

Message #12**Zechariah 9:1-17**

Back in the years AD 234-305, there was a philosopher who spent a lot of time teaching in Rome whose name was Porphyry. He hated Christianity. After he retired from teaching, he went to Sicily and wrote against Christianity and the Bible. One of his goals was to disprove the Bible.

One of the books of the Bible that drove him crazy and gave him fits was the prophetic writings of Daniel. Daniel had made such specific predictions that came true that just boggled Porphyry's mind. One of the main predictions was the one Daniel made about Greece. Daniel specifically named Greece as the power that would take over the Medio-Persian world (Daniel 8:21; 10:20). Then Daniel said Greece will be led by an impressive leader (Alexander the Great) who will rise to power and conquer the world and then he will die and his kingdom will be parceled out to four different people in four different locations. That is exactly what happened. His Kingdom was dispersed to his four generals (Daniel 11:3-4).

One of the most amazing proofs that the Bible is inspired by God is fulfilled prophecy. Some of the most amazing prophecies you will ever see are in these next chapters of Zechariah.

I doubt that Porphyry read Zechariah because had he read it, he certainly would have seen that Zechariah also mentions Greece (Zech. 9:13). In fact, what Zechariah predicts that Greece will do in Zechariah 9:1-8 is so specific and so precise and so amazing that the only explanation is the Bible is inspired by God.

But this prophecy written by Zechariah is not just given to prove the Bible is inspired, it is given to give hope to the people of God. That is what prophecy should do. What Zechariah wanted Israel to know is this:

THERE IS COMING A DAY WHEN ALL OF ISRAEL'S ENEMIES WILL BE DESTROYED AND JESUS CHRIST WILL COME AND POUR OUT ALL OF THE BLESSINGS ON ISRAEL.

Now the predictions here are amazing. They are predictions that name people and places. God is certainly sovereign in history, but He is moving history toward His conclusion and that is what you see here.

One section of Scripture that has had the most impact on the New Testament and in fact the most impact to believers understanding of Jesus Christ's work in salvation and in His future Kingdom is Zechariah 9-14. These chapters are rich in prophecy about Jesus Christ. George Klein said these chapters should be pursued by students "enthusiastically" (*Zechariah*, p. 254).

Zechariah 9-14 jumps us ahead to the third time-frame of the book. We may remember that Zechariah received his eight night visions in the second year of Darius the Mede's reign (Chapters 1-6).

Then, two years later, in the fourth year of his reign, Zechariah gave answers to that delegation from Bethel (Chapters 7-8). Now we jump forward in time some 40-50 years for the remaining chapters. In Zechariah, we move from the visions of the LORD to the Word of the LORD to the burden of the LORD (Zech. 9:1; 12:1).

Verse 1 begins by saying, “the burden of the word of the LORD.” That word “burden” (massa) is a word that means this is an oracle that is authoritatively given by God and it usually is some serious threat God makes (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 512).

Now it is clear from **verse 1** and following that this burden does have to do with serious threats He is making against specific places. The land is identified as “the land of Hadrach.” This land is only mentioned here in the Bible but it is usually identified as land that was dominated and controlled by the Assyrians that was located somewhere in the vicinity of Damascus.

Now what God reveals here is very specific. In fact, liberals still attack this section today because it is so precise. **These prophecies were given to encourage Israel. God was in complete sovereign control of everything going on in her land. Eventually God will destroy the proud, arrogant enemies of Israel and He will bring His Messiah-King and Israel will rejoice.**

SECTION #1 – The judgment of the cities that surround Israel. **9:1-8**

Now there are several cities that are specifically mentioned in this context, which today are mostly Arab and Muslim controlled. Eventually God will destroy them. Now what you are about to see here is an amazing display of God’s sovereignty. **God would allow Greece, under the control of Alexander the Great, to invade the Promised Land and conquer cities and at the same time He would protect Israel.**

The predictions that are made here are made about 150 years before they happened. Zechariah outlines how Greece will invade Palestine and the route they will use to do it. The only way Zechariah could have known this was if God revealed this to him. There is no other explanation. Now there are eight cities specifically mentioned.

City #1 - Damascus. 9:1b- Damascus is the oldest Syrian city in existence. This is the first on the list that would be conquered, but it is also predicted that she would be a resting place where all people of Israel would look to the LORD.

City #2 - Hamath. 9:2a - modern day Hamma located about 130 miles north of Damascus. It sits on the Orontes River.

City #3 – Tyre. 9:2b - port business city with two harbors. One on mainland and one on an island about half a mile out in the sea. This city on the island had a 150 high wall around it.

According to **verse 3**, Tyre built herself a fortress and piled up money. The fortress was so impregnable that the Assyrians attacked her for five years and Nebuchadnezzar besieged the main land city for 13 years (585 B.C.-573 B.C.), but neither could ever take the island city.

City #4 - Sidon. **9:2c** - Sidon was a port city to the north of Tyre.

According to **verse 2**, both Tyre and Sidon were very wise and skilled in their business dealings and they were also very arrogant. Especially the people of Tyre were very arrogant people. Both Tyre and Sidon were coastal cities located in the N.W. of Israel's land.

Now the specific prediction in verse 4 is that the LORD would demolish Tyre.

City #5 - Ashkelon. **9:5a**

The next four cities mentioned were strong Philistine cities located on the Mediterranean coast to the south and west of Jerusalem. The Philistines actually dominated 5 cities and the one not named is Gath. Gath was more inland. So this prediction is 4 of 5 Philistine cities will be taken.

Ashkelon was a prosperous port city and **what is predicted is that when she would see the powerful Tyre fall, she too became afraid. It is predicted that Ashkelon would end up being deserted.**

City #6 - Gaza. **9:5b**

Gaza was a fortress city that stood on a 60 foot tall mound. When Persia controlled the world, it used Gaza as a base for its military operations. It was a Philistine city, located in a key position on the Mediterranean. **The prediction is that Gaza will writhe in pain and the King of Gaza would be killed.**

City #7 - Ekron. **9:5c**

Ekron was located in the far north of the Philistine cities, near Tyre. **What is predicted here is that this city would lose all its hope when it would see the calamity coming to the land.**

City #8 - Ashdod. **9:6**

Ashdod was a proud and arrogant city because of its "mongrel race." What that means is that it was a city known for its intermingling of immigrants. They prided themselves on being a sophisticated city. **It is predicted that the power of the Philistines would be cut off.** God says He will remove them and destroy them and repopulate the city with a mongrel people.

Verse 7 predicts that He will remove all of their pagan religion. Idolatrous sacrifices were eaten with blood. It is predicted that eventually the people living in these areas will worship Jesus Christ.

According to verse 8, when all of this destruction of cities was taking place, He would protect His property and people.

Now I am certain that when Zechariah made these predictions, everyone got a good laugh. Zechariah is making specific predictions about specific places. These were successful, powerful, prominent places of the world and here comes Zechariah with these crazy predictions. Only it turns out they weren't crazy predictions. They were very accurate. In about the year 334 B.C., a young 21 year old named Alexander lit out from Greece with an army of about 35,000 men. They moved thru Turkey, which at the time was dominated by the Persians. Alexander defeated Darius at Issus and then moved south into the Promised Land. He sent one of his commanders to Damascus and it was easily conquered and then he started to move against the cities.

Alexander started down the Mediterranean coast and he attacked Sidon and took it. He moved to Tyre and spent seven months building a causeway to the island city fortress and he leveled it. Then he moved South after taking Tyre to the Philistine cities and he took them one by one. It took him five months to capture Gaza and that made him so mad that he took the king of Gaza and dragged him by the feet through the city until he was dead. He killed all the men of the city and he sold the women and children and he repopulated the city with people from neighboring areas.

Now after Alexander had done all of this, he turned and started for Jerusalem. Now here is where this gets even more amazing. According to Josephus, as he was moving to take Jerusalem, someone showed Alexander the Great a copy of Daniel's predictions and it so moved him that he went peaceably into Jerusalem and worshipped and spared the city and the Jews and permitted them to worship God. He actually declared that all the Jews, no matter where they lived, could worship God (*Josephus, Complete Works*, p. 244).

Just as Zechariah predicted in **verse 8**, God protected Israel and Zechariah said I saw this with my own eyes.

Now **verse 8** is critical. Because in this one verse we see that Jerusalem would be spared during the days of Alexander, but we also read there would come a time when "no oppressor will pass over them anymore."

Now the first part has already happened. But the second part sure hasn't. When will that happen?

SECTION #2 – The joyous coming of the King. 8:9-10

The cities will have much to mourn about but Israel will have much to be joyous about. **Verse 9** begins by saying there will come a day when Israel and Jerusalem will rejoice greatly and shout in triumph. The reason is "your king is coming to you." Jesus Christ is Israel's King and He is coming to Israel to be her King. He will be an amazing King.

For the most part, verse 9 has to do with Christ's first coming and verse 10 has to do with Christ's second coming. The Church Age that we are in sets between verse 9 and verse 10. Now there are some key prophetic facts brought out about this:

Fact #1 - Israel's King is a just King. **9:9b**

Jesus Christ always does that which is just and right. He did the first time and He will when He comes the second time. Wouldn't it be something to have a just king ruling the world? What a dramatic change to have someone ruling the world who only makes just, right, true judgments and decisions.

Fact #2 - Israel's King is a saving King. **9:9c**

Jesus is the Savior of Israel and He is the Savior of sinners. The coming King will save Israel and this coming King will save any sinner who believes on Him. **This King would first come as a Savior, before He would come as world conqueror.**

Fact #3 - Israel's King is a humble King. **9:9d**

Think of this. This King will eventually control the world, yet He will be a humble meek King. He came as a humble, meek Person the first time. He had no form or majesty to His look. Now remember, Alexander the Great was a proud, dominant king. This King will come and be humble and contrite.

Fact #4 - Israel's King will initially come to Jerusalem riding on the foal of a donkey. **9:9e**

During the days of David and Solomon, they rode on a special mule and after the days of Solomon, the king rode on a horse. But no king ever rode on a donkey.

Fact #5 - Israel's King will put an end to world war. **9:10a**

Everything connected to war will be cut off when this King returns. There will be no war in Israel's land.

Fact #6 - Israel's King will usher in world peace. **9:10b**

This King who would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey would eventually return and bring peace to all the nations of the world.

Fact #7 - Israel's King will rule the entire world. **9:10c**

Israel's King will rule over the entire world. He will rule from sea to sea and from the eastern River Euphrates to all the ends of the earth.

Now how will He do this? He will do this through judgment. The next time Jesus Christ returns He is not coming as a meek Lamb, but as a Roaring Lion.

SECTION #3 – The joyous victory and elevation of Israel. **9:11-17**

There are seven specific blessings spelled out in this text:

Blessing #1 - God will free and exalt Israel because of His covenant with her. **9:11**

God is in a legal covenant relationship with the nation Israel. He entered into it with Abraham. Just before the King comes, Jews will literally be locked up as a prisoner by the Antichrist. This is why at the Judgment of the nations, Gentiles who visited the Jew in prison or gave them something to drink will be rewarded. The King will free them from that.

Blessing #2 - God will regather Israel to her land and doubly bless her. **9:12**

The Jews who have been prisoners all over the world will be freed to return to Israel.

Blessing #3 - God will cause Israel to be the strong dominant warrior. **9:13**

It is interesting that God specifically singles out Greece. After Alexander the Great died, his kingdom was divided among four generals and Israel was under the control of the Ptolemy Greeks and later came under the control of the Syrian Greeks. War broke out under the tyrannical reign of Antiochus Epiphanes and a Jewish family known as the Maccabees led a Jewish revolt and eventually regained Jewish independence. Now this is a good historical illustration of what God will do when He returns.

Blessing #4 - God will appear in Person as Israel's God. **9:14**

The LORD is a great warrior King.

Blessing #5 - God will defend Israel. **9:15**

In **verse 15** we learn that the stones will miss their marks. God's people will be shot at, but no weapon used against them will succeed. The bullets won't hit. They will be victorious.

Blessing #6 - God will save Israel. **9:16a**

Blessing #7 - God will cause Israel to sparkle and flourish in her land. **9:16b-17**

Israel will enjoy the best of food and the best of wine.

What does this text say to God's people? God is sovereign over everything in the world and He protects His people and one day, His people will enjoy the best of everything. This is true for Israel and if you are a believer, this is true for you.

There is one Person entrusted with Salvation. There is one Person who can save Israel and save you. It is Jesus Christ. You need to know that and you need to believe that.