

Zech. 9:1 The burden of the word of the LORD in the land of Hadrach, and Damascus shall be the rest thereof: when the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be toward the LORD.

Zech. 9:2 And Hamath also shall border thereby; Tyrus, and Zidon, though it be very wise.

“burden” = a word of doom

Hadrach and Damascus are both cities in Syria. This message from the Lord and delivered by Zechariah declares judgment against these two cities. Although the wording is difficult, it would seem that this judgment will also include the Syrian cities of Hamath, Tyre, and Zidon even though they are regarded as wise [in the area of defense seems to be implied]. These cities are part of today’s Lebanon and Syria.

The timeframe for this prophecy is identified as “when the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be toward the LORD. This is the confusing part, but as is often the case with the prophets, maybe it can be explained by the fact that the message they declared often included near and far fulfillments without clear distinction of the two. That is definitely the case in later verses in this chapter, so there is no reason to think otherwise with this section. Even though Alexander the Great seems to be the reference point of fear in the “near” prophecy, I don’t think “the eyes of men” in general were looking to YHWH at that time—Israel, yes; the rest of the nations, no. This leads me to believe that there is fulfillment yet to come, and I would tend to think that it ties in with Isaiah’s prophecy in chapter 17 regarding the destruction of Damascus. Though men will be in worldwide rebellion against God, they will recognize His wrath.

Zech. 9:3 And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets.

Zech. 9:4 Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea; and she shall be devoured with fire.

Both Isaiah (chapter 23) and Ezekiel (chapters 26-27) prophesied against Tyre. Tyre was a very wealthy city due to her powerful naval force and position as a prominent port and trading center on the Mediterranean coast. She escaped being conquered by Assyria and Babylon, although Nebuchadnezzar persisted for 13 years. In fact, during Neb’s siege of the city, its citizens relocated their city to an island situated some distance from the mainland. Alexander the Great completed in seven months, what others could not do. He razed the original location and threw the rubble into the sea to build a causeway to the island and succeeded in conquering the city and burning it to the ground.

Zech. 9:5 Ashkelon shall see *it*, and fear; Gaza also shall see *it*, and be very sorrowful, and Ekron; for her expectation shall be ashamed; and the king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.

Zech. 9:6 And a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.

Zech. 9:7 And I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth: but he that remaineth, even he, shall be for our God, and he shall be as a governor in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite.

Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron and Ashdod were four of the main Philistines cities that were located in the general area of what is today known as the Gaza Strip. These cities had

hoped that Tyre would be able stop Alexander's advance, but that expectation was disappointed (from the Hebrew for *ashamed*). The key point being made, these cities were conquered and many were killed; the survivors of this proud people were duly humbled.

I went to the commentaries for help on the first part of verse 7; JFB states the following: "*Blood* was forbidden as food (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 7:26). **abominations** — things sacrificed to idols and then partaken of by the worshippers (Numbers 25:2; Acts 15:29). The sense is, "I will cause the Philistines to cease from the worship of idols." **even he shall be** for our God — "even he," like Hamath, Damascus, Tyre, etc., which, these words imply, shall also be converted to God (Isaiah 56:3, "son of the stranger joined himself to the Lord") [ROSENMULLER]. The "even," however, may mean, *Besides the Hebrews*, "even" the Philistine shall worship Jehovah (so Isaiah 56:8)."

That makes sense to me, but I think you have to jump way into the future from Zechariah's time to today. It is interesting that this area of land is today known as the Gaza Strip and is considered "Palestinian" territory, and they are enemies of Israel and Israel's God. The day is coming, however, when the Palestinians, the people of Lebanon and the Syrians will serve the God of Israel. I couldn't help but pay close attention last summer (2006) during the war between Hizbullah and Israel and make note of the impact on Tyre. I'm not sure how it all fits and is going to come down, but I believe these enemies of Israel will experience destruction once more and will finally be reconciled to Israel during the Messiah's Kingdom. And I'm sure that when we are able to read the scripture with hindsight, it will make perfect sense.

Zech. 9:8 And I will encamp about mine house because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth: and no oppressor shall pass through them any more: for now have I seen with mine eyes.

Alexander the Great basically "passed by" Israel (as described by Josephus) in his march to conquer Egypt and his return from that campaign. There will probably be a further fulfillment of this prophecy in the future.

Josephus, Book 11, The Antiquities of the Jews, Chapter 8, 4-5: "Now Alexander, when he had taken Gaza, made haste to go up to Jerusalem; and Jaddua the high-priest, when he heard that, was in agony, and under terror, as not knowing how he should meet the Macedonians, since the king was displeased at his foregoing disobedience. He therefore ordained that the people should make supplications, and should join with him in offering sacrifices to God, whom he besought to protect that nation, and to 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, 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 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 the dream he acted entirely, and so waited for the coming of the king.

And when he understood that he 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. It reached to a place called Sapha; which name, translated in Greek, signifies a *prospect*, for you have thence a prospect both of Jerusalem and of the temple; 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 all together, 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 to be disordered in his mind. However, Parmenio [Alexander's second-in-command] alone went up to him, and asked him how it came to pass, that when 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 has 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 dominion over the Persians; whence it is, that having seen no other in that habit, and now seeing this person in it, and remembering my vision and the exhortation which I had in my dream, I believe that I bring this army under 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." And when he had said this to Parmenio, and had given the high-priest his right hand, the priests ran along by him, and he came into the city; and when he went up into the temple, he offered sacrifice to God, according to the high-priest's direction, and magnificently treated both the high-priest and the priests. And when the book of Daniel was showed him, wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended; and as he was then glad, he dismissed the multitude for the present, but the next day he called them to him, and bade them ask what favors they pleased of him: whereupon the high-priest desired that they might enjoy the laws of their forefathers, and might pay no tribute on the seventh year. He granted all they desired: and when they entreated him that he would permit the Jews in Babylon and Media to enjoy their own laws also, he willingly promised to do hereafter what they desired: and when he said to the multitude, that if any of them would enlist themselves in his army on this condition, that they should continue under the laws of their forefathers, and live according to them, he was willing to take them with him, many were ready to accompany him in his wars."

The last half of this verse seems to jump forward to the Messiah's Kingdom, because Israel has been oppressed over and over again through the centuries since that time. Once Messiah's Kingdom is established, Israel will be under His Divine protection; and even when Satan is released to gather a great army for one more showdown with the Lord at the end of that 1000-year reign, Israel will be protected and avenged.

"now have I seen with mine eyes" – I think this is a reminder that Israel has remained under the watchful eye of YHWH throughout the years of their dispersion among the

nations. He has seen how they have been treated by the Gentile nations, and He will take vengeance on their behalf.

Zech. 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.

Matthew records that this prophecy was fulfilled by Jesus when He road into Jerusalem on what we commemorate as "Palm Sunday."

Matt. 21:1-5 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me. And if any *man* say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. **All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet**, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

Zech. 9:10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

We have to remember that it is the LORD speaking here. He is declaring His intent to eliminate the implements of war from Israel. He is going to declare peace with the Gentile nations and establish His rule throughout the earth. Again, this is obviously yet future; the LORD will establish His throne in Jerusalem as the center of world government when He returns as the King of kings as described in Revelation 19.

Rev. 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

Rev. 19:12 His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

Rev. 19:13 And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

Rev. 19:14 And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

Rev. 19:15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Rev. 19:16 And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Both Isaiah and Micah make similar prophecies.

Is. 2:2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

Is. 2:3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Is. 2:4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Mic. 4:1 But in the last days it shall come to pass, *that* the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

Mic. 4:2 And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Mic. 4:3 And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Zech. 9:11 As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.

Zech. 9:12 Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee;

In Genesis 15 we are told of a blood covenant that God made with Abraham promising that his seed would inherit the land “from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.” (v18) That covenant was unconditional. In spite of their rebellion, Israel will eventually be brought back into permanent relationship with YHWH.

The prophet Isaiah gives some understanding regarding the next part.

Is. 51:11 Therefore **the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion;** and everlasting joy *shall be* upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; *and* sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

Is. 51:12 I, *even* I, *am* he that comforteth you: who *art* thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man *that* shall die, and of the son of man *which* shall be made *as* grass;

Is. 51:13 And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where *is* the fury of the oppressor?

Is. 51:14 The **captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit,** nor that his bread should fail.

The prisoners in the pit seem to be referencing the people of Israel that are scattered throughout the nations.

“no water” – I’m a bit clueless. Could this be a reference to the absence of the Holy Spirit among the scattered people of the nation who were unable to access the temple?

Is. 44:2-3 Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, *which* will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

“return you to the stronghold” – A stronghold is a fortress or place of security. It would seem that the Lord is issuing a call for His people “of hope” to return home. This would be directed to those who had placed their faith in God and were looking for their Messiah and the fulfillment of the blood covenant to possess the land. Those who do will receive compensation double in comparison to their suffering. Isaiah again has a prophecy that is similar to this one that in context is referencing Messiah’s Kingdom.

Is. 61:7 For your shame *ye shall have* double; and *for* confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.

As I read over this again, I got the impression that the immediate application was to the Jews that had stayed in Babylon in spite of the fact that God had caused them to be “sent forth” or allowed to go home. They foreshadow the final fulfillment when Messiah comes to establish His Kingdom and facilitates the return of all the Jews to their homeland under the new covenant. At that time, Jerusalem and Israel will be a mighty stronghold.

Zech. 9:13 When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.

This sounds like the people of Israel would defeat the Greeks, picturing them as bows, arrows, and the sword of a mighty man. We know that Alexander didn’t bother them, but when he died, the same could not be said of his eventual successor over that region, Antiochus Epiphanes. Though he did great evil in the Holy Land, his armies were defeated by the Maccabean revolt that reestablished Jewish independence.

Antiochus Epiphanes is recognized by many (including me) as a type of the future Antichrist. (See topical study, “Antichrist per Daniel 11.”) I believe Antichrist will emerge from the same heritage. Though Greek is specified, the Roman Empire included that part of the Greek Empire; so Antichrist can be referenced as both Greek and Roman. I believe the defeat of Antiochus foreshadows the final defeat of the Antichrist.

Zech. 9:14 And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning; and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.

Zech. 9:15 The LORD of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, *and* make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, *and* as the corners of the altar.

If my conclusions are correct, then these verses are affirming that it is God’s supernatural provision that accomplished the victory for the Maccabees. Frankly, I believe that Israel has never won a battle without God’s supernatural provision, nor, will they ever. Who can call their fight to preserve the new state in 1948 anything but a miracle...or the 6-Day War in 1967...or the Yom Kippur War of 1973? It will be the same when Antichrist is defeated at Armageddon.

Zech. 9:16 And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they *shall be as* the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.

Zech. 9:17 For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty! corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.

The day is coming when Israel will again be pictured as a flock of sheep that is carefully guarded and provided for by the Shepherd, YHWH. They will be as treasured as precious jewels in the crown of the King. They will be a testimony to God's power and the truth of His word. Isaiah words it beautifully.

Is. 62:1 For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp *that* burneth.

Is. 62:2 And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.

Is. 62:3 Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

The people will enjoy the abundant produce of the land, which is representative of God's blessing and provision. In that day the people of Israel will understand more fully than ever the goodness of the Lord and the beauty of His being.