

<sup>9</sup> *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.* <sup>10</sup> *I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; the battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be “from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.”*

Text: Zech. 9:9-10 Palm Sun. A 4/14/19 Philip. 2:5-11 Lk. 19:28-40 Psalm 146 Resp. Ps.: 24  
Hymns: 162, 725, 341, 367

## PEACE IN OUR HEAVENLY KING

Crown Him with many crowns The Lamb upon His throne;  
Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns All music but its own.  
Awake, my soul, and sing Of Him who died for thee  
And hail Him as thy matchless King Through all eternity. (TLH #341:1)

Dear fellow redeemed in Christ,

The Jewish people at the time of Christ were ruled over by the Roman Empire. The Jews were at the mercy of the Roman rulers, who could be very cruel. The Jews were looking for their Messiah to come and free them from Rome and return their nation to the glory it once had under King David. The Jews wanted their Messiah to give them an earthly kingdom, with earthly peace. Today our Lord reminds us not to place our hopes for real, lasting peace in any earthly ruler or kingdom, but in Jesus, our Heavenly King.

Our text was written by the Lord through His faithful Old Testament prophet, Zechariah. In Zechariah's day, the Jewish people were terribly discouraged. Years earlier they had been conquered by the Babylonians and taken away into that foreign country. They had now been allowed to return to Jerusalem, which a group of them did. Fourteen more years had passed, and yet they hadn't rebuilt the city or the temple because of problems with their enemies and problems among themselves. They had hoped that the rebuilding would go quickly, but that hadn't happened. They were God's people, yet the unbelieving nations around them seemed to be doing so much better than they were.

The Lord sent Zechariah to encourage His people. The name "Zechariah" means "Jehovah remembers." Zechariah reminded the people that God had not forgotten them. Their nation had brought most of their problems on themselves because of their sinfulness and rebelliousness against God. But for all of them who would turn to the Lord in repentance, He would graciously forgive them and help them and bless them.

Sometimes we bring problems on ourselves, or make our problems worse because we don't humble ourselves before God and follow His Word. But when we tell God we're sorry He forgives us. And when we ask God to help us and enable us to follow Him, He does. We say with the psalmist, "*You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You*" (Ps. 86:5).

The Lord told His people, *“Behold, your King is coming to you.”* The Lord turned His people’s attention away from the troubles they were having, and gave them hope by reminding them of the coming Messiah. God was helping them, and their city and temple would be rebuilt. But they shouldn’t place their hopes in their earthly kingdom of Israel and any earthly king. Their real, lasting happiness was in their coming Heavenly King and His kingdom!

There are always problems and troubles in our earthly kingdoms with our earthly rulers. Our God tells us in His Word, *“Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. ... Happy is he ... whose hope is in the LORD his God, Who made heaven and earth”* (Ps. 146:3-6).

God referred to His people as the *“Daughter of Zion”* because David had built Jerusalem, their capital city, on Mt. Zion. The Babylonians had destroyed their city and temple and taken them into captivity for seventy years. Now their city and temple weren’t yet rebuilt. They were being threatened by enemies around them. Yet in spite of all that the Lord urged them, *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!”* They could and should thank and praise God who loved them and was seeing them through all their troubles.

In spite of all of our troubles in this world Scripture urges us, *“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men.”* Let people see Jesus and His peace in us. *“The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”* (Phillip. 4:4-7).

*“Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation.”* These words can only refer to the Son of God. Earthly rulers can be self-seeking, dishonest, and even cruel. God says of His Son, our Heavenly King, *“In Him I am well pleased”* (Mt. 3:17). Jesus said that He *“did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many”* (Mt. 20:28). Earthly rulers have their people serve them to establish their earthly kingdoms. Jesus, our Heavenly King, served us by living and dying in our place, earning the kingdom of heaven for us.

*“Your King is coming to you ... lowly, and riding on a donkey.”* The King who would come to God’s people would ride, not on a beautiful horse, but on a donkey. What kind of king is that?! Unlike so many earthly kings, our Heavenly King is *“lowly.”* Again, this is no earthly king. Earthly rulers have their people fight their battles for them. Christ, our Heavenly King, humbly allowed Himself to be put to death in our place on the cross. Jesus fought the battle in our place against Satan, sin, hell, and death, and won the victory for us! Our Lord assures us: *“‘Comfort, comfort My people,’ says your God. ‘Speak comfortingly to Jerusalem; and cry to her that her warfare is ended.’”* God tells us what kind of warfare it is and how He ended it when He says *“that her iniquity is pardoned”* (Is. 40:1).

*“I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem.”* The Jewish nation had been divided into two parts. *“Ephraim”* was the Northern Kingdom, and Judah, where *“Jerusalem”* was, was the Southern Kingdom. *“[The Lord] shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be ‘from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.’”* God gave His

people times of earthly peace, free from enemy attacks. But because of their nation's recurring rebelliousness against Him, those peaceful times didn't last.

We're not the only people to face the threat of weapons of mass destruction. People throughout history have faced the threat of the "WMDs" of their own time (our text speaks of the "*chariot*" and the "*horse*" and the "*battle bow*"). When Jesus came, did He restore the nation of Israel to its former earthly glory? No. As the Messiah, Jesus brought peace to the true Israel, spiritual Israel: all who believe in Him.

*"He will speak peace to the nations."* This "*lowly*" King riding on a donkey would bring peace to the whole world?! None of the greatest leaders in all of history, with their vast armies, achieved lasting peace. Only the Son of God can bring us peace that lasts. But it's not an earthly peace. Neither Israel, nor any earthly nation, can have absolute peace. Therefore, when the Lord promised to take away the chariots and war-horses and break the battle bows, He was speaking of spiritual peace – the peace Jesus gives us in our souls. Jesus assures us, *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid"* (Jn. 14:27).

Jesus has told us, *"My kingdom is not of this world"* (Jn. 18:36). Sometimes we look around at all the problems in the world wish that God would just fix this mess. God created a perfect world for us. Adam and Eve wrecked everything. The Lord is always with us to help us and bless us. But let's not make the same mistake the Jews made in Zechariah's and Jesus' day. They looked for the Messiah to establish an earthly kingdom with earthly peace. Because of sin, that is never going to happen. Don't expect Jesus to give us heaven on earth, with perfect peace between us sinful human beings. Jesus says, *"In Me you may have peace. In this world you will have tribulation. But take courage! I have overcome the world"* (Jn. 16:33).

It's good for us to be responsible, informed, involved citizens. We pray that the Lord give us good government. We need to be careful that we don't develop the mindset of looking for some earthly leader or political party as the solution to our country's many problems. Look to Jesus. Pray, do what you can, and place your faith and trust in Jesus. In the face of all the problems in the kingdoms of this earth, Jesus gives us His peace. He gives us peace of mind by telling us, *"I am with you always"* (Mt. 28:20). Jesus gives us peace with God and with ourselves by telling us, *"Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven"* (Mt. 9:5). Jesus gives us peace in His assurance, *"I have loved you with an everlasting love"* (Jer. 31:3). Jesus gives us peace for each day in His promise that He *"causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him, to those who are the called according to His purpose"* (Ro. 8:28). Jesus gives us peace for the future by telling us: *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand"* (Jn. 10:27-28).

The hope the Lord held out for His people so long ago is the same hope He holds out for you and me today: *"Rejoice greatly ...! Shout ...! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey.... I will cut off the chariot ... and the horse ...; the battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be ... to the ends of the earth."* In this Old Testament prophecy of Palm Sunday, our Lord promises us

peace. Christ, our King, humbly, willingly rode into Jerusalem on a donkey that first Palm Sunday. Within a few days He gave His life on the cross, and three days later, rose again. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, we have peace in the forgiveness of our sins, peace that comes from God's presence and guidance and blessings in our life right now, and God's promise of perfect and eternal peace with Him one day in heaven. In spite of all the problems with the rulers and kingdoms of this earth, "*rejoice greatly*" in Jesus, our Heavenly King, who gives us His peace.

Crown Him the Lord of Life Who triumphed over the grave  
And rose victorious in the strife For those He came to save.  
His glories now we sing Who died and rose on high,  
Who died eternal life to bring And lives that death may die.

Crown Him the Lord of Heaven, Enthroned in worlds above,  
Crown Him the King to whom is given The wondrous name of Love.  
Crown Him with many crowns As thrones before Him fall;  
Crown Him, ye kings, with many crowns For He is King of all. Amen. (TLH #341:5-6)