

# Truth for Today

The Bible teaching radio programme

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**Broadcast Date:** 3 April 2005

**No.** T0360

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## Places where Jesus was found: On the colt of an ass - John 12:15

"The queen is coming!" These are four words that generate action. City administrators clamour to prepare, businesses buzz with excitement; but schools hum with history and crafts. The head teachers make arrangements so that their schools are represented as the queen passes by. Teachers prepare lessons leading up to the event, no doubt including the making of flags and other items. The children hurry with excitement at the prospect of seeing "Her Majesty". Then there's the rustling and bustling, hustling and tussling of that magical day - all to snatch a mere glimpse of that royal person. If this is the case with a queen, think how much greater the activities and rejoicing should be in order to see the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Lord Jesus Christ!

Zechariah 9:9 foretells His coming to Jerusalem: "*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.*"

The expected Messiah entered Jerusalem, in partial fulfilment of this prophecy, two thousand years ago. He was greeted with the cries of the crowds: "*Hosanna to the son of David: blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest;*" (Matthew 21:5). A few days later, He was taken by wicked hands, crucified and slain. Yet, it was all in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God (Acts 2:23).

In this talk, we hope to:

- identify what is meant by Zion;
- explore the Person of the King; and,
- examine the events surrounding the fulfilment of the prophecy about five and a half centuries after it was voiced.

The name Zechariah means "Yahweh remembers". It is worth noting that in his prophecies, the Lord *remembers* His people. Zechariah was one of a priestly family who returned to Israel from captivity in Babylon. He prophesied about 520 BC. In his book, we find the Chosen One of God, the Messiah, presented in a number of ways. For example, He is described as the Shepherd, the man who is God's fellow. His name is the BRANCH who is revealed to be a Man, yet a Servant; and a King, but a Priest. In Isaiah there are further details concerning the BRANCH, including the fact that He is God (Isaiah 40:9). All these aspects relate to the Lord Jesus Christ as depicted in the four Gospels.

*Matthew is the Gospel of the King  
To whom the wise men precious tribute bring;  
A greater far than Solomon is here,  
In wisdom, power and glory without peer.*

*The Gospel of Luke, Messiah shows,  
Dispensing blessings everywhere He goes;  
The Son of Man to seek and save He came,  
For this He suffered, blessed be His name.*

*Yahweh's Servant in Mark we see,  
Obedient, toiling unceasingly;  
Healing the lepers, making lame to walk,  
Opening blind eyes, enabling dumb to talk.*

*John's Gospel reveals the glorious Lord,  
The eternal Son and the incarnate Word;  
Expressing God the Father by His love,  
Dying that we might live with Him above.*

The Lord focuses the prophet's attention upon Zion or Jerusalem. In Zechariah 1:14, the Lord of hosts (Yahweh

Tsebahoth) states: *"I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great zeal."* In verse 17 He says, *"My cities shall again spread out through prosperity; the LORD will again comfort Zion, And will again choose Jerusalem."* One of the key verses in the prophecy of the Lord by Zechariah in Zechariah 8:3: *"I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, the Mountain of the LORD of hosts, the Holy Mountain."*

Today, from many quarters, we find peoples battling for the possession of Jerusalem. But note that the King of kings is a Jew. Jerusalem is Israel's possession by the appointment of God. The intervention of politics will not prevent Jerusalem, under the rule of a Jewish king, from being the metropolis of a future earth. God has decreed it to be so.

Zion itself means 'a monument raised up' or 'spiritual illumination'. Originally, it was one of the mountains of Jerusalem that bore the name (2 Samuel 5:7). It is the place where God is known. On the other hand, Jerusalem means 'Possession of peace'. Both names are mentioned together to speak of the same place. Zion is the centre of God's blessing upon His people (Psalms 87:2 and 149:2). It is also the seat of Messiah's royal power on earth when He reigns as Prince of Peace (Isaiah 52:1-8). However, both Jerusalem and Zion are also used metaphorically to represent the favoured people of God - the faithful people of Israel. This is symbolised in the bride found in the Song of Solomon. It is vital to the interpretation of the scriptures to realise that Zion in the Old Testament is always linked with Israel. It does not represent the church of today.

### The Person of the King

Remembering that Jerusalem rejoiced (albeit temporarily) when the Lord Jesus Christ rode into the city, we can see whether He fitted the various points based in the prophecy by asking several questions:

- Is He the King?
- What is meant by *"cometh unto thee"*?
- Is He just?
- Does He "have salvation"?
- Is He lowly?

### Is He the King?

Throughout the Old Testament scriptures, there are numerous predictions concerning the Messiah who is God's "anointed" or "chosen" One. When speaking of Himself as the Good Shepherd in John 10, the Lord Jesus said, "...He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth..." (verses 2-3). He was saying that the true shepherd would enter by the door of prophetic scripture and the porter, the Holy Spirit, would open those scriptures concerning Him by their fulfilment. Here are some of the scriptures that help us to identify the Lord Jesus Christ as the expected Messiah:

<b>Isaiah 7:14:</b>	He was born of a virgin.
<b>Micah 5:2:</b>	He was born at Bethlehem.
<b>Jeremiah 31:15:</b>	Near the time of His birth there was the slaughter of the children.
<b>Hosea 11:1:</b>	He was called out of Egypt.
<b>Isaiah 40:3:</b>	John the Baptist prepared the way for Him.
<b>Isaiah 11:2:</b>	He was anointed by the Holy Spirit.
<b>Isaiah 9:1-2:</b>	He dwelt in Capernaum in the borders of Zabulon.
<b>Zechariah 9:9:</b>	His entry into Jerusalem.
<b>Psalms 41:9; 55:12-14:</b>	He was betrayed by a friend.
<b>Daniel 9:25-26:</b>	The time of His death.
<b>Psalms 16:10:</b>	His resurrection.
<b>Zechariah 13:7:</b>	Disciples forsook Him.
<b>Zechariah 11:12:</b>	Sold for thirty pieces of silver.
<b>Zechariah 11:13:</b>	Potter's field purchased with the blood money.
<b>Isaiah 50:6:</b>	Spit on and scourged.
<b>Exodus 12:46 and Psalms 34:20:</b>	Not a bone broken despite His horrific physical injuries.
<b>Psalms 22</b>	His sufferings, crucifixion and those gambling for His clothing.

If we simply look at Isaiah 53 alone (written about 700 years before His birth), we find many predictions concerning Him. He was the Man of Sorrows rejected by His people. He bore the griefs and sorrows of those same people. He made intercession for wrongdoers. He was smitten of God. He was wounded for the transgressions of His people. The Lord laid on Him the people's iniquity. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter. He was with the wicked and the rich in His death. His soul was made an offering for sin. He rose from among the dead. He will have an inheritance with the great and divide the spoil with the strong.

The mathematical probability of all these predictions being fulfilled by one man is remarkable. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Messiah who was to suffer first before entering into His glory. Oh, if you are a child of Israel, may God open your eyes to see the beauty of God's Son today, so that upon repentance and faith you may be part of His heavenly bride, the church! However, be aware that another terrible time awaits the Jew. The nation says, "Never again!" when considering the despicable horrors of the Holocaust; but, sadly, the scriptures tell us that the people of Israel still have to face a terrible ordeal before their Messiah appears in power and glory to deliver them. This trial is called "Jacob's Trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7). It is a precursor to the nation of Israel being born again spiritually under their glorious King. The fact that there is further rise in anti-Semitism in our, indicates that this trial may not be too far in the future.

The scriptures have identified the Lord Jesus Christ as the expected Messiah. He is the child who was born of Mary. He is the Son who was given by God. His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:5-6). He is the Son to whom God Himself says, "*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom.*" (Hebrews 1:8). He is God the Son who became man in order to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. If God had not intervened in the affairs of men two thousand years ago - if He had not provided a righteous ground upon which He could forgive people's sin - then He would have had to wipe out human kind altogether. Today, because of the finished work of the cross, His judgement is restrained by His longsuffering love. He still desires the salvation of all. But do not be passive or apathetic, time is short. The signs of the times found in scripture indicate that the patience of God is running out and this world is rapidly ripening for His judgement. May God open the eyes of our queen and government to realise the drastic consequences for our society of falling away from the truth of the living God.

### What is meant by "cometh unto thee"?

So the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of the Jews, entered Jerusalem on an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. The clause "cometh unto thee" in Zechariah 9:9 has the force of "for thy good". It shows us that the Word who was God became flesh and dwelt among us in order to bless and not to condemn. The Father sent Him (the Son) to be the Saviour of the world. In order for mercy to be gained for sinners, He had to die in order to exhaust God's judgement against sin. He was made sin in order that we who believe might be made the righteousness of God in Him. All who truly repent can see their sins borne in His own body on the tree. They recognise that He was delivered for their offences and raised again for their justification.

### Is He just?

The verse shows that he was "just". This is the word "tsaddick" which means that He was animated with righteousness. He preserves the peace and prosperity of the nation by fulfilling the commands of God in regard to others. His eye is upon the widow and fatherless. He delivers the oppressed. He supports the weak. He is a father to the poor. Psalm 37:21 tells us that such a righteous one gives freely without any thought of gain. It is in this King that righteousness and peace kiss one another. On the other hand, we read of this Just One in 1 Peter 3:18: "*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.*" There was no sin in Him. He knew no sin. He did no sin. Death had no claim upon Him. Yet He, the Son of God, delivered Himself up to death voluntarily in order that those who trust in Him can draw close to God as His children and call Him their Father.

### Does He "have salvation"?

The fact that the King has salvation means that He is "*endowed with salvation*" or "*saved*". This suggests that this event will also take place in the future. When the Lord Jesus came the first time, it was to **accomplish** salvation at the cross of Golgotha. Hebrews 9:28 states: "*So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*" In that chapter, we can find three appearances of the Lord Jesus. The first was in the end of the age when He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. This parallels with His being the Good Shepherd of John 10 and the sacrifice of Psalm 22. The second is His appearing in the presence of God on our behalf in heaven. This relates to His being the Great Shepherd of Hebrews 13:20 and Psalm 23. Finally, there will be His appearing as King of kings and Lord of lords without sin unto salvation. This speaks of Him as the Chief Shepherd of 1 Peter 5:4 and Psalm 24. Here He **brings** salvation with Him. And who is He? Psalm 24 answers: "*Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.*" Isaiah 59:20 verifies that the Redeemer shall come to Zion and Psalm 24:10 tells us He is not only the Lord (Yahweh), but the Lord of hosts.

### Is He lowly?

At His first coming, salvation was guaranteed for Himself as He passed through suffering and death. Nevertheless, in Matthew 27:42 we read the words of the chief priests and scribes as they mocked Him at the cross: "*He saved others,*

*Himself He cannot save.*” Psalm 22:21 gives us His prayer in the context of their mockery: *“Save me from the lion’s mouth; for Thou hast heard Me from the horns of the unicorns.”* We find His prayer has been answered in Psalm 118:21: *“I will praise Thee: for Thou hast heard Me, and art become My salvation.”* So it was!

Today, the salvation obtained by Christ at that cross is passed on to those who repent and believe the Gospel. In a future day, it will result in the salvation of Zion in both the physical and spiritual aspects.

In our day, we look upon a Christian’s salvation in three ways. First, there is the salvation from sin and its judgement when we show repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, through confessing His name, we are saved from many an adverse circumstance during our lives here on earth. Finally, our salvation will be complete when the Lord Jesus comes for us and we receive our new bodies (1 Corinthians 15). The Lord Jesus was “lowly”. The word in Zechariah 9:9 is not the normal word used for lowliness or humility. It is a word that primarily means “poor” or “afflicted” emphasising the physical condition rather than relating to the spirit of a person. It takes us immediately to the prophecies already mentioned in Isaiah 53. He was bowed under the griefs and sorrows of His people. In the day just prior to His appearing in glory, He will have heard the cries of the faithful Jews as they pass through trial. Just as He felt the persecution of Christians in the past and today, so He will enter into their sufferings. When He finally appears as their Deliverer, the faithful Jews will look upon Him whom they had pierced and they shall mourn for Him.

The last part of the passage reveals that He rode on an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. The first word used for ass indicates its ruddy colour. The second word for ass points to females and their endurance. The colt is a young male. In the East, the ass is respected as a noble animal although it is classed as unclean by the Law of Moses. It is frequently found in scripture as the mode of transport for people of wealth or rank. Abraham (Genesis 22) and the wealthy Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4) are examples of this. The family of Abdon the Judge all rode upon asses (Judges 12:14). A judge in this context was a deliverer or a saviour. So it is fitting that this Saviour-King should ride upon an ass. The fact that it was a colt suggests that no other person had ridden the animal. Kings since the days of Solomon were accustomed to riding upon horses or in chariots emphasising their *power*. Christ rode upon an ass to reveal His mission as one of *peace*. In that future day when salvation is brought to Israel, He will be the King-Priest predicted by Psalm 110, namely, a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. He will be seen as King of righteousness and King of Salem (peace). He, the Prince of Peace, will be a king and priest who blesses. Furthermore, His priesthood will last forever because He lives after the power of an endless life.

We may summarise the prophecy of Zechariah we have considered by quoting it from Young’s Literal Translation of the Holy Bible: *“Rejoice exceedingly, O daughter of Zion, Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, Lo, thy King doth come unto thee, Righteous - and saved is He, Afflicted - and riding on an ass, And on a colt - a son of she asses.”*

When we turn to the scriptures in the New Testament we find that the phrase, *“Just, and having salvation”* is not mentioned. This shows that this quality of righteousness and the fact that He is saved will be emphasised when He appears again to deliver Israel. So, in the Gospels, we find a partial fulfilment of the prophecy. Furthermore, the word for ‘lowly’ in the gospels is rendered as ‘mEEK’ indicating the submissive character that marked His first coming. Nonetheless, we can note several points from the Gospel records.

**Firstly**, we find that Jesus was all-knowing. Upon arriving at Bethphage, He sent two of His disciples to a village nearby. He said that they would find an ass with a colt. They were to bring them both to Him. If they were questioned, they were to say, ‘The Lord hath need of them’. The disciples obeyed. The ass and colt were released, with the consent of their owners, and brought to Jesus. The Lord Jesus Christ is omniscient an attribute of God Himself. He was also the Master (Lord) who should be obeyed. Yet He was humble because He allowed the disciples to seat Him ‘thereon’. The disciples used their own clothing to form seats on both animals. From the Gospels (other than Matthew), it is clear that He sat on the colt. Therefore, it is most probable that the company of the other ass would have been used to keep the young, unbroken one calm.

**Secondly**, He accepted the praise of the people who declared Him to be the Son of David. Legally, through the line of His stepfather Joseph, He was heir to the throne. By birth, His line through Mary also went back to David.

**Thirdly**, He accepted their cry that He had come in the name of the Lord. This is written of the Messiah in Psalm 118:26. It is in this Psalm where Christ is presented as the Stone that the builders rejected. The Stone later became the head of the corner. Thus, once again, we find His sufferings indicated, and the glory that followed is emphasised.

**Fourthly**, they expected Him to save them from the Roman occupation. ‘Hosanna’ means ‘Save now’. However, He had a far more solemn mission. He had to set the ground for their salvation from sin and judgement. This meant that He had to die.

The words that follow highlight the unbelief of the Jews in the city itself: *“When He was come into Jerusalem, all the*

*city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.*” The scriptures identified Him as the Messiah. His works showed that He had come from God. His spotless walk showed that He was no ordinary man. His raising of the dead showed Him to be the Son of God. His words revealed that He was equal with God. Yet, He came unto His own and, in general, they did not receive Him. Thank God that He gave to those who did receive Him the power (or right) to be the children of God, even to those who believe on His name. This scripture applies to us today. Have you believed on the name of the Son of God? Are you one of God’s children?

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