

3. The Messianic prophecies in Zechariah - Part 1

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Since the Biblical prophecies are so accurate, the skeptics of the Bible often claim that these prophecies, especially the prophecies of Jesus, had to be written after all the actual events happened. This silly idea was simply debunked by the discovery of Septuagint in Greece.

Some of you may not know what Septuagint is. It is a Greek version of the Hebrew Old Testament. It was translated into Greek in 285 B.C. It includes the Book of Daniel and Zechariah to show the authenticity of the Book's prophecies regarding Jesus. It has been said that prophecy is history pre-written by God.

In the last half of his Book, Zechariah presents two burdens which are "oracles" in the Hebrew word. These two focus on the first and second advents of the coming Messiah. These six chapters comprise one of the greatest concentrations of messianic truth found anywhere in Scripture.

In next six chapters Zechariah reveals Messiah as the humble King, the loving Shepherd, the mighty Warrior, the gracious Savior and the righteous Ruler who will reign on earth as King and Priest.

Tonight we are going to cover chapters 9-11, especially covering the Messianic prophecies in these chapters.

A. GOD'S PROTECTION AGAINST ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Tyre and Sidon were the two major cities north of Israel, in the land of Lebanon. Tyre was an important commercial city that was thought of as impossible to conquer because it was an island a mile off the shore. The Assyrians laid siege against Tyre for five years, but never conquered the city. Nebuchadnezzar tried for 13 years to conquer Tyre, but Alexander did it in seven months.

Alexander the Great conquered Tyre by laying siege for seven months, then using the rubble from the old city to make a causeway out to the island city. It was a spectacular achievement of both military and engineering strategy.

When Alexander the Great marched through Lebanon and the Promised Land towards Egypt he did not conquer or attack Jerusalem. God promised to protect and spare His house during this time, and He did through a remarkable chain of events connected to Alexander the Great and the High Priest.

According to Jewish historian Josephus, in his Antiquities Vol. 11, the Jewish High Priest and Alexander both had dreams from the Lord that allowed them to have peace and Alexander even offered a sacrifice to the God of Israel in the Jewish Temple.

B. THE COMING KING

Zechariah 9:9-10 "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. 10 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.'

This prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus Christ rode into Jerusalem on what we traditionally call "Palm Sunday," and the event is recorded in all four Gospels. This is the only public demonstration Jesus allowed during His ministry, and He did it to fulfill Scripture.

Note that the King is riding a colt, the foal of a donkey, not a white stallion like a conquering Roman general used to do. Alexander's arrival brought fear to people, but the Jews were commanded to rejoice and shout because their King had come. Jesus was righteous in all that He did, and His purpose in coming was to bring salvation to those who would trust Him. What a stark contrast to Alexander!

Luke 18:14b everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Almost 500 years before Jesus rode His donkey to Jerusalem, prophet Zechariah was prophesying this very event. According to Daniel 9, we can add 173,380 days or 483 Jewish years to the date when Artaxerxes made a decree to rebuilt Jerusalem, we come to the exact date when Jesus entered Jerusalem through the Palm Sunday road from the Mount Olive and was welcomed by the people of Jerusalem.

The entire age of the church fits between Zechariah 9:9 and 10. In v9, Zech mentions about the Triumphant Entry of Jesus two thousand years ago. But in v 10, he talks about the Second Coming and the Millennium on the earth.

C. THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE

Zechariah 10:2-5 For the idols speak delusion; The diviners envision lies, And tell false dreams; They comfort in vain. Therefore the people wend their way like sheep; They are in trouble because there is no shepherd. 3 "My anger is kindled against the shepherds, And I will punish the goatherds. For the Lord of hosts will visit His flock, The house of Judah, And will make them as His royal horse in the battle. 4 From him comes the cornerstone, From him the tent peg, From him the battle bow, From him every ruler together. 5 They shall be like mighty men, Who tread down their enemies In the mire of the streets in the battle. They shall fight because the Lord is with them, And the riders on horses shall be put to shame.

The ancient Hebrew word for 'idols' here is 'teraphim', meaning 'common household idols'. Diviners consulted the spirits of idols to predict the future. God warns His people that there is no real help from either idols or their representatives. The people have listened to false and deceptive leaders, and part of the reason is because there is a lack of godly leadership. Sound familiar with what is happening now?

Though God is displeased with Israel's shepherds which meant kings and rulers in the ancient Israel terms, He will raise up the perfect shepherd from and for Judah.

- Jesus is the Cornerstone: The foundation, measure and standard. – Isaiah 28:16, Psalm 118:22-23, Matthew 21:42, Acts 4:11, 1 Peter 2:4-5
- Jesus is the Tent Peg: Holding all things securely. – Isaiah 22:23-24
- Jesus is the Battle Bow: A strong fighter for good. – Isaiah 63:1-4, Revelation 19:11-16
- Jesus is the Leader over every ruler of His people. – Revelation 19:16

God's people Israel will be regathered, redeemed, reunited as one nation, and rejoicing in the strength of the Lord. But this same God can give the same blessings

to His church today. We're a scattered people in many ways, but the Lord can unite us in Christ and bring us together. We're fighting battles against the enemy, but the Lord can strengthen us and turn His helpless victims into victorious warriors.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

D. THE TRUE SHEPHERD

Zechariah 11:7-14 So I fed the flock for slaughter, in particular the poor of the flock. I took for myself two staves: the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bonds; and I fed the flock. 8 I dismissed the three shepherds in one month. My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. 9 Then I said, "I will not feed you. Let what is dying die, and what is perishing perish. Let those that are left eat each other's flesh." 10 And I took my staff, Beauty, and cut it in two, that I might break the covenant which I had made with all the peoples. 11 So it was broken on that day. Thus the poor of the flock, who were watching me, knew that it was the word of the Lord. 12 Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. 13 And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"--that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter. 14 Then I cut in two my other staff, Bonds, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

In the East, leaders and rulers were called "shepherds" because they were supposedly to lead the people, protected them, and provided for them.

Jeremiah 25:34 "Wail, shepherds, and cry! Roll about in the ashes, You leaders of the flock! For the days of your slaughter and your dispersions are fulfilled; You shall fall like a precious vessel.

Zechariah acts out this prophecy, feeding a literal flock of sheep that represents the people of God, while the shepherd Zechariah represents the Lord who has appointed this flock for a season of judgment.

Zechariah carried the two tools of a shepherd as they are mentioned in Psalm 23:4. He named one "Beauty (Grace)" and "Bonds (Unity)". He fed the flock and even got rid of three unfaithful shepherds in v8. Then one day he broke both of the staves. God's favor to His people had come to an end; the covenant union between God and His people was broken.

From v12 it becomes interesting. Thirty pieces of silver was not an insignificant amount, but it was the price of a slave. It was the lowest they could pay, and it said to Zechariah, "we think of you as a slave." This speaks prophetically of Jesus, who was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver – the price of a slave.

Matthew 27:9-10 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, 10 and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me."

Did you notice author Mathew was quoting a portion of Scripture from the OT and he said it was spoken by Jeremiah. What happened here? Here are three explanations:

- Some think it is an error but not by Matthew – an early copyist made a mistake. Perhaps Matthew wrote Zechariah, but an early copyist put Jeremiah instead
- Some think that Jeremiah spoke this prophecy and Zechariah recorded it.

- Some think that Matthew refers to scroll of Jeremiah, which included the book of Zechariah
So which one is it? Dunno. That is for smart people to figure out.

What happened in v13 is an exact fulfillment of what Judas did with his thirty pieces of silver in Matthew 27. A potter's field was a piece of useless land where he threw his broken, damaged, and rejected pots. Jesus really did purchase the potter's field – the place where broken, rejected, and useless people like us are scattered.

After the exchange of the thirty pieces of silver the staff of Bonds (unity) is broken. This also was fulfilled when Israel was scattered by the Romans after their rejection of their Shepherd Jesus.

E. THE FALSE SHEPHERDS

Zechariah 12:15-17 And the Lord said to me, "Next, take for yourself the implements of a foolish shepherd. 16 "For indeed I will raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for those who are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand. But he will eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hooves in pieces. 17 "Woe to the worthless shepherd, Who leaves the flock! A sword shall be against his arm And against his right eye; His arm shall completely wither, And his right eye shall be totally blinded."

This time Zechariah play-acts as a foolish shepherd who does not care for the sheep the way that a shepherd should.

Since Israel rejected the True Shepherd Jesus, they did not deserve another good shepherd. This one is ultimately fulfilled in their embrace of the antichrist and their covenant with him.

Daniel 9:27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

F. APPLICATION

What a comfort and peace to know that we can trust our all knowing God in this extremely volatile unknown world!