

Zechariah

Part 4

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[00:00:01] With Zechariah chapter 9 and verse 1. Our survey of the book of Prophet Zechariah we turn, as read, to chapters 9, 10 and 11. In these chapters there are many prophecies.

Some haven't been fulfilled at all. They await the final climax of God's dealings on earth.

Some have been fulfilled in measure, in part, but they await a final complete fulfillment, a greater and a fuller answer than has been given thus far in the history of men.

[00:01:03] Now we shouldn't be surprised, and we often find it in scripture, that there are things which bear the stamp of the prophecy, and seem to be an answer in part, and yet there are certain things which aren't yet fulfilled. It's not that the prophecy is inaccurate, but rather that God has allowed to occur in history events which give us a preview of the character of the ultimate fulfillment, but not as wide, not as deep, not as great, not as extensive as the final fulfillment. In demonstration of that well-known principle which is always worth bearing in mind, that coming events cast their shadows before them.

[00:02:05] It's a principle which is clearly demonstrated in many scriptures, and it's demonstrated in chapters 9, 10, and 11 of Zechariah. Well, that having been said, we can look at some of the details. If we want a heading for chapter 9, we can have in mind this mental note that God is going to wreak his vengeance upon the nations who have terrorized, enslaved, captivated his own beloved people Israel, the apple of his eye. No need to repeat what we've had in other chapters, but God's discipline necessarily applied to his own nation as a result of their rebellion, the Gentiles' nation being used as God's instruments of discipline, [00:03:03] overstepping the mark, enjoying the task that they'd been delegated to do, although unwittingly to them. And God says, ultimately, for their overstepping of the mark and their audacity in dealing in such a treacherous way with my beloved earthly people, I will wreak my vengeance upon them. And in so doing, he will deliver his own people. Now, chapter 9 largely tells us the manner in which that will be done, and it tells us the result of its accomplishment. Now, as with the other studies, I can only hope to give you guidelines that we might all take away and study. For instance, there are certain cities which are mentioned in the opening verses of chapter 9. Now, these were cities which, again, establish a principle, in one [00:04:04] way or another, geographically, commercially, strategically, these were cities who rivaled Jerusalem in one way or another. And God makes it plain. He will brook no rival. Jerusalem, as a city, is going to be preeminent. He will see to that. And for that, and other governmental reasons, we find that there are certain cities which are mentioned, which had to be dealt with in history, which are a little picture in themselves of the steps that God will ultimately take in order to establish the preeminence, as a city,

of the city of Jerusalem. Now, if you have the time, and you want to do the research, you can check that from secular history. If you are [00:05:01] a good steward of your time, and you want to take a shortcut, you consult John Nelson Darby, William Kelly, Edward Dennett, in their books of Zechariah, and they will tell you the dates, the battles, the nations, the cities, and demonstrate that these things were an accomplished fact in secular history. More important to us, when we get down to verse 8, is that God gives a reason why he makes this reaffirmation at this particular time in history that he's going to step in, he's going to deliver his people, that the point has arrived at. Verse 8, after summing up the statement, I will encamp about mine house because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth, no oppressor shall pass through them any more. He said Jerusalem will have no rival, they will be delivered, they will stand, and then he gives the reason for. [00:06:04] Now have I seen with mine eyes. Now, what had he seen? The prophets, Haggai and others, had spoken to those of the captivity, there had been repentance in measure, there had been a remnant who had returned to Jerusalem, and they were well on with the rebuilding of the temple, as we speak of Ed Zerubbabel's temple. It was approaching completion, although it took another couple of years to finish. God takes account of the movement of heart, and the partial at least restoration of the people to the land, and restoration in heart, he sees their repentance, and he says I can see it now, there's sufficient confirmation of their change of heart, that I can [00:07:07] now look right on. Remember the verse that we started with last Saturday night, let thine eyes look right on. God now takes the eye right on, to the end time, when all his plans will be accomplished. Now that sums up, I suppose, the first eight verses of that, but once the statement has been made, I'm going to act now, I'm going to move, my plans are finalized, the question then arises, how will he do it? How will the plan be brought into full effect? And so we get at this crisis point in the prophecy, we get the introduction of verse nine. Now in simplicity, I suppose, reading the text, we can say this, the coming king will resolve everything to the glory [00:08:06] of God, and the blessing of the nation, and ultimately all the nations of the world. And so we have here the introduction of the only one, the only person, who can bring this about. Now whenever we have well-known verses in the Old Testament, which are quoted in part or in full in the New Testament, we do well to look at the detail, and to see how much, and in which order, things are taken up in their fulfillment. And when we read this, we get a grand statement about the coming king, something about his character, something about his message, something about his purpose in being introduced. An object for contemplation, behold thy king cometh unto thee, addressed to the nation.

[00:09:06] And then, he is just having salvation. Now it certainly seems, in line with him being introduced as a king, ex officio, in virtue of his office, there are certain characteristics drawn attention to, which are in line with his fitness, his competence, to take up that official role as king. And the first two qualities that are referred to are official virtues, official qualities. He is just. He will bring in justice. Everything that he does will be marked by utter righteousness and justice, and bringing in, having salvation in his train. Salvation in the most [00:10:01] comprehensive of senses. As you know, salvation is one of the most comprehensive aspects of blessing that we find in scripture. There's a past aspect to it, there's a present aspect, and there's a future aspect. And in certain senses, it includes all the details of the wonderful blessing of the Lord that comes to those who are the blessed of the Lord. So here we are, that when the king, when he comes, he will be competent to wield the reins of government on behalf of the mighty God, because he is just, and because he brings in salvation. But that is not all that is said of him. What follows is that which is personal and moral. Lowly, riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. [00:11:02] I like the kind of comparison that says, in being lowly, he's lowly in character.

In riding upon an ass, he's lowly in his approach. His demeanor, the way he acts, the things that he

does, the way that he does them, are all very much in line with his personal quality of lowliness. I am meek and lowly in heart. No accident that that particular phrase, emphasizing his lowliness and meekness, is in the gospel which presents him as the coming king, the gospel of Matthew. Noteworthy too, in Matthew 21, when this particular verse is quoted, because the time has not yet arrived when the kingdom will come into outward manifestation, not yet to come in outward show, [00:12:08] because the king was rejected, as we shall see tonight, what is quoted in Matthew 21 is that which demonstrates his personal and moral fitness to be the king, but leaves it there, doesn't refer to those official qualities which he will only take up when the time finally arrives. And so we get the expression in Matthew 21, behold thy king cometh lowly riding upon an ass, and so on. How careful we need to be in noting how selective the Holy Spirit is in taking up valid Old Testament scriptures and applying them with utter precision in the New Testament, and this one in particular [00:13:07] is a good case in point. So that which is official is not referred to in Matthew, that which is personal and moral is. Now that deals in summary form with the first nine verses of chapter nine. When we look at verses 10 to 16, we get the result of the deliverance that the coming king will accomplish. And the first thing we notice in, when the king has come, when he has taken command, there will be no more war. Matthew again tells us that until the personal intervention of God in the person of the Messiah, there will continue to be wars and rumors of wars. But this tells us that when the king has come, [00:14:10] and set up his government, and even before the kingdom proper is set up, when he has put down the enemies, there will be no more need for the instruments of war. Look at what verse 10 says, I will cut off the chariot, the horse, the battle bow. In topical terms in their day, these were the instruments of war and will not be needed after the personal intervention of Messiah the king on behalf of the nation. Well verse 10 tells us that. And verse 11 tells us something even more wonderful. As for thee also by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. It almost seems out of context, out of sympathy with the [00:15:09] other things that are said. But if you go back to the deliverance of the nation out of the land of Egypt, there is a certain sequence that is well known to all of us. First the Passover, then the Red Sea. First redemption by blood, then deliverance by power. And here there's just this oblique reference to the fact that the work of deliverance is a mighty one, a spectacular one, a dramatic one.

But it flows out of, it finds its basis in, it has its foundation resting upon a deeper, a more mighty [00:16:01] work for which the blood must needs be shed. Wonderful thing that here there is this oblique reference that it is the blood of the covenant which necessarily leads to the deliverance by power. Now we've had verses earlier in the book, we'll come to further ones, which remind us that by the time is arrived when this deliverance is brought in personally by Messiah, all hope of self-deliverance is gone, the nation are on their knees, all attempt at appeal to man has gone forever, they realize that they're completely without hope.

No amount of law-keeping, no amount of obedience to ceremonial procedures [00:17:01] will avail for anything. They are shut up to the grace of God. This is new, and so why this blood of the covenant takes us back to Jeremiah 31.

It's a new covenant now, based not upon thou shalt, but based upon I will.

And again and again in these chapters, even here in verse 10, I will cut off, I will cut off, I have sent forth and so on, I declare, I will encamp and so on. And so we find that this mighty work of deliverance will depend in the ultimate upon this deeper work, which we know to be the work of the cross. Foundation of the blessing for Israel and the nations in the world to come is the same as the foundation and the basis of the individual salvation and the [00:18:07] establishment and maintenance

of the assembly now, the work of Christ, the shedding of his precious blood at Calvary. And so we find here that there will be this personal, mighty deliverance, and verse 12 says that until it happens, until the fulfillment thereof, they are shut up, they are prisoners to hope. They have this hope implanted within their hearts, but as we noticed last night, was it from Isaiah 14 and 46, because it is the purpose of God, because he has declared it, he says, because I have said it, I will surely bring it to pass. No doubt, merely because it yet remains in the future. Verse 16 reminds us of this characteristic [00:19:02] phrase, which we'll come to again in that day, that the blessing is centered upon his land. It's not their land. And then verse 17, two nice little touches. How great is his goodness? How great is his beauty? Young men should be made cheerful with corn, new wine the maids. Well, we find here, whether we take it in the overall sense, there should be celebration and there will be young adults. We've spoken in other chapters about the fertility, the prolific population explosion, because there will be longevity as one of the material blessings of being delivered, that there will be many successive generations coming to light. But apart from the old men that are referred to, apart from the streets being full of boys [00:20:04] and girls, here we have young adult men and women with all their energy and virility joining in the celebration. Now, those of you who've studied the offerings, if you want to read into this, that in the young men there's a certain element of objective truth in the eating and in the young maids and the new wine, that there's a certain element of subjective joy in entering into the subject, the objective truth of what God has provided, well, you feel perfectly free to read that into it. Certainly, we can see a Christian counterpart individually, which may well have a national counterpart in the world to come. In other words, John 6, those who have eaten once and for all, have entered into and appropriated the truth of [00:21:05] the death of Christ in a once and for all way, have the privilege of constant characteristic sustenance day by day in eating of his flesh in a figurative way, John 6. In the same way, those who've entered into the full appreciation of the significance and the value of the blood of Christ, it is open to them as the Lord said, he that drinketh me and so on. There is continual refreshment, there is continual joy available characteristic to the Christian now and nationally to the nation of Israel then. Very like as a comparison, the fact that in Matthew 19, we get a reference to national regeneration and there's an individual Christian counterpart [00:22:02] suggested in Titus 3, where we learn of the washing of regeneration. That which will be true and necessary in Israel as a nation to fit them for the world to come, fits us for individual enjoyment then. Well, whether it's regeneration, whether it's entering into the celebratory joy, there is a similar parallel to be drawn. And now we move into chapter 10 and must keep moving. Verse one, the latter rain. Sorry George Brodie isn't here tonight. When George and I were at Leamside, we had some very nice readings together and we had a brother, not from these shores, from the Middle East who was local then. And I remember once we were discussing the early [00:23:03] and the latter rain. And we were having some little difficulty in arriving at what the scripture meant in speaking of the early and the latter rain. And this Maltese brother eventually jumped in and he said, well of course it's very difficult for you British brethren to understand the early rain and the latter rain because here it rains all the time. And it was certainly true at the time that he was speaking. But he says where I come from there's need for the early rain to germinate the seed. Then there's need for reasonably stable conditions so that the general growth takes place. And he said then before the time of year comes when it needs to ripen and be harvested, it needs a latter rain to bring to maturity, to bring to full growth, that the full year might come in the corn, the full corn in the ear. And he said it needs the [00:24:05] latter rain for that purpose. Now I've always remembered that. Those of you who know about growing things can confirm that afterwards. But certainly it fits in here. No reference to the early rain, just the latter rain. Why is that? God's plans are coming to maturity. It's almost the harvest time. It's getting towards the point when the final shower will just bring things to that point where the reaping and the harvest has to take place. So I think we can see that in the reference to the time of the latter rain. Now when that comes to maturity there will be then

the revelation of the one who can alone bring it to pass. And with that we must move on to verse 4, [00:25:02] this lovely verse giving us the character and mission of Messiah. There isn't time for much detail in these surveys but we must look at verse 4. Out of him came forth really the corner stone, out of him the nail, out of him the battle bow, out of him every oppressor together, which is another difficult translation. As to the corner stone and the many things that might be said about that, I think as on other occasions, Zechariah is drawing from the prophet Isaiah. In this case probably chapter 28. I have laid in Zion a corner stone, among other things a sure foundation.

All the promises of God are ye and all men in him. Messiah when he comes will demonstrate himself to [00:26:11] be the foundation on which the promises of God and the blessing of the nation rest entirely. Or read Isaiah 28 and verse 16 again when you get home. There may also in this corner stone, in this particular connection, be a reference to that other facet of a corner stone when a building is being erected. That as well as being specially in the mind of the one whose plan it is, it is usually in such a point as where two major walls come together. Now there may again be an oblique reference here to the fact that in him ultimately the middle wall of partition will be broken down [00:27:03] and all will become one in him. We know that in the world to come there will be this sharp distinction between God's earthly nation, his own people, Israel, and the other nations. But here we have it, a little foretaste, perhaps just a suggestion, that certainly the only way that Israel and the nations will be in proper perspective one in relation to the other is when Messiah comes forth. Out of him the nail, used variously in the Old Testament either to mean a tent peg, not in this case I doubt, and in the more likely reference here there was a kind of nail inside the structure securely anchored to which the articles of most value of the household [00:28:06] were attached partly as a matter of security and partly so that they could be there on display. Now there are two excellent scriptures which we can think of in this connection and because they aren't so well known as Isaiah 28 perhaps we'd better turn to them. First of all Isaiah 22. Isaiah 22 and verse 23, I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place. He shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house and they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring, the issue, all vessels of small quantity from the vessels of cups even to all [00:29:01] the vessels of flagons. Well all the burdens, the great weight, there is nothing that needs to be borne for God or for the blessing of man that Messiah cannot take the burden off. There is nothing of value that God is going to establish that won't be effected in him and this I'm sure is some of the sense in which we find that the Messiah is referred to not only as the cornerstone but also as the nail. The third one, battle bow. There will be no need for the nation to have the battle bow chapter 9 verse 10 because he himself will bear this character. Any fighting that has to be done he will do it on their behalf. Any battle that has to be fought he will effect it for them. He will be the personal mighty deliverer. Isaiah 63, coming forth in garments dyed red, [00:30:08] fresh from the battle. Second Thessalonians 1, Revelation 19, coming the mighty deliverer, coming in person, all suggested by coming as the battle bow. The last one, a little more difficult, if we consult the Septuagint or any reliable Hebrew expositor, I'm sure we'll find there something which directs us to this. The exacto, the despotic dictator, one man in command, reminding us of God's idea of theocratic government, on behalf of God, one man on earth in charge of things, exercising, wielding power on behalf of God, as had to be said to Nebuchadnezzar, [00:31:03] thou art that head of gold. Read chapter 5, refresh your memory what is said about him and the style of government, not his personal performance in it, but as a style of government, it was said of him, whom he would he slew, whom he would he left alive, whom he would he set up, whom he would he put down. Sole command, didn't have a committee, didn't have a cabinet, he decided what would happen and that took place. In the ultimate, God has appointed a day in which he will rule, administer the world in righteousness, by that man whom he has ordained, whereof he's given assurance unto all, in that he has raised him from the dead. The ultimate in God's government, one man, his man, in absolute

control, and this is suggested in this last phrase, the one [00:32:07] who will exact on God's behalf whatever is necessary by way of government. Last little touch in chapter 10, and we must say just a little bit about chapter 11. Verse 12, I will strengthen them in the Lord. Well, first of all, verse 8, he calls them out of the nations, out of their hiding places, I will hiss for them, I will pipe for them, I will gather them, I have redeemed them, underlining the deliverance by power is in virtue of an accomplished redemption by blood. But in verse 12, I will strengthen them in the Lord, they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord. Here then, when redemption, [00:33:01] when deliverance has been accomplished, his representatives in the administration of blessing to the nations, the peoples of the world, as his appointed representatives, and as the text says, in his name. It's perhaps an unusual reference that, but here it is, his representatives administering his bounty, his blessing, doing it in his name. And so we must turn to chapter 11. Necessary precursor to chapter 12, our hearts long to get into chapters 12, 13, and 14, but the Holy Spirit says, not yet, there's another lesson that we need to be reminded of. The consequences of the rejection [00:34:02] of such a messiah as the one who is the cornerstone, the nail, the battle bow, the battle bow, and the soul governing king. Chapter 11 then tells us that the people themselves had their own shepherds, they got no pity from them, and because of their lack of proper guidance and the descent into disobedience and idolatry, the people had been subjected and subjugated to gentile rule and would continue so to be till all the gentile kingdoms expired, until he come who's right it is, as Ezekiel 21 says. Well, in part, in a large measure, [00:35:04] the shepherds of Israel so appointed to care for God's people had failed miserably. Not only did they not care for the people, they didn't even pity them in their present woeful condition. And so we find that because there was no shepherd in the land, verse 5, their own shepherds pitied them not. We find that Jehovah introduces the true shepherd, but the true shepherd is rejected.

Can we imagine a nation in need, in subjugation to hostile gentile powers, being offered deliverance in the person of the long-promised messiah, and he presents himself and he's utterly rejected. We know from the gospels, it's true. [00:36:03] We know from the prophets that it was going to happen. Oh, how sad to read hundreds of years in advance of the event that the true shepherd of Israel, when provided and presented to them, was rejected in such a cruel way. Well, this has its immediate effects. In this mystical reference to two staves, which we must refer to, one called beauty, one called bounds, both prepared, both ready for utilization, and then both necessarily broken. What's the answer? Well, the text tells us. Verse 10, I took my stuff, even beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the peoples, plural. Very often in these [00:37:05] scriptures, peoples, nations, talking about the gentile nations, who takes us back, doesn't it, to Genesis 49, to him shall the gathering of the peoples, the nations, be. Because in his life and ministry, messiah was refused, it wasn't possible for the gentiles to be brought into blessing at that time through God's chosen earthly vessel, Israel. So this stave beauty, which would show the beauty of nations in right relationship through Israel to the mighty God, wasn't possible because of the refusal of the ministry of the promised messiah, the stave called beauty was broken. It leaves one, the one called bounds. There again, verse 14, I cut asunder mine other stuff, [00:38:06] even bounds, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. Judah, the two tribes, Israel, the ten. Comes up again and again in these and other chapters. The clue here is given in verses 12 and 13. If the refusal of the ministry of the messiah meant that the nations couldn't be brought into blessing at the time, the rejection, betrayal, and crucifixion of the messiah meant that Israel as a nation couldn't be joined together. Judah, with their greater immediate responsibility in betraying and crucifying the messiah offered to them, have a graver and [00:39:10] greater responsibility in the judicial ways of God. And that will take its course, as later chapters will tell us. But in the immediate future, there was no hope at all of Judah and Israel being joined together. Nations missed the blessing because of the

rejection by Judah of the ministry of messiah. Judah and Israel could not be joined together because of the rejection and crucifixion of the same messiah. Now, as we come to the end, we will want to hasten on to chapter 12, but turn please to John and chapter 5, where we get something which puts in proper light the end of chapter 11 of Zechariah. [00:40:04] John 5 and 43.

I am come, the true shepherd, I am come in my father's name and he received me not. If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How tragic. Not only had their own shepherds neglected them, not only did they reject the true shepherd, but they opened their arms, they shall open their arms, in their time of greatest need, they'll open their arms and receive in his own name the idle shepherd, the false shepherd, the antichrist, whose character and characteristics are exactly the opposite to the true shepherd. [00:41:09] Verse 16, a shepherd who will not visit those that are cut off, who shall not seek the young one, who shall not heal that which is broken, who shall not feed that that standeth still, he'll feed himself, he'll tear the flock and will meet his due reward. He will be dealt with and summary at that. Examine John 10 where the Lord Jesus gives us the features of himself as the true shepherd. Compare with them and contrast with that the things that are said about the false shepherd, the antichrist, and see also the things that are said about the thieves [00:42:04] and the robbers in John chapter 10. Put them all together and what a contrast, what a comment upon the spiritual and moral state of the nation, that they would rather accept in his own name a false shepherd of that order, rather than the true shepherd who would gently feed them as a flock. Difficult lessons to learn, we would much rather be employed with happier things as we hope to in chapters 12, 13, and 14. But these considerations are the necessary precursor to those later chapters to see the mighty deliverance that Messiah will bring in, the blessing of God to both the nation and the nations of the world, when everything is put [00:43:03] in perspective after the latter reign has come. And if the Lord will, we look at some of that tomorrow evening. Now let us sing.