

TEXT – Zechariah 9:9-10

Intro: Hail to the king! Our English language is so unique. Hail can mean the pellets of ice that fall from the sky on a stormy summer day. Hail can mean yelling or calling out to catch someone's attention like hailing a cab. Hail can mean the place where a person comes from, as in she hails from Texas. Hail can mean to salute or greet often very enthusiastically. Sports fans hail their team in the hometown parade after pulling off the big victory and winning the championship. We also hail the president or a foreign dignitary who visits our country. If Jesus were in our midst, we would say, "Hail to the King." We would greet Jesus very enthusiastically as our Savior from sin, who died to make us righteous in God's sight. So, let's hail our King on this Palm Sunday. But why are we so enthusiastic in welcoming him? Who is this King and what has he done? Let's WELCOME JESUS, THE KING as 1) he comes in humility, and as 2) he proclaims peace.

I. He comes in humility

- The very first words out of the mouth of the prophet Zechariah are words of joy. He says, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem!" As subjects of our King through faith we are filled with joy when we think of our King and all that he has accomplished for us. We are moved to joyful words of praise and songs of thanksgiving when we consider each gracious and loving act of our King.
- Just think how great it is to be a member of Christ's kingdom. Every need that we could possibly have is fully supplied so that we truly lack nothing. Paul writes in Philippians (the letter of joy), "I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."
- Our physically needs are amply supplied by our King but there is so much more to what he has done for us that moves our hearts to rejoice and our lips to praise him. This King removed his crown of glory as God and wore a crown of humility and suffering. Jesus left his glorious throne in heaven for a life of ridicule and rejection, a life of pain and punishment at the hands of sinners that he loved. Jesus exemplified his humility as our King by riding into Jerusalem on a lowly donkey, actually a colt the foal of a donkey.
- Jesus' humility led him to the cross to be pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities, with the punishment that brought us peace being upon him, so that by his wounds we would be healed. Our King came in humility to pay the price for our sins so that we could enjoy the riches of all his blessings. How truly blessed we are to be a member of Christ's kingdom and heirs of the greater blessings of heaven.
- Zechariah wants us to take a good look at our King Jesus. He is righteous. This is the righteousness we could not earn before God. Jesus obeyed every command of God his whole life, never sinning even once. He is a righteous King and his righteousness he gives to us as our holiness before God. Jesus comes with salvation. He was victorious over all our evil foes. He defeated sin, Satan and death itself.
- In true humility Jesus put rebellious sinners ahead of himself. He humbled himself as Paul says to death, even death on a cross. All this Jesus did because he unconditionally loves sinners. He was willing to do whatever it took for our salvation. That's why Zechariah encourages rejoicing and shouting the praises of our King.
- But we may still be wondering to ourselves if such a humble King like Jesus fits our needs today. Is the humble Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, on a colt the foal of a donkey really our kind of King for 2010? Meekness and humility don't exactly get you too far these days. You have to be willing to take a few people out on the way for your own self-advancement.
- Jesus is the exact opposite of that kind of king. Jesus concerns himself with people's hearts. He knows that a heart full of pride and self-worth in the end only leads to self-destruction. Jesus is the only King who changes hearts from envy, idolatry, and selfish ambitions to love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These are the fruits of the Spirit.
- Jesus is the object of such a heart, a heart filled with faith, that precious gift of the Holy Spirit. Such faith trusts in the one who was humbly nailed to Calvary's cross to take care of our greatest needs – our sin and the punishment we deserved for our sin – death in hell. Jesus said, "For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
- "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."

Transition: Welcome Jesus, your King. He comes in humility. He also proclaims peace.

II. He proclaims peace

- Jesus is not your typical kind of King. Zechariah reminds us that the battle he fought did not require the usual weapons of war. Jesus didn't need chariots or the war-horses to drive those chariots. He didn't need bows or their arrows. Jesus fought his battle against the spiritual forces of evil. His goal was not to overpower a conquered people or even gain control of a larger tract of land.
- Jesus went to war with the devil, with sin and with death to free sinners from their control. He fought our battle against sin and Satan and death itself, and he did it alone. Only by removing the devil's hold on us, which was the guilt and punishment for our sin including death in hell could Jesus free us from their control. So Jesus did. He went to the cross and let sin and its eternal punishment crush him ending his very life.
- But remember that Jesus fought this battle for us. His seeming defeat on the cross is actually our victory. The pain, the punishment, and his death accomplished the very purpose of his coming – to give us peace, peace with God. This peace is what every sinner is after or at least should be after. Our conscience comes down on us when we sin. Whether we think about it or not, God is very angry with us because of our sins. If nothing else in this world we really want a conscience that is at peace, that has true peace with a holy God.
- This King riding into Jerusalem on a donkey is the Prince of Peace. He is our peace with God. Jesus signed up for the job to win our peace when the Father planned our salvation. Jesus willingly took on human flesh and blood so that all God's wrath for sin could be unleashed on him. Jesus' short trip into Jerusalem was all about peace because he rode into Jerusalem to suffer and die for our peace with God.
- Through Jesus we have peace. God is no longer angry with us. This is true peace in the forgiveness of our sins. Peace is either something you have or don't have. Either we have peace or we don't. Either God is going to punish us in hell or he is going to take us to heaven with him. There is no sort of at peace with God. There isn't a kind of holiness or righteousness with God. Either we are 100% at peace with the holy God or we are not.
- Our King Jesus proclaims that peace through faith in him. Paul writes in Romans, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God."
- This peace that our King brings is for all people. Zechariah says that our King's rule extends from sea to sea and to the ends of the earth. He wants peace with God for all sinners. John wrote so beautifully, "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."
- Jesus rode into Jerusalem amid shouts of "Hosanna," and "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Hosanna is an expression of salvation. We might translate it, "Oh save!" Jesus is blessed or praised as the one who comes in the Lord's name revealing peace with God through him. Jesus is our King who proclaims peace through his suffering and death on the cross and that's exactly where he was headed as he made his way into Jerusalem.
- Jesus told his disciples the night before he died, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." As those who have peace with God through Jesus, there is nothing to fear. There is no need for us be concerned when we are battered by so many problems like a storm raging around us.
- There is peace, an inner peace. Our sins are forgiven in Jesus. With Jesus as King in our hearts God is delighted in us and can't wait to take us to heaven to be with him. Whatever we may be going through only serves to make us that much more secure in our peace with God. Paul wrote, "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

Conclusion: We hail Jesus as our King. We greet him and welcome him this Palm Sunday as he comes in deepest humility for our salvation and as he proclaims peace, peace with God. For far too many people this week we call Holy Week has little meaning besides maybe some extra time off work or school. But for us as Christians it is the culmination of our Savior' work. We see our King in humility die on a cross so that there would be peace for sinners, true spiritual peace with God. We rejoice greatly and shout out, "Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!" Amen.