

September 20th Sunday 2015

Text: Zechariah 8:18-23

Topic: Kingdom Joy and Jewish Favour

This final section of this part of the book returns full circle to the theme with which it began, namely, the people's concern about fasting (cf. 7:1-7). These messages began after a few Bethelites came to Jerusalem (7:2-7), and they ended with the promise that multitudes of Gentiles representing all languages would come to Jerusalem. The fasting of the past would become feasting in the future. Zechariah received another message from the Lord Almighty. He promised that in the future, the sorrowful fasts that the Jews had observed in captivity would give way to joyful "feasts." Thus at the end of this section of messages on hypocritical fasting, the Lord provided at least a partial answer to the question that the messengers from Bethel had asked about the traditional fasts (7:3). In addition to the fasts in the fifth and seventh months (7:3, 5), the exiles also had commemorated the breaching of the walls of Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:3-4; Jer. 39:2) in the fourth month and the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:1; Ezek. 24:2) in the tenth month. Strict modern Jews still observe these four fasts.

Lesson: Joy is coming for the people of God.

Prayer: Help us not to relent Lord, as the day of joy is coming. Amen.

September 21st Monday 2015

Text: Zechariah 9:1-2

Topic: The Destruction of Nations and the Preservation of Zion

The first four verses of this poem deal with the north and the last four with the south. The first two verses and the last two speak of salvation, and the middle four speak of judgment. The passage begins and ends with references to eyes: the eyes of men (v. 1), and the eyes of God (v. 8). 9:1-2. The Lord sent a burden, heavy pronouncement to Zechariah that announced judgment and blessing. It concerned the lands of "Hadrach" (Hatarikka, near Hamath), "Hamath" on the Orontes River (a city farther south in Aram, cf. Amos 6:2), "Damascus" (the capital of Aram, still farther south), and "Tyre and Sidon" (Phoenician cities between Aram and Israel, cf. Ezek. 26:3-14; 28:20-24). The order of these cities in the text is from north to south. Earlier prophets had seen enemies invading Israel from the north, but now Yahweh would take the same route, destroying Israel's enemies as He came. Our enemies would be destroyed by the Lord.

Lesson: Victory is ours.

Prayer: Give us victory, our Redeemer. Amen.

September 22nd Tuesday 2015

Text: Zechariah 9:3-4

Topic: Trusting in Physical Defense

In verses 9:3-4, Tyre had trusted in physical fortifications for her defense, and in stockpiles of "silver" and "gold" for her security. She had built a 150-foot high wall around the city, which stood on an island just offshore, following Nebuchadnezzar's earlier unsuccessful 13-year siege (cf. Isa. 23:4; Ezek. 29:18), and she had gained great wealth through commerce. Nevertheless, the Lord would "dispossess" Tyre and displace "her wealth," casting it into the Mediterranean Sea. The parts of the city that

would not go down into the water would go up in flames. Alexander destroyed Tyre by building a causeway from the mainland to the island city, and then *leveling* it.

Lesson: Do not trust in your strength and wealth.

Prayer: Lord, teach us to have our protection in you. Amen.

September 23rd Wednesday 2015

Text: Zechariah 9:5-6

Topic: Humility

The Philistine cities farther south along the Mediterranean coast would observe Tyre's fate and fear, especially "Ekron," the northernmost of the four cities mentioned. The fifth city of the Philistine, Gath, had lost all significance by Zechariah's time, which probably explains its omission here (cf. 2 Chron. 26:6). God would also destroy these cities and populate them with a mixed group of citizens. Thus He would humble the pride of the Philistines. God cannot put up with pride. God will eventually destroy proud individuals as well as proud nations as He did to the Philistine cities.

Lesson: Be humble in all you do.

Prayer: Teach us the way of humility, o Lord our God. Amen.

September 24th Thursday 2015

Text: Zechariah 9:7

Topic: The Lord will Cleanse his People

The Lord would also "remove" the "blood" that these pagans ate, which was forbidden in Israel, from their mouths. He would take the unclean, "detestable" food that they ate, from their mouths. Drinking blood and eating unclean food was part of Philistine pagan worship (cf. Isa. 65:4; 66:3, 17), so the judgment in view included punishment for idolatry. Some remaining Philistines would turn to the Lord and become like the Israelites in their faith in Yahweh. As the Jebusites became incorporated into Israel in David's day (1 Chron. 21:18), so would the Philistines become in the future, from Zechariah's viewpoint. There is need for us to search our lives, if we have been negatively influenced by idolatrous practices in our environment, we need to immediately repent and have a change of attitude. God hates sin but He delights in cleansing His people of sin.

Lesson: Be ready to be cleansed by the Lord.

Prayer: Wash and cleanse us from filthiness, o Lord. Amen.

September 25th Friday 2015

Text: Zechariah 9:8

Topic: The Promise of Protection

The Lord promised to protect His people and land—as with a band of soldiers—since enemies would oppose them. "House" is probably a metonym for the whole land including its people. No enemy would oppress them ever again because the Lord had seen the plight of His people and would defend them (Ps. 32:8). This promise of no more oppression anticipates the second advent of Messiah. For their preservation throughout history and for their future deliverance from every oppressor, Israel is

indebted to the providence of God which watched over them for good. In our individual experiences as believers, God has been protecting and watching over us.

Lesson: The Lord is there for us so let us not be afraid.

Prayer: Trust in the Lord o you people. Thank you Jesus for your promise of protection. Amen.

September 26th Saturday 2015

Text: Zechariah 9:9-10

Topic: The Coming of Zion's King

This text is one of the most messianically significant passages of the entire Bible, in both the Jewish and Christian traditions. Judaism sees in it a basis for a royal messianic expectation, whereas Christianity see a prophecy of the triumphal entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem on the Sunday before His crucifixion (Matt. 25:5; John 12:15). Thus, though the fulfillment may be in dispute, there is unanimous conviction that a descendant of David is depicted here, one who, though humble, rides as a victor into Jerusalem. The way will have been prepared by the imposition of universal peace, following which the king will exercise dominion over the whole world. We have pictured for us: (1) the Agent of peace, (2) the method of peace, and (3) the kingdom of peace. This shows us that there is no true peace outside of Jesus.

Lesson: Jesus came and gave us peace.

Prayer: Lord, teach us to be peacemakers. Amen.