

Zechariah 9:1–17

The God Who Brings Down Pride and Sends a Humble King

Zechariah 9 moves from God’s judgment on proud nations to a beautiful picture of the coming King who brings salvation and peace. It reminds us that God sees human arrogance, that He acts in history, and that He will ultimately establish His righteous reign through the Messiah.

1. God Confronts Proud Nations (Zechariah 9:1–8)

The burden of the word of the Lord is against the land of Hadrach,
And Damascus its resting place
(For the eyes of men
And all the tribes of Israel
Are on the Lord);
Also against Hamath, which borders on it,
And against Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise.
For Tyre built herself a tower,
Heaped up silver like the dust,
And gold like the mire of the streets.

Zechariah begins with a “burden”—a weighty message of judgment—against the regions of Syria and Phoenicia: Damascus, Hamath, Tyre, and Sidon. Tyre especially was famous for its wealth, strength, and apparent cleverness. It was a coastal power, rich in trade, overflowing with silver and gold.

From a human standpoint, Tyre seemed untouchable. Yet God says:

“Behold, the Lord will cast her out;
He will destroy her power in the sea,
And she will be devoured by fire.”

History records that mighty powers did indeed come against Tyre, and the proud, wealthy city was humbled. The point is clear: no amount of wealth, strategy, or human strength can shield a nation—or a person—from the hand of God.

The prophecy then moves south down the coastal plain:

Ashkelon shall see it and fear;
Gaza also shall be very sorrowful;
And Ekron, for He dried up her expectation.
The king shall perish from Gaza,
And Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.
A mixed race shall settle in Ashdod,
And I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.

The Philistine cities tremble as they see what happens to Tyre. Their security collapses, their kings fall, and their pride is cut off. God brings down what people trust in apart from Him.

But God also speaks of mercy:

“I will take away the blood from his mouth,
And the abominations from between his teeth.
But he who remains, even he shall be for our God,
And shall be like a leader in Judah,
And Ekron like a Jebusite.
I will encamp around My house because of the army,
Because of him who passes by and him who returns.
No more shall an oppressor pass through them,
For now I have seen with My eyes.”

God not only judges; He purifies. Those who remain among these former enemies can be “for our God.” They are not out of reach of His grace. God promises to protect His people and to put a boundary around His house. He sees. He knows. He defends.

2. The Humble King Who Brings Salvation (Zechariah 9:9–10)

At this point the prophecy lifts our eyes from local wars to the coming of the true King:

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your King is coming to you;
He is just and having salvation,
Lowly and riding on a donkey,
A colt, the foal of a donkey.”

Here we have one of the clearest Old Testament prophecies of the coming of Jesus. Centuries later, He entered Jerusalem riding on a young donkey, and the Gospels quote this verse to show that He fulfilled it.

Notice the description:

- “Your King is coming to you” – Not a distant ruler, but One who draws near.
- “He is just” – He is righteous in His character and His judgments.
- “Having salvation” – He comes not merely to conquer, but to save.
- “Lowly” – He does not appear in outward pomp, but in humility.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, He was on His way to the cross. There, He would shed His blood for our sins and establish a new covenant. Jesus saved us when He shed His blood on the cross. He came not with chariots and war horses, but in mercy and gentleness, bearing our guilt.

The prophecy continues:

“I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
And the horse from Jerusalem;
The battle bow shall be cut off.
He shall speak peace to the nations;
His dominion shall be ‘from sea to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the earth.’”

God promises a King whose rule ends warfare and brings true peace, not just to Israel, but to the nations. His dominion reaches “to the ends of the earth.”

The full outworking of this promise is still ahead of us. Jesus has already come, died, and risen. His resurrection declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord. His reign has begun in the hearts and lives of those who trust Him, and one day His rule will be openly recognized throughout creation.

3. Prisoners of Hope and the Lord’s Deliverance (Zechariah 9:11–17)

God now speaks to His people in light of His covenant:

“As for you also,
Because of the blood of your covenant,
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.”

The “blood of your covenant” recalls the solemn bond God made with His people. For Christians, this points us even more deeply to the blood of Jesus, who said at the Last Supper, “This is My blood of the new covenant.” His sacrificial death is the foundation on which all true deliverance rests.

God calls His people:

“Return to the stronghold,
You prisoners of hope.
Even today I declare
That I will restore double to you.”

What a powerful phrase: “prisoners of hope.” They had known exile, defeat, and weakness, but God calls them to see themselves not as prisoners of despair, but as people bound to hope because of His promise.

He goes on to describe Himself as a warrior for His people:

“For I have bent Judah, My bow, Fitted the bow with Ephraim,
And raised up your sons, O Zion, Against your sons, O Greece,
And made you like the sword of a mighty man. Then the Lord will be seen over them,
And His arrow will go forth like lightning. The Lord God will blow the trumpet,
And go with whirlwinds from the south. The Lord of hosts will defend them...”

The message is clear: God Himself fights for His people. He defends, delivers, and acts with power on their behalf.

The passage ends with a beautiful picture of salvation and joy:

“The Lord their God will save them in that day,
As the flock of His people. For they shall be like the jewels of a crown,
Lifted like a banner over His land—For how great is His goodness
And how great His beauty! Grain shall make the young men thrive,
And new wine the young women.”

God will save His people like a shepherd rescuing His flock. They will be like precious jewels in a crown—cherished, honored, and shining with reflected glory. The final exclamation says it all: “How great is His goodness, and how great His beauty!”

Practical Application

1. **Human pride is fragile; God’s reign is sure.**

Tyre, the Philistine cities, and other powers looked invincible for a time, yet they were brought low. Today’s systems, powers, and wealth are just as temporary. Only the reign of Christ will endure. Are you building your life on what can be shaken or on the King whose kingdom cannot be moved?

2. **True kingship is humble and saving.**

Jesus rode into Jerusalem not to crush sinners but to save them. He came lowly, with salvation. This is the kind of King we are called to follow—One who wears a crown of thorns before a crown of glory. Does your idea of greatness match His humility?

3. **In Christ, you are a “prisoner of hope.”**

You may feel trapped by circumstances, guilt, or fear. But if you belong to Jesus, you are bound to hope by His promise and His blood. God calls you to return to the stronghold—to Himself—as your refuge and strength.

4. **God delights in His people.**

He speaks of His people as jewels in a crown and exclaims over His own goodness and beauty. You are not forgotten or tolerated; you are loved, valued, and destined to reflect His glory.

A Challenge for Believers

- Are you living like someone whose King has already come—trusting Him, obeying Him, and letting His peace shape your reactions to conflict and fear?
- Are you walking in humility, like your King, or are you secretly clinging to pride, position, or self-importance?
- Are you acting like a “prisoner of hope,” or have you allowed yourself to be taken captive by cynicism, bitterness, or despair?

Ask the Lord:

- To expose areas of pride that need to be surrendered.
- To renew your confidence that He truly reigns, even when the world looks chaotic.
- To help you live as a visible “jewel of His crown”—a person through whom His goodness and beauty are seen.

An Invitation to Non-Believers

Zechariah 9 points us to a King unlike any other:

- He is just—He does what is right.
- He has salvation—He alone can rescue us from sin and judgment.
- He is lowly—He came near in humility, riding on a donkey, not ignoring our need but entering into our world.
- He shed His blood on the cross as the true sacrifice for our sins.
- He rose from the dead—His resurrection declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord.

You cannot save yourself by your own strength, goodness, or spirituality. Tyre's wealth could not save it. The Philistines' power could not save them. Nations rise and fall. Human achievements fade. Only Jesus can set prisoners free from the "pit without water"—the emptiness and judgment our sins deserve.

Today, He invites you:

- Admit before God that you are a sinner and cannot make yourself right.
- Believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and rose again.
- Ask Him, in your own words, to forgive you, to change you, and to take His rightful place as Lord of your life.

If you come to Him, He will not turn you away.

The King who once came lowly, riding on a donkey, now offers Himself to you as Savior and Lord. The One whose goodness and beauty Zechariah glimpsed invites you into His kingdom, His forgiveness, and His future.