

**Rejoice! Your King is Coming!**  
**Zechariah 9:9-10; Matthew 21:1-11/14/19**

You 've probably had the experience that I often have, where you're looking for something in the house, but you can't find it because you had the wrong picture in your mind of what you were looking for. You thought it was in a banker box, but it really was in a plastic bin. You stared right at it, & maybe even moved it out of the way, but you missed it because your mental picture of it was wrong. (Frequently, I can't find what I'm looking for & I do have the right mental picture & I'm just blind. I ask Muriel & she points to it right in front of me.) Anyway, in Jesus' day, most Jews missed Him as their Messiah & King because they were expecting a different kind of Savior. They thought the Messiah would be a political deliverer, who would lead them to victory over Rome. They weren't looking for a lowly Savior. They couldn't picture a suffering Savior, who offered Himself as the sacrifice for sinners. & so, tragically, they missed the coming of their King. Many people today still miss Jesus because of their wrong expectations. They're looking for a Savior like a genie in a bottle, who grants their every wish, but it hasn't worked that way. They want a Savior who will instantly solve their problems, but those problems haven't gone away. In order to joyously welcome Jesus as our King, we need to understand who He truly is. Our text this morning in Zech 9 is one of the great Messianic prophecies of the OT. Even most Jewish commentators down through the centuries have agreed this is a prophecy about the Messiah.<sup>1</sup> Judaism sees in it a basis for a royal messianic expectation. Christianity sees a prophecy of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on the Sunday before His crucifixion (Mt 25:5; Jn 12:15). There's unanimous conviction that a descendant of David is depicted here, one who, though humble, rides as a victor into His capital city of Jerusalem. Our text teaches us that because Jesus Christ is King & He is coming to reign, we who are subject to Him should rejoice greatly. But the news that a king is coming isn't always a cause for great joy. The 1<sup>st</sup> part of Zech 9 predicts the coming of Alexander the Great, who ruthlessly conquered Israel's neighbors. The news of his coming struck terror into the hearts of those in his path. He often slaughtered all the men in a city & sold the women & children into

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Feinberg, *God Remembers*, pp 167-168

slavery.<sup>2</sup> He wasn't concerned about the well-being of his subjects, only about his own power & control. It's also difficult to accept the news of a coming king because there's a sense in which all of us want to rule our own lives. If a king started trying to control every aspect of our lives, we'd resist! We wouldn't rejoice at the news of the coming of that kind of king! But that's precisely the kind of King that Jesus is! He is rightfully Lord of all people & of all aspects of all people's lives. Regarding this King, Zechariah urges, **Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you.** The rest of vss 9 & 10 describe this King & explain why His coming gives cause for great joy. If we understand who this King is & what His coming will mean for all the earth, we will rejoice greatly at the news of His coming. PRAY

If Zech 9 were organized along chronological lines, vss 9 & 10 would be out of order. They speak of the coming of the Messiah, which occurred not only after the invasion of Alexander the Great described in vss 1–8, but also after the Maccabean revolt against the Greek armies described in vss 11–17. But the order is theological rather than chronological. After a prophecy of the coming of Alexander the great, the next step is a prophecy of the coming of Zion's King in contrast to Alexander. Few messianic prophecies are better known than this, chiefly because of its quotation in Mt 21:5 & Jn 12:15 as being fulfilled by the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on what we traditionally call Palm Sunday. **9:9**

The next vs tells how this righteous yet gentle King will bring peace to the nation & extend His rule over the entire earth. As Christians we believe that Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel & Savior of the world, is going to return to earth to establish the Kingdom promised to Israel & all those who've trusted in Him. We anticipate the reversing of the Adamic curse & the recreating of the earth to become as He originally intended it. Jesus will then reign as King of Kings & Lord of Lords. Many of the details of that coming Kingdom & of Christ's return are given in Scripture. What do we learn in vs 9?

**1. Jesus Christ is King** Jesus' so-called *Triumphal Entry* into Jerusalem at the beginning of Passion Week might be called His *Tragic Entry* because it triggered events that led to His death. Luke

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<sup>2</sup> Sabin, P; van Wees, H; Whitby, M, *The Cambridge History of Greek & Roman Warfare: Greece, the Hellenistic World & the Rise of Rome*, p 396

reports that when Jesus approached Jerusalem, He wept over it (19:41). The crowds lined the street & cheered for Jesus as the long expected King of Israel, but they were hoping for a political king, who would lead a military victory against Rome & bring peace & prosperity to their nation. They weren't so interested in a Messiah with a spiritual kingdom, who would provide forgiveness for their sins & who'd be Lord of every aspect of their personal lives. So within a week, the shouts of **Hosanna!** turned to **Crucify Him!** The fickle crowd was following Jesus for the wrong reasons.

Jesus' Triumphal Entry is reported in all 4 Gospels. To understand it properly, you have to recognize it's a complete reversal of all that Jesus has done in His ministry to this point. Up until now, Jesus has mostly kept veiled His identity as Messiah. When a demon proclaimed Him to be the Holy One of God, He told him to be quiet (Mk 1:24-25). When He healed people, Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone (Mk 1:44; 7:36). Even when He raised Jairus' daughter from the dead, He gave strict orders that no one should know about it (Mk 5:43). When the disciples gained insight into His identity as Messiah, Jesus told them not to tell anyone (Mark 8:30; 9:9). The only exception in John up to this point was when Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well that He was the Messiah (John 4:26). After the feeding of the 5,000, the crowd wanted to make Jesus King, but Jesus withdrew from them because it wasn't the right time. For nearly 33 years Jesus had purposely stayed out of the spot light because it wasn't yet time. But now the time has come & Jesus announces He is King, but not according to the plan of man, but according to the plan of God.

Jesus deliberately stages a public demonstration to proclaim Himself as Messiah in Jerusalem at the most widely attended feast of them all. There were perhaps a million people in the city for Passover. The gospels make it clear Jesus set up this event by sending 2 of the disciples to get the donkey & her colt. When some of the Pharisees in the crowd objected to the people's shouts of, **Hosanna!** rather than quieting the shouts, Jesus affirmed them by saying, **I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!** (Lk 19:40). There's a dramatic shift in Jesus' ministry at this point. We need to understand why. The answer lies in the Jewish concept of Messiah in that day. *Messiah* comes from a Hebrew word meaning *to anoint*. *Christ* comes from the Greek word *to anoint*. Thus the Messiah or Christ is the one whom God anoints, sent to deliver His people from sin & rule over

them as King & Lord. The kings of Israel were God's anointed rulers of His people, but they always fell short. Even David, the greatest king of Israel, made serious mistakes. But God promised to send one of David's descendants to reign on his throne, who would rule in absolute righteousness & justice, crushing all opposition under His feet (Ps 2). This political aspect of Messiah as King dominated Jewish thought in the 1<sup>st</sup> century as the nation chafed under Roman rule. This political aspect of Messiah's reign is behind Ps 118:26, which the people cite in Jn 12:13, **Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.** They added, **even the King of Israel.** But the OT presents a 2<sup>nd</sup> aspect of the Messiah, namely that He would be the suffering Servant who would bear the sins of His people, deliver them from God's judgment, & establish a kingdom of righteousness. He wouldn't only be the King, but also Israel's Prophet & Priest. This is the theme of Ps 110, which proclaims Messiah not only as a conquering Warrior, but also as a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. The suffering Servant is a theme in Isaiah 40-55, especially of chpt 53. It's also implicit in the prophecy of Zech 9:9, which presents Messiah not as a warrior mounted on a powerful horse, but as humble, mounted on the foal of a donkey. This idea of Messiah as the humble sin-bearer of His people wasn't popular with the Jews in Jesus' day. They were looking for a political Messiah. In the Triumphal Entry, Jesus was declaring Himself to be Israel's Messiah, but not the kind of Messiah they expected.

The phrase translated, **your king is coming to you** can also be translated, *your king is coming for you*, that is, *for your benefit*.<sup>3</sup> To receive the benefits that this King brings, we need to recognize our need. Israel was under the thumb of powerful foreign rulers. They were incapable of freeing themselves. But this King had the power to deliver them & He had their best interests at heart. Jesus is Israel's King & Redeemer, the promised seed of David. Isaiah spoke of Him when he said, **For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; & the government will rest on His shoulders** (Is 9:6). His kingship was announced after His birth by the wise men (Mt 2:2) & at His death by the sign placed on His cross, which read, **Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews** (Jn 19:19).

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<sup>3</sup> Kenneth Barker, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 7:662

We all must admit we're sinners & we're under the reign of sin that will destroy us & that we are unable to free ourselves. If we do this, we'll welcome the promised King & the benefits He offers. He comes for you! But who is He?

**A. The King of Authority** Chpt 9:1-10 distinguishes between 2 conquerors. The 1<sup>st</sup> (1-8) was the closer historical picture of the 2<sup>nd</sup> conqueror, who was yet to come (9-10). The 1<sup>st</sup> conqueror's name isn't given in the text but from the circumstances described, he's obviously Alexander the Great. He was an unrighteous pagan used by God to destroy the nations & preserve Israel. He's a human picture of Christ returning to judge the nations & save Israel. The implication is if God can do that through a godless human, imagine what He'll do in the end times through the divine Conqueror when He comes!

Authority is bound up with the idea of kings, especially in the ancient world. Today, monarchs, like the Queen of England, have almost no real authority. They function as state dignitaries. Their wishes may have some weight with those who run the government but they don't have much authority. But even in Jesus' 1<sup>st</sup> coming, when He came as the humble, suffering Servant, He possessed a quiet but total authority over all people & events. Although the Jewish leaders hated Him because He threatened their authority, they couldn't lay hands on Him until His time had come (Jn 7:30; 8:20). On what we call *Palm Sunday*, to fulfill this prophecy, Jesus staged a public demonstration to show the Jewish people & their rulers that He is the Messiah, but not the kind of Messiah they were expecting. Jesus' bold action of riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, to the cries of **Hosanna** led to His arrest & crucifixion at the very moment that the Passover lambs were being slaughtered in Jerusalem, in fulfillment of Scripture. The constant picture of all 4 gospels is that Jesus was firmly in charge of all these events. He wasn't a helpless victim. No one took His life from Him. He laid it down on His own initiative (Jn 10:17-18). We can't say for certain whether Jesus had prearranged for the colt to be loaned or if He simply knew in advance what would take place. Since He had clear foreknowledge of the specifics of His crucifixion & resurrection (Mk 10:33-34), I think He simply knew what would happen concerning the donkey. He told the disciples where to find it, what to say to the owner, & how the owner would respond. The point is Jesus was clearly in

charge of the events surrounding His death, including the triumphal entry, Judas' betrayal, the plots of the Jewish leaders, & His own death. None of it took Him by surprise. He is the King of authority who controls all things according to His purpose (Acts 2:23; 4:27-28). The question is: *Is Jesus the King your King? Does He rule in your heart & life?*

**B. The King of Justice** Zechariah says that Israel's king is **just** (some translate **righteous**, but the sense is *justice*). Justice & righteousness will characterize His rule. No more will anyone be denied justice. No more will corrupt politicians be in charge. A quick Google search of corrupt politicians has pages of hits. One example from American politics:

William Tweed was elected to Congress before he turned 30. But the real money was at home in New York, where he'd return to begin his climb to the top of the city's powerful Democratic machine known as Tammany Hall. Boss Tweed became a wealthy man—and one of the city's biggest land owners—thanks to some fairly basic scams, such as allowing over billing by favored contractors, widespread patronage, & accepting plenty of well-placed bribes & kickbacks. But in one of the early triumphs of investigative reporting, a series of reports by the *New York Times* beginning in 1871 helped bring down the Tweed Ring. Tweed was eventually convicted on hundreds of criminal charges, & New York City successfully sued him for \$6 million. But the money, believed to be a fraction of what he & his cronies actually stole was long gone (up to \$200 million worth \$4 billion today). He died in jail at age 55, secure in the knowledge that he stole more than any American public official before...or since.<sup>4</sup>

That story could be repeated endlessly. Much of the poverty & suffering around the globe stems from corrupt leaders who have no regard for justice. But Jesus will be just in the administration of His kingdom because He is righteous in His person. He isn't out to take advantage of His subjects for personal gain. He has their best interests at heart. The Messiah would be both the just One & the Justifier of many (Is 53:11). He is the King of Authority, King of Justice, & ...

**C. The King of Salvation** He is **endowed with salvation**. Scholars debate what the nuance of the verb means here. It can mean either that the Messiah Himself is saved by God or that He somehow has or possesses salvation & can thus grant it to others. Probably the latter is meant. That is, the King is salvation for all who belong to Him.<sup>5</sup> The difference doesn't affect the meaning, which is that Jesus came to bring salvation to His people. For the Jews, the salvation that Messiah would bring had political overtones. For centuries, they'd been threatened by hostile nations that wanted to

<sup>4</sup> [www.cnbc.com/2016/07/28/meet-americas-most-crooked-politicians.html](http://www.cnbc.com/2016/07/28/meet-americas-most-crooked-politicians.html)

<sup>5</sup> Boice, J. M. *The Minor Prophets: an expositional commentary*, p 532

annihilate or enslave them (Ps 129). Thus when God promised them a deliverer, they thought of one who would reign on David's throne & bring **salvation from all our enemies, & from the hand of those who hate us** (Lk 1:69-71). Yet at the same time, salvation for the Jew also had a personal dimension related to the individual's deliverance from God's judgment on his sins. Thus the father of John the Baptist prophesied that he would go before Jesus' coming **to give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins** (Lk 1:77). Or, as the angel told Joseph, **you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins** (Mt 1:21). Zech 9:10 refers to Messiah's 2<sup>nd</sup> coming, when He'll fulfill the national sense of salvation by ruling over all the nations. But the NT makes clear (along with several OT prophecies) that in His 1<sup>st</sup> coming, Jesus came to bring spiritual salvation by offering Himself as the sacrifice to satisfy God's justice against sinners. If God dismissed our sin without the penalty being imposed, He wouldn't be just. God has declared that the penalty for sin is death, not only physical death, but also spiritual death, eternal separation from the holy God (Rom 6:23). Through Jesus' death as the perfect substitute, He paid the penalty we deserved, which allows God to be both just & the Justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Rom 3:26). Whereas Alexander butchered thousands & sold multitudes into slavery, the Messiah-King is to be a Savior to Israel. He will save His people from their sins & give them far more than the promised deliverance from their enemies.

There are 2 wrong notions that will keep many people out of heaven, & they usually go together. 1<sup>st</sup>, people wrongly believe that God is too loving to send decent, moral people to hell. But that kind of thinking underestimates the serious nature of our sin. A single sin in thought, word, or deed is enough to condemn a person to hell. & it compromises God's justice in favor of His love, which compromises His holiness. The 2<sup>nd</sup> wrong notion is that most of us are good enough to qualify for heaven. Sure, we all have our faults, but we're not like murderers, terrorists, & child molesters, right? So we figure the scales will tip our way when we stand before God because we were sincere & we meant well. Many Jews made this mistake. They thought since they were descendants of Abraham, they observed the ritual law as given by Moses, & they were better than the Gentiles, that God wouldn't judge them. But their error was that it requires perfect righteousness to get into

heaven. That's where Christ & the cross come in. On the cross, the perfect Son of God offered Himself as the substitute for sinners. He came **to give His life a ransom for many** (Mk 10:45). Some day you will stand before God either clothed in your own goodness, which will condemn you, or clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, which will save you. God credits that righteousness to you the instant you renounce all trust in your own righteousness & put your trust in Jesus as your sin-bearer (Rom 3 & 4). Jesus came the 1<sup>st</sup> time bringing salvation, but He will come the 2<sup>nd</sup> time as the Judge of all the earth. If you've trusted Him as your personal Savior, then you can rejoice at the thought of His coming as the Judge because He has borne your sins.

**D. The King of Humility** *King of humility* sounds like an oxymoron, doesn't it? Maybe we should say He's the humble King. In contrast to the proud & arrogant Alexander on his war horse, Jesus came as a servant not just on a donkey, but the foal of a donkey. After Solomon's time, kings & warriors rode horses, not donkeys. The donkey was a lowly animal, used for peaceable purposes by those who were of no rank or position. By riding the colt of a donkey, Jesus was showing Himself to be the King, in fulfillment of our text, but not the exalted political king that the Jews expected. In His 1<sup>st</sup> coming, Jesus was the suffering Messiah who offered salvation & peace with God through His death. He did not come **to be served, but to serve, & to give His life as a ransom for many** (Mk 10:45). The Hebrew word for *humble* can also mean poor or needy in an economic sense, & that was also true of Jesus, who had no earthly wealth or possessions (Lk 9:58). The word also includes the meaning of a righteous man afflicted by evil men. Thus many commentators say the word pictures the suffering of the righteous servant of the Lord (Is 53).<sup>6</sup> Jesus willingly laid aside His rights & took the form of a servant, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Phil 2:5-8). Spurgeon pointed out that no false Messiah has ever copied Jesus in this taking the low place of a servant.<sup>7</sup> But our Savior commanded us to follow Him in this regard. After He took the towel & basin & washed the disciples' feet, He said, **I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you** (Jn 13:15). There are numerous commands in Scripture warning us not to think

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<sup>6</sup> Merrill Unger, *Zechariah: Prophet of Messiah's Glory*, p 163

<sup>7</sup> *Spurgeon's Expository Encyclopedia*, 3:129



too highly of ourselves & to think more lowly of ourselves (Rom 12:3, 16; Phil 2:3). I can't find any vss that tell us to build our self-esteem. The Messiah humbled Himself, setting all self-glorification aside. In the same sermon, Spurgeon applies the need to imitate Jesus in His lowliness:

*"But, then, persons have spoken evil of me. I do not deserve to be treated thus." Clearly it is specially wrong for any one to speak amiss of such an excellent being as you are. There lies the grievance.... You reply, "But, really, it was so malicious, & the charge was so absurd & unreasonable." Just so. People ought to be peculiarly careful not to hurt your feelings, for you are so deserving & praiseworthy. Is not self-esteem the spring of half our sorrow? ... If we were really lowly of heart, we should say, "I have been treated very badly, but when I think of how my Lord was treated, I cannot dream of complaining. This ... critic ... has been finding fault with me, & his charges were not true; but, if he had known me better, he might have found more fault with me, & have been nearer the truth."<sup>8</sup>*

So we should learn humility from our Savior. David Baron has pointed out that...

*Christ is the only person in all history whose character & experience answer to the description of the ideal king in this prophecy. He alone, among the sons of men, can be described as the true ... righteous One, who did no violence, nor was deceit found in his mouth.... The Lord Jesus Christ for us men & our salvation also became 'poor' & 'afflicted'—so poor that He Himself could say: 'The foxes have holes, & the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.' & of Him alone also is it true that He is endowed with & is the bringer of salvation, because He was Himself 'saved' or 'delivered' or 'made victorious' ... in the great conflict which He came to wage on our behalf with the powers of darkness."<sup>9</sup>*

He is the King of authority, justice, salvation, & humility. In George Washington's day, he was described like this: *He is a foe to ostentation & to vainglory.... Modest even to humility, he does not seem to estimate himself at his true worth. H receives with perfect grace all the homages which are paid him, but he evades them rather than seeks them.*<sup>10</sup> How much more is this true of Jesus?

Against the background of the invincible army of Alexander comes One who doesn't inspire fear, but praise & peace. This isn't a foreign tyrant, but Israel's own King. He isn't cruel & oppressive, but just & merciful. Rather than an appearance of power, He's seen as poor & meek. He wasn't, at that time, to come in earthly splendor or to reign in earthly power. He didn't come in wealth but in poverty; He didn't come in grandeur but in meekness; & He didn't come to slay Israel's enemies

<sup>8</sup> pp 136-137

<sup>9</sup> *The Visions & Prophecies of Zechariah*, pp 310-311

<sup>10</sup> French nobleman Prince de Broglie, quoted in Brad Meltzer's *The First Conspiracy*, p 45

but to save all mankind. The incarnation was the time of His humiliation, not the time of His glorification. Finally, we see He is...

**E. The King of Creation** This is evident from the fact that He rode into Jerusalem on an unbroken colt. I'm no expert on horses, but I know enough not to climb on an unbroken colt. Jesus' riding of this colt shows His power over the creation He spoke into existence by the word of His power. There was also a spiritual significance in the fact that the colt was unbroken. In the OT, when an animal was put to sacred use, it had to be one which hadn't already been used for common purposes (Num 19:2; Dt 21:3). Since this animal was now to be used for the Messiah, it was to be an animal that had never been ridden by man. Only the Lord of creation could do what Jesus did. If Jesus is the Creator, then certainly we should obey Him. This colt, like Balaam's donkey (Num 22), was smarter than people are. The colt received Jesus on its back without bucking, but He came unto His own people & they cast Him off. If we see Jesus correctly for who He is, we will submit to Him as the Almighty Creator, the King of authority, justice, salvation, & humility. As we do that, it makes sense that ...

**2. Jesus Christ is Coming to Reign** Vs 9 predicts Jesus' 1<sup>st</sup> coming in lowliness to offer Himself as the substitute for sinners. Vs 10 predicts His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming in power & glory, to reign over all the earth. Vs 10 tells of the final victories of the Messiah, as a result of which war will be abolished & peace will extend to the ends of the earth. This is the eventual outcome of Messiah's reign, but we don't see it here yet. Therefore, the entire church age may be said to fit between vss 9 & 10 of this chapter. When He returns, He'll remove all weapons of war, both from Israel & from all of Israel's enemies. When it says He'll **speaks peace to the nations**, it implies more than mere words. The power of His person & presence will bring about peace on earth. Unlike politicians, when Jesus speaks, His words carry authority & things happen (Ps 33:9). His Word will go forth with power & there will be a disarmament around the world. Chariots & war horses will be demobilized, every weapon will be destroyed, & **they will hammer their swords into plowshares & their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, & never again will they learn war** (Is 2:4;

see Micah 4:3).<sup>11</sup> Zechariah then quotes from Ps 72:8, about Messiah reigning **from sea to sea & from the River to the ends of the earth**, which is poetic language for worldwide dominion. When Jesus comes again it will be as the triumphant Ruler who will bring peace to the earth. Jesus predicted His own return to earth in power & glory (Mt 24:30; 26:64). Rev 19:11-16 shows Jesus coming again, this time not on a foal of a donkey, but on a white charger of war, to slay His enemies, as King of Kings & Lord of Lords. When He comes then there will be no need for implements of war, because He will bring perfect peace. Peace, permanent peace, will come at last. At that time, every person will meet Jesus. If you yield to Him now, you'll joyfully meet Him as Savior. If you reject Him now, you'll meet Him as Judge, when **He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty** (Rev 19:15). As believers, what should our response be to the fact that Jesus Christ is King & He is coming to reign?

**3. Our Response to Jesus, the Now & Future King Should be to Rejoice & Shout in Triumph.** The double commands, to **rejoice greatly** & to **shout in triumph**, emphasize exuberant joy. The commands are addressed to the **daughters of Zion & Jerusalem**, which means, those who are in a covenant relationship to God (Rom 2:28-29, 9:8). If Jesus is your King, then lift up your head & rejoice, for your redemption draws near (Lk 21:28)! Perhaps you wonder, *How can I rejoice greatly when there are so many overwhelming problems in the world & in my personal life? Jesus' coming will be nice, but that seems like a long ways off. How can I rejoice now?* The answer is the same for us as it was for Israel then: We rejoice by faith in our coming King. It would still be 4 long centuries from Zechariah's prophecy before Messiah rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, & even then, most of Israel missed Him! It has been 20 centuries since then. Scoffers taunt, **Where is the promise of His coming?** (2 Pt 3:4). The bottom line is, we either believe the Word of God or we don't! When He came the 1<sup>st</sup> time, Jesus fulfilled not only this, but hundreds of OT prophecies. It isn't unreasonable to assume that the prophecies about His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming will also literally be fulfilled. But, meanwhile, we must live by faith. Faith in the hope of His coming will fill us with great joy, even in the midst of difficult trials. Let me ask you, right now, *How's your joy in Jesus?* I have to fight the

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<sup>11</sup> Wiersbe, Warren, *Be Heroic*, p 133

flesh to gain this joy, just as you do. Remember, joy is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). Octavius Winslow wrote:

*The religion of Christ is the religion of JOY. Christ came to take away our sins, to roll off our curse, to unbind our chains, to open our prison-house, to cancel our debt; in a word, to give us the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Is not this joy? Where can we find a joy so real, so deep, so pure, so lasting? There is every element of joy—deep, ecstatic, satisfying, sanctifying joy—in the gospel of Christ. The believer in Jesus is essentially a happy man. The child of God is, from necessity, a joyful man. His sins are forgiven, his soul is justified, his person is adopted, his trials are blessings, his conflicts are victories, his death is immortality, his future is a heaven of inconceivable, unthought of, untold, & endless blessedness—with such a God, such a Savior, & such a hope, is he not, ought he not, to be a joyful man?*<sup>12</sup>

Are you pursuing that kind of joy? You should be, because your King is coming! The right reason to follow Jesus is because of who He is: God's Anointed One, the rightful King over every heart & life. He died for your sins, arose from the grave, & is coming back in power & glory to reign over all. So whether you struggle with tribulation, distress, persecution, poverty, health, or death itself, you can overwhelmingly conquer if your faith is in Him as your Lord & Savior (Rom 8:35-37)! Follow Jesus because of who He is, not for the temporal benefits that He might give you.

People often ask, *What's wrong with the world? Why is there injustice, conflict, disease, pain, tragedy, & chaos?* The answer is simple: the King is absent. But He is coming. He is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, who came once in humility, riding upon the foal of a donkey, but will return in honor as the mighty Judge of the nations & Savior of His people. He came in poverty & shame, but will return triumphant. Peter said that Christ's future return ought to have a practical impact on our lives: **Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct & godliness** (2 Pt 3:11). We ought to examine our hearts to determine the nature of our relationship to Christ. We also ought to go to those around us & call them to be a part of the Kingdom. Paul said we should be **giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, & transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins** (Col 1:12-14). Are you rejoicing in your King today? Is He your King? If not, why not?

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<sup>12</sup> *The Sympathy of Christ*, p 98, [http://www.grace-ebooks.com/library/Octavius%20Winslow/OW\\_The%20Sympathy%20of%20Christ%20with%20Man.pdf](http://www.grace-ebooks.com/library/Octavius%20Winslow/OW_The%20Sympathy%20of%20Christ%20with%20Man.pdf)