

ZECHARIAH: GOD'S PRESENT DIRECTIVES AND FUTURE HOPE

XIV: Christ's First Advent In Contrast To Alexander The Great

(Zechariah 9:9)

I. Introduction

- A. Zechariah along with Haggai called the returning Hebrews back to rebuilding the temple, and he gave God's directives and future hope. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the Book of Zechariah," p. 1310)
- B. Zechariah chapters 9-14 present two "burdens" or oracles, with Zechariah 9-11 predicting Messiah's first advent and rejection by Israel and Zechariah 12-14 foretelling His second advent and acceptance by Israel.
- C. After predicting God's protection of Israel from Alexander the Great, Zechariah 9:9 contrasts Christ's gracious first advent with Alexander the Great's dreaded arrival, and it offers rich application for us:

II. Christ's First Advent In Contrast To Alexander The Great, Zechariah 9:9.

- A. Alexander the Great was a mere tool in the hands of God to punish evil nations, a human conqueror, one who inspired fear and dread, a foreign tyrant, a cruel and oppressive ruler who slew his enemies, a rich and powerful man who rode a prancing horse, and his conquests were presented in Zechariah 9:1-7. (Merrill F. Unger, Zechariah, 1974, p. 160)
- B. Then, in Zechariah 9:8, God predicted how He would guard Jerusalem and His temple from destruction by Alexander the Great, what was wonderfully fulfilled in the Intertestamental Period.
- C. However, in vast contrast to Alexander the Great's arrival was the official entrance of Jesus to Jerusalem in His first advent as predicted in Zechariah 9:9 and fulfilled in His Triumphal Entry as recorded in the Gospels:
 1. The people of Jerusalem experienced great anxiety as Alexander the Great made his conquering, destructive approach to Jerusalem, but in striking contrast, the prophet Zechariah called on Jerusalem to exult exceedingly, to shout aloud, for her own King, the Messiah would come to her, Zechariah 9:9a.
 2. This King was not sinful like Alexander the Great, but He was righteous, Zechariah 9:9b.
 3. This King was not destructive like Alexander the Great, but showing Himself to be a Savior, Zech. 9:9c:
 - a. The KJV phrase "having salvation" (*nosha*) is a nifal participle with a normal reflexive meaning, to be translated "showing Himself a Savior," Ibid., p. 162. It really means "dispensing salvation" (Ibid., p. 163).
 - b. In the close association of the participle "having salvation" (*nosha*) with the adjective "righteous" (*tsaddiq*), Zechariah meant to imply that "(o)ur Lord's 'showing Himself a Savior' for others was a unique proof of His possession of that infinite righteousness which was an indispensable prerequisite for the justification of guilty sinners (1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 3:8, 9; Rom. 3:26; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 John 2:1)," Ibid., p. 162.
 - c. Alexander the Great had no qualification to be able to justify sinners, for he instead destroyed many of them, while Christ's salvation went far beyond just physically not harming people unlike Alexander the Great did but even to justify the souls of men and give them eternal life! The contrast here is huge!
 4. Israel's King was "lowly," the Hebrew adjective being '*ani*, meaning "afflicted, bowed down" as One Who is "pious" and "afflicted by evil men (Isa. 14:32; Hab. 3:14)," Ibid., p. 163; Zech. 9:9d. The prophet anticipates the "'the whole of the lowly, miserable, suffering condition' of the righteous Servant of the Lord so graphically delineated in Isaiah 52:13-53:12 . . . the sinlessness and the Saviorhood of the Messiah set forth in Zechariah 9:9" is followed by "thought of His rejection, suffering, and atoning death," Ibid.
 5. Israel's King would come to Jerusalem "riding upon a donkey," Zechariah 9:9e. Alexander the Great rode upon the finest horse he could obtain in the ancient world where the donkey after the days of king Solomon "was regarded as a very lowly animal ridden only by persons who possessed no rank or worldly position. Israel's King riding on this modest animal indicates Him to be without station or rank," Ibid.
 6. Furthermore, Israel's King would not only arrive riding on a donkey, but on a colt, the foal of a donkey, in the deepest form of personal humility, Ibid., p. 164; Zechariah 9:9f ESV.
 7. In summary, this prediction, though historically fulfilled in the event of Christ's Triumphal Entry (Matthew 21:4-5; John 12:14-15), actually "had in mind the entire scope of the Savior's [earthly] life, the complete order of events which transpired at His first advent. The Triumphal Entry brought into focus this panoramic view of Messiah's Person and character." (Ibid.; brackets ours)

Lesson: *Opposite the godless, destructive, proud Alexander the Great from whom God protected Jerusalem, her Messiah would come in gentle humility, righteous and in grace eternally saving to those who believed in Him.*

Application: *May we rejoice in our infinitely superior Lord Jesus and follow His example in how we lead others.*