

An Advent Devotion

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation. Zechariah 9:9

This is a word of prophecy written at a time when the Savior had not yet come. It is a word of prophecy given to the Daughter of Zion, the Daughter of Jerusalem. Who was the Daughter of Zion, the Daughter of Jerusalem? It was the congregation of believers in Israel, who desired to lift up their eyes to Mount Zion towering forth in Jerusalem, for upon that mount stood David's royal palace, and it was from David that the eternal King – the Savior – was to descend according to His human nature. And the desire of the believers was not to be put to shame. Through the Holy Spirit, the Prophet cried: "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion; shout, O Daughter of Jerusalem! Behold your King comes to you," your King, your eternal King! And He "is just, and having salvation": through His justice and righteousness, the righteousness which He procured for you, a poor sinful people, He will help you forevermore. Christians, believing Christians, the Savior has come. By His bloody merit He has procured for you that righteousness with which you can stand before God. He has helped you. Say:

Jesus' Thy blood and righteousness
My jewels are, my glorious dress,
Wherein before my God I stand
When I shall reach the heavenly land.

You are now the Daughter of Zion, the Daughter of Jerusalem. And now rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion; shout, O Daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King comes to you: He is just, and having salvation. Christians, you believe in Him, you are righteous before God, you are helped.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus Christ, dear Savior, I give thanks to You that You have fulfilled Your Word – given through the prophets – that You have truly come. Even me, a poor sinner, have You made righteous before God: to me, too, have You opened heaven; me, too, have You helped. Continue to help me, Lord Jesus, through Thy Word and Thy Holy Spirit, that in true faith I may firmly hold You; that I may rely upon Your merit wrought for me; that I may serve You, my King, willingly and gladly, and finally enter the blessed realms above. Amen.

This devotion is from Crumbs by C. M. Zorn (1914).

A Word from Pastor Preus

One of the great themes of Advent is that of our King coming to us lowly. He comes to serve us. He is our King. His kingdom is not of this world; but it was to bring His kingdom to us that He was born into this world (Jn. 18:36-37). Jesus does not say that His kingdom is “not of this world” simply because of its true origin in a faraway place. It is also “not of this world” because of how it works. It does not work by means of God threatening and intimidating us. No! Look at the first word in the prophecy to the left: “*Rejoice!*” God rules us by giving to us the forgiveness of sins. He rules us by teaching us who He is, and by giving us reason to be glad.

Or does this sound trite? Does it lose meaning in time? Do we see divisions in the church, emptying pews, a culture growing more and more hostile to the exclusive claims of our Lord? What does this say about the strength of God’s kingdom? Well, it speaks more to how much we *need* God’s kingdom. There are forces outside of us – the devil and his demons; there are forces within us – our own sinful hearts and our fleshly affections and opinions that are constantly thinking wrongly about God; there are forces that are opposed to God’s rule because they are opposed to God’s mercy.

This is to say that by nature you are not just a sinner – alas, we all make mistakes – NO! It is much more serious than that! It is to say that you are by nature an enemy of God’s mercy. You are by nature inclined to define your relationship with God based on your *own* feelings and thoughts and desires rather than on the sure promises of God in Christ that make for true joy. But Christ rules us as our King by coming to us lowly. He comes to sinners lowly. He comes to you who have been taught your need for God’s mercy. He comes to you who need a righteousness that has not failed and that has not been manufactured by a sinner, but that has been earned and accepted by your God and Judge. Jesus has what you need. This Jesus comes and gives it to you.

He comes to us. He is just. But He does not use His justice to show us our own *lack* of justice and to condemn us. No, He gives this justice/ righteousness to us. He is *having salvation*, remember. He comes to save us. That is why we *Rejoice!* to be where He is. That is why we hear His word. That is where He comes to us. Amen.

– Pastor John Preus

For any who would be interested in more daily devotions by Carl Manthey Zorn, as printed here, please ask Pastor, and he will be happy to prepare one for you.