

Session 9 The Forerunner Message in Zechariah 9

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Jerusalem will be the global worship center where all nations will come to honor Jesus (8:20-23). Thus, all the hostility of Gentile nations against the Lord and the Jewish people will be removed.
²²Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD...in Jerusalem... (Zech. 8:22)
- B. The question arises, what will happen to the Gentile nations who oppress Israel in the end times? Zechariah answered this in *two oracles* (Zech. 9-11 and 12-14). Both oracles begin with a *burden or oracle*, which is prophecy related to God's judgment (9:1; 12:1). The general theme of both oracles is the Lord as King bringing judgment and blessing to Israel and the nations as He defeats all the opposing world powers in context to openly establishing His kingdom in all nations. We see what happens in the Tribulation and especially in the 43rd month or the 30 days following Jesus' return.
- C. Outline of Zechariah 9
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| Zechariah 9 | The coming of Zion's victorious king |
| 9:1-8 | Israel will be delivered from the nations surrounding her |
| 9:9-10 | The King's salvation, humility, and worldwide peace |
| 9:11-13 | Israel's struggle before her final victory |
| 9:14-17 | Jesus's second coming and God's beauty |
- D. **Summary:** The coming King will openly manifest His power to overthrow hostile nations (Zech. 9). He will judge (9:1-4), redeem (9:5-8), and rule (9:9-10) as He delivers (9:11-12), empowers (9:13), appears over (9:14), and defends Israel (9:15), who is precious (9:16) and beautiful (9:17) to Him.

II. ISRAEL WILL BE DELIVERED FROM THE NATIONS SURROUNDING HER (ZECH. 9:1-8)

- A. Judgment will come to territory associated with modern-day Syria, Lebanon, Gaza (9:1-8). Zechariah spoke of judgment coming to nine cities in three nations—three cities in *Syria* (Hadrach, Damascus, Hamath; 9:1-2a), two cities in *Lebanon* (Tyre and Sidon; 9:2b-4), and four cities in *Philistia* or *Gaza* (Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, Ashdod; 9:5-8), covering an area 7 miles by 32 miles.
***¹The burden of...the Lord against...Hadrach, and Damascus its resting place (for the eyes of men and all the tribes of Israel are on the LORD); ²also against Hamath...and Tyre and Sidon...
³Tyre built herself a tower, heaped up silver like the dust, and gold like the mire of the streets.
⁴Behold, the LORD...will destroy her power in the sea. ⁵Ashkelon shall see it and fear; Gaza also shall be very sorrowful; and Ekron...⁶A mixed race shall settle in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines. ⁷I will take away the blood from his mouth, and the abominations from... 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. ⁸I 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...*** (Zech. 9:1-8)
- B. Alexander the Great's victory over those cities in 332 BC partially fulfilled 9:1-8 which was given about 150 years before his birth (365 BC). The ultimate fulfillment of 9:1-8 will be in the end times.

- C. These nine cities are prototypes of what the Lord will do to other cities as He humbles their pride (9:6), cleanses their sin, (9:7a), and offers them salvation and participation in His kingdom (9:7).
1. Here, we see different ways in which Gentile nations respond. Some respond in defiance, others with humility unto receiving salvation.
 2. We see His zeal in what He will do to those who refuse His salvation and His zeal in how far He will go to save those who humble themselves before Him.
- D. Zechariah declared that “no more” would an oppressor pass through the land of Israel (9:8). Thus 9:8 looks far beyond the time of Alexander to the Antichrist’s attack on this area in the end times.
- E. **Eyes of men:** The eyes of men and all Israel would look to the Lord as He judged the cities of Syria. They would be terrified in seeing the God of Israel judge nations as was foretold by His prophets. Zechariah described the fearful responses of the people in these cities as they heard the news of Alexander marching through these coastal cities on the Mediterranean coast.
- F. **All eyes on the Lord:** The eyes of men and all Israel will look to the Lord as He judges the nations near to them using Alexander the Great as His instrument of wrath. The nations under the Persian empire were filled with fear by the fast approach of Alexander the Great conquering each nation with great ease. They will look to God in fear especially if they know Zechariah’s prophetic words about their judgment. This foreshadows what will take place in the end times.
- G. **Tyre built herself a tower:** Most translations say Tyre built “a fortress,” not merely a tower. They built an island city about a half a mile from the mainland, with 150-foot-high walls so strong that the Assyrian king Shalmaneser besieged it for five years and the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar for thirteen years without being able to capture Tyre. However, Alexander built a causeway from the mainland to the island city of Tyre and quickly destroyed it in 332 BC.
- H. **Shall be for our God:** Some of Israel’s longest and most fierce enemies like the Philistines will remain (survive the Great Tribulation) and will join Israel in worshiping Jesus, the God of Israel. Some Philistines will turn to the Lord as some Jebusites did in David’s day. God’s mercy is seen in His judgment on Philistia in delivering them from idolatry and including them among His people.
- ⁷**But he who remains, even he shall be for our God, and shall be like a leader in Judah, and Ekron like a Jebusite. (Zech. 9:7)**
- I. **Shall be a leader in Judah:** Some Gentiles shall even become leaders in Judah.
- J. The Lord’s triumph over hostile nations will culminate in saving His house in Jerusalem (9:8). The Lord’s house includes His temple, people, and land (Heb. 3:6). The Lord camps around His people with angels (Ps. 34:7). After defeating the Persians in 333 BC, Alexander destroyed many cities in Syria and on the Mediterranean coast while on his march to attack Egypt. Yet when he came to Jerusalem, Alexander refused to destroy it because of a dream that he had received.
- ⁸**“I will camp around My house because of the army, because of him who passes by and him who returns. No more shall a oppressor pass through, for now I have seen with My eyes.” (Zech. 9:8)**
- ⁶**...Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast... (Heb. 3:6)**

III. THE KING'S SALVATION, HUMILITY, AND WORLDWIDE PEACE (ZECH. 9:9-10)

- A. Zechariah turned his focus to the One who camps around or protects His house. Zechariah described the Messiah as a humble King who will bring dominion and peace to the earth (9:9-10). Zechariah described the King's character (9:9) and His accomplishments (9:10) in bringing peace to nations. Jesus' first coming was on a donkey (9:9). He will return to take dominion over the earth (9:10).

⁹***“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion... your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey...¹⁰I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; the battle bow [war] 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.’” (Zech. 9:9-10)***

- B. **Rejoice greatly:** The people in Zechariah's day were to “rejoice” by seeing the big picture of the Lord's narrative instead of being preoccupied with their personal or national pressures. We must anchor our life in the Lord's storyline—He will live in Jerusalem, build a glorious temple, etc.

¹⁰***“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For I am coming and I will dwell in your midst...” (Zech. 2:10)***

- C. **Your King is coming:** All the kings of the earth will worship and obey Him in the Millennium (Ps. 72:11; 102:15; 138:4; 148:11; Mal. 1:11; Rev. 15:4).

- D. **He has salvation:** Jesus will establish the fullness of salvation in every sphere of life in the nations.

- E. **He is just:** Jesus is perfectly just and righteous in all of His motives, plans, and actions.

- F. **His dominion:** His dominion will stretch from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth.

¹³***...behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven...¹⁴To Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations...should serve Him. (Dan. 7:13-14)***

- G. **Riding on a donkey:** Zechariah saw Israel's King riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. How was Zechariah to understand that the Son of Man would come with the clouds yet on a donkey? He came first in humility riding on a donkey instead of a war horse declaring war on Rome.

- H. **He is lowly:** The character trait that Jesus proclaimed of Himself was that He is lowly (Mt. 11:29).

- I. **I will cut off the chariot and battle bow:** Jesus will cause all war to cease in the nations (Isa. 2:4; 9:5-7; Mic. 5:10-15). He alone has the authority, wisdom, and humility to bring peace on earth.

- J. **From Jerusalem and Ephraim:** The whole nation is indicated by the inclusive names Ephraim and Judah speaking of national unity. Ephraim is the name given to the 10 northern tribes (9:10; 10:7).

- K. **He shall speak peace to the nations:** He will bring lasting world peace.

- L. **His dominion:** The river is the Euphrates, as the remotest eastern boundary of the promised land, implying world dominion (Ps. 72:8; Isa. 66:18; Mic. 7:11-12). The phrase, *from sea to sea*—is idiomatic and equivalent to “from the sea to the end of the earth where the sea begins again.” Some suggest that *from sea to sea* means from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea or the Dead Sea.

IV. ISRAEL'S STRUGGLE BEFORE HER FINAL VICTORY (ZECH. 9:11-13)

- A. Zechariah describes activity associated with Jesus' second coming to bring world peace (9:11-17). Jesus will liberate, empower, defend, and save Israel (9:11-17). He will destroy the Antichrist's armies, liberate Jewish prisoners (12:2-3; 14:2), and empower the Israeli army (10:3-7; 12:5-8). The context of 9:11-17 is the end of the age. This theme is further developed in Zechariah 10 and 12.
- B. The Lord speaks to Jerusalem about their struggle before anointing them for final victory (9:11-13).
*¹¹As for you also, because of the blood of your covenant, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. ¹²Return to the stronghold, you prisoners of hope...I will restore double to you.
¹³For 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. (Zech. 9:11-13)*
- C. ***Because of the blood of your covenant:*** The Lord delivers us based on the blood of the covenant. Jesus referred to His shed blood in establishing the new covenant (Mk. 14:24).
²⁴“This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.” (Mk. 14:24)
- D. ***I will set your prisoners free:*** Jesus will liberate Jewish prisoners and destroy the hostile Gentile armies that surround Jerusalem (9:11; 10:10; 13:8; 14:2; cf. Ps. 102:20; Isa. 11:11-16; 14:1-3).
- E. ***A waterless pit:*** This speaks of dry pits or wells that have no water. People would most likely drown if they were in a pit full of water. One might be rescued from a pit that has no water. Joseph and Jeremiah were thrown into waterless pits (Gen. 37:24; Jer. 38:6-9). Some may have interpreted this as being rescued from Babylon, yet this prophecy was given over 20 years after Israel was freed.
- F. ***Return to the stronghold:*** The prisoners of hope are exhorted to “return.” Many agree that the *stronghold* physically is the land of Israel or Jerusalem, and spiritually it is the Lord (Ps. 9:9; 18:2; 31:3; 71:3; 91:2; 94:22; 144:2; Jer. 16:19; Nah. 1:7; Joel 3:16).
- G. ***Prisoners of hope:*** Any persons in captivity—spiritually, emotionally, physically, economically—are to set their hope on Jesus who sets the captives free from the powers of darkness in this age (Isa. 61:1). The ultimate fulfillment of the promise of “prisoners of hope” being rescued speaks of the remnant of Israel being held captive in a prison camp yet hoping that the Lord would rescue them.
¹“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me...He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound...” (Isa. 61:1)
- H. The subject of Israel and the body of Christ going into captivity in the end times is a sober reality.
1. *The New Testament* describes Christians in persecution and captive (Rev. 13:7, 10; cf. Lk. 21:16-19; Jn. 15:18-16:4; Rev. 6:9-11; 11:7; 12:11, 17; 16:5-7; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2; 20:4).
 2. *The Old Testament* focuses on Jewish people being scattered, persecuted, and/or taken captive (Ps. 102:20; Isa. 11:11-16; 14:1-3; 27:12-13; 40:11; 42:7, 16, 22; 45:14; 49:9-12, 21, 24-26; 60:10, 12, 14; 61:1, 5; Jer. 30:3, 8, 10, 17; 31:16, 23; Ezek. 34:27; 39:23-29; Hos. 11:11; Joel 3:1-2, 8; Amos 9:14; Mic. 2:12-13; 4:6-7; 5:6; 7:12; Zech. 9:11-12; 10:10-11; 13:8; 14:2).

- I. ***I will restore it double to you.*** The Lord promises to restore double of what the enemy took from Israel. A double-portion restoration is a reference to the inheritance of the firstborn and/or an idiom for a complete restoration (Isa. 40:2; 51:19; 61:7).
1. The double portion is best understood in reference to the firstborn (Deut. 21:17). The firstborn son inherited a double portion of property compared to other family members.
¹⁷But he shall acknowledge...the firstborn by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his. (Deut. 21:17)
 2. Joseph was delivered from a waterless pit to sit on a throne and to receive a double portion of inheritance as Jacob's firstborn. He is a picture of Israel's salvation as God's firstborn nation. The one and only time that Israel receives double blessing is at the end of the age (Isa. 61:7).
⁷Instead of your shame you shall have double honor, and instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double... (Isa. 61:7)
- J. ***Judah and Ephraim as the Lord's bow:*** The Lord will anoint Israel to subdue the Gentiles (9:13). The Lord spoke of stretching Judah as His bow and filling it with Ephraim as His arrows. That is, Judah will be His drawn bow, Ephraim His arrows, and Zion His sword to defeat Gentile armies.
¹³I 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 (Zech. 9:13)
- K. ***I raised up your sons like a mighty man:*** He promised to raise up *sons of Zion* as mighty soldiers to overthrow Greek oppression. This is a promise to "anoint" soldiers to defend Israel when attacked.
- L. ***Against Greece:*** The initial fulfillment of Israel's military being anointed to fight against the Greeks was seen when the Jews overthrew the Greek military forces in the Maccabean revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century BC. Judas Maccabeus' victory in 165 BC over Greece in the second century BC was a prophetic token of the Messiah's end-time victory.
- M. The ultimate fulfillment of this will be in the future battle of Jerusalem (10:5-7; 12:3-9) when the "composite" beast empires reemerge in the Antichrist (Dan. 7:12; Rev. 13:1). Greece will rise up again against Israel at the end of the age with Rome, Babylon, Persia, and others.

V. JESUS' SECOND COMING AND GOD'S BEAUTY (ZECH. 9:14-17)

- A. The Lord will be seen over His people (9:14) and will defend Israel (9:15) when Israel's sons are raised up as mighty men to resist a military attack from the sons of Greece (9:13).
¹⁴Then 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. ¹⁵The LORD of hosts will defend them; they shall devour and subdue with slingstones." (Zech. 9:13-15)
- B. ***The Lord will be seen over them:*** When Jesus returns, every eye will see Him in His royal procession in the sky on clouds (Rev. 1:7; cf. Mt. 24:27, 30; 26:64; Zech. 9:14; 12:10).
⁷He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him...all the tribes of the earth will mourn. (Rev. 1:7)

- C. **His arrow will go forth like lightning:** Jesus' arrow is singular, so some suggest He will release "His arrow" to signal the beginning of battle in proximity to the time when He sounds the trumpet. He will release lightning to the earth like arrows (Ps. 18:13-14; 144:5; Hab. 3:4).
- D. **The Lord will blow the trumpet:** When Jesus returns, the trumpet of God will be blown (Mt. 24:31, 1 Thes. 4:16; cf. 1 Cor. 15:52; Rev. 10:7; 11:15; Isa. 27:13; Zech. 9:14)

¹⁶**The Lord Himself will descend...with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. (1 Thes. 4:16)**

- E. **The Lord will go with whirlwinds from the south:** The Lord is pictured as "marching" through the wilderness to lead the people Israel in the days of Moses (Deut. 33:2-5; Judg. 5:4-5; Ps. 68:7-9).

1. Jesus will march from the south passing through Bozrah (Jordan) on His way to Jerusalem (Isa. 63:1-6; 34:6-8; 19:20; Hab. 3:3-5, 12-13; Mic. 2:12-13; Zech. 10:11; cf. Ps. 45:3-5; 68:24; 110:5-6).
2. The Moses story including the journey to the promise Land is being "retold" in the end times.

- F. The overthrow of the Gentile powers is followed by the exaltation of God's people (9:16-17). Zechariah proclaims the greatness of the goodness and beauty of Jesus and His people (9:17).

¹⁶**The LORD their God will save them in that day...For they shall be like the jewels of a crown, lifted like a banner over His land—¹⁷For how great is its goodness and how great its beauty! (Zech. 9:16-17)**

1. **The Lord will save them in that day:** When Jesus returns, He will rescue Israel from Greece and all other hostile Gentile powers.
2. **They shall be like the jewels of a crown:** The Jewish people will be like jewels to the Lord. They are very precious to Him. A king's jewels in his crown are very valuable possessions.

³**You shall also be a crown of glory...and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. (Isa. 62:3)**

¹⁷**"They shall be Mine...on the day that I make them My jewels." (Mal. 3:17)**

3. **Lifted like a banner over His land:** Israel will be like jewels the Lord displays to others, and like a banner lifted over His land. He will show the whole earth how dear Israel is to Him.
4. **For how great is its goodness and beauty:** The NKJV obscures the object of this verse by using the word, *it*. There is debate about whether *it* speaks of God's beauty or Israel's.
 - a. Is the greatness and beauty attributed to God's people and land or to the Lord Himself? It is the very same reality.
 - b. The beauty that Jesus possesses is the beauty that He imparts to His people (Isa. 61:3).

¹**"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me...to proclaim liberty to the captives...**

²**To comfort all who mourn, ³to give them beauty for ashes..." (Isa. 61:1-3)**