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# A Great King Is Coming

*by: Ronald L. Dart*

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The prophecies of Zechariah are among the most difficult in the Bible. It is not only that Zechariah is so rich in imagery and symbols, it's a strange mixture of the past and the future. An odd mixture of events in history, of people, personages, places, things that happened and things that never happened then, but are going to happen before man's age is finished.

There is absolutely no doubt that some of Zechariah has been fulfilled in history. It is just as certain that much of it is prophetic and I was debating with myself as to whether more of it is future or whether more of it is passed and I think I have come down on the side of more of it is future. Some of it is prophetic to the coming of the Messiah, some of it looks all the way to the millennium.

## **A Great King Is Coming**

Right in the middle of this difficult prophecy, is a prophecy of the great King to come, but oddly it is not what we would expect to hear about a great King.

Zechariah says in chapter 9 verse 9, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout O daughter of Jerusalem behold your King comes to you. He is just, having salvation, lowly, riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

This is not what one would expect. A king, you would think, would ride into town on a chariot. A king would ride in on a chariot with someone holding a laurel over his head and with crowds of people praising him.

Maybe he would come in on a horse, but of course, in the Bible, horses and chariots are the cavalry, they are instruments of war. They are the tanks, and Bradley fighting vehicles of that age. They are war making instruments.

"Your King comes to you, lowly, riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass." The Hebrew word for 'lowly' means basically, 'poor, needy and in depressed circumstances'. Not exactly the sort of thing you would ever think of a king or in any way would represent a king.

## **Jesus' Triumphal Entry Into Jerusalem**

Now Jesus was ready for his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, here is the Messiah, here is the Savior, here is the one who is coming to save His people.

Matthew 21 verse 1, "When they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, {2} saying to them, "I want you to go over to the village over there and you will find an ass tied and a colt with her, un-tie them and bring them here to me, {3} if anyone says anything to you, you just say, "The Lord has need of them," and he will let them go and you come right over here with those animals." {4} All this was done," said Matthew, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet saying, {5} "Tell the daughter of Zion, "Behold your King comes to you, meek, and sitting upon an ass and a colt, the fowl of an ass.""

Right in the middle of Zechariah, this prophecy is found, and Jesus fulfills this prophecy, in His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, for the people who are praising him are children and the things that they're laying out in front of Him on the road as He goes through are palm fronds.

What does all this mean? Why is it that the King, when He comes, the Messiah, when He comes, why is He coming 'lowly' and I can't imagine frankly how the first readers took Zechariah.

### **Restoration Of The Kingdom Of Israel**

For indeed, the expectations of a Messiah were there, but the expectations generally were of a restoration of the Kingdom of Israel. The restoration was to throw the Romans out. We will do what the Maccabees failed to do, and we will actually succeed in establishing, once again, the Kingdom of Israel.

What did they think when they read Zechariah, "Your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on an ass, upon a colt, the foal of an ass" (Zechariah 9:9).

All of this must've seemed very, very strange to people long ago. I think it even seemed strange to Jesus' own disciples when He did it, but this was prophesied long before this by Isaiah. Isaiah is another prophet whose work is convoluted and kind of confusing in a way, a little hard to follow. It is a strange admixture of history and prophecy, of the past and the future.

### **Jeroboam, The Son Of Nebat**

Isaiah wrote, chapter 9, verse 1, "Nevertheless there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past He humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future, He will honor Galilee of the Gentiles by the way of the sea along Jordan."

Now, I imagine the casual reader going through here doesn't have a clue what in the world he is talking about here, because if you have no idea of the prophecy of the times you won't get this.

The fact is Zebulun and Naphtali were in the far north of Israel. They were very far removed from Jerusalem and they were in the area that Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, created as the new House of Israel, separated from the House of Judah, and this is the man who stopped the

observance of the Feast of Tabernacles and established a new feast, a month later on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the eighth month. He established a new center of worship in Bethel. He said, "It is too much for you people to go all the way to Jerusalem and also the feast is too early, so we're going to put it a month later, we are going to do it on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the eighth month and you don't have to go to Jerusalem, you can stop at Bethel or if you live in the north you can go on up to Dan," and he made priests of the lowest of the people and established a new worship for the northern tribes of Israel, plunging them into darkness. They were indeed neglected and cut off and finally went into captivity.

Then in verse two of Isaiah 9, it is probably a familiar Scripture do you, "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light, on those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned."

Zebulun and Naphtali, the northern tribes in the far north were left completely in the dark because they were cut off from the Temple, they were cut off from the worship of God. They were cut off from the ritual ceremony, the normal calendar, everything was taken away from these people. They were left in the dark.

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned. {3} You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy, they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when men divide the plunder."

It is a celebration, it's a happy time.

"For as in the day of Midian's defeat," {4} "you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, {5} Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning and fuel for the fire."

This is over. He is not doing things this way anymore. He will not be coming into town on a horse or a chariot. He will be coming to you meek, lowly, riding upon an ass, upon the colt, the foal of an ass.

### **A Great King Is Coming**

Isaiah 9 verse 6, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders, and He will be called, Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. {7} Of the increase of His government and of peace, there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne, over his kingdom establishing it and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on forever."

This is a prophecy, well off into the future for us.

"The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this."

### **Jesus Is Called The Mighty God**

Now this is a staggering prophecy. The implications are enormous in this passage, because this passage is telling us that the Messiah will be born of a woman, "Unto us a Son is given, unto us a child is born"... and the Messiah will be called the "Mighty God" (Isaiah 9:6).

Now this is a matter of controversy sometimes among Christian peoples, as to whether or not Jesus would be truly God, whether or not Jesus preexisted before his human birth, and here's a prophecy that says, "When He comes, when He brings light to Zebulun and Naphtali, when He finally comes on the scene, He will be called the 'Mighty God.'

What you do with this? Well, my suggestion is you just take it as it is.

### **The Birth Of The King**

Matthew chapter 1 and verse 18, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: As His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. {19} Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded putting her away privily. {20} But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary your wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. {21} She shall bring forth a son, and you shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins.""

"That Wonderful Counselor, that child that was to be born, was to be a savior.

Matthew 1 verse 22, "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, {23} Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is, God with us."

Now you would expect great things in the birth of a king, wouldn't you? You would expect a massive national celebration! You would expect huge things. I guess when a child is born of the Queen of England, it must be an enormous experience, a time of great celebration throughout the whole land. You would be disappointed in this case.

The story is told again in Luke chapter 2 verse one, "It came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed." An old familiar comfortable Scripture. "And Joseph," verse four, "went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David,) {5} To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. {6} And so it was while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. {7} And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

This is not what one would expect for a great king. Now, here's my question, was it possible for God to find them a room? That's silly isn't it? Was it possible for God to have a house prepared for Jesus to be born? Well of course it was! Couldn't God have worked things out so that Jesus could have been in not only a house, but perhaps even born in a palace? Of course, He could!

But He didn't! Have you ever asked why? Have you ever asked why it was that God allowed his Son to be born in a stable, wrapped up in swaddling clothes and laid on hay in a manger as His place of birth, why did God do it that way? When everybody knows God could have easily done it anyway, He wanted to do it. I have to conclude, there was a purpose behind it.

Just as there is a purpose behind the Scripture in Zechariah, "Behold your king will come to you lowly, riding upon an ass and a colt, the foal of an ass." Just as all these things were said of Jesus, this also I think had a point and a purpose and you would expect announcements to be made to all of the high-level people, but they weren't. Not one single person in Jerusalem was even told, much less the high priest, the king, any of the Levites. Nobody in Jerusalem, the scribes and Pharisees were all left completely in the dark about the birth of the Messiah. No one was told.

The people who were told were a bunch of shepherders not far from Bethlehem, who were sleeping in the field at night keeping watch over their flocks. They were out there with their flocks taking care of things.

Luke 2 verse 9, "And the angel of the Lord appeared before them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were terrified. {10} And the angel said, "Relax, don't be afraid. I'm am bringing you great tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. {11} For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.""

I'm sure this meant a whole lot to these shepherds. These were religious men, obviously, otherwise I don't think the angels would've gone to them and I don't think it would have meant anything to them if they had not been religious, if they had not been expecting a Messiah.

"There is born to you a Savior, Christ the Lord. {12} This shall be a sign to you, you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. {13} And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, {14} "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and goodwill toward men.""

My favorite chorus in the 'Messiah,' is this one, "Glory to God in the highest." I really would like to have heard the song of the angels on that night. It must've been amazing to behold.

But what on earth did the angel mean, when he said, "This shall be a sign to you?" Did he mean, "This night you are going to recognize Him?" When he says, "This shall be a sign to you." A sign is a very important thing in the Bible, whenever a sign is given to somebody, it's very meaningful. What in the world did this mean? It is almost as though the angel said, "Listen Up! This is important! "You will find this child wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." Why? Why did the angel want to tell them that?

### **Wise Men From The East**

I think it was a meaningful thing, that the Savior, the newborn Savior, was of a humble birth. But there's more! As I said, Jesus' birth was not revealed to the kings and priests in Jerusalem, but it was revealed to somebody else.

We find in Matthew chapter 2, "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, {2} Saying, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and we have come to worship Him.""

Who are these people and why were they told? You kind of halfway understand shepherds, but why drag these people halfway across the world for this new born Savior and why did God bother with them?

Legends have abounded about the wise men. They even have names created for them, Gaspar, Melchior and I forget the third guy's name (Balthasar). Of course, it is not their names anyway, they were made up names for them. Nobody knows what their names were or even who they were. Nothing can be said with certainty about these men except they came from the East. That seems to be important.

I would like for you to add a little footnote in your Bible, if you make notes, you might want to make a reference to this. Isaac and Ishmael were not Abraham's only sons. Did you know that? After Sarah died and after Ishmael was gone, Abraham married a woman named Keturah. He had six more sons by this woman and they are all named in the Bible (Genesis 25:1-2). And you might want to make a note of the Scripture, the one I read about the Magi.

Genesis 25 and verse 5, it says, "Abraham gave everything he had to Isaac, but to the sons of his concubines which Abraham had," (which suggests that there could be more than Keturah). "Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward into the East country."

Abraham sent them away in the East. Now this is absolutely the only rationale I can find for why on earth God would've said anything to a bunch of magi in the Far East about the birth of a Son except for the fact that this was a Son of Abraham, He was the promised seed of Abraham. God may have announced the birth of the promised Son of Abraham, to Abraham's other sons. Maybe? Maybe not? But at the same time, it is the only rationale that I can find that makes any sense to me at all, as to why He would bother telling those people about the birth of the promised seed in whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed. For I don't doubt at all, that the children of Abraham knew that promise and hoped for it and waited for it, like the rest of the world did.

### **Feast of Tabernacles Season**

I think at this season of the year, because for those of you that may be new to us, we believe that Jesus was born not far from this night of the first night of the Feast of Tabernacles, somewhere in this fall season of the year. I think it's good to remember that Jesus came as one of us, and by that, I mean He was born of the flesh. We have really gone over that pretty thoroughly in years gone by, that it was necessary that Jesus come in the flesh.

"He that denies that Jesus is come in the flesh is not of God and is of the spirit of antichrist" (1 John 4:3).

## Jesus Was Born of Lowly Birth

I think it is important that we understand Jesus not only came in the flesh, but he came of lowly birth. He came like one of us, of a working-class family, and that He as a young man, worked with his hands to earn a living for Himself, for His mother and for His family. When He was born, He was as helpless as any of us and He was laid in a manger. He didn't even have a proper crib. He was not in a house. He was in a stable and I think all that is there so that we can know our Savior is one of us. And we know that when He finally came into Jerusalem, He came not as a conqueror, but He came as a Savior, riding on a colt of a donkey.

The next time Jesus comes, it will be different!

{"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30).

"The seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." (Revelation 11:15)

Jesus Christ will return and set up the Kingdom of God and rule for 1,000 years. He will rule as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:16).}

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*The late Ronald L. Dart was a Christian evangelist whose teachings still inspire thousands of people around the world. His legacy spans decades. For more information about the teachings of Ronald L. Dart, visit [RLDEA.com](http://RLDEA.com) where you will find booklets, articles, sermons, Bible studies, and books by Mr. Dart.*

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## Discussion Questions

1. What is your opinion of the book of Zechariah?
2. What do you think the ancient readers of Zechariah thought when they read the lowly description of their future king?
3. How would you explain Isaiah 9:6, where it describes the Messiah as "Mighty God"?
4. Have you ever asked yourself why God allowed Jesus to be born in a stable?
5. Why do you think God told the wise men about Jesus' birth?
6. Have you ever studied about them?

7. Have you ever realized that the Bible never says that there were three of them?
8. What are your thoughts about Mr. Dart's idea that these wise men from the East may have been descendants of Abraham?
9. What are your thoughts about the fact that Jesus first came to us via a lowly birth?
10. Do you ever think of all Jesus had to sacrifice for us?