

## The Weighty Word

Zechariah

Sermon 11

Zechariah 9:1 – 17

Nutshell: In Burden #1 (of 3), God begins to put names and places with the forecasts in chaps. 1-8. These will help to prepare for the coming complexity of the fulfillments. The fulfillments, as in chaps. 1-8, center in God once again working on behalf of His people, culminating in Messiah.

Review: God told them to turn, 1:3. They turned, 1:6. They were ready for God to reveal the renewal of His gracious dealings, now that the day of His discipline had passed. The priesthood was now consecrated for the new Temple. God could prepare the way for overcoming His enemies by first ridding His own land of uncleanness or of its spiritually unclean.

Vision Outline: Chaps. 1 – 6.

A chiastic outline: Themes introduced, Focal point (Vis. 4 & 5), Resolution. Link Vision 1&8, 2&7, 3&6, 4&5.

Vision 1, 1:7-17. Vis 2, 1:18-21. Vis 3, 2:1-13. Vis 4, 3:1-10. Vis 5, 4:1-14. Vis 6, 5:1-4. Vis 7, 5:5-11. Vis 8, 6:1-8.

Vis 2 & 3, God to judge the pagans; Vis 6 & 7, now His people. Vis 8 brings real rest from wrong rest (Vis 1).

Vision 1: The Son's HORSEMEN: the pagans **rest** smugly. God: I'll be with Israel and judge/convert the pagans.

Vision 2: God sends 4 builders to **BRING DOWN** the 4 pagan horns that scatter God's people.

Vision 3: The Son **goes out** to measure Jerusalem for her coming expansion. Pagans to be judged.

Vision 4: Priest Joshua clothed: justification. Satan rebuked. Zechariah appointed; Messiah promised.

Vision 5: Olive-fed Menorah: sanctification. Spirit-filled Zerubbabel to overcome pagan 'mountains'.

Vision 6: A flying scroll **goes out** as a 'measure' of the ungodly in Israel.

Vision 7: Counterfeit bride measured (ephah), **THROWN DOWN**, sealed over, bridesmaid-flown to native Shinar.

Vision 8: The Son's HORSEMEN go forth to give God's Spirit **rest** (judge or convert (2:11) the pagans).

**Kid-speak:** "Zechariah" means "Yahweh remembers." What did God remember? His promises to do good to His people. Had He forgotten His promises? No, He just couldn't bless His people while they were being bad. So what does "Zechariah" mean?

Review (cont.):

Chap 6:9-15, Make crowns for the High Priest, since Messiah (Shoot) will be the original Priest-King.

Chap 7, Q & A: "Has your fasting been for Me? Or, as your fathers, have you ignored justice & mercy?"

Chap 8, "The Big Shift- I'll dwell with you → pleasantness. Many will join. But are you neighborly?"

I. What Is "the Burden of the Word of Yahweh"? 9:1

A. A phrase used 3x: Zech 9:1; 12:1; Mal 1:1

1. The phrase seems intended as an organizational marker, heading three bodies of prophecies, 1) Zech 9-11; 2) Zech 12-14; 3) Mal 1-4
2. We've already seen Zech as a continuation-unit with Haggai. Now a tie to Malachi.
3. Remember, Hosea-Malachi were originally one book called The Twelve

B. Burden just means weight or load. God's communications have weight and lay a burden upon

those to whom they speak.

1. Nah 1:1 is a “burden of Nineveh.” Hab 1:1 is the “burden” Habakkuk saw
  2. “Burden” had become a favorite word among counterfeits, so God banned the word! Jer 23:33-38
  3. With God’s renewal of His mercies comes the renewal of His weighty words
    - a. They were enabled to bear them
    - b. As we are
- C. Are God’s words a burden now?
1. Not as in commands weighing us down. They never have, 1 Jn 5:3.
  2. But yes, the glory of the New Covenant is a weight God must equip us for, 2 Cor 2:16; 3:9
  3. The Bible in general is a weight. Gen 1:1- I’m part of a Creator’s scheme. Rev 22:18-21- Plagues for adulterating His words.

**Kid-speak:** When it says God’s Word is a “burden,” what does that mean? It means that you can feel it. It like a weight on your soul. It’s heavy.

## II. A Geographical Tour with Forecasts from a Solemn Guide, 9:1-7

- A. The only sin listed on this tour is arrogance, v 6
1. It is assumed that Tyre’s “wisdom” in v 2 is part of her posture against God
  2. Because everything the Bible says about any of the cities tells us of their idolatry and iniquity
- B. These are geographical places with recognizable fulfillments in the near-term
1. In this regard, they are like 2:9, 4:9, and 6:15: short-term fulfillments, “Then you’ll know.”
  2. This burden is different, though, in that it rests on its object, to be carried to completion
  3. God will start north of Israel, stay north but east, then skip down south to Philistia
  4. It’s a circuit God would be taking a military commander on
- C. Just north of Israel was Damascus, a city of Syria, v 1
1. For us, mainly where Saul was headed when Christ ‘captured’ him
  2. But here, we primarily remember David securing his borders, conquering Damascus, 2 Sam 8:5-6
  3. With the promises of the Davidic king in Zech, this pictures Messiah’s renewed conquest in reality or type
  4. Hadrach was a city of Syria north of Damascus, v 1
- D. God’s burden is “in” this place, 9:1
1. Calling Damascus “His” resting place (better than ↑ “its,” I think), God is laying claim to it
  2. The “weight” of this prophecy begins in Damascus
  3. The Visions end with God having rest in the North, 6:8. Chap 9 may tell us how He achieves it.
- E. God is directing mankind’s and Israel’s “eye”: “Watch Me here.” 9:1
1. Man lives his life diverting his gaze or attention *from* God
  2. When God acts conspicuously, He *refocuses* us where we should be looking
  3. May there be such a work (whether or not geographically based) in our day!

**Kid-speak:** Most people try not to think about God. But is God able to get their attention? Yes. Maybe He'll do that in a big way while we're still alive.

- F. Hamath, just south of Damascus, bordering Israel, is named as included on this list, 9:2
  - 1. Part of David's conquests in 2 Sam 8 again
  - 2. The name of the leader became the name of the city
- G. Tyre (Tsor) and (north of Tyre) Sidon (Tsidon, Tyre's 'mother' city) border Syria to the west, on the Mediterranean; so the territory to Israel's north is now represented 9:2-3
  - 1. Tyre was wiser than Daniel! Ezek 28:3. Wiser in earthly things, in which Daniel led Babylon.
  - 2. Tyre in particular is described as very rich and well-protected (150 ft. walls)
- H. God doesn't actually begin describing His assaults until Tyre, 9:4
  - 1. God used **Alexander** to fulfill this dispossession, viz., Isa 10:5
  - 2. Alexander built a half mile causeway from the stones of old Tyre to reach the island fortress

**Kid-speak:** There was a city on an island called Tyre. They were really smart and had huge walls. They thought nobody could beat them, and guys like Nebuchadnezzar tried! But when God wanted to bring them down, could He do it?

- I. Now we move well south of Tyre, west of Israel, but still on the Mediterranean: Philistia, 9:5
  - 1. The Philistine towns of Ashkelon, Azza (Gaza), and Ekron would be alarmed at what happened to Tyre
    - a. There were 5 major Philistine cities. Gath is missing; probably much less dominant.
    - b. Alexander destroyed these cities as well, often brutally
  - 2. The king of Azza (Gaza) in particular was pierced through the feet, 'threaded' through them, tied to a chariot, and dragged around the city
    - a. The Greeks made "mixed races" of many conquered lands, weakening their coherence, v 6
    - b. Again, it was Alexander, but "I," God, will cut off their arrogance, v 6

**Kid-speak:** Remember the Philistines who used to bother the Israelites a lot? God used Alexander the Great to beat them badly. Will *any* of God's enemies get away with it?

### III. The Tour's Transformative Turn, 9:7

- A. God didn't bonk Philistia just to undo her, but also to redo her!
- B. The blood and defilements were Philistia's pagan food/ sacrifice rituals. Ridded.
  - 1. The remnant of them would turn from idolatry to the true God
  - 2. Not only that, but they'd become leading elements, "stalwarts," capable of fully assimilating into Judah
- C. Ekron as a Jebusite
  - 1. Jebus was the pre-Jerusalem. But Jebusites converted! 2 Chron 3:1, even providing the land for the Temple! So "Jebusite" in this context is a good thing.
  - 2. Jebus represents 'built-in' converts. Already part of the land. Ekronites would be 'naturals' as

Christians.

**Kid-speak:** God beat the Philistines black-and-blue! But guess what He did with the ones who were left? He made them into really good Christians!

#### IV. Tour's Terminus. Sentencing Stops; Shielding Starts, 9:8

A. This sounds like *stopping* an attempted invasion- which it is, except by *changing* the invader to an admirer!

1. If we stay with Alexander, he had a special grudge vs. Jerusalem. According to Josephus, the high priest, Jaddus, who initially refused Alexander, had a dream to submit to him. The city welcomed him with pomp.
  - a. But Alexander had seen Jaddus in a dream 3 yrs. earlier, telling him to conquer Persia
  - b. Jaddus showed Alexander Daniel's prophecies of him
  - c. Israel attained favored nation status (until Antiochus). Alexander sacrificed to Yahweh.
2. This will sound strange, but this would make Alexander a type of Christ: a ruler saving Israel from oppressive overlords (as Persia had become)
  - a. But on reflection, it is not essentially different than Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, or Darius being "servants" of Yahweh, "anointed," etc. Isa 44:28; 45:1

**Kid-speak:** God said He would protect His people from Alexander. How did He do that? He told His people to obey Alexander. Then Alexander started liking the Jews!

- b. And this is the context for 9:9
  3. There is, of course, a *final* fulfillment of 'no more bad guys' yet to come
- B. Israelites ushered Christ into Jerusalem much as they had done for Alexander. Christ, of course, is the direct fulfillment of 9:9. Alexander was just a partial preview. History is full of those (Hitler, *an* antichrist, etc.)
  1. In contrast to the military conquests of 9:1-7, Christ's arrival would be meek. Such was His first coming, 9:9.
  2. Israel's shouts at the Triumphal entry were muted by the cries of "Crucify Him" soon to follow
  3. It therefore remains to us to carry on the command to "celebrate" and "shout." Jesus has come to us. He has come to us by His Spirit. He has come meekly, under the banner of love.
- C. Christ is "righteous": the only man every fully and only so
  1. He is "rescued" from death in answer to His prayer in Gethsemane, without which *we* could not be rescued.
  2. He is "lowly." He has 'come down to our level'. He is lowly of heart. Creating when He needed nothing shows that.
  3. Riding a young, purebred donkey. Again, not the military conqueror the first time around. A war horse the *second* time, Rev 19. The donkey figure for Christ goes all the way back to Gen 49:11.

**Kid-speak:** Zechariah 9 tells how Jesus would come into Jerusalem about 500 years later. What would Jesus be riding? A young donkey! Jesus didn't come to make war the first time. But will He make war the second time He comes? Yup.

D. Christ's lowliness translates (seeds) into our own, 9:10

1. We are peace people under the Prince of Peace. Our spiritual battle is UNTO peace in our souls daily, hourly.
2. Based on Christ's cross, He will be able to implement world peace during the Millennium, Rev 20. There is no final peace until there is universal peace, Ps 72:8. "Cause Your kingdom to come."
3. From the River (the Euphrates) not just to the Mediterranean, but on and on

**Kid-speak:** Will there always be wars? No. Jesus fought the big battle on the Cross so there would be no more fighting one day. Wow, that'll be great, huh!

IV. Advantages of the Alteration, 9:11-17

A. Freedom from imprisonment, v 11-12

1. Because of the blood of their covenant, which was ultimately Christ's blood for all who hoped in the coming Messiah
2. A waterless pit = certain death. Escape from death. Living waters.
3. The 3<sup>rd</sup> command of the chapter: "Return to the fortification." Now that you're free, be safe, Prov 18:10.
  - a. But you are *still* prisoners until the **final** alteration: glorification, Rom 7:23, 25
  - b. But safe, even in the prison of the flesh! Still enabled for blamelessness! Philip 2:15

**Kid-speak:** Jesus takes us out of the worst prison. What's that? Sin! *If* we believe in Him.

4. And repaid double for all we suffered, like Job, 42:10; Isa 61:7
5. The portion of the firstborn goes to Christ, which He shares equally with us, Rom 8:17

B. We become war implements in God's cause, v 13-15

1. Judah (south) and Ephraim (north), bow and arrow: a reunited kingdom! V 13
2. Against Greece! But Alexander's *successors* who turned vs. Israel much later.
  - a. Near-term, this was the Maccabees, 1 & 2 Maccabees: good historical accounts of the Jews fighting Alexander's evil successors, 150 years after, especially Antiochus Epiphanes (IV)
  - b. The Maccabees called on God to help them like Gideon, etc. He seems to have done so, but they had no staying power, Dan 11:34.
3. God's personal involvement seems to fast-forward to Christ's final victories, v 14
4. But v 15 seems to apply Christ's victory to us in our spiritual battle
  - a. Our warfare is fairly guaranteed when employed rightly, 2 Cor 10:4-5, but only in winning the battle of ideas, not necessarily making people like it

**Kid-speak:** 2 Cor 10:4-5 says we're in a war. What's the war about? Ideas. How do we fight the war? With words. What words? God's words.

- b. "Full like the bowl" that splashes blood on the altar. Christ's meek sacrifice is the source of our power, first over sin, then over Satan, then over those who hate us (making us not avenge)
- C. We will finally have rest, reward, and rejoicing, 9:16-17
  - 1. God has to rescue us, because we are always in a precarious place in enemy territory
  - 2. But we are *His*. *That's* our territory. We will be beautiful emblems of Christ's victory.
  - 3. We are on conquered ground. Christ just has to come claim it.
    - a. Patience
    - b. *See* its loveliness until then. *Enjoy* its nourishments and delights.

Wrap-up: God's weighty words against His enemies are relieving words for us.

Christ's cross is our victory. We can walk in it every moment that we reckon ourselves dead in it, Rom 6:11. His meekness translates into our own.

Our Lord's words are a burden, Matt 11:29-30, but a burden that strengthens and raises us up. God's words should burden us **for** the world, Rev 10:10-11.