

The Saga of Two Conquerers, Part 2

Scripture: Zechariah 9:9-17

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Let's look at the Word of God, Zechariah chapter 9. People ask me very often, mostly people who don't know Christ, they say, "What's wrong with the world? Why is there all this injustice? Why is there all this turmoil? Why is there all this war? Why all the disease and the pain and the agony? And why is this chaos existing in the world?" There's a very simple answer. The King is absent and therein lies the chaos. The King is absent.

Well, He came once and He came once and promised to right the world. He said He was the Messiah of Israel. He said He was the Prince of Peace. He said He was the King of Kings. He said He was the Lord of Lords. And He was going to take back this world from the usurper who had had it for a long time whose name was Satan. And He offered His Kingdom to people but they rejected it, didn't they? So He went away and He said, "I'll be absent a little longer, but I'll be back."

And so we say very often as Christians, the King is coming back. And when He comes back, war will end, injustice will end, anarchy will end, infusion will end, pain and disease and all the other things will be brought to a bare minimum. The world will be righted when Jesus comes again. He will seize the reins of the government of the world and He will rule with a compassionate rod.

There are two elements that we find in Zechariah's prophecy and in all the other prophetic books in the Bible that write about His return. One is positive and one is negative. One says that He comes with great salvation and the other says that He comes in great judgment. These two elements of the coming of Jesus Christ were cause for the response of John in the tenth chapter of Revelation. In Revelation chapter 10, we read, "I saw another mighty angel come down with heaven clothed with a cloud and a rainbow," and John goes on to describe this angel in verse 1. And then in verse 2 he says, "And He had in His hand a little scroll opened." And by the way, that little scroll was the title deed to the earth. The title deed to the earth, Jesus was coming and He had the title deed to the earth. He's the King, He's absent but He has the right to reign and He's going to come back with that title deed and He's going to take over the earth. In fact, as He unrolls the title deed that is mentioned in the book of Revelation, you have the unrolling of the seven seals. But He unrolls that title deed and takes back the earth.

John's reaction is interesting. Look at verse 8. "And the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, Take the little scroll which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth. And I went to the angel and said unto him, Give me the little scroll. And he said unto me,

Take it and eat it up and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little scroll out of the angel's hand and ate it up and it was in my mouth sweet as honey. And as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter."

You say, "What is this?" The little scroll is a title deed. And John says when I saw this vision, in my vision the angel said eat this. In other words, John, take in the reality of the coming of Christ and His repossession of the earth. And John says first he said it would be sweet. Why? Because when Christ comes back, everything is made right and salvation reigns all over the earth and Israel is redeemed. And an innumerable number of Gentiles are redeemed. And the Kingdom is come. And Christ receives His due honor.

But I hadn't eaten it very long before it became bitter because I realized that when Jesus came, not only was all that good going to happen but there were going to be people eternally damned. There were going to be nations eternally destroyed. And those are ever and always the two sides of the return of Jesus Christ. And that's why Christians are sort of mixed when they think about it. We rejoice that He comes and yet we are disheartened when we see the world that He comes to. And we know the judgment that awaits.

Well, Zechariah is little different from John. And as we approach Zechariah 9 through 14, the last five chapters of Zechariah, we find these same two elements of the return of Christ are emphasized. That which is positive in the salvation of Israel and the restoration of the earth and the Kingdom and all the glory that God deserves and His Son is finally going to attain, and comparing with that the terrible fearful eternal judgments that fall.

When Jesus comes the second time, the world will be arrayed against Him. The world will be determined to blast Him out of heaven. In fact, the book of Revelation says that as Jesus comes out of heaven, the armies of the world who are already gathered on the field on the plain of Megiddo fighting the battle of har Megiddo will turn their guns to blast Jesus out of the sky.

That won't be anything new. When He came the first time, He was met by the threat of slaughter, wasn't He? Herod actually slaughtered every baby to try to destroy Him. And so when He comes the second time, there will be a similar challenge, only this time, it won't just be Herod set against Him, it will be the armies of the world amassed to destroy Him.

And in contrast to His first coming, when men succeeded in killing Him, at His Second Coming, He will destroy His enemies all over the face of the earth. And then and only after that judgment, He will begin to minister healing to a sick world and the wonders of His salvation will come to pass. These are the two emphases of chapter 9. And the same two, as I said, that flow all throughout the Bible.

The judgment work of Christ is not an easy work to speak on because, you see, even Isaiah in Isaiah 28:21 calls it God's quote "strange work," because to Isaiah it seems to be so contrary to the greatest attribute of God which is His love, the supreme quality of His nature. But you see, God must be a God of judgment because He loves. You see, He loves so much that the day is coming when He's going to protect those who are the objects of His love from evil forever. And the only way He can do it is to destroy evil, you see? So even that is an act of love...to protect and preserve the full manifestation of His love to His people forever. And so He will come in judgment to destroy sinners and sin.

But the other side of it is that He will come to save. So much of the Bible talks about the judgment part of it. You can't deny it. It's all over the Bible...the major prophets, the minor prophets, they all talk about it. I was thinking of Joel 3:12, "Let the nations be wakened and come to the Valley of Jehoshaphat," which incidentally is a valley created when Jesus hits the earth. His feet land on the Mount of Olives and the earth splits and a valley is made there, the Valley of Jehoshaphat. "And the nations are gathered," and He says, "There will I sit to judge the nations round about, put in the sickle for the harvest is ripe, come get down for the press is full, the vats overflow for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision, for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, the stars shall withdraw their shining, the Lord shall roar out of Zion and utter His voice from Jerusalem, the heavens and the earth shall shake, but the Lord shall be the hope of His people and the strength of the children of Israel."

There you see the two sides, the great judgment. But the Lord also is the hope of His people. There are times in the New Testament that this judgment is presented. Matthew 24, Matthew 25, Revelation 14:14 to 20, many places. But the other side of it, of course, is salvation and that's presented, too. When Jesus comes, it won't all be judgment, it will be salvation for His people and the fullness of that salvation all it could possibly mean. Listen, for example, to Luke 21:27, "And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass...listen...then look up and lift up your heads for your redemption...what?...draws nigh." It isn't just judgment, it's judgment on the ungodly and on sin, but it's redemption for those who are God's own.

Paul in Romans chapter 11 verse 26 says that that's the day in which all Israel will be saved. "As it is written, there shall come out of Zion the Savior, or the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob, for this is My covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins," Romans 11:26 and 27. So there's a deliverer coming who shall remove sin and grant salvation.

Dear weeping prophet, Jeremiah, talks about this day and what's going to happen when the children of Israel enter into the covenant of God in Jeremiah 31 and verse 3...the whole chapter, really...but verse 3, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee...listen...again I will build thee and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel, thou shalt again be adorned with thy timbrels and shall go forth in the dances of those who make merry." There's coming a day when salvation returns.

So, all throughout the Old Testament God promised the patriarchs and God promised the prophets that what was most dear to them would come to pass, the salvation of their nation, the wholeness of their nation, the healing of their nation, the eternal place in God's program was never forfeited. Believe me, it's reiterated in the New Testament, "Look up, your redemption draws nigh," that's Israel. It's reiterated in Romans, "So all Israel shall be saved." It's reiterated in Revelation, "A hundred and forty-four thousand out of every tribe in Israel," says the seventh chapter, "shall be missionaries to reach their nation and the world." And I'm convinced that God will not go back on His Word to His friends, but that God will do what He has promised.

So, we come then to chapter 9 again. And we have to see these two sides in this chapter...the side of judgment and the side of salvation. And we're going to see them in chapter 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14. That's why I took the time to cover it, so you'd understand.

Now remember that as we look at chapter 9 and we see the prophecy that is here, we're just kind of finishing up what we started last time, you remember that in this chapter I told you something very important to remember, that normally when the prophets of the Old Testament gave a prophecy that was a long time away related to the end of the age, they would usually give another prophecy that would come to pass somewhere along the line of history before that time as a kind of a pledge to keep people confident that the ultimate fulfillment would take place. In other words, rather than say something to those people then and then have nothing between them and the end of the age, the Lord would drop in a historical thing that would come to pass to keep future generations on the track that God really meant what He said. That's exactly what you have here. The chapter is trying to tell us that Jesus is going to come and number one, He's going to judge the ungodly. And number two, He is going to save the righteous and draw them into His Kingdom.

Now, that's a long time from when this happened. And so God drops in the first eight verses and they don't discuss the coming of Christ...whom do they discuss? Remember from last week? Alexander the Great. Now Alexander the Great came just a couple hundred years after this was written. But it kept the succeeding generations aware of the fact that if the first part of Zechariah came to pass, what's the natural conclusion? So will the last part. That's how God repeatedly kept people on track with His prophecies.

And so, the first eight verses which we discussed last time, point out to us the campaign of Alexander the Great as he swept through Syria, Phoenicia, Philistia and Israel. And I told you last week and it couldn't be anybody but Alexander, it absolutely chronicles what he did. We have history to support it, his own records. I told you that he went into Syria and knocked off Syria, came over to the coastline and took Phoenicia which amounted to Tyre and Sidon...moved south and took care of Philistia, all of the cities of Philistia that are named in verse 5, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron. But amazingly enough, after destroying the nations, he saved...whom? Israel. And he spared them. And he absolutely to the tee,

fulfilled the prophecy penned hundreds of years before the man was ever born, a prophecy written in a book he never saw. It was God's way of saying, "When you see Alexander do this, know that just as that part came to pass, so will part two. And if I can use a pagan human being to judge nations and to save My people, wait and see what I'll do with the God-Man, Jesus Christ in the end of the age."

We left off at verse 8. After finishing off with Alexander, He turns to Christ in the middle of verse 8, "I will encamp about Mine house because of the army, because of him that passes by and because of him that returns." Now that was Alexander. God says I'll encamp around My city, he'll pass by on his way to Egypt, he'll return back again and he won't harm you. And then he turns to the future in a sweeping jump in the middle of the verse and says, "And no oppressor shall pass through them anymore, for now have I seen with My eyes." And here there's a leap into the end of the age and when Christ comes, He says, there will never ever beyond that be an oppressor in the land of Israel. We know that couldn't be fulfilled by Alexander, could it? Because there were plenty since then. Some even now. So He jumps in the future and He says there's coming a time when the other conqueror, the divine conqueror, not the human one, comes and after Him there will never be an oppressor again for now have I seen with My eyes.

In other words, that means God says I have seen all I am going to see of oppression. I've seen all I'm going to allow. I've seen enough. And when Jesus comes, it will be over. And that introduces us to the second part of the chapter, not the human conqueror, but part two, the divine conqueror, verse 9. Now watch this comparison.

Verse 9, here we go, are you ready? "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion." Get happy, Israel. "Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold thy King cometh unto thee." Stop right there. He says, "Hey, people, get happy, the King is going to come." And, boy, you know, when Alexander came, he was hot stuff. You know, the white charger and the whole bit. But look at the comparison, this is incredible. "He is just and having salvation," notice those two things? Justice refers to what aspect of His coming? Judgment. Salvation refers to the saving aspect. He is just and He has salvation. The same two things.

But look, "Lowly, riding on an ass and upon a colt, the foal of an ass." Riding on a donkey and a baby donkey...some conqueror. Something wrong here. With that humble statement is the conqueror introduced. They would have reacted perhaps by saying, "I never saw a conqueror in my life riding around on a donkey's colt. Where's the white steed?" But this is a different conqueror.

Now I want to show you several things. First of all, His character in verse 9...His character in verse 9...the character of this conqueror. You know, it's amazing as you look at the text because against the background of the invincible marching army of Alexander comes one who doesn't inspire fear and He doesn't inspire dread and nobody's shaking and nobody's quaking, but He inspires praise and apparently, as we shall see, He inspires peace. This is a different conqueror. This is not a foreign

tyrant, but Israel's own king. He is not cruel and oppressive, He is righteous. He is not slaying, He is saving. He is not rich and powerful, He is poor and meek and He doesn't ride a steed, He rides an ass's colt.

But Zechariah says, "Get ecstatic!" That's what the Hebrew says, ecstatic rejoicing...flip out, get happy, whoop it up. And he tells them why, there are four elements to His character. "A" is His character, four elements. First of all, He's a King. "Behold thy King cometh." The absolute monarch. I love this. "Thy King, Israel's King, Israel's redeemer, the promised seed of David, the Messiah, the One who is to reign, the One of whom Isaiah said, Unto us a child is born and the government shall be upon His shoulders...He's the King." And so it was announced at His birth, He's the King. And so it was announced at His death, placarded on the cross, Jesus of Nazareth, the King. And He was. Though they said it in jest, He was the King.

The King is coming. People, listen, it's going to be so good for this old world when the King gets back, don't you think? To make it all right, to fix it all up when He takes it back from that usurper Satan.

Second thing it says about Him, He's not only the King but He is just. He is just. His character is royal and His character is righteous. His character is royal and His character is righteous. That means He deals justly...He deals righteously. He will do what is right. No more will anybody say you can't get no justice...no more. He is righteous. Won't it be great to have a world where all decisions are made by one who is absolutely righteous and just? The Scripture talks so much about that. I wish we had time to go into all the thoughts that it has.

Third thing, He is not only royal, He is not only righteous, but it says He has salvation. He is a Savior. He is a King. He is righteous. He is the Savior. He is royal. He is righteous. He is redeeming. He comes to save. And what did the angel say when He was born? Thou shalt call His name what? Jesus. Why? For He shall save His people from their sin. That's why we come to the table, isn't it? He's a Savior. We need a Savior, don't we? Somebody to save us from our sins. Alexander was no Savior. Alexander wasn't even righteous. He was a puny king compared to Christ.

And then it says lastly in discussing His character, He is not only a King and righteous and a Savior, but He is meek...He is meek. And it simply says "lowly." Do you see it there? Lowly, humble, quite different from Alexander. The word in the Hebrew means "poor." And the same Hebrew word is used in an economic sense to speak of somebody with no money. That's sounds like Jesus, doesn't it? You know, when they crucified Him, they took all of His belongings. You know what they had? One robe, that was it. Foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, Matthew 8:20 says, but the Son of Man hath not any place...what? To lay His head. You know where His home was? The Mount of Olives, that's where He went every night and communed with the Father and slept under the stars. If He stayed in a home, it was the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus or somebody else who kept Him there. He had nothing. The word means poor in the Hebrew language when it refers to

economics.

When the same word is used to speak of somebody else other than economic, it has to do with them being sick or wounded or afflicted. But the whole idea is of a person who has nothing. Who is miserable, who suffers alone. That's Him. That's Him. Meekness. And Zechariah ties that meekness into a very explicit prophecy and he says, "When He does come as King, just, Savior, lowly, it will be riding on an ass on the colt, the foal of an ass."

Now early in Israel's history, very early, it was respectable to ride around on a donkey. But by Solomon's time, it wasn't. See, Solomon brought into Israel horses. He was really big on horses. I've been to his stable. You say, "His stable, is it still there?" Yep. You know where it is? It's right on the shelf overlooking the valley of Megiddo where Armageddon will be fought. That's where Solomon's stables were. And I'll never forget looking at them. They were massive stables. He had literally...some say 30,000 horses in his private group of horses. He introduced the horse. And from that time on, nobles and soldiers and important people rode horses and the donkey lost its dignity. You were really admitting your poverty by putting around on a donkey.

Jeremiah 17:25, "Then shall there enter into the gates of this city, kings and princes sitting on the throne of David riding chariots and horses." So Jeremiah 17:25 acknowledges that kings and princes rode horses, not donkeys. So you see, this would be a strange prophecy. The King is coming riding on a donkey's colt. Well, that's an amazing prophecy. Did it happen? Look at Matthew 21...Matthew 21, "And when they drew near to Jerusalem and were come to Bethphage unto the Mount of Olives," which is of course east of the city, "then Jesus sent two disciples and said to them, Go into the village opposite you and straightway you shall find an ass tied and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me."

How did He know that? Just like He knew everything. Just a part of the information that God has, total information.

"When you find this little donkey with a colt, bring it. And if anybody says, you shall say, The Lord has need of them. Straightway he will send them." In other words, He says I'll not only take care of the fact that the donkey's there, but I'll take care of the questions the man might have. Just tell him the Lord sent for them and we'll work on his heart and he'll let you go. "All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet," what prophet? Zechariah, we just read it. "Saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, behold, thy King comes unto thee meek and sitting on an ass and a colt, the foal of an ass." Just exactly as was prophesied.

And He got on, verse 7, they set Him on it. "And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way. They cut down branches from the trees, spread them in the way. The multitude that went before that followed Christ saying, Hosanna to the King of David, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of

the Lord, Hosanna in the highest." Hosanna to the what? The King. He was a King riding on a donkey, prophecy explicitly fulfilled.

Now go back to Zechariah. So Zechariah presents His character. Now that, of course, if the first coming of Christ, wasn't it? Look at verse 10. We move from the first coming of Christ where we see His character, to the Second Coming of Christ where we see His conquest...His conquest. This is absolutely fascinating. Now watch. By the way, you say, "How can the Old Testament jump from one to the other?" Simple, the Old Testament writers didn't see the church age, do you see? They saw the King coming offering the Kingdom and setting it up. The church is a mystery. Paul says this is a mystery which has been revealed to me which was hidden in the past.

And so, the gap in here is two thousand years long now, the Old Testament prophets didn't see. And so, immediately the King comes and it moves to His Second Coming and it says, "I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem and the battle bow shall be cut off and He shall speak peace to the nation and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea and from the earth...or from the river rather, even to the ends of the earth." From the deep humiliation and affliction of Messiah at His first coming, Zechariah moves to the glory and exaltation of His Second Coming.

Now the chariot here is a battle chariot. And the horse is an instrument of war. The horse was used for war. So were chariots. And what he's saying here is, "I will bring an end to war. I will remove the need for chariots and horses in Jerusalem." They won't have to fight anymore. "And the battle bow will be cut off." There's no need for these things. Why? "He shall speak peace to the nations, set up His dominion from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth." That's basically a quote from Psalm 72 verse 8. "From sea to sea" means worldwide. He will rule the world, rule the whole world. And the river here is the river Euphrates which was the eastern border of the land given originally to Abram. And so, from Israel's land bordered on the east by the Euphrates, extending to that center point, that as the Latins would say terminus aquo, from that point all around the world will be the place where Jesus reigns. And He will...He will bring peace so that there will be no more need for battle. Now here we are in the salvation part. This is God's wonderful redemption of Israel. No more war. He will rule and He will reign.

And then he takes it a step further. Verse 11, "As for thee also," that is Israel, "by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit in which is no water." You know, there's a phenomenal thing here in the Hebrew and that is this, that this is spoken of as if it already happened. It's a perfect tense. In other words, it's just as good as done in that day. Because of the blood of the covenant, I have already sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit in which was no water.

You say, "Well, what does that mean?" Well, He says first of all, because of the blood of the covenant. "Well, what blood is that?" Well, you remember back in Genesis 15? God made a promise to Abram. He said, "Abram," before he was Abraham, He said, "I'm going to make a great nation out

of you and I'm going to promise to bless that nation. Now I want to seal that promise, so you get a goat and a ram and a heifer and a pigeon and a turtledove and you split the animals in half and then just kill the pigeon and the turtledove. And lay half of the animals on this side and half of the animals on this side, the dead pigeon on this side, and the dead turtledove on this side."

That's a messy bloody deal. You say, "What's God up to?" He got all done doing that and God just gave him a divine anesthetic...whish...put him to sleep. He's zonked. And the Bible says that God, speaking of God as a smoking burning lamp and furnace, God passed between those pieces, Genesis 15. You say, "What in the world is that?" In the east, when people made a covenant, they made it in blood. And the way they did it was to cut an animal in half and walk between the bloody parts of the animal. That was the custom to seal a promise. And God...watch this...God was not making a promise with Abram, so He just put Abram asleep and said, "You're not involved in this, kid." God was making a promise with God. Nobody went through those pieces but Him. He vowed with Himself to bless his people. That's unconditional because God could never break a promise He made with Himself, both parties are incapable of violating it because both parties are one in the same God.

And so, He says it is because of My own covenant, the blood of that covenant, it may even also include the bloodshed in the Mosaic covenant. And certainly ultimately it is the covenant that is fulfilled most singularly in whose blood? The blood of Jesus Christ. Because of the blood that I that I passed between then, because of the blood of the Mosaic covenant, because of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the once for all offering, because of those things, some pass, some yet to come, I'll never violate My promise, it's sealed in blood.

You say, "Well,"... people always...amillennialists always say this, the people who don't believe Israel has a place, they say, "Well, you see, Israel blew it. You see, Israel isn't worthy to be redeemed. Israel isn't worthy to be brought back. Israel forfeited their right." Listen, it doesn't say, "But I'm going to bring you back because you're so wonderful." Or, "I'm going to bring you back because you've just now and then been pretty good." Or, "I'm going to bring you back because I feel sort of sorry for you." It says, "I'm going to bring you back because I made a promise with Myself and I sealed that promise in blood. And when I do that, I keep My promise."

And so, God says because of the blood of the covenant, now watch this, I have already sent forth the prisoners out of the pit in which is no water. You remember Joseph, Genesis 37? Where did they throw Joseph? Where did his brothers throw him? In a pit. That was a common place to put people you wanted to get rid of. You know what happened when they threw them in the pit? Nothing, they died. And you now what they used to use for pits? Empty cisterns and dry wells. And that's exactly what you have here. A pit in which there is no water is a dry well. And God says Israel has been in a dry well a long time but because of the blood of the covenant and because I have made a vow to Israel, they're as good as out. And that's a great message to announce to the Jews, you know that?

That your people are as good as out of the pit some day. When the King comes, Israel will be freed from the pit of trouble, the pit of war, the pit of suffering to know the liberty of the Kingdom of peace and the reign of the Prince of Peace Himself.

And so, because of that he calls them prisoners of hope in verse 12. "Turn to the stronghold, you prisoners of hope." Turn to Me, is what He's saying. It's all going to come to pass, trust Me, lean on Me, ye prisoners of hope.

I spoke at a prison this week. And after I was done preaching, a couple of men received Christ and I walked out into the chapel to talk with some of the prisoners. And every prisoner I talked to, except for one, said to me, "I'm getting out in 12 months....I'm getting out in six months...I think I'm going to get out in October...I think I..." You know why? Because they had to have hope. ??? ????? to be there and think they would never get out.

Ah, we say to Israel, "Israel, you may be prisoners in a terrible situation with a PLO. You may be in a terrible situation with the Arab pressure. You may have it really rough but I'll tell you one thing, you're prisoners of hope because one of these days you're as good as out of the pit. And when you get out, everything that's ever been withheld from you will be given back double measure." Is that in the Bible? It's in the Bible, verse 12, "Even today do I declare, I will render...what?...double unto you." Not just blessing, double blessing. After all, you've had double anxiety and double pain. I'll render double blessing.

And they have had terrible pain, double pain. Isaiah 61:7, I just thought of it, says, "For your shame, you shall have double. And for confusion, they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion." In other words, you had double pain, I'll give you double portion. That's God's promise.

And so, He says I'm going to save them. I'm going to take war from the earth, verse 10. I'm going to give them salvation and bring them out of the pit. And I'm going to double bless them, verse 12.

Now watch this one. Just so we don't lose our place in history, the Holy Spirit stops here and gives us another one of those historical pledges. Are you ready for this one? Verse 13, "When I have bent Judah for Me, and filled the bow with Ephraim and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee like the sword of a mighty man, and the Lord shall be seen over them and His arrow shall go forth like the lightning and the Lord God shall blow the trumpet and shall go with whirlwinds of the south." Now stop there.

Now that seems pretty obscure. But it isn't. Let me show you the picture here, it's really clear if you just look a step at a time at it. The Lord says, "Just to let you know I'm on your side, even so you don't doubt Me, even after Alexander, I've got another little token along the path here that will show you I

mean business. I will use Judah like a bow." And you know a bow, you bend that bow, Judah is the bow and Ephraim is the arrow. In other words, I'm going to use you as My weapons, O Zion, against Greece.

Now there's only been one time in history when God ever used Israel to defeat Greece. And that was in the period of time known as the intertestimonial period, the period of time between the Old and the New Testament, that 400 year period in there between the last of the prophecies, Ezra...or the last of the scribes, Ezra, and the first of the New Testament, those 400 years, the last 400. In that period of time, Israel knew the domination of Greece. And only one time in those years did they ever break that domination, it was under the Maccabees. Judas Maccabaeus, a Jewish man and his sons started a rebellion against the yoke of Greece because that rotten Greek ruler that had been assigned to Israel by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes had so desecrated the temple, he stuffed pork down the throats of the priests and he sacrificed a pig on the altar. He was a terrible character. And they were so infuriated by this that God raised up a rebellious army and they literally fought against Greece and prevailed.

And so that's what you have here. God is saying some day I'm going to use you to defeat Greece and make you like the sword of a mighty man. And the Lord will be seen over them at that time and His arrows shall go forth like the lightning. And the Lord God will blow the trumpet and go with whirlwinds of the south.

If you ever lived in that part of the world, they say you watch for whirlwinds coming from the south because they're devastating deadly...whirlwinds. And just like a devastating whirlwind, just like lightning cracking out of the sky, just like a sharp arrow and a piercing sword, God says I'm going to use Israel against Greece. And the war lasted from 175 to 163 B.C. They fought Antiochus Epiphanes and they won their independence.

For them it was a holy war. And here Zechariah says God will be your captain. Jehovah will blow the trumpet. He'll call you to battle. He'll send you out to victory.

But that's only a touch. That's only a token. That's only a pledge on the path to the final victory that awaits in the great and glorious future when Jesus comes. David Behrend(?) the great commentator, written probably the most significant book on the prophecy of Zechariah, says, quote: "Zion and Greece as has been well observed by another writer, are in this prophecy of Zechariah opposed to one another as the city of God and the city of the world. And the defeat of Antiochus Epiphanes and his successors at the hands of comparative handfuls of despised Jews to which this passage may refer primarily, foreshadows the final conflict with world power and the judgments to be inflicted on the confederated armies who shall be gathered against Jerusalem, not only directly by the hand of God but also by the hand of Israel who shall then be made strong in Jehovah so that the feeble among them shall be as David and the house of David shall be as God as the angel of Jehovah before

them."

And so, Behrend is right. What you see here is just a token or a pledge. It's just a historical picture of the ultimate great victory God will win over the nations using Israel even as His instrument.

Now, let's go on to the final triumph in verse 15. "The Lord of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue the sling stones; and they shall drink and make a noise as though...as through wine, and they shall be filled like bowls and like the corners of the altar."

You know, the "Lord of hosts" is a great term. In the Hebrew it literally translates the "Lord of armies." The Lord of armies is on their side. He is going to defend them like a lion. He will devour. You see, it's the Lord and Israel, one and the same. And Israel like the lion of God takes their enemies and devours them.

You know, there's an interesting picture here. I'll just take a minute to...I just remembered this. But the reason this symbolism is used so often in the Bible is because what you devour is...I'll put it another way. When you devour something, you take its strengths and make it your own. Right? Whatever you eat, you take the strength of that which you eat and you make it your own and turn it into your own energy. And that's why this is so often used. Israel would literally take the strength of its enemies and turn it into its own strength. To conquer a certain country was to take all its resources, all of its attributes, all of its strengths and make them your own. And that is precisely what they would do.

The sling stones, it says, you'll walk on them. The enemies in those days used to hurl stones, sometimes with little slingshots, sometimes with great big catapults. Have you ever seen Werner Keller's book, *The Bible is History*? He's got diagrams of the kind of great big huge machinery they used to use to throw boulders and crush walls and things. And he's saying whether they're the little shots or the big stones thrown by the enemy, you're just going to walk on them. They're just going to bounce off, fall to the ground, you're going to walk along.

And I like this one. "They shall drink and make a noise as through wine." You know what happens to people when they drink too much wine? They get loud. Have you ever noticed that? And they get boisterous. And you're going to be like that. You're going to know victory and the joy and the excitement and the boisterous kind of things that go with it.

The battle he's really discussing here is Armageddon. And the armies of the world may amass themselves against Israel, but Israel's going to wind up just walking over the stones, shouting with joy.

And then an interesting thing. He likens them to bowls. He says, "And you shall be filled like bowls and like the corners of the altar." What are the bowls here? Well, *mizraq* in Hebrew. This is a type of a bowl, now watch this, the type of a bowl used to catch up sacrificial blood splashed against the altar.

When they offered sacrifices, the blood was very meaningful to them and so when it would splash on the altar, they would catch it in these bowls. And then...this is an interesting thing...then they would take the bowls and they would splash the remaining blood against the corner of the altar so that it would splatter on this side and splatter on that side. And they would do that to all the corners so that the whole altar was splattered with blood. You can't imagine how ugly an altar finally became. Incredible, ugly thing.

But they were literally, he says, you will be like bowls that are used to splatter blood all over the altar. And what he's really saying here is that Israel is going to see the splattering of the bloodshed of the godless. See, both parts are here, people. I...that's a terrible thing to think about, terrible. There's going to be so much blood, you'll think you're the bowls. Read Revelation 14:20, the blood will be to what depth? The horses' bridles for 200 miles.

So, you have the salvation on the one hand, and the peace and the Kingdom and this terrible judgment of the godless on the other hand. So we see the character of the coming King...a King righteous, a Savior, lowly. We see His conquest in judgment. And lastly, I love this, we see His care, verse 16. And here we turn to judgment to salvation again. "And the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of His people, for they shall be like the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon His land." And we'll stop there.

He says the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of His people. Now all of a sudden He's a shepherd. A Shepherd King, saving His flock. I'm not going to take the time to show you but we'll see it as we finish the book of Zechariah, that Shepherd-King concept is repeated in Zechariah. Salvation is going to come. Salvation is going to come.

Chapter 13 verse 1, "In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." There's going to be a purging. You know what I think? You know what I think the theme song of the...the theme song of the Kingdom is going to be? The Twenty-third Psalm..."The Lord is...what?...my Shepherd, I shall not want." That's the theme song of the Kingdom.

The saved remnant, he says further, will be like the stones in a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon His land. "Lifted up" means sparkling in Hebrew. The saved people are going to be like sparkling jewels in the crown of the Messiah. Beautiful thought. All the rebels will be purged out, Ezekiel says. And there will be godly people left and they will become like jewels in the crown of the Messiah. Malachi 3:17, Malachi says that the Lord spoke and said, "They shall be Mine in the day when I make up My jewels." God's people will be like the crown on His head in the Kingdom.

So, we see a great future for Israel. Great, great reality of the coming King based on the blood of the covenant. And what is the response? There can only be one response in the heart of Zechariah, there

can only be one response in your heart and mine and that's praise, verse 17. "For how great is His goodness and how great is His beauty." And then they look into the Kingdom and see the plenty that's there. "Grain shall make the young men cheerful and new wine do the same thing to the young girls."

In other words, look at the Kingdom, all supplies will be there. We'll have all we need for happiness. O how great is His goodness...how great is His beauty. In that day, beloved, there will be prosperity and there will be joy like the world has never conceived.

There is coming a King. I hope you'll be a part of His Kingdom. Who is that King? I'll tell you who it is. Who was it that rode on the colt, the foal of an ass? The Lord Jesus Christ. Who will it be that comes back? The Lord Jesus Christ. He came once in humility, He returns in honor. He came in meekness, He returns in might. He came in poverty, He returns in power. He came in shame, and He returns in sovereignty. And Zechariah says, "Be comforted, Israel, some day your trouble will be over and salvation will come and you'll reign with the King."

And in case you doubt this in 1977 in Panorama City, in case you doubt this, you better look back at Alexander the Great, that was sign number one. And you better look back at the Maccabean revolution in 175 B.C., that was sign number two. And believe me, God kept the first two and I'm confident He'll keep the last part, aren't you? And it behooves us not only to examine our own hearts as Peter said knowing..."Seeing that you know these things shall come to pass, what manner of persons ought you to be?" We ought to examine our own hearts. We also ought to go to those people around us and call them to be a part of the Kingdom that is going to be brought by the King. Our message should be the message of the Apostle Paul, "Giving thanks unto the Father who has made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light who has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son in whom we have redemption even the forgiveness of sin."

Beloved, we have that. And that's the very message God calls us to pass on to others. The only reason you and I will ever enter that Kingdom, we're not Jews, but God's going to let us be there if we love Jesus Christ. We become spiritual Israel, spiritual seed of Abraham. He's going to let us into His Kingdom because we know His Son. I'll tell you something, we have a lot to thank Him for, don't we? And when we come to this table tonight, this is our way of saying, "Thank You, Jesus Christ. Thank You for dying on a cross so that we could be in Your Kingdom." Let's pray together.

Father, we do pray that as we share in this bread and the cup that it might be with hearts filled with love for You, hearts full of true worship. May no one mock the cross by accepting it and then rejecting at the same time...accepting by saying, I want Christ and I want salvation. And then living in sin which denies that very acceptance. Help us not to mock the cross by harboring the sin that Jesus died to take away. May our hearts be pure as we partake in Jesus' name, we pray.

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