus – but he came in a different way. Zechariah foretold it when he said *See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey*. Jesus came not with a display of power, but rather in lowliness and humility. He is a **Different Kind of King**.

And it's that difference that was too much for many to swallow. They wanted power, might, and freedom from Rome. They wanted the miraculous, they wanted action. They wanted Jesus to flex his muscles and break them free from the chains of bondage. They wanted a political hero and when it became obvious that Jesus wasn't here to offer those things, they quickly turned on him. When they saw they weren't in for the life that they wanted, they chanted "Crucify!!" If they couldn't have their Jewish revolutionary hero, then they didn't want Jesus at all!!!

But don't we sometimes want more than the life that Jesus offers to us? Don't we at times want Jesus to flex his muscles and perform miracles in our lives? Don't we look to him for the snap of the fingers solutions to our problems and then gripe and grimace when the problems don't fade away? We look for instant healing for our hurts and we begin to turn on him when things don't go our way. We long after the comforts of life and we look for Jesus to play hero, failing to recognize that he is far wiser and stronger than we. God had a plan for Jesus and he has one for us, too.

But remember that Jesus had a reason for not displaying his power on Palm Sunday. He had to set his glory aside in order to save us. If Jesus had come with full power and glory and might, he might have turned some heads, but he wouldn't have been our Savior. He came in humility in order to bless us. And sometimes that is his plan in our lives, too. Sometimes the hardship lingers, because God wants to bless us in his own special way. Perhaps the pain remains so that our connection to him remains strong. Maybe our life is difficult today so that we can help someone who is hurting tomorrow. Whatever the situation we experience in life, we can trust that God has a reason for it and will turn it into blessing!!

Just as in his own life, so also in ours, sometimes Jesus displays his power in outward and amazing ways. Sometimes it's through the vivid and outward displays that invoke emotional responses, but sometimes he works in more quiet ways. Sometimes it's through the silent working of the Gospel on a person's heart. Sometimes it's the Spirit working the assurance of forgiveness through quiet pondering and meditation on God's Word. Whether outward or inward, our amazing God does amazing things in our lives.

Jesus doesn't operate the way most kings would. He is a **Different Kind of King** because of the way he comes, but he shows that he is a **Different Kind of King** also in the way that he conquers.

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### 2. Different in the Way He Conquers

I want you to picture a conquering King. Take a moment; I'm going to ask you to share what you envision. Perhaps we can help each other picture what a conquering king looks like. (Tanks, F-22s, bombs, cruise missiles). Did any of you have that King on a donkey? Were there dusty roads and dirty coats involved in any way? Listen to the way that Zechariah foretells the conquering of King Jesus. ***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.*** King Jesus conquers in a different way. You had it right for the way that modern kings win victories; they roll in tanks and show might and power, and force the conquered into submission. But we have a **Different Kind of King**. King Jesus conquers without aggressive acts of war. Jesus conquers in a different way, a far different way; in fact it's the opposite way. He conquers by declaring peace.

Does that work today? Can you win a war victory by simply declaring peace? Just send in someone to say, "OK, it's time for peace." They tried that in Libya this week, but it didn't work!! If it did we'd be in three less wars, wouldn't we? That's not the way it works today, but it's the way that it worked for Jesus, because he is a **Different Kind**, a better **Kind of King**.

Jesus conquers by declaring peace. He achieved a victory for us by declaring peace and by delivering peace between us and God. And his Palm Sunday march was an essential step. He willingly rode the donkey into Jerusalem, because he knew that there was *his* betrayer, there were *his* courtrooms, there was *his* cross. He knew that the celebration would end and that his pain was about to begin, yet he kept marching, because he was in the process of being our conquering King. He *had* to be in Jerusalem; he *had* to be arrested, beaten and put on the cross, because that was his place to declare peace. There he declared peace between us and God. There he pronounced that the war was over, the victory won. There he delivered peace to guilty sinners like you and me. For the times that we look for the miraculous and grow weary of the same old weakness and humility, our Savior came humbly to die. Even though the crowds turned on Jesus, he never turned on us. For the times that we doubt God's ability to work blessing from the hard situations in life, Jesus took the hardest situation and turned it into the brightest blessing for us and for all who have faith in him. There on the cross, he delivered peace.

And the peace that Jesus brings is a special peace. He brought it to more than just the remnant that heard the words that Zechariah preached. It was to more than those who waved branches and spread their garments on the Palm Sunday road to Jerusalem, it's a peace that he delivers to you and to me. And it goes beyond us as well. Zechariah tells of the extent of that peace. ***His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.***

And those words are a comfort and encouragement to us. Even though Alaska is part of the United States, we don't always share in same benefits as the lower 48. We still don't have an Olive Garden and often don't get free shipping and handling. We can, however, be comforted in the knowledge that we are included in the group that Zechariah talks about. We are a part of that rule, recipients of his grace and peace. But it's an encouragement as well. His peace is spread to the ends of the earth, through people like you and me. Through mission offerings, through prayers for our world missionaries, we spread that peace. By recognizing our personal roles as missionaries right here in Alaska, we ensure that Christ's rule expands, by spreading the news of Good Friday and Easter, maybe inviting friends to celebrate with you here at church, you are sharing the message of hope and peace.

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We have a **Different Kind of King** in Jesus, that's for sure. The way he comes and the way he conquers shows that he is far superior to any other King this world has seen. This Palm Sunday, we celebrate his willingness to come to Jerusalem. This Holy Week, we again consider the passion that he endured for our sins, with gatherings on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday here at church. And it all culminates on Easter, as he bursts from the tomb in glory and victory. Through it all, his humility, his suffering, and his glorified new life, we can praise and thank God all the same - that we have a **Different Kind of King**. Amen.