

# REFORMED CHURCH CLANWILLIAM : SUNDAY 24 MARCH 2013

## MORNING SERVICE

**Sing before:** Psalm 149:1

*Let us commence this meeting with God by declaring openly to one another and to God:*

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Beloved grace and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, through the mighty working of God the Holy Spirit.

**Amen**

Psalm 48:1

**Confession of faith:** Apostolic

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.  
And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into Hell, the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, a holy universal Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting

**Amen.**

*After the reading of the Law we confess our guilt and pray for forgiveness and a new life before God with Psalm 32:3*

Law

Psalm: 32:3

**Prayer:**

- **Doxology**
- **Worship**
- **Confession of sins**
- **Forgiveness**
- **Gratitude**
- **Prayer for the need of the congregation of the church, the authorities and the sinful world and appeal to God's promises**
- **General prayer**
- **Enlightenment from the Holy Spirit for the sake of the ministry of the Word.**

**Amen**

Psalm 89:7

**Scripture reading:** Zechariah 9

**Scripture text:** Zechariah 9:9

**"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.**

(Zechariah 9:9)

Sometimes events occur that we do not understand and which we then deal with incorrectly – and then such events were predicted to us by the Lord but we failed to recognize them as such when they occurred.

- One such event not recognized by the faithful was the arrival of the Lord Jesus.
  - They expected Him to arrive with the regalia befitting a great King who would rule over the whole world.
  - But this expectation was wrong – because the Lord had predicted that Jesus, when He comes, would not have the regalia of a king.

We consider our text with reference to the following aspects of the prophecy that Jesus would come:

1. **The poor condition of the people.**
2. **The message that the King would come.**
3. **The manner in which the King reigns.**

#### 1. **The poor condition of the people**

Ninety years ago these people were humiliated when their ancestors were conquered in this city and taken away into exile in Babylon.

- Meanwhile the king of Babylon allowed those who wished to return to their fatherland.
- About twenty years before Zechariah saw these visions at night these people returned to Jerusalem.
- They returned in two groups – one with Zerubbabel at the head and another with Ezra as its leader.

The people who had returned had received specific instruction from the Lord:

- They were to rebuild the temple and the city.
- This was to serve as proof that they served the Lord and did not worship idols as their ancestors had.

Matters did not go well with the returnees.

- They were menaced by the people who, during their absence in exile, had taken possession of the land.

- These new occupants saw them as a great danger because they feared that the Jews would drive them from the land and their property.

Hence they and their leaders tried to find ways and means of preventing the reconstruction of the temple and the city walls.

- They tried to stop the work - with some initial success.
- When that failed they sent untruthful stories about the returned Jews to the king in Babylon.
- Eventually they tried to stop the work with force of arms and plotted to kill Nehemiah. (Nehemiah 4-6)

How does the Lord see these poor people who in poverty and oppression try to rebuild the temple?

- The Lord loves them greatly
- In verse 8 He says that He Himself will watch over them – they are His house and He will defend them so that nobody will overrun them again.
- In verse 9 the Lord calls them "**Daughter of Zion**".

"**Daughter of Zion**" is a well-known image that occurs often in the Bible.

- With it the Lord describes these people as a young woman or virgin awaiting her bridegroom.
- The book of Revelation ends with the revelation that the Hereafter commences with the wedding of this bride with her Bridegroom.

The Lord gives this young woman who struggles to arise from her poverty great hope.

## 2. The message that the King is coming

The bridegroom who is coming is not just anybody. He is a King.

- The young woman must be readied to receive a king.
- The reception must be joyful – the virgin must be so happy that she shouts with joy when the king arrives.

The Lord tells the young woman what the King who is coming will be:

- He is righteous.
  - There are many passages in the Bible that speaks of the Lord's righteousness.
  - What is striking is that in many of these passages the Lord's righteousness is linked to the fact that He brings justice to the poor who are oppressed.
  - The bride is poor therefore the promise means to her that she especially has reason to rejoice for when the King comes her poverty will end.
- But there is a warning – the King will not arrive with wealth and luxury.
  - The Daughter of Zion must be careful in her expectations!
  - The King will arrive concealed – He comes humbly and He will ride a donkey's foal.

The Lord repeats here an old prophecy. (Genesis 49:11)

**"He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch, he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes".** (Genesis 49:11)

- The prophecy makes it clear that the Messiah will ride the foal of a donkey when He comes as King.
- It also refers specifically to the occasion when He comes to be crucified and His clothes be drenched with His own blood.
- In the passage quoted it is referred to us the "blood of grapes".
- This is also a reference to the wine at the Last Supper. This prophecy was fulfilled as we see in Matthew 21:2+3: **"Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them "go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them and he will send them right away".**

This occurred the last time Jesus went to Jerusalem.

- That was the week in which He was crucified to atone for our poor faith.
- That was the week in which He bore the punishment for all the misery caused by our sins.
- The prophecy reveals that the King became part of His broken and sinful people so that He could take upon His shoulders the charges laid against them.
- The Daughter of Zion must not expect Him *to be a great and illustrious person arriving in wealth and splendour.*

It occurred as predicted.

- Jesus was born in poverty.
- Instead of playing around in a palace, He grew up the child of a poor carpenter.

That is why the Daughter of Zion did not recognize her King!

- They did not recognize Him even when He fulfilled the old prophecy by entering Jerusalem riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
- The Daughter of Jerusalem had forgotten her God's prophecy.

It is interesting to note how the style of living and of status symbols changes over the centuries.

- In the days of Moses a donkey was highly valued as a mount.
- Moses let his wife and sons ride on a donkey on their journey to Egypt. (Exodus 4:20)
- In the Book of Judges we find a few passages showing that the wealthy and important people rode donkeys and the snobs rode white donkeys, see Judges 5:10.
  - In Judges 10:4 we read of Jair who had thirty sons riding on thirty donkeys and that they controlled thirty towns known as the Towns of Jair.
  - In Judges 12:13 we are told that Abdon had forty sons and thirty grandsons whom all rode on seventy donkeys.

But as times changed so did the status symbols

- In the days of David mules were the valued animals to ride.
  - David himself had a royal mule.

- All his sons rode mules.
- The donkey was no longer the prized mount.

A number of years later mules were replaced by horses and chariots as status symbols.

- Donkeys were no longer considered.
- **It is in this period that the prophecy that the King who is to come shall ride a donkey is fulfilled.**
- **The prediction expected the faithful who awaited the coming of the King to have the power of discretion.**

The King arrives, but outwardly He will not look like a king.

- He will ride the foal of a donkey.
- At that time a donkey will not be a prized symbol indicating the status of a king.

**The true King is not bound to the earthly regalia indicating an earthly king. He is a totally different King, one who is unique.**

### 3. The way in which the King reigns

It is remarkable how the values of mankind have changed with time.

- The Jews expected a king who would reign by force of arms.
- The people of the Last Days expect a King who shall come in peace.
- Both are wrong!

The True King came to preach to the people the peace of God.

- The smallness of the King and His peacefulness are shown by the foal of the donkey that he is riding.
- He lacked not only the external trappings of power and glory of a king.
- He also lacked the army of horses, chariots and swords.

This the Jews should have known because the prophecy revealed it (verse 10).

**"I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem and the battle-bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth".**

(Zechariah 9:10)

God's kingdom of peace commenced when Jesus came to earth.

- The important point is that the victory of the Messiah's people is not gained by force of arms.
- It was not gained that way when Jesus came to earth the first time and it shall not be achieved by it when He comes the second time on the clouds.

This does not mean that, because they do not have arms to fight with, the faithful will lose all they have. No, God will fight.

- First He shall fetch His elect from out of all nations.
- That shall occur when all nations appear before His throne of judgment and the Lord will end all unrighteousness.

Jesus' Kingship is misleading to those who do not know God's power.

- They see only the foal of the donkey and reject the almight of God.
- A king without the trappings of earthly power is not good enough for them.

But -

- In the same week that He rode into Jerusalem on the back of the foal of a donkey this King destroyed the power of death.
- He shattered the power of hell so that it could never again rise up against Him or His elect.

That is why the Lord writes in this prophecy that He thinks of the blood of His covenant.

- It is the blood of this King that was spilt on the cross to ransom all the chosen from the power of Satan.
- The prisoners who are freed from the waterless pit is a metaphor depicting the miseries in which the believers are caught up.
  - It reminds us of Jeremiah who was cast into such a pit.
- Out of this condition of lostness the true King saves us with His blood of His covenant.

Perhaps the problem of our modern time lies here – the modern man expects a Messiah who will bring peace only.

- Where the people at the first coming thought only of force of arms the people of the Second Coming think only of peace and compromise.
- Both expectations are wrong – because the Messiah's peace expects of the chosen to release their principles like an arrow on the principles of the unbelievers.
- In verse 13 it is said that the Lord will use Judah as His bow to shoot the sons of Ephraim as arrows against Greece.

Eventually the Lord appears to all like lightning in a storm that will come when the trumpet is sounded.

- Verse 15 shows clearly that the Lord, as a mighty warrior will sling His arrows down onto the unbelievers like flashes of lightning.
- The trumpet that is sounded is His signal as commander of the heavenly hosts to attack.

The King is coming.

- We must joyfully prepare for His arrival, for He shall destroy all powers that oppose His glory and His church.
- He will take us from this broken earth and clothe us with heavenly glory.

The Lord has predicted His Second Coming for us. Therefore we must read the signs correctly.

- He will not be riding the foal of a donkey – the time for peace is past.
- He will now come like lightning out of a storm, for he comes to judge.

- The Jews misunderstood the First Coming of the King because they expected a king arriving with glory and power and He came riding a donkey.

We expect and preach peace and expect a King of peace. Beware!

- Now He comes to judge.
- Those who have the wrong expectation will, like the Jews, be caught on the wrong side.
- Which means that they who miss the Second Coming of the true King will fall into hell.

Therefore, see to it that you know your Bible so that you may know how your King will come and be ready to receive Him with joy.

**Amen.**

Closing prayer.

Closing Song: Scripture Versification 81:1, 4

The Lord bless and keep you, the Lord make his face shine on you, the Lord turn His countenance to you and give peace.

**Amen**

Dr MJ Du Plessis  
 Helping Reverend  
 Reformed Church Clanwilliam  
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 Scripture Modern King James Version