

Sunday 9th April 2017

Palm Sunday

Red



Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, who in your tender love towards the human race sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross: grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Zechariah 9:9-12 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Coming King of Zion

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. ¹² Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.

COMMENT: Christians readily recognise this passage as the model for Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem in all four Gospels. Matthew and John actually quoted part of it in their separate records of that event. (Matthew 21:5; John 12:15) Undoubtedly, it originated as a hopeful prophetic oracle with messianic implications based on Israel's sacred covenant with The LORD. The passage comes from what scholars designate as an anonymous appendix attached to the earlier chapters 1-8 of Zechariah. Modern scholarship places the prophecies of Zechariah in the early Persian period, soon after the return from the Babylonian exile (539 BC). Some Scholars place chapters 9-14 much later, but different opinions have claimed precedence for an exact date. One of the stronger claims dates it in the time of Alexander and his conquests in the late 4th Century. Vs. 13 of this 9th chapter refers distinctly to Greece in the English versions. The first part of chapter from which this reading has been separated refers to many of Israel's neighbouring city states which are under threat of invasion or already captured

from an overwhelming military power. This brief passage and subsequent verses defends Jerusalem as having The LORD's protection. Ultimately The LORD will triumph as earlier prophets like Amos, Isaiah and Ezekiel prophesied. The passage also has similarities to the so-called "Enthronement" Psalms 43, 93, 96-99. The king, however, is the messianic monarch anointed by The LORD to whom Israel looked for deliverance in such desperate times.

Matthew 21:1-11 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Triumphal Entry

21 ¹ Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once." ⁴ This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, ⁵ "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt,^[a] the foal of a beast of burden.'" ⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. ⁸ Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" ¹⁰ And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" ¹¹ And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."

Footnotes: a. or *donkey*, and on a *colt*.

COMMENT: Matthew described the event as the deliberate attempt by Jesus to reveal himself a peaceful Messiah. He did this by quoting one of Israel's prophets directly as he so often did (Zechariah 9:9-10). Matthew also alludes to it by the choice of the mount Jesus made in sending two of his disciples into Bethphage to bring him the humblest of beasts of burden. Zechariah's prophecy symbolized the peaceful choice of a victorious monarch selecting a donkey as his mount instead of a conqueror's proud steed for his triumphal entry into his capital city. Jesus' disciples and others acknowledged our Lord's kingship by throwing their garments and branches before him as Jehu had been hailed as king in 2 Kings 9:13. Also the riding of the boy King Solomon into Jerusalem to proclaim him King, on the King's mule will be evoked by our Lord's actions (1 Kings 1:38-40) According to the Mishnah of the 2nd century AD, the custom of waving Palm branches had precedents in the celebration of the Feast of Booths (Tabernacles) when pilgrims collected twigs or branches of myrtle, willow and palm to be bound together in a festal plume, called a lulab to symbolize rejoicing. Waving these lulabs aloft, the pilgrims paraded into the

courts of the temple singing the Hallel (Psalms 113-118). It is entirely possible that narratives of the earliest apostolic tradition reflected this practice.

Psalm 31: 10-19 *Miserere Mei* Grail Psalter

℟ Save me in your love, O Lord.

¹⁰ Have mercy on me, O Lord,
for I am in distress.

Tears have wasted my eyes,
my throat and my heart. **℟**

¹¹ For my life is spent with sorrow
and my years with sighs.
Affliction has broken down my strength
and my bones waste away. **℟**

¹² In the face of all my foes
I am a reproach,
an object of scorn to my neighbours
and of fear to my friends. **℟**

Those who see me in the street
run far away from me.

¹³ I am like a dead man, forgotten,
like a thing thrown away. **℟**

¹⁴ I have heard the slander of the crowd,
fear is all around me,
as they plot together against me,
as they plan to take my life. **℟**

¹⁵ But as for me, I trust in you, Lord;
I say: "You are my God.

¹⁶ My life is in your hands, deliver me
from the hands of those who hate me. **℟**

¹⁷ Let your face shine on your servant.
Save me in your love.

¹⁸ Let me not be put to shame for I call you,
let the wicked be shamed! **℟**

Let them be silenced in the grave,
¹⁹ let lying lips be dumb,
that speak haughtily against the just
with pride and contempt." **℟**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

COMMENT: This psalm may have begun as an individual hymn of thanksgiving, but quickly became a congregational hymn for celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles. One of the six psalms of the Hallel (Psalms 113-118), pilgrims sang it as they approached the temple on this and other high holidays. It is yet another of the Psalms given a messianic interpretation by the Apostolic Church. Several New Testament passages alluded to it. The person who originally sang this hymn (the “I” of the text) may have been the king, but it soon was reinterpreted as the personification of the nation and sung antiphonally with several parties singing allotted parts. The “gates of righteousness” (verse 19) referred to the massive gates at the entrance of the temple precincts representing the holy presence of the LORD at the centre of the nation. The words would have been sung by the priest at the head of the procession of pilgrims. The day of rejoicing in vs. 24 is the day of the festival, but which one is not identified. This may well be the Feast of Tabernacles, for in vs. 27 the festal procession to decorate “the horns of the altar” probably best fits with that festival. The horns were protrusions at each corner of the altar possibly created for just such a decorative purpose or on which the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled (cf. Lev. 4:7). Vss. 28 and 29 give what appears to be a double ending to the psalm. More likely, vs. 28 is the original ending for the individual hymn of thanksgiving, while vs. 29 is the ending to the congregation hymn. Alternatively, the first is sung by the celebrant priest while the second is the antiphony sung by the congregation.

Short Preface

And now we give you thanks because, for our salvation, he was obedient even to death on the cross. The tree of shame was made the tree of glory; and where life was lost, there life has been restored.

Post Communion

Lord Jesus Christ, you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant, and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation: give us the mind to follow you and to proclaim you as Lord and King, to the glory of God the Father. **Amen**

Solemn Blessing

May the Father, who so loved the world that he gave his only Son, bring you by faith to his eternal life. **Amen.**

May Christ, who accepted the cup of sacrifice in obedience to the Father’s will, keep you steadfast as you walk with him the way of his cross. **Amen.**

May the Spirit, who strengthens us to suffer with Christ that we may share his glory, set your minds on life and peace. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**