

**God Remembered
Zechariah 9:1-9
Chapter 14
“...I Will Curse Those Who Curse You”**

A Pronouncement:

***The word of the Lord is against the land of Hadrach,
and Damascus is its resting place—
for the eyes of humanity and all the tribes of Israel are on the Lord—***

***and also against Hamath, which borders it,
as well as Tyre and Sidon, though they are very shrewd.***

***Tyre has built herself a fortress;
she has heaped up silver like dust and gold like the dirt of the streets.***

***Listen! The Lord will impoverish her and cast her wealth into the sea;
she herself will be consumed by fire.***

***Ashkelon will see it and be afraid;
Gaza too, and will writhe in great pain, as will Ekron, for her hope will fail.
There will cease to be a king in Gaza, and Ashkelon will become uninhabited.***

A mongrel people will live in Ashdod, and I will destroy the pride of the Philistines.

***I will remove the blood from their mouths and
the abhorrent things from between their teeth.
Then they too will become a remnant for our God;
they will become like a clan in Judah and Ekron like the Jebusites.***

***I will encamp at my house as a guard, against those who march back and forth,
and no oppressor will march against them again,
for now I have seen with my own eyes.***

The Coming of Zion's King

***Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!
Shout in triumph, Daughter Jerusalem!
Look, your King is coming to you; he is righteous and victorious,
humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.***

There is a major shift in the book of *Zechariah* that begins in the ninth chapter and continues until the fourteenth. Due to the significant change in the style of writing in these chapters as opposed to the preceding eight, many liberal scholars have attempted to discredit the writings of these final six chapters, claiming they were written by another author at a later time. But those who seem to take great delight in their efforts to discredit God's Word often take such positions.

The fact of the matter is, this last portion of Zechariah's prophecies were written much later than the first eight chapters. And that is the reason for the change in style. I have had on occasion the need to go back and pull the notes from my own sermons from years past, and the writing style seems so foreign to me that I cannot believe I wrote them. The simple truth is, that as we grow older (and hopefully wiser), we tend to do things a bit differently than when we were younger. Zechariah is no exception. He was a young man when The LORD set him apart to prophecy to the people who were returning from exile.

And as we read the last portion of his prophecies, we are greeted by the wisdom and maturity of a much older man. The messages are still divinely inspired, but the tone and style are markedly different.

When this last portion of prophecy was given, gone were the days of strife and contention as the temple and city walls of Jerusalem were being rebuilt. Those days were but a memory. However, the devil does not cease in his torment of God's chosen people. And just as Israel had her struggles in the past, new adversaries had taken the place of the old. The Persian Empire was the dominant empire in Zechariah's days, but just as power tends to be a fickle mistress, there was a fledgling empire that loomed just beyond the horizon. And God intended to use this power against those cities who had brought grief to His people.

The LORD gave the prophet a list of those whom He had been watching. The phrase in **verse 1**, translated in the CSB as **"for the eyes of humanity and all the tribes of Israel are on The LORD"** can also be translated:

The eyes of The LORD are on mankind.

Zechariah 9:1(b)

This is most likely a more accurate rendering of the text since it better corresponds with the words in **verse eight** which say: **"...for now I have seen with My own eyes."**

God does not slumber, and although many in this world may think that they have gotten away with their evil deeds, God is watching, and The LORD remembers. There is a record kept in heaven, and all who sin and do not repent will indeed pay the price for their evil ways. Or as The LORD Himself has declared:

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a person sows he will also reap...

Galatians 6:7

So to all of those who had caused Israel trouble in the years following their return to their promised homeland, God had been a witness. And He was prepared to repay them for their harsh treatment of His chosen people. He was, in other words, about to remember His promise to Abraham so many years before, **"I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you..."** (**Genesis 12:3 NKJV**).

The list of malefactors were the cities which surrounded the holy land. Beginning with the cities of Syria, (*Hamath, Tyre, Sidon*) and ending with the strongholds of the Philistines (*Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron and Ashdod*). For apparently in Zechariah's time, each of these places were hostile to the people of The Covenant. And God Himself would soon rise up a warrior to bring them all to their knees. Zechariah calls this prophecy "a burden" (**vs. 1**) for it was intended to serve a warning to those who would harm Israel that God's vengeance was looming upon the horizon, and there would be no escape.

Many early *Bible* critics sited the error of this prophecy by saying that no such city with the name *Hamath* has ever existed. But later archeological discoveries have proven the critics wrong once again. For the city did in fact once exist, but was destroyed centuries ago. And it was not the only one destroyed. All these cities which God specifically named in this prophecy came to ruin. For God raised up a mighty conqueror, who would wreak havoc in the region.

As with most prophecies, Zechariah's prediction of the destruction of these cities carried both a short term and a distant future fulfillment. In the short term, Zechariah was foretelling historical events. For The Medo-Persian empire, which was the dominant power in Zechariah's time, was not meant to last. The power of Greece, as prophesied by Daniel, was coming into its own. And a mighty ruler was about to step into history who would take the world by storm.

Alexander The Great swept through Palestine like a whirlwind, leaving destruction in his wake. Fortresses that had long been considered impregnable fell before him in heaps of rubble. One such fortress was the city of Tyre, located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The city became a major seaport and was wealthy beyond compare. The main part of the city was actually located on an island just off the coast. Because it was surrounded by water, it was considered unassailable by any marching army. In 332 BC, Alexander The Great promised the rebellious and proud city that it would be transformed into a continent. He fulfilled this pledge by destroying a suburb of Tyre, which lay upon the coast and using its rubble to build a roadway into the sea for his armies to march upon. As a result the

city of Tyre was completely destroyed, and its foundations are now part of a peninsula that extends from the mainland into the sea.

In similar fashion, Alexander brought down every stronghold that stood in his path to utter conquest of the region, but miraculously, the nation of Israel was spared from his wrath. All those cities that God had mentioned in Zechariah's prophecy were annihilated, but Jerusalem was left intact. Was this by chance, or did God remember His promise? In his writings, the historian Josephus described the events that spared God's people from the wrath of Alexander. He spoke of a high priest in Jerusalem named *Jaddua* who sought The LORD on behalf of the nation. The account he provided is as follows:

"He (Jaddua) therefore ordained that the people should make supplications, and should join with him in offering sacrifices to God, whom he sought to protect the nation, and deliver them from the perils that were coming upon them; whereupon God warned him in a dream, which came upon him after he had offered sacrifice, that he should take courage, and adorn the city, and open the gates; that the rest appear in white garments, but that he and the priests should meet the king in the habits proper to their order, without the dread of any ill consequences, which the providence of God would prevent. Upon which, when he rose from his sleep, he greatly rejoiced; and declared to all the warning he had received from God. According to which dream he acted entirely, and so awaited for the coming of the king.

And when he understood that he (Alexander) was not far from the city, he went out in procession, with the priests and the multitude of the citizens. The procession was venerable, and the manner of it different from that of other nations... and when the Phoenicians and the Chaldeans that followed him, thought they should have liberty to plunder the city, and torment the high-priest to death, which the king's displeasure fairly promised them, the very reverse of it happened; for Alexander, when he saw the multitude at a distance, in white garments, while the priests stood clothed with fine linen, and the high-priest in purple and scarlet clothing, with his mitre on his head having the golden plate on which the name of God was engraved, he approached by himself, and adored that name, and first saluted the high-priest. The Jews also did altogether with one voice, salute Alexander, and encompass him about: whereupon the kings of Syria and the rest were surprised at what Alexander had done, and supposed him disordered in his mind. However, Parmenio alone went up to him, and asked him how it came to pass, that all others adored him, he should adore the high-priest of the Jews? To whom he replied, 'I did not adore him, but that God who hath honored him with that high-priesthood; for I saw this very person in a dream, in this very habit, when I was at Dios, in Macedonia, who, when I was considering with myself how I might obtain the dominion of Asia, exhorted me to make no delay, but boldly to pass over the sea thither, for that He would conduct my army, and would give me the dominion over the Persians; whence it is, that having seen no other in that habit, and now seeing this person in it, and remembering that vision and the exhortation which I had in my dream, I believe that I bring this army under the divine conduct, and shall therewith conquer Darius, and destroy the power of the Persians, and that all things will succeed according to what is in my own mind.'"

God Himself allowed Alexander to exact His vengeance upon the tormentors of Israel. And He remembered His promises to keep His people safe. Today, many of these same adversaries would destroy God's chosen, but He has miraculously preserved them until now, for He still has plans to prosper them, to give them a hope and a future (**Jeremiah 29:11**). So the prophesy of Zechariah was fulfilled in the short term by Alexander The Great, but there is a greater King Who would come and remove the enemies of God's chosen people forever. And the first time He appeared, He came in lowly and humble circumstance, and was rejected by those to which He came. But one day, He shall return in power and majesty!

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout in triumph, Daughter Jerusalem! Look, your King is coming to you; He is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. **Zechariah 9:9**

Unlike the pomp and circumstance that accompanies the kings of this world, The True King of Israel would come (at His first appearing) in lowliness and humility. And it was for this reason that He was rejected by His own people, and subsequently, crucified. But by doing thus, He is able to extend His great mercy and forgiveness, even to those who were once Israel's enemies! This is also part of Zechariah's prophecy:

I will remove the blood from their mouths and the abhorrent things from between their teeth. Then they too will become a remnant for our God; They will become like a clan of Judah, and Ekron like the Jebusites. ***Zechariah 9:7***

For you see, our God is not only a God of judgment, but also of mercy. And He would also extend through Christ Jesus the opportunity for pagan nations to join with His chosen ones. His great salvation was offered first to the Jew and then to the Gentile. And this is what Paul refers to as "*the great mystery*" (***Ephesians 3:3-13***).

The LORD'S declaration to *remove the blood from their mouths and the detestable thing from between their teeth*, is a reference to idolatry in which pagan peoples would eat of the offerings that were sacrificed to idols. When The Spirit of God reveals the gospel of truth, even the most wicked of pagans can see and repent and turn to The LORD! This is the mighty power of God's grace. And we Gentiles have been made partakers of His divine nature, when we believe.

Christ will come once more, in power and glory, and on that day, all those who would oppose God's people will come to their final ruin and destruction. But for now, we are living in the age of grace, where salvation is readily available to all who believe. When Christ rode into Jerusalem over two thousand years ago in humility on the foal of a donkey, the people shouted, "*Hosannah* (save now), and *Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of The LORD.*" Just a few days later that same crowd shouted, "*Crucify!*" and the Lamb of God was slain as a sacrifice for all who would believe.

This same Jesus will one day return in glory riding upon the clouds of heaven, and every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that He is LORD to the glory of God The Father. We know this is truth, because our God has promised it. And our God... *remembers!*