

## BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING!

Zechariah 9:9

### INTRODUCTION

- A. Before I was a Christian, as a teenager I nevertheless had a keen interest in the Bible, especially the areas of apologetics and prophecy.
1. My confidence in the truthfulness of the Bible was confirmed.
  2. My father also wisely encouraged me in these pursuits, except that he explained that beyond these absorbing matters, Jesus Christ was the great and glorious theme of the Word of God.
  3. So let me not discourage you in these peripheral areas of truth. But remember that Jesus Christ himself must be the end of our apologetic and prophetic enquiries, even as He himself declared in John 13:18; 14:28-29; 16:4.
    - a. Application. You may believe the Bible to be true; but unless Jesus Christ is your Savior and Lord, you will perish! (John 3:36).
    - b. Application. You may believe in Jesus Christ's second coming; but unless He is your Savior and Lord, you will perish! (Rom. 1:18).
- B. In our reading of Zechariah 9:1-10, did one verse stand out above all others? Most likely it was v. 9, because we easily remember its precise fulfillment in the Savior's triumphal entry into Jerusalem at the commencement of passion week described in Matthew 21:1-5, that is on Palm Sunday.
1. Certainly the fulfillment of this prophecy directs us to Christ.
  2. But do you understand the context of Zechariah 9:9, and not simply pluck it out of its setting? We often rashly do this.
  3. Yet to understand the prophetic significance of vs. 1-8, 10, is only to enlarge our understanding of this Savior, by way of His stark contrast with a notable worldly potentate.
- C. Zechariah, the largest of the minor prophets, is the second most important of the messianic prophets in the Old Testament after Isaiah.
1. "Zechariah" means "Jehovah remembers," and this is especially true in this book concerning God's love for Israel. He may severely judge His people under the Gentile heel, and scatter them for centuries. But He will not forget them. They shall eventually return to their land and enjoy the righteous reign of Messiah.

2. Chapter 9 commences the second major section of Zechariah. It is addressed to exiles from Babylon who have just completed the second and less glorious temple.
3. However, God has not only remembered Israel, but also Israel's enemies, in particular Syria, Phoenicia, Philistia.

### JESUS CHRIST, KING OF KINGS, EVEN ALEXANDER – ZECHARIAH 9:1-9

- A. The destructive power of the kingdom of Alexander the Great, vs. 1-8.
  1. Introduction. In vs. 1-8 we have a description of God's sovereign judgment on three of Israel's most constant enemies, Syria, Phoenicia, and Philistia. Most evangelical commentators agree that here we have a prophecy of Alexander the Great being used to accomplish this end. Let us learn more about this remarkable military genius and world conqueror.
  2. Alexander the Great was the precocious son of King Philip of Macedon and Olympias, his tempestuous red haired wife.
    - a. Born in 356 B.C., at the age of 13 he tamed the legendary Bucephalus, a black stallion that he jealously regarded.
    - b. Tutored by Aristotle, he became a skilled commander who took over the kingdom when his father was assassinated, and then expanded it by conquering all of Greece and Thrace, at the age of 20!
    - c. At the age of 22 he led an army of 40,000 into Asia Minor to challenge the might of Persia that had so pillaged Greece.
    - d. At the Battle of Granicus in 334 B.C., Alexander routed a Persian army, losing under 200 men compared with the loss of 19,000 Persians.
    - e. At Gordium, he cut the mysterious Gordion knot, so qualifying, according to legend, to be the conqueror of Asia.
    - f. In 333 B.C. at the Battle of Issus, Alexander defeated a Persian army ten times the size of his own, and so gained entrance to the land of Israel having passed through the Cilician Gates.
  3. In Zechariah 9:1-8, we now view the campaign of Alexander as he sweeps south, conquering all before him through Israel and as far as Egypt.
    - a. In vs. 1-2a, Syria is captured, especially the prize of Damascus. So rapacious is Alexander that Israel's only hope is to turn to the Lord.
    - b. In vs. 2b-4, Phoenicia is captured south along the coast, and is overwhelmed. Sidon also quickly surrenders, but the rich, insular, island city of Tyre resists.

- (1) Tyre was a fortress island, two miles around, and half a mile from the shore, with walls 150' high. It had earlier resisted a siege by Nebuchadnezzar for 12 years.
  - (2) Furious at the proud resistance, Alexander was held back for 7 months. He asked the Jews in Jerusalem for help. They refused claiming allegiance to the Media/Persian empire. Alexander swore he would pay them back severely.
  - (3) Eventually Tyre was overthrown, v. 4, by means of an earthen causeway built across the channel. Thousands of Tyrians were slaughtered. Evidence of the causeway remains even to this day.
- c. In vs. 5-7, Philistia is captured, including Ashkelon, Ekron, Ashdod, and resistant Gaza. Some cleansing from raw paganism will result.
- d. In v. 8, Alexander heads north-east and returns to Jerusalem where the high priest and Jewish leaders are full of fear. But Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells a remarkable story of what took place at this tense confrontation.
- (1) Jaddua the high priest called for prayer meetings seeking God's merciful intervention.
  - (2) Jaddua then had a dream in which God told him to dress in his priestly robes, the priests in white garments; then they should open the city gates and go out to meet Alexander.
  - (3) The procession surprised Alexander, except that he remembered a dream back in Macedonia where it was revealed that he would conquer Asia and meet this priest of God.
  - (4) Therefore Alexander surprised his troops when he dismounted and bowed before the high priest, explaining that he worshipped God, not man.
  - (5) The Jews then showed Alexander from Daniel how the Greeks would conquer the Persians, probably Daniel 8:3-9. He in turn offered sacrifices to God in Jerusalem, and established a favorable relationship with the Jews. Hence: "I will camp around My house because of an army, because of him who passes by and returns," v. 8.
  - (6) Alexander then continued his conquest even as far as India, returning only because of weary soldiers. Having taken Nineveh at the Battle of Arbella in 331 B.C., Babylon was subsequently conquered. There he rested and indulged himself, and then suddenly died of a fever, aged 32!

B. The saving power of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, v. 9.

1. Introduction. What then is the connection between v. 9 and vs. 1-8? It is the connection of stark contrast between two kings and two kingdoms, two radically different world views.
  - a. Alexander the Great is the representative ruler of this present world and age. His weapons are carnal; his boasting is in human achievement; his subjects submit to fear.
  - b. Jesus Christ, the King of Israel, is the head of the righteous kingdom of the world to come. His weapons are spiritual; his boasting is in the power of heaven; his subjects submit to mercy and grace.
2. In v. 9, the emphasis is upon: "Behold, your king cometh." He is radically different from and superior to Alexander. This King is also greater than Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, the Temple.
  - a. On Palm Sunday it was the intention of Jesus Christ to present himself as the greater King, the King of Israel, but even more, the "King over all the earth" (Zech. 14:9).
  - b. On Palm Sunday, Christians are reminded that a greater than the kings of England, the presidents of the U.S., the tsars of Russia, the Kaisers of Germany, the emperors of China and Japan, has come to establish His kingdom, and he will come again to consummate it, when it will have no rivals.
3. Look at the great contrasts that this prophetic verse offers.
  - a. This King of Israel brings rejoicing, not terror.
  - b. This King of Israel brings salvation, not servitude.
  - c. This King of Israel brings justice, not pagan Greek culture.
  - d. This King of Israel comes riding on a donkey, not as a tyrant astride Bucephalus the war horse.
  - e. This King of Israel died and rose again to an endless life, aged 33; not as Alexander who died aged 32 due to drunken debauchery, and still is dead! A greater than Alexander has come!
4. Look at the great contrast that v. 10 declares.
  - a. This King Jesus will ultimately eliminate war, and "speak peace to the nations," and His kingdom will be "to the ends of the earth."

- b. Alexander's kingdom was immediately divided at his death amongst his four chief generals. Even then it was subsequently conquered by Rome. Alexander could only conquer by force, and that temporarily. And likewise with Rome.

## CONCLUSION

- A. How utterly foolish it is to trust in any mere mortal in this life. Even the "Alexanders" of this world rise, bloom, fade, and fall (Ps. 37:35-37).
  1. They spread and prosper like "a luxuriant tree," v. 35.
  2. They decline and decay into humiliating insignificance, v. 36.
  3. But "the blameless man, . . . the man of peace," will endure, just as the kingdom of Jesus Christ (Rev. 11:15).
- B. Psalm 2:4-6 indicates God's estimate of the Alexanders and Napoleons and would-be potentates of this world; they are of little import.
  1. God watches and waits as "the kings of the earth take their stand," v. 2.
  2. God "sits in the heavens and laughs, scoffs," v. 4.
  3. God "has installed His King upon Zion," v. 6.
  4. Then God invites the wise: "Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way," v. 12.