

Zechariah's Easter Prophecies
Lesson 03 of the series: "It is finished!"

1. On Palm Sunday Jesus fulfilled a prophecy of Zechariah by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.

"...the news that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem swept through the city. A large crowd of Passover visitors took palm branches and went down the road to meet him. They shouted, 'Praise God! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD! Hail to the King of Israel!' Jesus found a young donkey and rode on it, fulfilling the prophecy that said: 'Don't be afraid, people of Jerusalem. Look, your King is coming, riding on a donkey's colt.' His disciples didn't understand at the time that this was a fulfillment of prophecy. But after Jesus entered into his glory, they remembered what had happened and realized that these things had been written about him."

John 12:12-16 (NLT)

"Rejoice greatly, O people of Zion! Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey—even on a donkey's colt." Zechariah 9:9 (NLT)

Note: The crowd was shouting a Psalm: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD." Psalm 118:26 (NIV)

Life Application: We must recognize that Jesus is a different kind of king.

"My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world." John 18:36 (NLT)

"You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many." Matthew 20:25-28 (NLT)

2. Judas fulfilled a prophecy of Zechariah by betraying Jesus for a price and later returning the money.

"When Judas, who had betrayed him, realized that Jesus had been condemned to die, he was filled with remorse. So he took the thirty pieces of silver back to the leading priests and the elders. 'I have sinned,' he declared, 'for I have betrayed an innocent man.' 'What do we care?' they retorted. 'That's your problem.' Then Judas threw the silver coins down in the Temple and went out and hanged himself. The leading priests picked up the coins. 'It wouldn't be right to put this money in the Temple treasury,' they said, 'since it was payment for murder.' After some discussion they finally decided to buy the potter's field, and they made it into a cemetery for foreigners. That is why the field is still called the Field of Blood. This fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah that says, 'They took the thirty pieces of silver—the price at which he was valued by the people of Israel, and purchased the potter's field, as the LORD directed.' Matthew 27:3-10 (NLT)

"So they counted out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said to me, 'Throw it to the potter'—this magnificent sum at which they valued me! So I took the thirty coins and threw them to the potter in the Temple of the LORD." Zechariah 11:12-13 (NLT)

Life Application: Sin blinds us to the consequences of our actions.

"But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him." 1 John 2:11 (NIV)

Then Jesus told him, "I entered this world to render judgment—to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see that they are blind." John 9:39 (NLT)

3. The disciples fulfilled a prophecy of Zechariah when they deserted Jesus.

Jesus told them, "Tonight all of you will desert me. For the Scriptures say, 'God will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have been raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there." Peter declared, "Even if everyone else deserts you, I will never desert you." Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, Peter—this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know me." No!" Peter insisted. "Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you!" And all the other disciples vowed the same. Matthew 26:31-35 (NLT)

"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, the man who is my partner," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. "Strike down the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn against the lambs." Zechariah 13:7 (NLT)

Life Application: God knows how weak we are and loves us anyway.

"...the spirit is willing, but the body is weak." Mark 14:38 (NLT)

“He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. The LORD is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust.” Psalm 103:10-14 (NLT)

Good News! “...he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.” Titus 3:5 (NLT)

Life Application: Because God knows the future and is always with us we don't have to be afraid.

“Remember the things I have done in the past. For I alone am God! I am God, and there is none like me. Only I can tell you the future before it even happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish.”
Isaiah 46:9-10 (NLT)

“Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:20 (NLT)

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Discussion Questions

1. Looking back at your notes from this week's lesson discussing some of the prophecies of Zechariah and their fulfillment during the week before Easter, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?
2. What is your favorite Easter memory? Why? What is your funniest Easter memory?
3. Read John 12:12-16, Zechariah 9:9 and Psalm 118:26. Zechariah made his prophecy about the coming Messiah more than 500 years before Palm Sunday happened so how could he have known that the people of Jerusalem would shout a verse from Psalm 118 in triumph as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey? How does it make you feel to know that God knows the future? What impact, if any, should this information have on our daily lives?
4. Read Mark 15:7-17. The same crowd that cheered for Jesus on Sunday wanted him dead on Friday. What changed? Why?
5. Read John 18:36 & Matthew 20:25-28. What kind of king is Jesus? What does he mean when he says that his kingdom is not of this world? How does this impact the followers of Jesus?
6. Read Matthew 27:3-10 & Zechariah 11:12-13. Why did Judas betray Jesus for money? (see also Matthew 26:7-16 & John 12:3-6) Why wouldn't the priests take Judas' money back? How do you explain such treachery and hypocrisy? (see 1 John 2:11) How does sin "blind" us?
7. Read Matthew 26:31-35, Zechariah 13:7, Titus 3:5 & Psalm 103:10-14. Why didn't Jesus desert the disciples after they deserted him? How does it make you feel to know that Jesus saves us and we cannot save ourselves?
8. Counting a Saturday night worship service and a sunrise service at our Prattville location, Centerpoint will be offering 10 worship services next weekend. Why do we do this? Who can you invite to join you for worship on Easter weekend? Spend some time as a group praying for people by name.
9. Discuss the following quotations:

"Let us never put confidence in people, or in any sanctity of position, office, or dress. If apostleship did not make Judas a saint, neither will position, office, nor dress make us saints." Unknown

"We must never forget - if we are to grow in grace, and therefore grow like Christ - that the One we trust, love, and serve is a crucified Savior. To follow Him means taking up the cross, as well as denying ourselves. It means a crucified life." Sinclair B. Ferguson

"I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." Jesus in John 3:3

"Though the Bible was written over sixteen centuries by at least forty authors, it has one central theme--salvation through faith in Christ." Max Lucado