

This passage in Zechariah describes the blessings and protection the LORD will provide for Israel when Jesus Christ returns to defend them. He will bring them back into their land and strengthen them against their enemies as they look to Him as their God.

In the midst of Zechariah's prophecy concerning how the LORD is going to protect Israel from their enemies, verses 9-10 give us a glimpse of both comings of the Messiah. Jesus fulfilled verse 9 during His triumphal entry into Jerusalem and verse 10 will be fulfilled at His second coming when He returns to deliver Jerusalem from the armies surrounding Jerusalem at the end of the Great Tribulation.

Zechariah 9

⁹ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem” - In context, the LORD is calling on the Jews to rejoice in the face of their enemies for their Messiah is coming.

“behold, thy King cometh unto thee” - The reason for their rejoicing is because their King (the Messiah) is coming to deliver them. Jesus Christ fulfills this promise when He arrives in Jerusalem the final time before His crucifixion (Matt. 21:1-5; John 12:12-16). Jesus weeps over Jerusalem because they did not recognize the arrival of their King (Luke 19:41-44), knowing the destruction and bloodshed that would result because they would not accept His deliverance.

“he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass” - Four characteristics describe the Messiah: (1) He is King; (2) He is just; (3) He brings salvation; (4) He is humble (riding on an ass rather than a horse).

Zechariah 10

¹ Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field. ² For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain: therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled, because there was no shepherd.

Chapter 10 describes the blessings and protection the LORD brings after the return of Christ.

“Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain” - The “time of the latter rain” is in the spring (April and May) and here the Jews are told to pray to and depend on the LORD for the rain for their crops. We are to look to the LORD for our blessings.

“so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field” - The LORD will respond to their prayer for rain by sending the showers. The “bright clouds” refers to clouds with lightening, indicating the imminence of rain. The result will be that everyone will have grass in their field for their livestock.

“For the idols have spoken vainity [trouble; sorrow], and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain [emptiness]” - The LORD contrasts His response to their prayers against how their idolatry has failed them. The things promised by idols have only led to sorrow and disappointment, the things predicted by those who practice divination (witchcraft and astrology) have turned out to be false, and their words of comfort have been empty.

“therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled [to be humbled], because there was no shepherd” - The people suffered humiliation for their sin because no one was leading them in the ways of the LORD. Without godly leadership the LORD had to chastise them for their sin by allowing other nations to afflict and even conquer them.

³ Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle. ⁴ Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle bow, out of him every oppressor together.

“Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats” - The word “goats” is rendered “goat herders” in some translations and refers to the leaders of the people. The LORD was angry with the spiritual and civil leaders for not fulfilling their responsibility of leading the people to follow the LORD.

“for the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah” - The LORD is expressing His anger toward the failed leadership now that He has returned to bless His people and do what the leaders of the people have failed to do.

“and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle” - The LORD will strengthen the Jews into war horses against their enemies.

“Out of him came forth the corner [cornerstone], out of him the nail [pins; pegs], out of him the battle bow” - A list of the emblems of strength the Jews will gain from the LORD. The cornerstone refers to the Messiah (Isa, 28:16; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:6-8), the word for “nail” is the same word used for the “pins” or fasteners that held the tabernacle together. The LORD also provides them with the battle bow, with which they defeat their enemies.

“out of him every oppressor together” - The LORD will defeat every oppressor of the Jews and they will never be victim to any oppressor ever again.

⁵ And they shall be as mighty men, which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because the LORD is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded.

Instead of being the victims of their enemies, the LORD will transform the Jews into mighty victors over their enemies. While their enemies depend on superior war implements (like war horses), they will depend on the LORD for their strength in battle. Thus they will confound (“shame”) those who depend on their horses for victory when the LORD gives victory to the Jews despite the advantages of their enemies.

⁶ And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the LORD their God, and will hear them.

“And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph” - The Jews’ strength and victory will come from the LORD for He will be actively working for them.

“and I will bring them again to place them” - The LORD place the Jews back in the land of promise once again.

“for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off” - Even though they do not deserve His help or His blessings, the LORD will show them mercy as He intervenes to defend and bless them. Illustrating their complete forgiveness, the LORD says He will look upon them as if He had never rejected them because of their sin.

“for I am the LORD their God, and will hear them” - The LORD confirms that He is still their God and that He will hear and respond when they call upon Him.

⁷ And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine: yea, their children shall see it, and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the LORD.

“And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man” - The reference to Ephraim indicates that the restoration will not be for Judah alone but that Ephraim (often used to represent the nation of Israel) will also be included. The full nation of Israel will be restored. Instead of being the victims of their oppressors as they have been over the centuries, the LORD will make Israel strong.

“and their heart shall rejoice as through wine” - The joy of the Jews will be like those who are drunk.

“yea, their children shall see it, and be glad” - Their descendants will also benefit from these blessings and will rejoice.

“their heart shall rejoice in the LORD” - The rejoicing will not be based in the blessings but in the Giver of the blessings. They will recognize that their blessings come from the LORD and does not come from luck or circumstances.

⁸ I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased.

“I will hiss [whistle] for them, and gather them” - This is a picture illustrating that fact that the LORD will summon and gather His people back to the land that He promised them. He uses the illustration of whistling for them, much like we whistle to summon a dog.

“for I have redeemed [ransomed; rescued] them” - The LORD has redeemed His people individually through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. He will also redeem them nationally from their enemies and their troubles.

“and they shall increase as they have increased” - They will have children and multiply in number as they have in the past.

⁹ And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again. ¹⁰ I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them.

“And I will sow them among the people” - The LORD looks into the future from Zechariah’s time and promises that He will preserve the Jews as a people, for He will allow them to retain their ethnic identity in all the nations of the world where they will be scattered.

“and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again” - They will remember their God, have offspring, and then the LORD will return them to the land.

“I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria” - These nations are two historical enemies of the Jews and yet the LORD will preserve them there and bring them back out.

“and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon” - Gilead is next to the eastern border of Israel next to the Jordan river and Lebanon is at the northern border of the land of Israel. Thus the phrase “the land of Gilead and Lebanon” encompasses the whole land of Israel. It would be like saying “from coast to coast” to refer to the land of the United States.

“and place shall not be found for them” - Other translations render this “until there was no place left for them.” It means that the land will be completely full because the LORD will not leave anyone out.

¹¹ And he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away.

“And he shall pass through the sea with [or “of”] affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up” - The picture is of the LORD defeating all obstacles to the return of the Jews to the land. Just as He parted the Red Sea so that the children of Israel could pass through, the LORD will pass through the “sea of affliction,” smiting (defeating) the waves of the sea as He does so. Even “the river” (likely a reference to the Nile River, historically the strength of Egypt) will dry up and pose no obstacle to the LORD’s plans to restore the Jews to the land.

“and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away” - These historical enemies of Israel will be rendered powerless to prevent the Jews from returning.

¹² And I will strengthen them in the LORD; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the LORD.

“And I will strengthen them in the LORD” - The Jews will put their trust in the LORD and He will respond by strengthening them.

“and they shall walk up and down in his name” - Everything they will seek to accomplish will be done in the name of the LORD and with His help. To resist them will be to resist the will of the LORD.

“saith the LORD” - All of these promises have been ordained by the LORD and He will guarantee them.