

July 2, 2023

"Peace to the Nations"  
Lesson 4

Zechariah 9:9-13, 16-17

**Intro**

Zechariah was a prophet who returned to Judah from Babylon in 538 BC. His prophetic ministry began in the 520's BC.

The book of Zechariah has three main sections. The first 6 chapters contain 8 apocalyptic visions, vivid and unusual visions of future events. Chapter 7-8 contains responses from God about fasts suggested by a group from Bethel. The last 6 chapters, from which today's lesson comes, contains two prophecies. The first in chapters 9-11 speaks of God's forthcoming actions of judgment and mercy. The second vision in chapters 12-14 describes a coming Day of the Lord.

**Read Zechariah 9:9-17**

1. vs. 9: The use of parallelism in Hebrew poetry is at work here

A thought is repeated using words that are synonyms

"Rejoice" is repeated as "shout"

"Zion" is repeated as "Jerusalem"

Recognizing parallelism prevents us from seeing two actions, two locations, etc

A celebration is happening here as the people rejoice/shout

The reason for the rejoicing is that the king has come to the city

He is described as "righteous and victorious"

The word righteous is a synonym for "just"

The same Hebrew word is translated as "just" in 2 Chron. 12:6

This king will rule in a way beneficial to the people

He rides into the city on a donkey

Kings were expected to be majestic, riding in on horses

Donkeys were the rides of common people

This last phrase is a prophecy that Jesus fulfilled when he came into Jerusalem

He rode on a donkey, entering the same way as thousands of others

2. vs. 10: Ephraim is one of the 10 northern tribes of Israel

The way it's used here is meant to refer to the entire northern nation of Israel

The same is true of Jerusalem; it refers to all of Judah, not just the city of Jerusalem

The intention is that all of Israel, north and south, are included in this promise

This promise is one of peace

Chariots and warhorses are being taken away

This peace will not be for Israel alone

"from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth"

Peace here refers both to an absence of fighting and a reconciliation with God

The verse begins with "I will", showing God's voice and His actions

Later it says "His rule", referring to Jesus and what He will do

3. vs. 11: This verse could be seen as looking both into the past and also to the future  
“The blood of my covenant” could be the OT sacrifices and also Jesus’ redemption  
To be in a pit is to be in a place of hopelessness, of despair  
This pit is described as being “waterless”, which sounds like Jeremiah’s pit  
Jesus’ blood gives hope to the hopeless—those trapped in the pit of sin  
So this could be referring to Israel’s release from Babylonian captivity  
It could also refer to the spiritual freedom the Messiah would bring
4. vs. 12: The word translated “fortress” is used only here in the whole OT  
The word seems to refer to a place of security  
When Zechariah prophesied this, Jerusalem’s walls were not yet built  
So perhaps the place of safety and security refers to God Himself  
God gave Israel a double portion of His wrath for their idolatry  
Here, He promises “twice as much” will be restored to those who return to Him
5. vs. 13: This verse suggests God using Israel as His weapon against the Greeks  
Alexander the Great died in 323 BC, still two hundred years beyond these prophecies  
His kingdom was split among his four generals  
Two of the territories ran through Palestine, and there was conflict from it  
The Maccabean Revolt happened in the 160’s BC  
God is promising to defend His people, as He did from the Greeks
6. vs. 16: Instead of military terms, we see here God’s caring compared to a shepherd and sheep  
The promise here is that God will care for His people  
What happens in Babylon will be temporary, not permanent  
The people are seen as even more precious than sheep to a shepherd  
They are compared to jewels in a crown  
These are precious gemstones—this is how God sees His people  
All will see how God blesses His people—“they will sparkle in His land”
7. vs. 17: Two specifics are given in this verse to show God’s blessing on the people  
God will bless them with grain, from which bread is made  
God will bless them with wine  
The picture of these two combined is a picture of prosperity  
The people here are thriving because of God’s blessing

Application: These verses fulfill a double function. They are promises to the people of Israel of how God will care for them, restore them, and protect them during the time of the Babylonian captivity and after they are released to come home. But they are also a prophecy of the future, when God will give humanity the spiritual blessings through Christ’s death that they cannot comprehend at the time that Zechariah made these prophecies.

Prayer: Father God, Thank You for giving us Your promises throughout history. Thank You that our citizenship is with You in heaven; help us to strive to be the best citizen of that kingdom even while we are here on earth. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

