Small Group Guide

Zechariah 9-11: The Good Shepherd and the Coming King



Before You Begin

Read Zechariah 9-11 together as a group, or ask group members to read it before gathering. Open with prayer, asking God to give clarity and insight into his Word.

Context and Overview

This passage covers three major themes: God's judgment on the surrounding nations, Israel's coming redemption, and the arrival of the Messiah. The sermon walked through how these prophecies were fulfilled -- some through Alexander the Great's conquest, some through Jesus' first coming, and some that still point toward a future fulfillment at Christ's return.

Key Takeaways

- God used a pagan king, Alexander the Great, to protect and preserve his people, demonstrating that he is sovereign over all nations and rulers -- not just those who acknowledge him.
- Zechariah 9:9 is a precise prophecy of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, written approximately 500 years before the event.
- Biblical prophecy often contains what is called a "law of double reference," meaning a near fulfillment and a future, more complete fulfillment exist side by side in the same passage.
- The 30 pieces of silver paid to Judas for betraying Jesus, and the subsequent purchase of a potter's field, were foretold in detail in Zechariah 11.
- The rejection of the Good Shepherd at Jesus' first coming was not a surprise to God. It was written into the prophetic record centuries in advance.
- The "worthless shepherd" described in Zechariah 11 appears to foreshadow the Antichrist, contrasting sharply with the character and care of the Good Shepherd.

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. Before this sermon, how familiar were you with the book of Zechariah? What surprised you most from this passage?
2. The sermon opened by pointing out that God protected Israel through a pagan king. What does that tell you about how God works in history? Have you ever seen God use an unlikely person or circumstance to protect or provide for you?

Going Deeper

3. Alexander the Great reportedly bowed before the high priest Jadua and said he was bowing before the God who gave that priest his position. What does this moment reveal about how God can move in the hearts of even powerful, unbelieving rulers?
4. Zechariah 9:9 describes the Messiah coming humbly on a donkey, while verse 10 immediately describes a future reign of total peace and dominion. The people of Jesus' day struggled to reconcile these two images. Why do you think it was difficult

for them to accept a humble, suffering Messiah rather than a conquering king? In what ways do people today still struggle with that same tension?

5. The sermon used the image of a mountain range to explain how the prophets saw future events -- the peaks appear close together from a distance, but there is great distance between them as you approach. How does that image help you understand the relationship between Jesus' first and second coming?
6. In Zechariah 11, the Good Shepherd asks the people what his wages should be, and they respond with 30 pieces of silver -- the price of a common slave. What does that valuation communicate about how the religious leaders of Jesus' day viewed him? How does that make you think about the cost of your own redemption?
7. The sermon described how the staff called "beauty" -- representing the Good Shepherd -- was broken, symbolizing the rejection of Christ at his first coming. Yet even in that rejection, God was working out a plan of salvation. How does knowing that God works through rejection and suffering change the way you view difficult seasons in your own life?
8. The "worthless shepherd" in Zechariah 11 is described as one who does not care for the weak, the young, or the broken. How does that contrast with everything Jesus demonstrated in his ministry? What does it mean to you personally that Jesus is described as a shepherd who does care?

Bringing It Home

9. The sermon closed by saying that God has been trying to get our attention for a very long time so that we would not miss that Jesus is the Messiah. What does the level of prophetic detail in this passage do to your confidence in the trustworthiness of Scripture?
10. Zechariah 10 includes a promise that even those who seemed cast aside would be heard and restored by God. Is there an area of your life where you have felt cast aside or forgotten by God? How does this passage speak to that?

Practical Applications

- **Study a fulfilled prophecy this week.** Pick one prophecy from this passage -- such as Zechariah 9:9 or the 30 pieces of silver in Zechariah 11 -- and read the New Testament account of its fulfillment. Write down what stands out to you about the precision of God's Word.

- **Reflect on God's sovereignty.** Think of a situation in your life -- past or present -- where God may be working through unexpected or even difficult circumstances. Spend time in prayer asking him to give you eyes to see his hand at work.
- **Meditate on the character of the Good Shepherd.** Zechariah 11 contrasts the Good Shepherd with a worthless one. Read John 10:11-18 alongside Zechariah 11 this week and reflect on what it means that Jesus willingly laid down his life for his sheep.
- **Share the evidence.** The fulfilled prophecies in this passage are among the most compelling arguments for the identity of Jesus as Messiah. Consider sharing one of these fulfilled prophecies with someone in your life who is skeptical about the claims of Christ.

Closing Prayer Points

- Thank God for the precision and trustworthiness of his Word.
- Ask for faith to trust in his sovereignty over nations, rulers, and the details of your own life.
- Pray for those in your group who may be in a season of feeling forgotten or cast aside.
- Ask God to give your group a deeper love for Jesus, the Good Shepherd who was broken for our redemption.

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on Zechariah 9-11: The Coming King, the Good Shepherd, and God's Faithful Promise



Day 1: The God Who Sees and Protects

Reading: Zechariah 9:1-8

Devotional: The same God who directed the movements of Alexander the Great's empire was simultaneously watching over a small, vulnerable people in Jerusalem. He declared that no oppressor would pass through them, for he had seen them with his own eyes. That phrase is worth sitting with. God does not manage his people from a distance. He sees. He watches. He intervenes. The nations around Israel may have been stronger, wealthier, and more powerful, but none of that changed what God had promised. Whatever surrounds you today, the same eyes that watched over Jerusalem are watching over you.

Reflection Question: In what area of your life do you need to trust that God sees your situation and is already at work within it?

Practical Application: Write down one circumstance that feels overwhelming or beyond your control. Beside it, write the words "God has seen this with his eyes." Return to that reminder throughout the day.

Day 2: The Humble King Who Brings Salvation

Reading: Zechariah 9:9-10; Matthew 21:1-11

Devotional: Five hundred years before Jesus rode into Jerusalem, God told his people exactly how their king would arrive. Not on a war horse. Not surrounded by armies. Not dressed in the armor of a conqueror. He would come lowly, riding on a donkey, bringing salvation. The people watching that first Palm Sunday were looking for a warrior. They got something far better. They got a savior. The world still tends to want a king who defeats enemies by force. But the king God sent chose humility, sacrifice, and the cross. True salvation rarely looks the way we expect, but it is always exactly what we need.

Reflection Question: Are there ways you have tried to fit Jesus into the kind of king you wanted rather than receiving him as the king he is?

Practical Application: Spend a few minutes in quiet prayer, surrendering one expectation or preference you have been holding onto, and ask God to help you receive his provision on his terms rather than your own.

Day 3: The Cornerstone Who Holds Everything Together

Reading: Zechariah 10:1-5; Ephesians 2:19-22

Devotional: Zechariah described a people wandering without a shepherd, led astray by false voices, and stumbling in confusion. Into that picture, God declared that from him would come the cornerstone, the tent peg, and the battle bow. Every image points to the same truth: Jesus is the one who holds everything together. He is the foundation that cannot be moved, the central support that keeps the structure standing, and the strength that wins the battle. When life feels as though it is unraveling, the answer is not a better strategy or a stronger effort. The answer is returning to the one who was never moved.

Reflection Question: What false voices or misplaced sources of stability have you been leaning on instead of Christ?

Practical Application: Identify one habit, relationship, or mindset that has been functioning as a false cornerstone in your life. Bring it honestly before God and ask him to reestablish Christ as the foundation in that specific area.

Day 4: The God Who Remembers His Covenant

Reading: Zechariah 10:6-12; Romans 11:25-29

Devotional: God told his people that even though it might appear he had cast them aside, he had not forgotten them. He promised to hear them, restore them, and bring them back. The basis for that promise was not their faithfulness but his. He said he would act because he has mercy on them. That same mercy is the ground on which every believer stands. You are not held by your consistency. You are held by his covenant. God does not abandon what he has promised, and he does not forget those who belong to him. His mercy outlasts every failure, every season of wandering, and every moment of doubt.

Reflection Question: Do you find it easier to trust God's promises in general than to believe they apply personally to you? What makes that difficult?

Practical Application: Look up one biblical promise that speaks directly to a struggle you are currently facing. Write it out by hand and place it somewhere visible as a daily reminder that God's covenant is still in effect.

Day 5: The Good Shepherd Who Was Rejected and Will Return

Reading: Zechariah 11:4-13; Matthew 27:3-10; John 10:11-15

Devotional: The detail is staggering. Zechariah recorded that the Good Shepherd would be valued at thirty pieces of silver, the price of a common slave, and that those pieces would be thrown to the potter in the house of the Lord. Hundreds of years later, every detail landed exactly as written. Judas. Thirty pieces of silver. The temple floor. The potter's field. God was not caught off guard by the rejection of his Son. He declared it in advance. And yet the Good Shepherd came anyway, knowing the cost, knowing the betrayal, knowing the cross. That is the depth of his love for you. He came for you with full knowledge of what it would require.

Reflection Question: How does knowing that Jesus came willingly, fully aware of the rejection and suffering ahead, change the way you understand his love for you?

Practical Application: Take time today to read John 10:11-15 slowly and personally. After reading, sit quietly for several minutes and simply thank Jesus for being the shepherd who did not abandon the flock when the cost became clear.