April 13, 2025 - Zephaniah 3:14-20 - "The King Shall Return"

Introduction:

Today is Palm Sunday. Palm Sunday marks the day that Jesus made his Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem and offered himself as the King of the Jews. Easter is the perfect time for a movie about Jesus to be released. Angel Studios released the animated film "The King of Kings". It has generated over $14.6 million in pre-sales. The film follows the legendary author Charles Dickens story about the life of Jesus to show that Christ is the true "king of kings." The movie emphasizes His sacrifice for our sins. My sermon this morning is about the King of Kings who was rejected by His people but will return and will become not only King of the Jews but King of kings. When he came into the capital city He presented himself as their humble king.

People began stripping palm branches off the trees and then started laying them in the pathway as Jesus rode by. Palm branches were a symbol of victory. The winner of the Olympics races carried a palm branch as a flag. Jesus descends from the Mt. of Olives to Jerusalem to offer himself as King of Israel. And as Jesus rode into town I am sure that some thought," Here is the one who will free us from Rome!

The crowd followed Him into Jerusalem and yelled out, 'Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest… which means. They cried out "Save us, save us." Many were there that had heard Him teach, seen Him heal the sick, give sight to the blind, cause the lame to walk, and raise the dead and they followed Him where-ever He went. I think it's interesting to note that many in the crowd praised Christ only because they thought He was going to release them from the control of the Roman government. They had heard the prophecies about the King. They believe the Messiah would set up his kingdom at that time.

That day was foretold by the prophet Zechariah 520 years before Christ was even born. We read from his book, "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. Folks, it happened exactly according to the scriptures. Look with me at Matthew 21:1-9.
Now, we know that Christ was rejected and was not exalted as the King of the Jews; instead of sitting upon a throne he was nailed to a cross. This week we will reflect on the passions of Christ… You may be here this morning thinking why does this even matter to me about Jesus riding on a donkey and people waving some palm branches 2000 years ago? Folks, the kingship of Christ did not come 2000 years ago but you and I could be living when the king of kings shall return.

It is written by another prophet Zephaniah in chapter 3 that Christ our King is coming again and he will set up His Millennium kingdom. Folks, we need to keep our hearts and mind in

perspective of the scriptures and what they promise if we are to have hope. Jesus said, "But the Scriptures must be fulfilled."

Folks, there is a new world coming. A day when there will be no illness or disease, no need for doctors. No poverty, no famines, no earthquakes, no racial unrest, no need to lock your doors for crime will be almost unheard of. How can this be? That wonderful day will become a reality a time of peace and joy that people have dreamed of. That day will occur when Jesus Christ the King of King returns as it is written in Zechariah 14:9.
And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

It will be known as the Millennial Kingdom, a literal 1000-year reign of King Jesus ruling on planet earth. It will be an earthly political kingdom of Christ when He will restore the nation of Israel, their temple worship, and their holy city and fulfill his covenant to David and take his rightful throne. His appearance will be a visible, physical and catastrophic event, as we will see. Matthew 24:27: For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

I He Shall Returns in All His Glory

1. The Lord Jesus will return to earth in glory as King. His first task after Armageddon will be to separate the righteous from the wicked, as a shepherd separates his sheep from the goats. The nations of the earth will be gathered before Him when He does this. The subjects of this judgment are those who have survived the tribulation, be they believers or unbelievers.

The Bible pronounces in Rev. 19 verse 15...And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations. By the power of His spoken word, not with bombs, missiles and weapons, He will destroy the armies of the earth. By simply speaking, "the sword of judgment" Jesus will smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: That "rod of iron" is a symbol of tough justice, of unbending, unwavering righteousness. It is the standard of God's morality that He cannot lessen or diminish in any way. – Romans 3:23 Righteousness will reign in all the earth. Christ will smite the nations into utter submission and establish His absolute rule.

2. The glory of God will return as it left. Ezekiel the O.T. prophet penned in chapters 9 -11 concerning the Shekinah glory "meaning the divine presence of God" leaving His people. The pillar of the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, it went first upward from the Temple Mount down the Kidron Valley and up the Mt. of Olives. For decades the glory of God had been with Israel but because of their idolatry, the Shekinah glory of God left them. "Ichabod" (The glory is departed from Israel," (1 Sam. 4:21) was written over the nation. Christ will return exactly as he left. Look at Acts 1:8-12.

3. When He returns to the Mount of Olives it will split open from the east to the west, and the remaining embattled population of Jerusalem will flee the city through this gap. (Zech. 14:4-5).

Christ reclaims the earth, however before the earth can be reclaimed, it must be cleansed. You wouldn't move back into your house infested with termites without first exterminating and cleaning it up. That is what Christ must do before He reclaims the earth. All rebellion must be rooted out and purge the rebels from the face of the earth. The earth is full of such rebels.

5. Ezekiel was privileged to look far beyond his days to see the glory of God return to the city and to His people. Chapter 43:1-2 gives a breathtaking account of the glory of God returning through the Eastern Gate. This description corresponds to Revelation 19. The presence of the Lord will return to a Jewish Temple in Jerusalem and will remain there.

II He Shall Returns to Establish Temple Worship

1. At the end of the Tribulation, Jesus Christ will establish His Kingdom and throne in Jerusalem and begin His thousand-year reign. A glorious Millennial Temple will be constructed, far surpassing the Temples built by Solomon, Zerubbabel, and Herod.

2. Ezekiel chapters 40 to 42 give very exacting measurements of this building. The Millennial Temple will be approximately one mile square. It will be the largest and most magnificent structure ever erected, and it will all be for the glory of God. The outer areas will be far larger than the present-day city of Jerusalem. Present-day Jerusalem, which is 2,500 feet above sea level, is not large enough to contain the future Temple area spoken of in the Scriptures.
Israel's long-standing desire for a permanent dwelling place for the Lord will finally be met. The Lord will dwell in His holy Temple. Jerusalem will finally be the city of peace, and people from all nations will go there to worship the Lord. What a day that will be!

Zechariah seemed to indicate that at least three changes will take place when the Messiah returns to the earth at His second advent. As we already said; the Mount of Olives will split open from the east to the west. Second, living waters will flow toward both the Mediterranean and Dead Seas (Zech. 14:8). For this to occur, Jerusalem will have to be lifted up. Third, not only will Jerusalem be raised up as a high mountain, but it will be greatly enlarged as well. Ezekiel 45:1 states that the holy portion of the land will be immense, measuring 25,000 by 25,000 reeds. This is an area 50 by 50 miles, or about 2,500 square miles.

III He Shall returns with His Bride; the Church

1. The Church will accompany Christ in His second coming. People like you and me standing side-by-side with heavenly beings of immense power. We will be made leaders and administrators in this dispensation and help Christ to rule on planet earth for 1000 years. This truth is foretold in the O.T and N.T.

2. Jesus came at first as the passive lamb to be slain for our sins. What compelled him to fulfill his mission? It was the comfort and truth of Scriptures). The Scriptures kept everything in perspective for our Savior, holding Him steadfast in the knowledge that everything He was experiencing was according to His Father's plan.

Jesus could proceed with confidence because the Scriptures assured Him that the Father was in control. The Scriptures assured Him that he shall return one day as a Lion and take his rightful place as King. Since Jesus was confident in what the scriptures foretold so you can be too.

Conclusion & Invitation:

Never let the world crisis and culture around you disillusion you from the father's will and purpose for your life. What he has said will come to past. Turn to the scriptures and allow them to reorient you to God and His activity. If you will immerse yourself daily in the Word of God, you will not be caught off guard when crises come.