



The Mar Thoma Church
Diocese of North America & Europe
Christian Education Forum

Lenten Meditations

BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING

Zachariah 9:9-12

Images can inspire, remind, and transform because they are used to represent powerful ideas in a simple way. The Good Shepherd that was stricken for the flock, and the messianic Prince of Peace, are just two of the images that the book of Zechariah develops that are later used to describe Jesus the Christ. Another image is from Zechariah 9:9; "Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey".

"I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations." Zechariah 9:10

Most people believe that riding on a donkey symbolizes that the king will come in peace and it stresses his humility. But Charles W.F. Smith in his article: 'The horse and the ass in the Bible: an essay on Zechariah 9:9, 10', wrote an interesting comparison between horses and donkeys in the Old Testament. He wrote that in the majority of the Old Testament, horses are portrayed in a negative light. They are used to symbolize warfare, reliance on physical power (Psalms 20:7), foreign allegiances, oppression, and even idol worship (II Kings 23:11).

But the donkey is portrayed in almost the exact opposite manner. It is a reminder of simpler times when Israel was loyal to God. By riding on a donkey the king is reminding the people that they are to return to the days when they were faithful to God.

This verse is used to describe Jesus' entry into Jerusalem at the start of Holy Week. Matthew even quotes this verse in his gospel (Matthew 21:5.) Throughout Jesus' life and ministry he was constantly telling people to return to God and not to trust in our own abilities. The image of the Son of God, riding a donkey, is another example, another reminder, that:

"The war horse is a vain hope for victory, and by its great might it cannot save. Truly the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the Lord; his is our help and shield. Our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name." Psalms 33:17-20

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I pray that we always remember that you are the light of the world, and that you came into the world to spread your light and love to all people. Allow us Lord to always remember your sacrifice, your love, and our responsibilities to you and to those around us.
Amen.

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