

LSB Zechariah 9:9,10

*9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion!
Shout in triumph, O Daughter of Jerusalem!
See, your King comes to you,
righteous and victorious,
humble and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

*10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
and the horse from Jerusalem,
and the bow of war will be broken.
Then He will proclaim peace to the nations.
His dominion will extend from sea to sea,
and from the Euphrates
to the ends of the earth.*

This morning I thought it good to take a short break from our study in Ephesians and spend time together considering what we term as Palm Sunday.

And I want to begin, back in our passage in Ephesians chapter 4 with a single word. Let me read again to you the passage we would have been looking at this morning and indeed, if the Lord permits, we will return to in a couple of weeks; Eph. 4:1 *Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, exhort you to walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,*

The single word I want to pull out for us this morning is patience. Long suffering. Waiting, if you will.

God doesn't respond on our schedule. He promised Abraham that from his seed a mighty nation would assemble and through that nation a promised Messiah would come.

Abraham waited, and waited, and waited, and finally took things into his own hands. Gonna help God a bit. Need to get this done while I'm still capable. And thanks to that, we got the Arab nations and Islam. That's what happens when you don't wait for God to do it His way, in His time

Then 13 years later when Abraham was 99, when he was as good as useless to conceive a child, Isaac was born. God's timing is not our timing. We are used to instant gratification. You Zelle me some money and my phone goes "ding" instantly. That's how we like it. That's not how God rolls.

Abraham must have thought, what good is the promise when I'm too old to see it happening. We want to enjoy the results. Gratification. Now. In this life, please.

God works His sovereign plan according to His sovereign schedule. He makes promises to us, that we aren't going to see in this life. What I get in this life, is His Holy Spirit living in me to help me in this waiting process. There is some progress towards holiness, but it's painfully slow. Wait, wait, wait.

What does this lesson of patience have to do with Palm Sunday, you ask?

You know, normally, if we're going to spend a morning reviewing the scripture of Jesus final entry into Jerusalem, we would look at one of the synoptic gospels. Matthew, Mark, or Luke. And we will do that.

But to understand the irony of this historic event, we need to go back all the way to Zachariah, which is the scripture that I read to you.

But first, to lay some groundwork, let's look at what the added titles in most of your Bibles calls ***The Triumphal Entry***. Mark 11:

1 And as they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, 2 and said to them, "Go into

*the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. 3 And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' you say, 'The Lord has need of it'; and immediately he will send it back here." 4 And they went away and found a colt tied at the door, outside in the street; and they untied it. 5 And some of the bystanders were saying to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" 6 And they spoke to them just as Jesus had told them, and they gave them permission. 7 And they brought the colt to Jesus and put their garments on it; and He sat on it. 8 And many spread their garments in the road, and others spread leafy branches, having cut them from the fields. 9 And those who went in front and those who followed were shouting:
"Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord;
10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David;
Hosanna in the highest!"*

And you'll recall the pharisee's had something to say about the event while it was happening that is telling. Was Jesus on board with the people who were giving Him the entrance due to the long promised Messiah?

Luke gives us insight that the other gospel writers didn't tell us. Luke 19;

*37 Now as soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God, rejoicing with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, 38 saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"
39 And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." 40 But Jesus answered and said, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones will cry out!"*

The reason the pharisees attempted to stop what the people were shouting is because those words that the people were saying, are from Psalm 118.26 and they are reserved for one person. God's chosen Messiah. The pharisee's knew and understood that, and that's why they ordered Jesus to

silence these people.

If Jesus is not the Messiah, then what these people were shouting and what Jesus was accepting from them, is blasphemy.

Let me read to you from Psalm 118. What was prophesied 750 years previous to the event, was being carried out by the pharisees, before the eyes of anyone present who believed Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

*22 The stone which the builders rejected
Has become the chief corner stone.*

*23 This is from Yahweh;
It is marvelous in our eyes.*

*24 This is the day which Yahweh has made;
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

*25 O Yahweh, save!
O Yahweh, succeed!*

26 Blessed is the one who comes in the name of Yahweh;

On that morning, when those pharisees told Jesus to silence the people who were saying the very words that were reserved to welcome the Messiah, they were fulfilling the prophecy *The stone which the builders rejected*

When they put their self righteous hands over their self righteous ears and shout STOP, they are declaring that Jesus is NOT the Messiah and the blasphemy must stop. Teacher, make them stop blaspheming! You are NOT the Messiah and this blasphemy must stop.

And Jesus has a message for them, and for us; Luke 19:40 *But Jesus answered and said, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones will cry out!"*

You see, Psalms 118:26 must be fulfilled, because He is the Messiah, and if those people did not shout those words in fulfillment of that prophecy, the stones would have cried out instead. God's words must come to pass. The scriptures WILL be fulfilled.

So then, Luke takes us back to Psalms 118 and shows how God fulfils His words, and Matthew, in his account takes us back to the Zachariah 9 prophecy which is also fulfilled at the exact moment.

Matt. 21:4 And this took place in order that what was spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled, saying, 5

*“Say to the daughter of Zion,
‘Behold your King is coming to you,
Lowly, and mounted on a donkey,
And on a colt, the foal of a pack animal.’”*

6 And the disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them, 7 and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid their garments on them; and He sat on the garments.

Three prophecies all fulfilled together at that moment. The builders rejected the Messiah of God, the people shouted the very words reserved for Messiah that David had written so long ago, and Messiah entered Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey.

The scene has pathos. So much happening at the same moment. One group of people who are jubilant. Messiah has come! Another group of people who are saying something very different.

The Sanhedrin met at this time and said; John 11:47 *Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the Sanhedrin together, and were saying, “What are we doing? For this man is doing many signs. 48 If we let Him go on like this, all will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”*

The Romans were occupying Israel. But the Romans wisely allowed the chief priests (by the way, that shouldn't be plural, but it is) Rome allowed the chief priests and the sanhedrin to rule Israel with some latitude, for Rome.

Rome has veto powers. Rome lets the rulers of Israel know what they can and cannot get away with. Rome is in ultimate control. Pilate is Rome's guy. The chief priests and the sanhedrin are the Israel guys. And their concern is, if this movement of some radicals who want to make Jesus King in Israel, if we allow that to happen, Rome is going to come and squash them . . . and us.

Rome will just come in and brush the chief priests aside along with the elders, or the sanhedrin, if you will, 70 wise elders in Israel, they'll lose whatever grasp and political control Rome has given to them, and Rome walks in and takes over. Martial rule, by Rome, without concessions.

If you've heard sermons before on Palm Sunday, it's usually portrayed as Jesus victorious moment, before everything goes wrong. The Triumphal entry. The ultimate positive moment of Jesus. The people receive Him as King. Right?

How did Jesus view this moment in time? Well, He tells us. This is powerful; Luke 19:41 *And as He approached Jerusalem and saw the city, **He wept over it**, 42 saying, "If you knew in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, 44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."*

What just happened? The crowd was laying their garments and palm branches in the path of the donkey, fulfilling yet another prophecy by so doing. They were fulfilling Isaiah 40:3 *"Prepare the way for Yahweh in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God."*

They're doing everything according to the fulfillment of the prophets. This is Messiah. This is the king. The crowd is receiving their King. But how

does Jesus react to all of this homage and reception of Him as the promised King?

Not exactly what you expect from a King, appointed by God, the Messiah. He weeps. Why? He knows something they do not know...and He alludes to it when He says; *because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.*”

Daniel the prophet says something about Messiah that simple math should have told them; 24 *“Seventy weeks have been determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Holy of Holies. 25 So you are to know and have insight that from the going out of a word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be restored and rebuilt, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. 26 Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing,*

70 weeks of years. 490 years. From a decree. To the fulfillment of everything. But with a caveat. At the end of the 69th week, 483 years, Messiah will be cut off. That means murdered.

The day Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the foal of an ass, as their Messiah, King, to all those Hosannas, this prophecy was also a week away. Jesus knew that. So there is regalia over the King they want! There is rejection by the rulers of Israel, the builders in the prophecy, and from Jesus perspective there is weeping over the pathos of a nation that should have known, to the day, that the Messiah they're rejecting and plotting to murder, is right exactly on Daniel's schedule.

So all of these emotions are coincidental. All at the same time. The exultant crowds. The furious and frightened and jealous, hate of the rulers. And the weeping of the King, who knows what will take place in a week's time.

Let's go back where we began, shall we. Zechariah chapter 9. This is fascinating, and absolutely fabulous to understand and have insight into. I'm going to tell you something that very few people on earth know. They should know it, it's all right here, it is neither rocket science, or lawyer speak.

All you need to do is take this book seriously, literally, to get here;

*Zech. 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion!
Shout in triumph, O Daughter of Jerusalem!
See, your King comes to you,
righteous and victorious,
humble and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

Did that happen? Yes, it did. It isn't fairy tales. It isn't Harry Potter. It is an historic event that happened exactly as it was written down 550 years before it happened.

And it happened to the day, according to a specific time frame, given by God, through His prophet Daniel. Jesus wept saying, *if you, even you, had known, in this day*, Lk19:42 They should have known the day. But they did not.

Let's continue in Zechariah chapter 9

*10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
and the horse from Jerusalem,
and the bow of war will be broken.
Then He will proclaim peace to the nations.
His dominion will extend from sea to sea,
and from the Euphrates
to the ends of the earth.*

Did that happen? No, it did not. It did not happen and up to this very day that we are speaking, it has not happened.

Oh dear. What do we do about that?? Throw our Bibles away? Maybe an overreaction. Or perhaps we should do like many do and spiritualize it.

Make everything Jewish, after the first century, be spiritually, the church. In the church, Messiah has proclaimed peace to the nations. Spiritually His dominion extends from sea to shining sea. Not doing so hot with the Euphrates, but in some sense, spiritually Christ has dominion to the ends of the earth. Right? We can spiritualize the second half of this prophecy away.

The stuff about chariots from Ephraim and horses from Jerusalem and bows of war, could mean almost anything. Once we start down the non literal road, it all becomes, as R. C. Sproul would say, a fig newton of your imagination. Easy peasy. Except, that seems like, just perhaps, now, don't want to make anyone mad, that seems sort of sleazy.

You're going to claim vs. 9 was literal and historic but vs. 10 can be whatever fig newton you want it to be? We like to point the finger and call other people hypocrites. That sort of seems a little hypocritical to me. The first half is literal and happened in history, but the second half is whatever fig newton you want it to be.

Why would anyone who hears us speak that way believe anything we said about anything? That's nonsense.

OK, we don't want to have to throw our Bibles out the window, take them to the dump, and we might seem sleazy saying this half is literal and this half is whatever spiritual thing we assign to it. What other choices do we have.

This is going to be the weirdest Palm Sunday message you've ever heard.

Look again at Daniel's prophecy in chapter 9. Similar situation. Messiah is cut off, murdered at the end of the 69th week. The 483rd year to the day, after Cyrus sent the Jews to rebuild what? Jerusalem. Messiah is murdered. That all happened.

But like the Zechariah prophecy, Daniel didn't stop there. It keeps on going.

9:26b . . . and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are decreed. 27 And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will make sacrifice and grain offering cease; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”

It sounds a little bit like the scenario in Zechariah 9 that we can't quite figure out. Wars. desolations. Jesus said that too, when He wept over Jerusalem. Same language.

Now part of the Daniel prophecy and also certainly Jesus prophecy did happen. Desolations. In 70AD the Romans came and completely decimated Jerusalem. They took it apart stone by stone and scattered it over the top of the land until someone who came a hundred years later couldn't tell a city was ever there. Total destruction.

So that part is right. But if you look carefully, beginning with the part where it says it's end will come with a flood; from there forward, there is pre-written literal history that has not yet happened.

A prince will come. He will have some connection with Rome. Hmmm. He will make a covenant with who? Israel. Oh my, you had to have an Israel for that to be literal. Not until 1948 could that part of a literal prophecy be fulfilled. Because the first decimation in 70 AD obliterated Israel as a sovereign nation. Until 1948.

He makes a firm covenant for how long. One week. Remember the weeks. How long is one week? 7 years. When did Messiah get cut off? End of week 69. One week left. 2000 years later that missing week of years of this prophecy hasn't happened. Israel. Yes. Prince? no. No covenant. No final week. How do we account for these things?

Patience. Remember. God doesn't do things on your time line. He does them, quite literally too, I might add, he doesn't need anyone to help try to fit these things together by spiritualizing everything, God accomplishes His goals, that He told us would happen ahead of time, according to His sovereign schedule.

But, you say, 2000 years of waiting? Really? How is that possible.

Who was the 70 weeks prophecy given to? Israel. Is it possible, given God's schedule and times according to His plan and pleasure, that Israel was set on a shelf and that week of years, seven years that belong to their clock, according to Daniel, is waiting for a parenthesis in the middle that no one saw, in the old testament, that period that Paul referred to as a "mystery" because it was not foretold in the old testament, and when that parenthesis ends, God will restart Daniels clock of jewish years and finish this prophecy? You bet it's possible,

And it makes perfect sense, and I don't have to throw my Bible away, and I don't have to help God out by making up idiotic spiritualizations of things that sound very literal that were only sentences away from other things God said that were also very literal and that we can point to in history and they happened with precision.

So, beloved, if that scenario is true, what starts the jewish clock again. Well, I'm just going to throw this out there, because it sort of makes sense to me, what with 20-20 hindsight of 2000 years of history in between. Maybe when God calls the church out of this world, the jewish clock will start again and those final 7 years of jewish history, Jacob's trouble

according to another prophet, will time itself out with the completion being at the physical return of Jesus to this earth to set up His earthly kingdom and reign here on earth in Jerusalem, for a thousand years.

So you can read the second verse in Zechariah's prophecy that we began with this morning as literal history, that has not happened yet, but we believe will happen with precise accuracy, very soon.

What a DAY that was, when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, and some shouted Hosanna to the King, and some shouted. shut up! Make them shut up! And some plotted how to get rid of Him, and He, for His part, wept over all of it.

Was it the triumphal entry? Well, I might say, it depends. For the pharisee's it was the disastrous entry. For the people who wanted a King who would knock off Rome and heal all their diseases and create food on occasion, when needed, it was in their minds, a triumphal entry. But to Jesus it was a heart breaking entry into a city and people that He loved, who He knew would murder Him.

The triumphal entry will be from the sky. You can read about it in Revelation 19, and many other places.

Post Script. How did it go for the people who thought they were on the verge of an enormous political victory? That's what they thought, you know. Nothing new under the sun. We're still playing those mind games today. IF we can just get this guy, he'll fix everything and life will be perfect. If only . . .

They thought they were in the drivers seat. New King. Rome will be routed. Israel will be great again. Life will be good. If you break a toe nail, He can heal it. If a famine comes, He can create food. Out of nothing! This is going to be great.

How'd that work out for them. Well, He ignored Rome and went on the attack against the jews. His first act is to throw all the religious and civil

leaders out of the temple and temple grounds. Clears the place out. Goes on the total warpath with all of the leadership, not of Rome, but of Israel!

Then He starts claiming to be equal with God. He calls the temple His Father's house. Who does this guy think He is? 2nd person in the trinity? Who did we just vote in as King? This guy's acting like a lunatic. Meanwhile, the chief priests and elders are like, Hey, Rome, you've got a problem. This guy thinks He's the Messiah. He's claiming to be king here, instead of Ceasar.

It goes downhill quick, but, maybe we'll look at some more of this story next week. Along with Easter bunnies and sugary eggs.