

ZECHARIAH

Chapter Nine

Introduction

Let's read verses nine and ten together,

Zechariah 9:9 "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.

Zechariah 9:10 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.'

The King was coming to their city and to their Temple. He would rule over the whole earth and establish unprecedented peace and prosperity. He would establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

The King spoken of in these verses ***did*** come! Matthew quoted from Zechariah 9:9 to tell you that the prophecy was literally fulfilled when Jesus Christ rode into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday.

The things prophesied in verse ten, however, have not been literally fulfilled. How is it that verse nine can be literally fulfilled but not verse ten?

Something happened when Jesus rode into Jerusalem "lowly and riding on a donkey..." The Jews who should have *received* Him as their promised and prophesied King instead *rejected* Him. "He came to His own, but His own received Him not." The crowds who had shouted "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord," turned against Him and shouted "Crucify Him!"

Verse ten went unfulfilled when Jesus came. It awaits a yet future fulfillment. It awaits fulfillment at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to earth.

There are centuries in between verses nine and ten. From our earthly perspective it seems a long wait. From God's heavenly perspective it is not long at all.

God condenses centuries of human history into a few short verses that span from the sixth century BC beyond even our own day and age:

1. In verses one through eight God moves from the sixth century BC forward to the time of Alexander the Great in the fourth century BC.
2. In verse nine He jumps centuries forward to describe the first coming of Jesus.
3. In verses eleven through thirteen He looks back again to the century prior to the first coming of Jesus when the Jews would be involved fighting against the Greeks in the Maccabean period of their history.
4. In verses fourteen through seventeen God looks beyond our own time to the Second Coming of Jesus to fulfill the prophecies of verse ten.

We might have trouble following God's jumping around through time. We like to think of history as linear and keep it in chronological order. God sees all of history at once – past, present, and future. He's not really jumping around; He's picking out significant moments in history.

We want to understand some of the significance of these historic events. We'll organize our thoughts around two points: #1 Show Others That Jesus Christ Has Come To His Temple, and #2 Share With Others That Jesus Christ Is Coming To His Temple.

#1 Show Others That Jesus Christ
Has Come To His Temple
(v1-8; 9; 11-13)

God jumps around... *But I like things in chronological order!* We're going to go in order from the sixth century BC to Alexander the Great to the Maccabean Period to the first coming of Jesus Christ.

Zechariah was written in the sixth century BC to the Jews who had returned from captivity and exile in Babylon. Chapter nine immediately transports you forward to Alexander the Great's conquest of the world around 333 BC. We know the Scripture is

prophetic of Alexander because of what it says in verse eight – “I will camp around My house because of the army, **because of him who passes by** and him who returns.” “Returns” could be translated, *passes-by again*. As we will see in a moment, Alexander is the “him” who “passes-by” Jerusalem and who “passes-by again” in his conquest of the region without destroying it.

Let’s read verses one through seven:

Zechariah 9:1 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);

Zechariah 9:2 Also *against* Hamath, *which* borders on it, and *against* Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise.

Zechariah 9:3 For Tyre built herself a tower, heaped up silver like the dust, and gold like the mire of the streets.

Zechariah 9:4 Behold, the LORD will cast her out; he will destroy her power in the sea, and she will be devoured by fire.

Zechariah 9:5 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.

Zechariah 9:6 “A mixed race shall settle in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.

Zechariah 9:7 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.

These verses were written two centuries before Alexander the Great but they accurately foretell his military campaign in the eastern Mediterranean. He crossed into the region around 336 BC. He defeated the armies of Damascus in 333 BC. After that he marched south against Tyre, Sidon, and the cities of the Philistines – *precisely as written here two centuries before it happened!*

The siege against Tyre is worth noting. At one time the city had been on the mainland but to insure its safety a new city was constructed on an island located about one-half mile offshore. The island was surrounded by a double wall one hundred fifty feet high and filled in with twenty-five feet of earth. Tyre had survived a five year siege by Assyria and a thirteen year siege by Babylon. *Yet Alexander took the city in only seven months!* He had his armies fill-in the half-mile channel to the island, using stone, timber, and other materials from the old city on the shore. Tyre was literally scraped flat, fulfilling not only this prophecy of Zechariah, but the verses in Ezekiel which said,

Ezekiel 26:12 ... they will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses; they will lay your stones, your timber, and your soil in the midst of the water...

Ezekiel 26:14 I will make you like the top of a rock; you shall be a *place for spreading nets*, and you shall never be rebuilt, for I the LORD have spoken,' says the Lord GOD.

Alexander was coming. He could not be stopped. But verse eight reads,

Zechariah 9:8 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.

According to first century historian Flavius Josephus, the high priest in Jerusalem had a vision in which he was instructed to go out and meet the conqueror. He went out with other priests, all of them in their Temple garments. The priests stood clothed in fine linen, and the high priest in purple and scarlet clothing, with his mitre on his head, having the golden plate whereon the name of God was engraved. Josephus writes,

"...Alexander... saluted the high priest... Parmenio alone went up to [Alexander], and asked him how it came to pass that, when all others adored him, he should adore the high priest of the Jews? To whom he replied, "I did not adore him, but that God who hath honoured him with his high-priesthood; for I saw this very person in a dream, in this very habit, when I was at Dios in Macedonia, who, when I was considering with myself, how I might obtain the dominion of Asia, exhorted me to make no delay, but boldly to pass over the sea thither, for that he would conduct my army, and would give me the dominion over the Persians; whence it is, that having seen no other in that habit, and now seeing this person in it, and remembering that vision, and the exhortation which I had in my dream, I believe that I bring this army under the divine conduct..." (Flavius Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews* Book XI, chap. VIII, p. 350).

Another tradition says that not only did the high priest approach him arrayed in his priestly garments, but that he also brought along the Book of Daniel and showed Alexander the prophecy concerning him recorded by Daniel. This so moved him that he went into the city and offered sacrifices and worshiped in the temple.

Skip ahead to verses eleven through thirteen. These are next chronologically.

Zechariah 9:11 "As for you also, because of the blood of your covenant, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

Zechariah 9:12 Return to the stronghold, you prisoners of hope. Even today I declare *that* I will restore double to you.

Zechariah 9:13 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."

The historical clue here is the mention of the Jews at war with the “Greeks.” The only time in history that occurred was during the period of the Maccabean Revolt.

After the death of Alexander, the Greek empire was split among his four generals. Jerusalem was under control of the Seleucid dynasty. Antiochus IV, known as Antiochus Epiphanes, suspended the daily sacrifices, abolished the Sabbath, destroyed copies of the Scriptures, forbade circumcision, and erected pagan altars. In December 167 BC he introduced a pagan altar to Zeus in the Temple itself and sacrificed swine on it. In Modein, a small town northwest of Jerusalem, a revolt broke out, led by a local priest and his five sons. When the priest died his son, Judas, became the leader of this growing revolt. He became known as Judas Maccabeas, “Judas the Hammer.” The Jews won stunning victories, occupied Jerusalem, and purified the Temple. There followed a century of Jewish independence until the region fell to Roman control.

Now we jump ahead chronologically to the first coming of Jesus Christ in verse nine:

Zechariah 9:9 “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.”

Jesus *was* and *is* the King promised in this verse. The “donkey” seems odd to us, but it was the preferred beast of Kings during peace. Jesus came offering peace – peace between God and men. He *was* and *is* “just,” meaning He alone is just and the justifier of sinners. “Having salvation” means He alone can offer salvation. He *was* “lowly” it means *humble*. It’s a summary of His mission in His first coming. He came to make peace between God and man; and for that, He had to come and humble Himself to die on the cross for your sins.

The Jews rejected their King. Their Temple and city were destroyed by Titus and the Romans in 70 AD. The Jews have been scattered and despised throughout history ever since. *But that is not the end of the story!* Jesus promised to come again – a second time. He will come again to Jerusalem and to the Temple and His people, the Jews, will receive Him.

Inbetween verses nine and ten are the centuries from Jesus Christ's crucifixion until today. The entire Church Age fits in this pause. While Israel is disciplined and dispersed, Jesus is building His church.

I said you can **show** others that Jesus Christ has come to His temple. Certainly you show them in the Scriptures, as we are doing today. You can also show Jesus has come to His temple through your life. Today **you** are His temple on earth – a *spiritual* temple. There are two pictures in our text, drawn from the two historic episodes. The first encourages you to be His temple in the world; the second exhorts you to keep the world out of His temple.

When Alexander came near, the priests came out from the Temple to meet him. They came out into the world – dressed as God's priests. That is your calling, too. You are to be a kingdom of priests who put on spiritual garments and take the knowledge of Jesus out into the world.

The Maccabean Revolt got the world out of the Temple. You and I must be *in* the world, but not *of* the world. We must get the world out of our lives.

#2 Share With Others That Jesus Christ Is Coming To His Temple (v10; 14-17; 10:1)

It is not unusual in Bible prophecy for vast periods of time to be separated by a verse, *or even by a comma!* (Isaiah 61:2). Verse ten is the future Second Coming of the King.

Zechariah 9:10 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.'

The verse describes a forced disarmament of armies that brings a universal peace upon the earth. It will not be achieved by negotiation! The Bible prophesies that the armies of the world will be gathered in the Valley of Megiddo, at the Battle of Armageddon. Jesus returns in His Second Coming during this battle and all the armies turn against Him. Jesus will easily defeat the armies that

have gathered there. He will disarm all the nations and enforce His peace over the whole earth.

You're given more detail in verses fourteen and fifteen.

Zechariah 9:14 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.
Zechariah 9:15 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.

The Second Coming of Jesus is first likened to a violent storm. You're told the same thing in Matthew's Gospel – "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (24:27).

Then there is this mention of "slings and stones." It's a hard phrase to translate. Here is what it means: All the combined might of the technologically-advanced armies will be no more than "slings and stones" before the power of the Lord of hosts.

The description of drinking wine and blood-filled basins matches the account in Revelation and elsewhere that describes the destruction of God's enemies as if it were a feast for the scavenger birds.

Once the Battle of Armageddon is done, Jesus will turn His attention toward establishing His kingdom on the earth. In Matthew twenty-five you learn that He separates the people who have survived into two groups: believers and unbelievers. Unbelievers are cast into Hades to await their final judgment. Believers are invited to live on earth as His subjects.

Later in Zechariah you will learn that all the Jews who survive the seven-year Tribulation prior to the Second Coming will be saved. The Jews as a nation will have a prominent place in the kingdom on earth. They are described in verse sixteen.

Zechariah 9:16 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 -

The Jews will be the Lord's "flock..." They will be the "jewels in His crown..." They will be the "banner over His land." Each of these images is worthy of its own Bible study! Taken together they portray

an Almighty King with a Shepherd's heart Whose redeemed people are the sign of His grace and mercy. God **will** keep His promises to Israel!

The changes that Jesus will bring upon the earth are summarized in the next two verses:

Zechariah 9:17 For how great is its goodness and how great its beauty! Grain shall make the young men thrive, and new wine the young women.

Zechariah 10:1 Ask the LORD for rain in the time of the latter rain. The LORD will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, grass in the field for everyone.

This is a picture of abundant harvest upon the earth. It may not sound all that attractive to you, but remember that their culture was based upon the harvest. *Grain* and *grapes* and *grass* for grazing shall thrive.

By the way, "new wine" is not intoxicating! New wine is fresh grape juice - *before* fermentation can occur.

The kingdom of God on earth will be pastoral... peaceful... prosperous... perfect.

Conclusion

Jesus literally fulfilled all the Bible's prophecies of His first coming as Savior. He will literally fulfill all the Bible's prophecies of His Second Coming as the Sovereign to rule the earth.

The Last Days in which we live are an unprecedented time of seeing Bible prophecy fulfilled. We ought therefore to **share** that Jesus is coming back to this earth - to Jerusalem, to a Temple that will be built there.

Our message will be more readily received if we also **show** others that we are living as though His first coming made a difference in our own lives.