

December 3

Scriptures: Read Zechariah 9 & 10

Key Verse: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!... Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation...” (Zechariah 9:9)

Overview

Chapters nine and ten prophetically describe Israel under the Grecian World Empire in the fourth century B.C. Alexander the Great was used by God to defeat many nations but, in God’s providence, he never overran Jerusalem, for God Himself encamped around His people to protect them (9:8). It has been speculated that some wise Jews told Alexander the Great that he had been prophesied about in their Holy Scripture, saying that he would conquer the world (cf. Dan. 8:5-8; 11:3); this possibly made him favourably disposed toward the Jews.

Although both the Assyrians and Babylonians had come against Tyre, they had never completely conquered her, because of her island fortress. Although she seemed impregnable, Alexander the Great succeeded in defeating Tyre’s “power in the sea”, because it was the appointed time that the Lord had purposed for her fall. Therefore, Zechariah rightly gives the glory to God; the Grecians were merely executing God’s plan when they defeated and burned the city (9:4).

Alexander the Great also defeated all the Philistine cities. One of his policies was to transplant populations and mingle various peoples in an attempt to blend the west and the east. This would help to Hellenize the world and force these mixed ethnic groups to communicate in the Greek language. This was all in the plan of God in preparation for the appointed time of the Messiah’s coming. As Zechariah prophesied, Ashdod was one of these “mixed” cities. Some Philistines, however, would escape, be incorporated into Judah, and serve the Lord. With the Grecian attacks and the many conversions, idolatry would be swept away from the coastal area of Palestine (9:7).

In contrast to the coming of the ruthless Grecian ruler upon a war horse which brought fear into the hearts of people, Israel would have the coming of a humble and meek King, an event that would be accompanied by great rejoicing. He would be riding upon the foal of a donkey, which signified He was a man of peace. This Messianic prophecy was quoted by the Gospel writers as being literally fulfilled in Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem (9:9; Mt. 21:5; Mk. 11:9; Jn. 12:15). In the usual prophetic fashion, Zechariah jumps to events that are separated by centuries. In the very next verse he prophesies about Christ’s second coming, when He will come to ensure the world-wide establishment of peace, for He will break every weapon of war and have “dominion ... from sea to sea” (9:10; Ps. 72:8). He will set free all His faithful ones who had been “prisoners of hope” during the tribulation time. He will give them victory over their enemies and make them invincible, since He will empower them, be over them, go before them, and save them; they are His sheep who are most precious to Him, and He will rejoice in their beauty (9:13-17).

The people were to understand that blessings and prosperity come from God. Therefore, they were to pray to Him with faith in their time of need. Before the Babylonian captivity, their fathers had often sought help from idols and diviners, but this was in vain (10:2). The Lord lays

blame upon the false shepherds, whom He punished, but because of His eternal purpose, the children of Israel remained as His flock, for from the remnant whom God would save and restore, the Messiah Jesus would come. The many things that are to come from Judah, such as the “cornerstone”, “tent peg”, and “battle bow”, are most likely Messianic references meaning His strength, stability, and power (cf. 1 Pet. 2:6; Is. 22:23; Ex. 15:3; Ps. 45:4-5).

By His mighty power and wonderful grace, He will bring unto Himself the remnant of Judah and Joseph. “Joseph” (10:6) represented the ten northern tribes of Israel. Most of the people from these tribes had been absorbed into the population, wherever the Assyrians had scattered them, with the exception of a remnant who remained true to the faith of their fathers. Many of these faithful ones returned to their homeland with Zerubbabel. Even though some might live in far countries, they will come to know the Messiah, Lord Jesus. Then, when Christ gathers His Bride unto Himself, they too will come to Him from wherever they might be in the world. Just as God prepared the way for the children of Israel by parting the Red Sea, so once again He will remove all obstacles when His redeemed people come to Him. They will glorify Him as they “walk up and down in His name” (10:12). Since the Lord will be with them and sin will be removed from Zion, all their comings and goings will bring honour to the Name of Jesus.

Prayer

Dear Lord, You are our source of life, encouragement, and joy. You are our all in all. Thank You for our complete salvation. Grant us the opportunity to share our joy in You with someone else today.