

## Zechariah 9:1 – 17

### Context: God Will Renew His City and His People

<sup>8:1</sup> Then the word of the LORD of hosts came, saying, <sup>2</sup> 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I am exceedingly jealous for Zion, yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her.' <sup>3</sup> Thus says the LORD, 'I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain...'

### God Will Overthrow Tyre, the Enslaving Merchants

<sup>9:1</sup> The burden of the word of the LORD is against the land of Hadrach, with Damascus as its resting place (for the eyes of men, especially of all the tribes of Israel, are toward the LORD),  
<sup>2</sup> And Hamath also, which borders on it;  
Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise.  
<sup>3</sup> For Tyre built herself a fortress  
And piled up silver like dust,  
And gold like the mire of the streets.  
<sup>4</sup> Behold, the Lord will dispossess her  
And cast her wealth into the sea;  
And she will be consumed with fire.

### God Will Cleanse the Philistines

<sup>5</sup> Ashkelon will see it and be afraid.  
Gaza too will writhe in great pain;  
Also Ekron, for her expectation has been confounded.  
Moreover, the king will perish from Gaza,  
And Ashkelon will not be inhabited.  
<sup>6</sup> And a mongrel race will dwell in Ashdod,  
And I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.  
<sup>7</sup> And I will remove their blood from their mouth  
And their detestable things from between their teeth.  
Then they also will be a remnant for our God,  
And be like a clan in Judah,  
And Ekron like a Jebusite.  
<sup>8</sup> But I will camp around My house because of an army,  
Because of him who passes by and returns;  
And no oppressor will pass over them anymore,  
For now I have seen with My eyes.

### God's King Will Be Enthroned

<sup>9</sup> Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!  
Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem!  
Behold, your king is coming to you;  
He is just and endowed with salvation,  
Humble, and mounted on a donkey,  
Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.  
<sup>10</sup> I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim  
And the horse from Jerusalem;  
And the bow of war will be cut off.  
And He will speak peace to the nations;  
And His dominion will be from sea to sea,  
And from the River to the ends of the earth.  
<sup>11</sup> As for you also, because of the blood of My covenant with you,  
I have set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.  
<sup>12</sup> Return to the stronghold, O prisoners who have the hope;  
This very day I am declaring that I will restore double to you.

### God Will Restore Both Judah and Israel

<sup>13</sup> For I will bend Judah as My bow,  
I will fill the bow with Ephraim.  
And I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece;  
And I will make you like a warrior's sword.  
<sup>14</sup> Then the LORD will appear over them,  
And His arrow will go forth like lightning;  
And the Lord GOD will blow the trumpet,  
And will march in the storm winds of the south.  
<sup>15</sup> The LORD of hosts will defend them.  
And they will devour and trample on the sling stones;  
And they will drink and be boisterous as with wine;  
And they will be filled like a sacrificial basin,  
Drenched like the corners of the altar.  
<sup>16</sup> And the LORD their God will save them in that day  
As the flock of His people;  
For they are as the stones of a crown,  
Sparkling in His land.  
<sup>17</sup> For what comeliness and beauty will be theirs!  
Grain will make the young men flourish,  
And new wine the virgins.

### Cultural Background Notes

- Tyre was the merchant power of the Mediterranean during this period. They enslaved Israelites and sold them captive abroad (Ezk.27:13).
- The Philistines (v.5 – 6) were ancient enemies of the Israelites. Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, Ashdod, and Gath were the 'five cities' of the Philistines. Ashkelon, Gaza, and Ashdod were on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Ekron was near the coast, but 35 kilometers west of Jerusalem.
- Jebusites (v.7) were residents of the city Jerusalem before King David conquered it (2 Sam.5:6). King David bought land for the Temple from Araunah the Jebusite (2 Sam.24:16 – 25), thus indicating that the Jebusites contributed to building the Temple. Zechariah was saying that Ekron would be incorporated somehow into the people of Israel, and perhaps even the Temple worship.
- The donkey (v.9) was the lowest of all the hoofed animals, opposite the war horse. It was a sign of humility.

## Questions

1. Examine my subtitles for each section. Do they seem accurate to you? Would you make any changes?
2. What does 'a mongrel race' in v.6 seem to mean?
  - a. A mixed people of some sort.
  - b. But are they mongrels ethnically or spiritually? In other words, is this a literal reference to their ethnicity or a poetic reference to their spiritual conversion? I think it is a poetic reference to their spiritual conversion. It's not that they are 'biracial' or 'biethnic' in a biological sense. They will be a mixed people in a *faith* sense: they are partially Philistine (Gentile) and partly Israelite (Jewish).
3. What is God going to do to the Philistines?
  - a. Circumcise them, in some sense: 'And I will cut off the pride of the Philistines' (9:6). The term 'cut off' is a circumcision term. It may or may not mean literal circumcision, because here God says He will cut off their pride.
  - b. Remove their uncleanness: 'And I will remove their blood from their mouth and their detestable things from between their teeth' (9:7). They will eat clean food, and live in a clean way, in some sense.
  - c. Adopt them into Israel as part of the chosen people: 'Then they also will be a remnant for our God, and be like a clan in Judah, and Ekron like a Jebusite' (9:7).
    - i. The phrase 'they also will be a remnant' indicates that they will join the people of God.
    - ii. Being 'like a clan in Judah' refers to being incorporated into the tribe of Judah, which was the most welcoming tribe in Israel; the Gentiles who converted into Israel often joined Judah: Tamar, Caleb, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba.
    - iii. Being 'like a Jebusite' refers to Araunah the Jebusite contributing the land for the Temple (2 Sam.24:16 – 25)
  - d. So what does 9:5 – 8 mean? Does it mean that the Philistines will convert to Judaism and accept Torah purity and kosher laws? Or does it mean God's full internal cleansing of the Gentiles, which was the same human nature problem that Israel was realizing it had, and God making them fellow partakers of His promise through the Messiah, which Paul envisioned in Ephesians 3:6?
    - i. The text by itself doesn't tell us enough; the language might mean that, but it might mean something deeper.
    - ii. Often the principle in Old Testament interpretation is that the text underdetermines the fulfillment. And we need to look at the bigger context (if we had the time, all of Zechariah, and all of the Old Testament). For example, consider the fourth and eighth visions of Zechariah: the Messiah will cleanse Israel and remove iniquity from Israel (3:1 – 10) and be a priest who is crowned king (6:9 – 15). So here in 9:5 – 8, something similar is going to be offered to the Philistines.
  - e. State: This is one reason why the hope for a 'military messiah' in Jesus' day was wrong. When Jesus invoked this passage by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, almost all the Jews of his day hoped he would raise an army and liberate Jerusalem from the Romans and 'redeem Israel' in a political and military sense (e.g. Lk.24:21).
4. How is the Messianic King from David's line going to do this?
  - a. Through a kind of weakness. He comes riding not on a strong war horse but on a lowly donkey.
  - b. God will cut off instruments of war and strength: chariot, horse, bow of war (9:10). Again, this is suggestive. Is the Messiah going to do this by having a bigger chariot, horse, and bow than everyone else. Or is the kind of peace he is bringing radically different? 'He will speak peace to the nations'...
  - c. But this peace language has to be squared with the military language of 9:13 – 17. What do we make of that?
    - i. The warfare imagery seems to suggest, though, that people *are* the weapons of God, not that people *will wield* physical weapons. 'For I will bend Judah as My bow, I will fill the bow with Ephraim. And I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece; and I will make you like a warrior's sword.' (9:13) Jesus sent out his disciples into the world (Mt.28:18 – 20), especially the Greek world (e.g. the apostle Paul), and brought about a radical transformation (check out 1 Corinthians for that).