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Lent Day 27: The Coming King

3 minutes

Zechariah 9:9-10 (ESV)

*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.
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.*

In the Ancient Near East, a king entered cities riding on a warhorse in order to convey his military power, particularly when he was entering into newly conquered cities where his rule may have been regarded as illegitimate or met with suspicion or outright rejection. The exception to this custom was when a beloved king entered his own capital city. There he would ride in on a donkey — the benevolent king.

The prophet Zechariah speaks of a day when Jerusalem would

see her king return. He would conquer the enemy once and for all, secure a lasting salvation and establish a new reign of peace for all. This hope of the true king, riding on a donkey, led the crowd to shout: “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” when they saw Jesus riding into Jerusalem, yes, on a donkey.

And yet this crowd soon became the angry mob that cried for blood: “Crucify Him!” Jesus, who was once welcomed as the returning king, would be met with the violent rejection of a hostile people. The true king returned to his capital city to find that it had betrayed him. Yet still, he mounted a donkey, not a warhorse, and entered in peace. And he won the ultimate victory for his treacherous people by submitting himself to their violence — **our** violence — confirming our guilt and achieving our forgiveness in one decisive victory. The enemy this king would conquer turned out to be us, and the cost of the victory we longed for was the death of our beloved king. And he did it. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Prayer

Lord, we rejoice and shout aloud that you would give your life to pay the price for our treachery. We praise you as our beloved king we have been waiting for. Come reign in our heart, our lives and our city. In Christ's Name, Amen.

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