

The Coming King

Zechariah 9

By Scott Huckaby

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Zech 9:1-8 – Israel Defended Against Enemies

The burden of the word of the Lord

Against the land of Hadrach,

And Damascus its resting place

(For the eyes of men

And all the tribes of Israel

Are on the Lord);

² *Also against Hamath, which borders on it,*

And against Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise.

³ *For Tyre built herself a tower,*

Heaped up silver like the dust,

And gold like the mire of the streets.

⁴ *Behold, the Lord will cast her out;*

He will destroy her power in the sea,

And she will be devoured by fire.

⁵ *Ashkelon shall see it and fear;*

Gaza also shall be very sorrowful;

And Ekron, for He dried up her expectation.

The king shall perish from Gaza,

And Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.

⁶ *“A mixed race shall settle in Ashdod,*

And I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.

⁷ *I will take away the blood from his mouth,*

And the abominations from between his teeth.

But he who remains, even he shall be for our God,

And shall be like a leader in Judah,

And Ekron like a Jebusite.

⁸ *I will camp around My house*

Because of the army,

Because of him who passes by and him who returns.

No more shall an oppressor pass through them,

For now I have seen with My eyes.

v1 – What is this burden Zechariah mentions?

burden of the word of the LORD: The two oracles that make up the remainder of Zechariah (chapters 9 through 14) are undated, but many scholars believe they came from Zechariah's old age.

- Chapters 9-11 focus on the Messiah's first coming... a burden because Israel missed their Messiah
- Chapters 12-14 focus on the return of the Messiah... a burden because of the Tribulation (Jacob's Trouble, Jeremiah 30:7)

What is the significance of the places mentioned here?

They all represent people who have oppressed Israel in the past listed from North to South...

Hadrach, Damascus, Hamath, Tyre and Sidon,

Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, Ashdod, Philistines

They also happen to be places conquered by Alexander the Great of Greece in 332-331 BC.

Genesis 12:3 – *I will curse him who curses you*

How is it that the eyes of men, not just Israel were on the Lord?

The eyes of men would be on the Lord in the sense that they are on God's instrument of judgment, Alexander.

What was significant about the judgment of Tyre?

Tyre and Sidon were the two major cities in the land of Lebanon. Tyre was an important commercial city that was thought of as impossible to conquer. The Assyrians laid siege against Tyre for five years, but never conquered the city. Nebuchadnezzar tried for 13 years to conquer Tyre, but Alexander did it in seven months.

- Alexander the Great conquered Tyre by laying siege for seven months then using the rubble from the old city to make a causeway out to the island city. It was a spectacular achievement of both military and engineering strategy. *“destroy her power in the sea”*

How was Tyre and Sidon “very wise”?

They had worldly wisdom as revealed in their tower and riches but they did not fear God...

Romans 1:21-22 – *although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools*

Thinking you can be wise without God is foolishness that will lead to destruction...

1 Cor 3:19 – *the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*

Tyre trusting in their military and economic power did not help them in their day of judgment.

What would become of the Philistines who so tormented Israel during the time of David?

Ashkelon shall see it and fear; Gaza also shall be very sorrowful: The Philistine cities of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and Ashdod are south of Tyre and Sidon, and were also conquered by Alexander the Great in 332-331 B.C.

- *Ashkelon* caused fear, would themselves experience fear and become uninhabited
- *Gaza & Ekron* caused sorrow and would themselves experience sorrow
- *Ashdod's* people would be replaced

Why is Gaza mentioned twice?

The first time refers to the people who caused Israel to be sorrowful would themselves experience sorrow. The second reference is to the king of Gaza who would die.

v7 – What is this taking away the blood and meat in the mouth of the Philistines?

God would end the pagan Philistine practice of eating unclean food and drinking blood.

How would Ekron be like a Jebusite (v7)?

The Jebusites inhabited Jerusalem when David conquered the city (Joshua 15:8, 2 Samuel 5:6-9, 2 Samuel 24:16-18). David did not wipe out the Jebusites, but merely incorporated them into Israel. The same would happen to the people of Ekron.

v8 – Who is him who passes by God's house?

When Alexander the Great marched through Lebanon and the Promised Land towards Egypt he did not conquer or attack Jerusalem. God promised to protect and spare His house during this time, and He did through a remarkable chain of events connected to Alexander the Great and the High Priest.

- Josephus gave an account of Alexander meeting with Jaddua the High Priest in Antiquities 11.8.4-5. Alexander had a dream back in Macedonia where God revealed to him that he'd have success in having dominion over the Persians (happened in 333 BC). Jaddua showed Alexander from the book of Daniel how God would enable Greece to overcome the Persians. Alexander was so impressed that he decided to not molest Jerusalem.

Zech 9:9-10 – The Coming King

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.*

¹⁰ *I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
And the horse from Jerusalem;
The battle bow shall be cut off.
He shall speak peace to the nations;
His dominion shall be 'from sea to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the earth.'*

v9 – What is amazing about how the Messiah is prophesied to come into Jerusalem?

This Messiah-King doesn't ride the triumphant stallion of a conquering general, but the customary mount for royalty, coming in peace. This was quite a contrast to the conqueror Alexander the Great. But Israel wanted a conqueror instead...

Romans 9:31-32 – *Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.*

Israel tripped over the stumbling stone of Jesus Christ not recognizing Him for who He was and why He came.

What does it mean that the Messiah will be lowly?

He will come as a humble servant of all.

Matthew 20:28 – *the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many*

How can we emulate Jesus in His humility?

“Well, I will try to be lowly...” You cannot do it in that way. We must not try to act the lowly part; we must be lowly, and then we shall naturally act in a humble manner. It is astonishing how much of pride there is in the most modest.

What is significant about the donkey being described as, “a colt, the foal of a donkey”?

This seems to be a Hebrew expression of speech emphasizing that the animal is purebred. Thus, a truly magnificent, royal mount.

Did the Jews acknowledge the Messiah when He rode the donkey into Jerusalem?

Rejoice greatly ... Shout ... Behold, your King is coming: This clearly prophesies what is known as the triumphal entry of Jesus (Matthew 21:5), when He presented Himself as the Messiah to Jerusalem and the people of Israel.

- The people acknowledged Him but became disenchanted when they realized He wasn't there to relieve them from the tyranny of Rome.
- And the Jewish religious leaders rejected Him because he was not what they expected of the Messiah. His rejection was prophesied by Jesus:

John 5:43 – *I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive*

Though the triumphal entry was a joyful celebration, a Roman spectator would have dismissed it as nothing...

- When Julius Caesar came back to Rome from Gaul, there was a 3-day parade displaying all the captives and booty he brought back.
- Jesus was a different kind of King.

v10 – Of what is this verse speaking?

The battle bow shall be cut off. Zechariah 9:9 belongs to the first coming of Jesus, but Zechariah 9:10 belongs to the Second Coming of Jesus, when He comes in power and glory to reign over this earth for 1,000 years.

His dominion shall be "from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth": When Jesus rules over this earth, His reign will be universal. The entire earth will be under His authority. This speaks of Millennial Kingdom reign of Jesus on this earth.

- In that day there will be an enforced righteousness, and He will no longer allow war...

Isaiah 2:4 – *He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.*

How do we know that verse 10 has to be referring to the Millennial Kingdom and not the Eternal State?

His dominion shall be "from sea to sea: There is no sea in the Eternal State...

Revelation 21:1 – *I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.*

What is the river mentioned in verse 10?

Based on the context, this is probably the river that originates in the Millennial Kingdom temple...

Ezekiel 47:1-8 – *there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east... it was a river that I could not cross... When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed.*

Why wasn't the Church Age mentioned here?

The church of the inter-advent age was a mystery to the Old Testament prophets... they only saw the mountain peaks of the Messiah's coming, the valley in between was out of their view.

Ephesians 3:3-7 – *He made known to me the mystery... which in other ages was not made known to the sons of*

men... that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel

God is using the church in this age to provoke Israel to jealousy which will in time lead to their salvation as a nation...

Romans 11:11 – *have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.*

Zech 9:11-17 – God Will Save His People

¹¹ *"As for you also,*

Because of the blood of your covenant, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

¹² *Return to the stronghold,*

You prisoners of hope.

Even today I declare

That I will restore double to you.

¹³ *For I have bent Judah, My bow,*

Fitted the bow with Ephraim,

And raised up your sons, O Zion,

Against your sons, O Greece,

And made you like the sword of a mighty man."

¹⁴ *Then the Lord will be seen over them,*

And His arrow will go forth like lightning.

The Lord God will blow the trumpet,

And go with whirlwinds from the south.

¹⁵ *The Lord of hosts will defend them;*

They shall devour and subdue with slingstones.

They shall drink and roar as if with wine;

They shall be filled with blood like basins,

Like the corners of the altar.

¹⁶ *The Lord their God will save them in that day,*

As the flock of His people.

For they shall be like the jewels of a crown,

Lifted like a banner over His land—

¹⁷ *For how great is its goodness*

And how great its beauty!

Grain shall make the young men thrive,

And new wine the young women.

Why would God set Israel free from the waterless pit?

Because of the blood of your covenant: This is God acting towards Israel in light of the blood covenant He made with Abraham. This was the foundational covenant that preceded the Covenant of Moses.

- As Israel turns to God, He will turn to them and rescue them as if they were trapped in a dry cistern.
- Genesis 15 describes animals being cut in two with God passing between the pieces signifying that He alone was obligated to fulfill their covenant.

v12 – What is the stronghold?

It is God... *return to the stronghold, you prisoners of hope:* Because of His faithful promise, even the prisoners are prisoners of hope. They should receive encouragement from His promise and return to the stronghold - both in the sense of a military fortress and a spiritual fortress in the LORD Himself.

What is the principle where God would restore to His people whatever they lost in being faithful to Him?

He would restore to them double... also seen with Job:

Job 42:10 – *And the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.*

We lose nothing when we are faithful to God...

Joel 2:25 – *I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten*

v13 – How had God enabled the sons of Judah to prevail over the sons of Greece?

This was partially fulfilled in the days of the Maccabees, when God raised up Jews to fight against the successors of Alexander's Empire. Nevertheless, the ultimate fulfillment of this promise will be realized in the Millennial Kingdom... Greece is simply a representation of Gentile rulers oppressing Israel.

What is amazing about Greece being mentioned here by name?

This was 200 years before Alexander the Great would rise to power. At this time Greece was just a collection of goat herding tribes.

- This mention of Greece has led some “higher criticism Bible scholars” to say Zechariah couldn't have written the second half of this book... they do not understand how predictive prophecy works. They deny the supernatural capacity for God to inspire His prophets with what would happen in the end from the beginning.

What do we know about the Maccabean revolt?

It was a Jewish rebellion led by the Maccabees against the Seleucid Empire and against Hellenistic influence on Jewish life. It began when Seleucid King Antiochus Epiphanes slaughtered a pig on the Temple altar in 168 BC. The Maccabees eventually attained independence in 134 BC.

- The Jewish Feast of Dedication or Feast of Lights, Hannukah, began with the miracle of the Temple menorah burning for 8 days until more consecrated oil could be made available despite having a days-worth of oil to start.

What other Jewish holiday resulted from overcoming a plot to destroy them?

Purim, from the Book of Esther ... Both Hannukah and Purim are non-Levitical feast days that are celebrated by the Jews. Even Jesus participated in Hannukah in John 10:22-23.

v14 – What does it mean that “the Lord GOD will blow the trumpet”?

The idea is that the LORD Himself leads the battle. Both the Bible and the Koran have the idea of the holy war - which Islam calls Jihad - but there is a huge difference between the idea of the holy war in the Bible and in Islam. Jesus alone carries out the Biblical holy war - never His people. In Islam, the Jihad is the responsibility of every good Muslim.

- This is God's battle, not the battle of men.

v15 – What does “subdue with slingstones” bring to mind?

As David defeated Goliath in a totally unmatched conflict by the world's standard, being on God's side makes all the difference.

v16 – When would Israel be like the “jewels of a crown”?

This will be the case during the Millennial Kingdom when Jesus will rule from Jerusalem.

v17 – What does the reference to grain and new wine represent?

Grain shall make the young men thrive, and new wine the young women: As in other passages that speak of the Millennial Kingdom (Hosea 2:21-22, Joel 2:19) here grain and new wine are pictures of prosperity and blessing.

What principles come to mind from the discussion today?

- God is a promise keeper... we can trust His promises to us.
- God will ensure that justice is done... there is no need for us to seek vengeance, God will on our behalf.
- God reveals Himself in Scripture... only God can declare the end from the beginning.
- Jesus demonstrates the power in humility... we tap into that power when we humble ourselves depending on Him.
- God restores what we have lost in being faithful to Him beyond our expectations.
- Our battles are won when we allow God to fight them for us.