

**CCF Study Notes**  
**Tuesday 7 AM Study**  
**18 July 2006**  
**Zechariah 9-11**

Before beginning to read from Zechariah let's spend time in prayer, considering where our faith is placed and how God keeps us. Let's ask God to:

1. Keep **our eyes** on Jesus – even when the news is frightening;
2. Keep us **rejoicing** in Christ;
3. Keep us **free** from slavery to fear and sin;
4. Keep us from **idols** – keep us trusting only in God;
5. Keep us in **His care**, always strong in the Lord;
6. Keep us **faithful** in following our Good Shepherd, and
7. Keep us from **deception**, from following antichrist!

Chapter 9 marks the beginning of a new section of Zechariah, probably written years after the first section. God maps out the road ahead for Judah just before the prophetic ministry enters a 400 year silence. The conquests of Alexander, the horror of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabean revolt, and the future destruction of Jerusalem by Rome are subjects of these chapters – as well as the restoration of Israel which is only now taking place. Dangers are warned of. Hazards are considered. Instructions are given.

Verses one through eight of chapter nine tell of the campaigns of Alexander the Great long before they would happen. Scholars who don't believe in miracles have problems with prophets who accurately predict the future. We have no such problem – fulfilled prophecy is God's calling card. Notice the little aside in verse one: "For the eyes of men and all the tribes of Israel are on the Lord." As Alexander was on the move fear gripped every city in that part of the world. Would Alexander come to take their city as well? Jerusalem was spared. But the lesson is clear: keep your eyes on the Lord, not on worldly superpowers. Notice that the credit is not given to Alexander, but to God. God is at work in the affairs of nations.

The reign of Christ is contrasted with Alexander's reign of terror. He is just, not cruel and heartless. He brings not destruction, but salvation. He doesn't come as a pompous general, but comes in lowly estate, riding on a donkey. Jesus brings peace – both with God, and eventually, among nations. Jesus will rule all nations by speaking peace to them.

The prophet jumps to the time of the Maccabean revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes. Notice how freedom is proclaimed to those who had not yet returned from captivity. They had become "prisoners of hope," always hoping that somehow they would become wealthy enough and the world would grow stable enough for them to return to the Holy

Land. Have you ever been a "prisoner of hope"? Sometimes we wait for conditions to be just right before stepping out in obedience to God. We make ourselves prisoners of circumstances that way. But God will save His people, the jewels of His crown. You are precious to God!

The latter rains come at just the right time to cause the crops to finish ripening. The other nations who had lived in Canaan prayed to their idols to provide the latter rains. God's people were to ask the Lord for rains instead. God was angry with the leaders who set a bad example for the people by their idolatry. Are there things or government entities or philosophies that we are looking to for help when we ought to be asking God for things?

The prophet suddenly looks down through the centuries to that time when God would gather and restore His people for the last time. Those who were rebuilding the temple and those who would rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and those who would choose to live in the promised land under less than ideal circumstances need some reason to hope. The ultimate restoration of Israel was and still is a cause for hope in Zion. Those still living in far off lands needed a cause for hope as well. God would one day gather their children in the promised land and bless them there.

Chapter eleven looks at the eventual conquest of Israel by Rome in 70 AD. From north to south the Roman army would move slaughtering the people of the land, making the land desolate and scattering the people so as to destroy their national identity. Jesus would feed this flock, but be rejected by them. Instead, the Chief Priest, Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees would be owners who slaughter the flock at will. Jesus would be sold for the princely sum of thirty pieces of silver. We need to be ready and watching when Jesus comes – unlike that generation.

Finally, we meet the foolish shepherd, Antichrist, who will mistreat those who trust in him. Antichrist will be the ruler of a revived Roman Empire. He is not the owner of the sheep, so doesn't care properly for them. He rules for what he can get out of it. We need to beware of the growing deception in this world which leads people to put their faith in leaders who serve only their own selfish interests.

As we watch the world crumble around us, let us look to God in faith and in prayer. When Jesus comes back, this world and our bodies will be renewed. Jesus loves to restore broken things and broken people. Let us ask for God's restoration again today!

P.S. Recordings of these studies in John and the Prophets and copies of these notes are now available on a new website at <http://www.jstoker.name>. A new podcast is also available there or at <http://feeds.feedburner.com/CCF-T-Podcast>.