

XII. ZECHARIAH 9:9

A. Background of Zechariah 9:9

1. Zechariah 9:1-10 portrays the advents of two kings and contrasts the outward pomp and power of one with the humility and righteousness of the other.
2. Zechariah 9:1-8 presents an amazing prophecy of the campaign of Alexander the Great in the eastern Mediterranean (332 B.C.).
 - a. Conquest of Syria (9:1-2a)
"Hadrach" (Hamath) and "Damascus"
 - b. Conquest of Phoenicia (9:2b-4)
Sidon and Tyre (Note Alexander's conquest of island city by use of a causeway – see page at end of these notes)
 - c. Conquest of Philistia (9:5-7)
Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, Ashdod
 - d. Safety of Jerusalem (9:8)
cf. Josephus account of Alexander's sparing Jerusalem in Antiquities XI 8, 3-5

Note: There are elements in passage that did not find literal fulfillment in Alexander's day. (cf. v. 7,8)
3. The coming of Jerusalem's King is not to be characterized by the power of military conquest. He will humbly bring "salvation" and will bring peace, not war. (9:9-10)

B. Rabbinic Interpretation of Zechariah 9:9

1. Jewish commentators almost unanimously view this verse and passage as Messianic.
2. B. R. Isaac of Troki, *Faith Strengthened*, views entire passage as eschatological - during Israel's regathering the land will be enlarged, Philistines converted, no need for weapons, for Messiah has been "saved" from Gog and Magog: None of these things took place when Jesus came; therefore, he is not Messiah.
3. "R. Hillel says there will be no Messiah for Israel, because they have enjoyed him already (fol. 99, col. 1) in the days of Hezekiah. Said Rav. Joseph, may God pardon R. Hillel. When was Hezekiah? In the first house, but Zechariah (9:9) prophesied in the second house, 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.'" Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin, 99a,
4. "This image of the ideal future king (Messiah) has been very influential in Jewish tradition, and has influenced the depiction of Jesus in the gospels."
The Jewish Study Bible, JPS Tanakh translation, p. 1259

C. Exegesis of Zechariah 9:9

1. The key to interpretation is to see 9:9 ff. as a contrast to preceding verses.
 - a. Whereas fear struck the people at the first king's advent (9:1) the coming of the second King will cause rejoicing (9:9).
 - b. Whereas the first king brought destruction, the second King brings peace.
 - c. The second King is obviously an Israelite ("thy king" - 9:9), the first King is not.
2. Description of King - Messiah (9:9)
 - a. "just" i.e. righteous (*tsadik*)

“...one animated with righteousness, and maintaining and displaying in His righteous rule this fundamental attribute of the ideal king.”

 - 1) Jeremiah 23:5-6
 - 2) Psalm 45:4,6
 - 3) Isaiah 53:9b
 - b. "having salvation" i.e. "saved" (*nosha*)

See Isaiah 12; 40:10; 62:11 (God - Yeshua is our salvation)

New Testament follows LXX translation (*sodzon*)
 - c. "lowly" (*ani*) - contrasted with first king
 - d. "riding upon an ass..." - contrasted with Alexander's steed Bucephalus

- kings rode on horses after the captivity (see Jeremiah 17:25). David Baron says, "...from the time of Solomon downwards, we do not meet with a single example of a king, or of any distinguished personage, riding upon an ass."
Commentary on Zechariah, p. 309, Kregel Publications

D. Fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9,10

1. All four gospels refer to verse 9 in connection with their accounts of the "Triumphal Entry"

(Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:7-10; Luke 19:29-40; John 12:12-19)
2. Problems:
 - a. Matthew mentions two animals, while other gospels mention only one.
 - 1) Possibly there were two entrances - Matthew's on Friday, Mark/Luke/John's on Sunday

- 2) Possibly Mark/Luke/John simply do not mention other animal
- b. Matthew 21:7 says Jesus sat "upon them" - how could he sit on two animals?
- "upon them" refers to the garments, not to the animals
3. Zechariah 9:10 awaits fulfillment at Messiah's second advent.
 - a. Jesus was rejected by Sanhedrin following His entry into Jerusalem. The fulfillment of conditions of verse 10 is dependent on Jerusalem's acceptance of His coming described in verse 9.
 - b. Zechariah 9:9-10 provide an example of the prophetic perspective, i.e. combining in one passage the two-fold aspects of Messiah's work. (1 Peter 1:10-11)

Example: Isaiah 61:1-3 / Luke 4:16-21

First Coming - LORD has anointed me

1. to preach
2. to bind up
3. to proclaim liberty
4. to proclaim acceptable year

Second Coming

1. day of vengeance of our God
2. to comfort mourners, etc.

PROPHECY ABOUT TYRE

Zechariah 9:3-4; Ezekiel 26:1-14

Tyre was fortified by 150 ft. high walls that were 15 feet thick. It was a port city with the strongest fleet in the world.

Ezekiel 26

1 And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

2 Son of man, because that Tyre hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken *that was* the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: I shall be replenished, *now* she is laid waste:

3 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against thee, O Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up.

4 And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock.

5 It shall be a *place* for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken *it*, saith the Lord GOD: and it shall become a spoil to the nations.

6 And her daughters which *are* in the field shall be slain by the sword; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

7 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyre Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people.

8 He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field: and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee.

9 And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers.

10 By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee: thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach.

11 With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets: he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground.

12 And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water.

13 And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard.

14 And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a *place* to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the LORD have spoken *it*, saith the Lord GOD.

3 years after the prophecy Nebuchadnezzar:

Smashed the walls and towers (v. 12) but gained no plunder (Ezek. 29:17-20) because everyone had moved to an island ½ mile off shore. The old mainland city still was there in rubble (prophecy not complete).

250 years later Alexander the Great laid siege to the island city of Tyre and:

built 2,000 ft. causeway, 200 ft. wide, from debris of old Tyre (vs. 12)

built 160 foot high moveable towers on wheels

got his fleet from many nations he conquered (vs. 3)

reduced it to ruin in 332 B.C.

causeway that Alexander built is still there

mainland city of Tyre still bare, fisherman lay nets on bare rocks, despite the presence of fresh water springs. (vs. 5 and 14)