

Zechariah Chapter 9 — The Coming King and the Salvation of Zion

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Zechariah Chapter 9 marks an important transition in the book.

The earlier chapters focused heavily on the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the temple, the cleansing of the priesthood, and the restoration of the remnant.

Chapter 9 looks farther ahead.

The prophet begins with judgment against surrounding nations, but the chapter quickly moves toward one of the clearest Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament:

“See, your King comes to you... humble and riding on a donkey.”

This prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus entered Jerusalem before His crucifixion.

But the chapter does not stop with His humble arrival.

It also looks toward His worldwide reign, the liberation of prisoners, the defense of His people, and the final beauty and abundance of His kingdom.

The movement of the chapter is striking:

Proud nations fall.

God protects His people.

The King arrives.

Peace spreads to the nations.

Prisoners are released.

The Lord fights for His people.

His people become jewels in His crown.

The central message is:

Human kingdoms rise and fall, but God’s righteous King will come, save His people, establish peace, and reign to the ends of the earth.

I. JUDGMENT ON THE NATIONS

Zechariah 9:1

“The burden of the word of the Lord is upon the land of Hadrach, and Damascus is its resting place, for the eyes of all people—and of all the tribes of Israel—are toward the Lord.”

The word burden refers to a weighty prophetic message, usually involving judgment.

The prophecy begins in the region north of Israel.

Hadrach and Damascus represent areas of Syria that would come under divine judgment.

The verse also emphasizes that the eyes of humanity are ultimately accountable to the Lord.

He sees the nations.

The nations are under His authority.

Cross References in Simple American English

Amos 1:3 — God pronounced judgment against Damascus because of its cruelty.

Isaiah 17:1 — Isaiah foretold that Damascus would lose its strength and glory.

Jeremiah 49:23 — Jeremiah announced judgment upon Damascus and surrounding regions.

Spiritual Lesson

No nation exists outside God’s moral authority.

Application

Political strength does not exempt a people from accountability to God.

Zechariah 9:2

“Hamath also will share this judgment, and Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise.”

The judgment moves southward.

Hamath, Tyre, and Sidon were influential cities.

Tyre especially was famous for commerce, wealth, maritime power, and human wisdom.

But wisdom without submission to God cannot save.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezekiel 28:3 — The ruler of Tyre boasted in his wisdom and understanding.

Amos 1:9 — God judged Tyre for its treachery.

Isaiah 23:1 — Isaiah announced judgment against the wealthy city of Tyre.

Key Truth

Human wisdom is powerless when it becomes proud and independent of God.

Application

Intelligence is a gift.

Pride in intelligence is dangerous.

Zechariah 9:3

“Tyre built herself a stronghold, heaping up silver like dust and gold like the dirt of the streets.”

Tyre trusted in two things:

Fortification.

Wealth.

Its island fortress was famous for being difficult to conquer.

Its commercial empire brought enormous riches.

From a human perspective, Tyre appeared secure.

But wealth can create the illusion of safety.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezekiel 28:5 — Tyre increased its wealth through trade and became proud because of its riches.

Isaiah 23:8 — Tyre was influential and wealthy among the nations.

Job 22:24 — Gold is compared to dust to show its abundance and temporary value.

Spiritual Lesson

What looks secure to humanity can be fragile before God.

Application

Never make wealth or human defenses your ultimate refuge.

Zechariah 9:4

“But the Lord will dispossess her and strike her power in the sea; she will be consumed by fire.”

Tyre’s wealth and defenses would not save her.

The Lord Himself would bring her down.

Historically, Tyre endured repeated attacks, and Alexander the Great eventually conquered the island city in 332 B.C.

He built a causeway to the island and destroyed much of its strength.

The prophecy emphasizes the larger point:

God can bring down what people believe is unconquerable.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezekiel 26:3 — God said many nations would come against Tyre.

Isaiah 23:11 — God stretched out His hand over the sea and shook kingdoms.

Amos 1:10 — God promised fire against the walls of Tyre.

Key Principle

No fortress can resist God forever.

Zechariah 9:5

“Ashkelon will see it and be afraid; Gaza will writhe in sorrow, and Ekron’s hope will wither. The king will perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon will be left uninhabited.”

The fall of Tyre would terrify the Philistine cities.

If powerful Tyre could fall, their confidence would disappear.

Ashkelon, Gaza, and Ekron represented important Philistine centers.

Their political strength would be broken.

Cross References in Simple American English

Amos 1:6 — God announced judgment on Gaza.

Zephaniah 2:4 — Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron were warned of coming destruction.

Jeremiah 47:5 — Jeremiah described mourning coming upon Gaza and Ashkelon.

Spiritual Lesson

Confidence built on other human powers collapses when those powers fall.

Zechariah 9:6

“A foreigner will occupy Ashdod, and the pride of the Philistines will be cut off.”

The pride of Philistia would be broken.

The people who had long opposed Israel would lose political and cultural dominance.

A mixed or foreign population would occupy Ashdod.

Cross References in Simple American English

Zephaniah 2:5 — God pronounced judgment on the Philistine coast.

Amos 1:8 — God promised to cut off rulers from Philistine cities.

Isaiah 14:29 — Philistia was warned not to celebrate too quickly over temporary relief.

Key Truth

National pride does not last forever.

Zechariah 9:7

“I will remove the blood from their mouths and their detestable things from between their teeth. Those who remain will belong to our God and become leaders in Judah, and Ekron will be like the Jebusites.”

This verse is remarkable because judgment gives way to transformation.

The Philistines were associated with pagan worship and practices that were offensive to God.

Yet God says a remnant would be purified.

Those who remained would belong to our God.

This is not only destruction.

It is redemption.

The mention of the Jebusites recalls a people once opposed to Israel who were eventually incorporated into life around Jerusalem.

Cross References in Simple American English

Isaiah 56:7 — God promised that people from outside Israel could come worship Him.

2 Samuel 5:7 — David conquered the Jebusite stronghold of Jerusalem.

Acts 15:17 — God's redemptive plan includes Gentiles seeking the Lord.

Spiritual Lesson

God can transform former enemies into worshipers.

Application

Never assume that someone is beyond the reach of God's grace.

II. GOD PROTECTS HIS HOUSE

Zechariah 9:8

“I will encamp around My house to guard it against marauding forces. No oppressor will march through My people again, for now I Myself have seen it with My eyes.”

God promises personal protection.

He says:

“I will encamp around My house.”

The language pictures the Lord Himself forming a defensive camp around His people.

The phrase:

“I Myself have seen it with My eyes”

emphasizes His awareness.

He has seen their oppression.

He has not forgotten.

Cross References in Simple American English

Psalms 34:7 — The angel of the Lord surrounds those who fear Him and delivers them.

Isaiah 31:5 — The Lord protects Jerusalem like birds hovering over their young.

Nehemiah 4:9 — God’s people prayed and set a guard while rebuilding Jerusalem.

Key Truth

God sees the suffering of His people.

Application

Divine protection does not mean believers never face hardship.

It means no hardship falls outside God’s knowledge or purpose.

III. THE COMING KING OF PEACE

Zechariah 9:9

“Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! See, your King comes to you, righteous and victorious, yet humble and riding on a donkey—on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

This is one of the most important Messianic prophecies in Scripture.

Jerusalem is told to rejoice because:

Her King is coming.

Notice His characteristics.

He is:

Righteous.

Victorious.

Humble.

And He rides on a donkey.

Kings could ride powerful warhorses when presenting military strength.

A donkey was associated with humility and peaceful kingship.

Jesus deliberately fulfilled this prophecy when He entered Jerusalem.

Cross References in Simple American English

Matthew 21:5 — Matthew identifies Jesus' entry into Jerusalem as the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy.

John 12:15 — John also records that Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

Genesis 49:11 — Judah's royal blessing includes imagery involving a donkey and the coming ruler.

Christ Connection

Jesus is the King of Zechariah 9:9.

His triumphal entry was not an accidental resemblance.

It was a deliberate Messianic fulfillment.

Application

Jesus is not merely a teacher.

He is King.

The proper response is not admiration alone.

It is submission.

Zechariah 9:10

"I will remove the chariots from Ephraim and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth."

The King comes humbly, but His reign is universal.

He removes the instruments of war.

Chariots disappear.

Warhorses disappear.

Battle bows are broken.

His kingdom brings peace.

His rule extends:

“from sea to sea.”

“to the ends of the earth.”

This goes far beyond the first-century entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem.

It looks toward the complete reign of Messiah.

Cross References in Simple American English

Psalm 72:8 — The Messianic King will rule from sea to sea and to the ends of the earth.

Micah 5:10 — God promises to remove warhorses and chariots.

Isaiah 9:6 — The Messiah is called the Prince of Peace.

Key Doctrine

Christ’s kingdom is universal.

Application

Human governments may be temporary.

Christ’s rule will be complete.

IV. DELIVERANCE FOR PRISONERS OF HOPE

Zechariah 9:11

“As for you, because of the blood of My covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit.”

The basis of deliverance is covenant.

The phrase “blood of My covenant” recalls Israel’s covenant relationship established through sacrifice.

A waterless pit could be used as a prison.

Joseph had been placed in such a pit.

God promises liberation.

Cross References in Simple American English

Exodus 24:8 — Moses sprinkled the blood of the covenant on the people.

Matthew 26:28 — Jesus spoke of His blood as the blood of the covenant poured out for forgiveness.

Genesis 37:24 — Joseph was thrown into an empty pit without water.

Christ Connection

The language of covenant blood ultimately points toward Jesus Christ.

His blood establishes the new covenant and provides freedom from the deeper prison of sin.

Application

Our hope rests not in our ability to free ourselves but in God's covenant grace.

Zechariah 9:12

“Return to your stronghold, you prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you.”

What a remarkable description:

“Prisoners of hope.”

They were prisoners in one sense.

But hope had captured them even more strongly than their circumstances.

God calls them back to a place of security.

He promises restoration.

Cross References in Simple American English

Job 42:10 — God restored Job's fortunes after his suffering.

Isaiah 61:7 — God promised double blessing in place of former shame.

Joel 3:16 — The Lord will be a refuge and stronghold for His people.

Spiritual Lesson

Believers can be surrounded by hardship and still be held by hope.

Application

Do not become a prisoner of fear when God calls you a prisoner of hope.

Zechariah 9:13

“For I will bend Judah as My bow and fill it with Ephraim. I will rouse your sons, Zion, against your sons, Greece, and wield you like a warrior’s sword.”

God now describes His people as weapons in His hand.

Judah is the bow.

Ephraim is the arrow.

Zion becomes a sword.

The reference to Greece is striking.

At the time of Zechariah, Persia ruled the region.

Yet Greek power would later rise.

This likely looks forward to later conflicts between Jewish people and Greek rulers, especially the period surrounding the Maccabean revolt against Seleucid oppression.

Cross References in Simple American English

Daniel 8:21 — Daniel identifies Greece as a major coming kingdom.

Joel 3:6 — The Greeks are mentioned in connection with the selling of God's people.

Isaiah 49:2 — God's servant is compared to a sharpened weapon in His hand.

Spiritual Lesson

God can use weak people as instruments against powerful enemies.

V. THE LORD’S VICTORY AND SALVATION

Zechariah 9:14

“Then the Lord will appear over them; His arrow will flash like lightning. The Sovereign Lord will sound the trumpet and march in the storms of the south.”

God is pictured as a divine warrior.

He appears above His people.

His arrow flashes.

The trumpet sounds.

The storm moves forward.

The imagery communicates overwhelming divine intervention.

Cross References in Simple American English

Habakkuk 3:11 — God’s weapons are pictured flashing with divine brightness.

Psalms 18:14 — God sends out arrows and scatters His enemies.

Joel 2:1 — The trumpet announces the coming day of the Lord.

Key Truth

God is not powerless in the face of evil.

Zechariah 9:15

“The Lord Almighty will shield them. They will destroy and overcome with sling stones. They will drink and roar as with wine, they will be filled like a sacrificial bowl, like the corners of the altar.”

The Lord shields His people.

Victory comes under divine protection.

The imagery of sacrificial bowls and altar corners suggests a battlefield so complete that the scene is described with the language of sacrifice.

The verse is vivid and severe.

The point is not uncontrolled violence.

It is the certainty of divine victory over hostile power.

Cross References in Simple American English

1 Samuel 17:49 — David defeated Goliath using a sling stone.

Exodus 27:2 — The altar had projecting corners associated with sacrifice.

Isaiah 49:26 — God promises to overthrow those who violently oppress His people.

Spiritual Lesson

God’s victory is decisive.

Zechariah 9:16

“The Lord their God will save His people on that day as the Shepherd saves His flock. They will sparkle in His land like jewels in a crown.”

The imagery suddenly changes.

The divine warrior becomes a Shepherd.

God saves His people as a shepherd saves sheep.

Then they are described as:

“jewels in a crown.”

The people who had once been scattered, humiliated, and oppressed become precious ornaments in God’s land.

Cross References in Simple American English

Ezekiel 34:12 — God promises to search for and rescue His scattered sheep.

Isaiah 62:3 — God’s people are pictured as a beautiful crown in His hand.

Malachi 3:17 — God says His faithful people will belong to Him like treasured possessions.

Key Truth

God does not merely tolerate His redeemed people.

He treasures them.

Application

Your value is ultimately determined by belonging to God, not by how the world evaluates you.

Zechariah 9:17

“How great is His goodness, and how great His beauty! Grain will make the young men thrive, and new wine the young women.”

The chapter ends not with warfare but with wonder.

“How great is His goodness.”

“How great His beauty.”

The emphasis returns to blessing.

The land is fruitful.

The people flourish.

God’s goodness produces abundance and joy.

Cross References in Simple American English

Psalms 27:13 — David expected to see the goodness of the Lord.

Joel 2:19 — God promised grain, new wine, and oil to His restored people.

Psalms 144:12 — Young men and women are pictured flourishing under God’s blessing.

Spiritual Lesson

The final goal of God's salvation is not merely escape from danger.

It is life under His goodness.

VI. MAJOR THEMES OF ZECHARIAH 9

1. God Judges Human Pride

Tyre had wisdom.

Wealth.

Fortifications.

None of them could stop God.

2. God Can Redeem Former Enemies

The Philistine remnant would become part of God's people.

3. God Protects His People

He personally encamps around His house.

4. The Messiah Is King

Zechariah plainly announces:

“Your King comes to you.”

5. The Messiah Is Humble

He rides on a donkey rather than displaying human pride.

6. The Messiah Brings Peace

His reign removes war and extends throughout the earth.

7. Covenant Blood Brings Deliverance

Prisoners are released because of the blood of the covenant.

8. God's People Are Prisoners of Hope

Hard circumstances do not destroy covenant hope.

9. God Fights for His People

His intervention brings victory.

10. God Shepherds His People

The Warrior is also the Shepherd.

11. God Treasures His People

They are jewels in His crown.

VII. CHRIST IN ZECHARIAH 9

Zechariah 9 contains one of the strongest Messianic portraits in the Old Testament.

1. Christ Is the Coming King

Zechariah says:

“Your King comes to you.”

The New Testament directly applies this prophecy to Jesus.

2. Christ Is Righteous

Unlike sinful human rulers, Jesus rules in perfect righteousness.

3. Christ Is Humble

He entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

The eternal King came without worldly display.

4. Christ Is Victorious

His humility does not indicate weakness.

He comes possessing salvation and victory.

5. Christ Brings Peace to the Nations

His kingdom ultimately extends to the ends of the earth.

6. Christ Establishes the Covenant Through His Blood

Jesus said:

“This is My blood of the covenant.”

The language of Zechariah 9:11 finds profound fulfillment in Him.

7. Christ Is the Shepherd

Jesus identifies Himself as the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep.

VIII. ZECHARIAH 9:9 AND THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Zechariah 9:9 deserves special attention because of its direct New Testament fulfillment.

Centuries after Zechariah wrote these words, Jesus approached Jerusalem.

He deliberately rode on a young donkey.

The crowds welcomed Him.

Matthew and John both identify the event with this prophecy.

The symbolism was unmistakable.

Jesus was publicly presenting Himself as Israel’s promised King.

But He came humbly.

He did not enter on a warhorse.

He came in peace.

Yet the same King who first came in humility will ultimately rule with universal authority.

Key Principle

The first coming revealed the humility of the King.

The final fulfillment will reveal the full extent of His reign.

IX. THE KING WHO BREAKS THE BOW

Human rulers often establish kingdoms through warfare.

Zechariah's King is different.

He removes:

Chariots.

Warhorses.

Battle bows.

Then He proclaims peace.

His kingdom does not ultimately depend on the weapons of men.

Spiritual Lesson

The peace of Christ is not merely the temporary absence of conflict.

It comes through the righteous reign of the rightful King.

X. PRISONERS OF HOPE

Few expressions in Zechariah are more memorable than:

“Prisoners of hope.”

A prisoner is someone held by something he cannot easily escape.

God tells His people to let hope hold them that tightly.

They had reasons for discouragement.

They had experienced exile.

Loss.

War.

Humiliation.

Yet God's promises gave them reason to hope.

Application

The believer should be so firmly held by God's promises that despair cannot easily carry him away.

XI. THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

Verse 11 connects deliverance to blood.

This theme runs throughout Scripture.

In Exodus, blood confirmed the covenant.

In the sacrificial system, blood represented atonement.

At the Last Supper, Jesus said His blood established the new covenant.

At the cross, that blood was shed.

Key Doctrine

Our deliverance is costly.

Salvation is free to us because Christ paid the price.

XII. WARRIOR AND SHEPHERD

Zechariah 9 presents two pictures of God that might initially seem opposite.

He is a Warrior.

He is a Shepherd.

As Warrior, He defeats the enemy.

As Shepherd, He rescues the flock.

These are not contradictions.

They are two sides of divine salvation.

God judges what destroys His people.

God protects those who belong to Him.

XIII. KEY LESSONS FROM ZECHARIAH 9

1. Human pride eventually falls.

Wealth, intelligence, and fortifications cannot replace God.

2. God can turn enemies into worshipers.

The Philistine remnant would belong to Him.

3. God personally watches over His people.

He sees their oppression.

4. Jesus is the promised King.

His triumphal entry directly fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy.

5. The King is humble but victorious.

Humility and authority are perfectly united in Christ.

6. Christ's kingdom is a kingdom of peace.

His rule will ultimately reach the ends of the earth.

7. Covenant blood provides freedom.

Deliverance comes through God's redemptive covenant.

8. Believers are prisoners of hope.

God's promises are stronger than our circumstances.

9. God fights for His people.

The final victory belongs to Him.

10. God treasures His people.

They are jewels in His crown.

XIV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Zechariah 9 challenges us to ask:

What am I trusting for security?

Do I depend more on wealth or wisdom than on God?

Have I submitted to Jesus as King?

Do I admire His humility while resisting His authority?

Am I living as a prisoner of fear or a prisoner of hope?

Do I trust the blood of Christ as the basis of my deliverance?

Do I believe God sees what His people suffer?

Do I see myself as part of the Shepherd's flock?

Do I believe God can transform former enemies into members of His people?

XV. QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What does the word “burden” communicate in Zechariah 9:1?

Answer

It refers to a serious prophetic message, especially one involving divine judgment.

Question 2

Why could Tyre not depend on its wisdom and wealth?

Answer

Because neither intelligence, money, nor fortifications could protect it from God’s judgment.

Question 3

What happened to the pride of the Philistines?

Answer

God promised to cut it off and remove their corrupt practices.

Question 4

What surprising promise is made concerning the Philistine remnant?

Answer

Those who remained would belong to God and be incorporated among His people.

Question 5

How does God describe His protection in verse 8?

Answer

He says He will personally encamp around His house and guard His people.

Question 6

Who is the King in Zechariah 9:9?

Answer

The King is the promised Messiah, fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Question 7

How did Jesus fulfill Zechariah 9:9?

Answer

He entered Jerusalem humbly, riding on a young donkey.

Question 8

What kind of kingdom does the Messiah establish?

Answer

A kingdom characterized by righteousness, peace, and worldwide rule.

Question 9

What does the blood of the covenant represent?

Answer

It represents the sacrificial basis of God's covenant relationship and ultimately points toward the blood of Christ.

Question 10

What is a “prisoner of hope”?

Answer

It is someone whose confidence in God's promises remains stronger than present circumstances.

Question 11

What is significant about the reference to Greece?

Answer

It anticipates later historical conflict involving Greek power and God's people.

Question 12

How is the Lord pictured in verses 14–15?

Answer

He is pictured as a powerful divine Warrior who intervenes for His people.

Question 13

How is He pictured in verse 16?

Answer

He is pictured as a Shepherd who saves His flock.

Question 14

What do the jewels in a crown symbolize?

Answer

They symbolize the beauty, value, and preciousness of God's redeemed people.

Question 15

What is the central message of Zechariah 9?

Answer

God judges proud nations, protects His people, sends the humble Messianic King, establishes peace through Him, and saves His people through covenant grace.

XVI. FINAL THOUGHT

Zechariah Chapter 9 begins with cities that appear powerful.

Tyre has wealth.

Fortresses.

Wisdom.

Prestige.

But none of those can save her.

Then the chapter turns toward Jerusalem.

And instead of another earthly empire, God introduces a King unlike every other king.

He is righteous.

He is victorious.

Yet He is humble.

He rides on a donkey.

Centuries later, Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem exactly that way.

The prophecy became history.

But Zechariah's vision reaches farther still.

The King who came humbly will establish peace.

His rule will reach the ends of the earth.

Prisoners will be freed because of covenant blood.

God will defend His people.

The Shepherd will save His flock.

And those who once seemed scattered and insignificant will shine like jewels in His crown.

That gives God's people a reason to hope.

We are not prisoners of circumstances.

We are not prisoners of fear.

We are not prisoners of the kingdoms of this world.

In Christ, we are called:

Prisoners of hope.

So rejoice, daughter of Zion.

Your King has come.

Your King will reign.

Your Shepherd will save.

And His goodness and beauty will be seen throughout His kingdom.

Key Verse

“Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! See, your King comes to you, righteous and victorious, yet humble and riding on a donkey.” — Zechariah 9:9

Key Phrase

The humble King has come, and His righteous reign will bring salvation, peace, and hope to His people.