

Join us in being on mission with God!

OUR VISION

To continually mature and grow as a united body of Jesus-imitators who live out God’s greatest commandment to “Love” by exalting God and serving one another, and His greatest commission to “Go” by reaching into and shaping our local, regional, and global communities.

“Tale of Two Peoples”

Zechariah Chapter 9

Getting Started

After an introductory time, discuss the following questions in your group or class.

You live in a world where power and authority can become entrenched and feared.

- Most of us don’t want to mess with the IRS. We prefer not to attract an audit.
- Playing games with dictators is risky. (We question the wisdom of American Aijalon Gomes, who walked into North Korea from China and was arrested. He was just sentenced to 8 years of hard labor and fined \$700,000.)
- CEOs of major corporations prefer not to tell-off the heads of congressional committees when testifying on capital hill.
- Celebrities try not to alienate the press, who can make their careers nearly unbearable overnight.
- Small nations sign treaties with larger ones—like the U.S., China, or Russia, in order to have someone help them in case of armed conflict.

We have the luxury of living in a place where power is somewhat constrained by laws—at least theoretically. A congressman cannot order you shot. A business cannot claim your land belongs to them and seize it. You can take legal action if a broadcaster makes libelous and slanderous statements against you.

Q: How would you behave differently if you lived in a place or a time when there were no checks on raw power—where people or institutions could damage any part of your life with impunity?

NOTE: There is a **major shift** between chapter 8 and chapter 9. From Zechariah 9:1 to the end of the book, the revelation of God to the prophet focuses on the future. Some of these events were fulfilled—in whole or in part—between the time the words were spoken and today. Other events will not be fulfilled until the return of Christ and the establishment of his kingdom on earth.

Addressing the bullies of the day

The Jews of Zechariah’s day were looked down on. They were regarded as impotent refugees from the Babylonian captivity who had no value in the greater world. In the eyes of most in the Middle East, their God had failed them, their glory was past, and their ability to influence future events was negligible. All the other peoples had greater armies, more influential economies, better leaders, and stronger gods.

God first begins to encourage his people by describing how he will bring the powerful and war-like nations that surround them to their knees.

1. Look on a map for *Damascus*. Where is it in relationship to Israel? Of what kingdom is it the capital? Why do you think God starts with an address to a nearby city (Hadrach) and Damascus?



Zechariah 9:1-14

The word of the LORD is against the land of Hadrach and will rest upon Damascus-- for the eyes of men and all the tribes of Israel are on the LORD--² and upon Hamath too, which borders on it, and upon Tyre and Sidon, though they are very skillful.³ Tyre has built herself a stronghold; she has heaped up silver like dust, and gold like the dirt of the streets.⁴ But the Lord will take away her possessions and destroy her power on the sea, and she will be consumed by fire.⁵ Ashkelon will see it and fear; Gaza will writhe in agony, and Ekron too, for her hope will wither. Gaza will lose her king and Ashkelon will be deserted.⁶ Foreigners will occupy Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.⁷ I will take the blood from their mouths, the forbidden food from between their teeth. Those who are left will belong to our God and become leaders in Judah, and Ekron will be like the Jebusites.⁸ But I will defend my house against marauding forces. Never again will an oppressor overrun my people, for now I am keeping watch.⁹ Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.¹⁰ I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will

2. The last two towns God addresses in verse 2 are part of what kingdom? Where are they located in relationship to Damascus? Do your Bible notes tell you something special about Tyre?

3. Verse 3 describes some of the features of Tyre. What kind of town would you compare Tyre to today? What will be her fate? (Note: this was fulfilled by Alexander the Great in 333 B.C.)

4. Verses 5-6 describe another power situated to the north of Israel. It mentions four of the five prominent cities. In the days of the judges Samson fought against this kingdom along the coast of the Mediterranean. What people group do these towns belong to?

5. In verse 7, Zechariah predicts two things that will happen to the people in these cities. What does he foresee?

6. Verse 7 compares the people of these cities to the Jebusites. What happened to them in the past? (See Judges 1:21 for a clue.)

A deliverer comes

Verse 8-10 promise a rescue through God's deliverer.

7. Which of these three verses refer to Jesus' first coming? Which ones speak of his second coming?

8. What does verse 8 tell you about the deliverer's character?

9. Where do you see verse 9 appearing in the New Testament?

10. Verse 11 uses a metaphor to describe the plight of the people. What two Old Testament figures does it remind you of?

11. Verse 13 unites tribes from the northern and southern kingdom. A different metaphor or action is assigned to each one. Together, what are they in God's hands?

Tale of Two Peoples

extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. ¹¹ As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit. ¹² Return to your fortress, O prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you. ¹³ I will bend Judah as I bend my bow and fill it with Ephraim. I will rouse your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece, and make you like a warrior's sword. ¹⁴ Then the LORD will appear over them; his arrow will flash like lightning. The Sovereign LORD will sound the trumpet; he will march in the storms of the south, ¹⁵ and the LORD Almighty will shield them. They will destroy and overcome with slingstones. They will drink and roar as with wine; they will be full like a bowl used for sprinkling the corners of the altar. ¹⁶ The LORD their God will save them on that day as the flock of his people. They will sparkle in his land like jewels in a crown. ¹⁷ How attractive and beautiful they will be! Grain will make the young men thrive, and new wine the young women.

12. How will the Lord deal with the enemies of his people in verses 14-15?

13. List some of the descriptions used to describe the ways in which he will bring deliverance.

14. The people who were the forgotten refugees of the world take on a new status with God. They go from "trash to treasure." How does God speak of his people in verses 16-17?

15. What do you sense about God's attitude toward his people, despite their failures, as you look and the way he describes them in verses 16-17?

The people in Zechariah's day were sometimes afraid, compromising, and reluctant to follow the prophet and the voice of God. They were much like the church today. We too struggle with trusting in God and honoring him with our lives.

16. What do you learn about the character of God and his attitude toward you as you read about what he did after the days of Zechariah, and what he promises to do for his people in the future. How does this encourage you?

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