

Zechariah 9

4-3-03

“Prisoners of Hope!”

1. **Intro:**

- 1.1. After the **8 visions**(ch.1-6); the **4 Revelations**(ch.7,8) the book winds down w/**2 Prophecies**(see burdens/oracles).
 - 1.1.1. **Ch.9-11** – The Messiahs 1st Advent.
 - 1.1.2. **Ch.12-14** – The Messiahs 2nd Advent.

2. **PAST PRESERVATION OF HIS PEOPLE! (1-8)**

- 2.1. **Burden** – Oracle, “what is lifted up”(by the voice).
- 2.2. **Q: Remember Daniel’s prophecies of the world powers?**
 - 2.2.1. Ch.2 – [**Image**] Head of **Gold**; Chest & Arms of **silver**; Belly & sides of **Bronze**; & Legs of **Iron**.
 - 2.2.2. Ch.7 – [**4 Beasts**] Lion; Bear; Leopard; Beast.
 - 2.2.3. These represent the current Kingdom Daniel was writing during (i.e. **Babylon**). And the transition into the **Medes & Persian**. - Then **Greece** would follow(w/Alex. The Great); & then **Rome**.
 - 2.2.4. Zechariah is writing this during the time of the Medes & the Persians.
 - 2.2.5. **Verses 1-8,13** then is a prophecy of the conquests of the next Kingdom(Alexander the Great/Greece) as they will mow through the area of Palestine after the battle of Issus(Turkey) in 33bc.
 - 2.2.5.1. Notice it’s a **Southward sweep**.
 - 2.2.5.2. We’ll watch Syrian, Phoenician, & Philistinian cities tumble.
- 2.3. **Syrian Cities tumble(Damscus)** (1,2a)
- 2.4. **Phoenician Cities tumble(Tyre)** (2b-4)
 - 2.4.1. They had a citadel of defense(Tyre/tsor = Rock). 150’ high walls, on its 150 acre rock fortress, a ½ mile from the mainland.
 - 2.4.2. It withstood a **5 year** siege by the **Assyrians**. A **13 year** siege by the **Babylonian** army. **But when Alexander came with a small army he defeated them in only 5 brief months**.
 - 2.4.2.1. This was heralded as “**one of the epic stories of military history**”

- 2.4.2.2. *“He actually engineered a causeway across the narrow straight , which still remains the core of the wedge-shaped ridge that to this day attaches the ancient island site of Tyre to the mainland.”* (Zondervan Pictorial Ency. pg 835)
- 2.4.3. Note the pun **“Tyre(tsor) has built herself a tower(matsor).**
- 2.4.3.1. Or if you’re from a southerner you’d use sound-alike pronunciation. **“Tarr has built herself a tarr.**
- 2.5. **Philistine Cities tumble**(Askelon, Gaza, Ekron, Ashdod) (5-8)
- 2.5.1. 4 of the 5 principle Philistine cities(Askelon, Gaza, Ekron, Ashdod).
- 2.6. Alexander passed & re-passed the city of Jerusalem w/o laying a siege to it.
- 2.6.1. The ultimate cause...Divine protection upon it.
- 2.7. The spread of Alexander’s kingdom helped to prepare the way for the birth of the Lord Jesus. *(And then of course Rome - Language/Greek, Travel/roads, Peace/with other nations)*
- 2.7.1. **“God controls history & uses it to accomplish His purposes!”¹**
- 2.7.2. Events in the **news today** are doing the same.
- 2.7.3. If He’s written to us about end times then **He MUST** be at work today with the setting up & the taking down of all the nations.

3. **1st ADVENT! (9-10)**

- 3.1. **Jesus’ triumphal Entry!** (9)
- 3.1.1. At His **1st Advent** the Messiah enters Jerusalem’s gates, not on a charging white horse, but on a **donkey**.
- 3.1.1.1. It was the animal of **peace**, where as the horse was the animal of **war**.
- 3.1.1.1.1. Thus, appropriate for Christ to ride into Jerusalem.
- 3.1.1.2. We see a donkey as stubborn & stupid animal.
- 3.1.1.3. *“In the East they were remarkable for their patience, gentleness, intelligence, meek submission& great power of endurance.”* (Smith’s Bible Dict.)
- 3.1.2. Bringing salvation, not war.
- 3.1.3. **Lowly & riding on a donkey**
- 3.1.3.1. **Roy Rodgers** had his **Trigger**; **Gene Autry** had **Champion**; **Hopalong Cassidy** his **Topper**; **Alexander the Great** had **Bucephalus**[Byoo-sef-a-les](which he took everywhere with him)

¹ Warren Wiersbe; pg.618

3.1.3.2. *“Having ridden the seemingly unbreakable Bucephalus, Alexander was inspired to conquer the world. In his attempt to do so, Bucephalus carried him from Greece to Egypt and India. When Bucephalus finally died, Alexander honored the horse by naming a city in central Asia after him.”*

3.1.3.3. **Jesus was different** – He didn’t come yelling “Hi-O-Silver”! – It was lowly riding on a young donkey!

3.1.3.4. Napoleon Bonaparte noted, “**Alexander, Caesar, and Hannibal** conquered the world but they had **no friends...** **Jesus** founded his empire upon love, and at this hour millions would die for him...He has won the hearts of men, a task a conqueror cannot do.”

3.2. (10) Zechariah sees all the way to the 2nd Coming as well.

3.2.1. His kingdom **will** extend to the ends of the earth.

3.2.2. These back to back prophecies...are years apart.

3.2.2.1. **Story** – Like the child looking up to the star & his father asks her, “Do you think those stars are close together?” The child says, “yes,” stretching her hands to show how close they are. [show fingers a few inches apart]

3.2.2.2. They appear to be close together but they are miles apart!

3.2.3. So we are able to see what many O.T. seers could not see.

4. **FUTURE PRESERVATION OF HIS PEOPLE! (11-17)**

4.1. Zechariah now focuses on the **future** deliverance of God’s people.

4.1.1. It will be like releasing **prisoners** from a pit(11); gathering a scattered **flock**(16a); putting **jewels** in a crown(16b); assembling a **conquering army**(14,15).

4.1.2. He will free them from **all** their enemies.

4.2. (12) **Prisoners of Hope!**

4.2.1. God’s people are labeled “**prisoners of hope**”.

4.2.1.1. [Lit. “**Prisoners of the-hope**”] - Not any hope, not general hope, The Hope of Israel!

4.2.2. Charles Wesley wrote, “The tyranny of sin is past; And though the carnal mind-remains. My guiltless souls is on thee cast; **Prisoner of hope**, to Thee I turn, And bless the day that I was born.”

4.2.3. **A good illustration of this comes from the Isle of Wight.** The main cell overlooking the channel was used for political offenders. Into this dungeon **Henry VIII** placed **Earl of Warwick**. In stone letters above were the words “**Hope Cell**”. The reason for this lay in the fact that political prisoners remained in custody only during the term of the life of the king.

- 4.3. [1] All believers are “**prisoners of hope**”!
- 4.3.1. Often we are prisoners of **our own making**!
- 4.3.1.1. Debt, fears, lusts, guilt, corruption.
- 4.3.2. Or, prisoners of our **own mind**!
- 4.3.2.1. The Pictures, images, old movies you’ve seen...all video-logged in your mind.
- 4.3.3. *Q: What do we do when we find ourselves in prisons, or in the pits?*
- 4.4. [2] We must **return to the Stronghold!**(fortress)[i.e. to them it was Jerusalem]
- 4.4.1. Your return must be a willing one.
- 4.4.2. It must be w/a converted heart & will.
- 4.4.3. Is. 55:7 “Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.”
- 4.4.4. **God Himself** is our stronghold/fortress!
- 4.4.4.1. Ps.18:2 “The LORD is my **rock** and my **fortress** and my **deliverer**; My God, my **strength**, in whom I will trust; My **shield** and the **horn** of my salvation, my **stronghold**.”
- 4.4.4.2. Only “He” will **set us free** (11).
- 4.5. [3] Then He will **render to us double!**
- 4.5.1. Is. 61:7[in Millennium] “Instead of your shame you shall have double honor, And instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double; Everlasting joy shall be theirs.”
- 4.6. (13) **Judah my bow** – God uses a military metaphor here.
- 4.6.1. God’s people are likened to His “bow, sword, & arrow.”
- 4.6.2. **Believers are God’s battle instruments!**
- 4.6.2.1. Rom.6:13 “And do not present your members as instruments (weapons) of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments(weapons) of righteousness to God.”
- 4.6.2.2. JB Phillips, “Nor hand over your bodily parts to be, as it were, **weapons of evil** for the devil’s purposes. But, like men rescued from death, **put yourselves in God’s hands as weapons of good for his own purposes.**”

- 4.7. **Your sons oh Greece** – Alexanders successors(the **Seleucus**/Syria; **Ptolemy**/Egypt; **Ly-simachus**/Thrace; **Cassander**/Macedonia & Greece)
- 4.7.1. Speaking of the Maccabeen revolt (against *Antiochus Epiphanes*; 171bc)
- 4.8. **(14) The Lord will be seen over them!**
- 4.8.1. This could be a great 3-fold prayer over our soldiers today!
- 4.8.2. *That The Lord will be seen over them; defend them; & save them!*
- 4.9. **(15) The Lord will defend them!**
- 4.9.1. The 5 missionaries martyred by Auca Indians went forth to death singing this hymn, “We rest on Thee, our shield & our defender. We go not forth alone against the foe. Strong in Thy strength, safe in keeping tender. We rest on Thee & in Thy name we go.” (Edith Cherry; *Be Still My Soul*)
- 4.10. **(16) The Lord will save them!**
- 4.10.1. **Jewels of a crown** (16) –
- 4.10.2. We are “**Diamonds for His Diadem**”!
- 4.10.2.1. I just saw the **Hope Diamond** at the Smithsonian! (Wow!)
- 4.10.3. **Lifted up** – We are not to be concealed.
- 4.10.3.1. As the priest displayed his gold “Holiness to the Lord” on his turban.
- 4.10.3.2. As a city displayed up on a hill.
- 4.10.3.3. As a candle is placed on a candle stick.
- 4.10.3.4. We as Christians are not to be **shown** also! (not hidden/covered/buried/ or masked).
- 4.10.3.5. Everything in our lives as Christians bears examination & inspection.
- 4.10.3.6. **Caution** - at any time the Lord might “**lift us up**” to display us to the world....what will you be caught doing? (*shining your light or walking in darkness?*)
- 4.11. **Des will come up & lead us in Communion tonight!**