

Zechariah 9:1-17 A Restored Kingdom

It seems to me that we often hear words about “restoration” in our country. I think it is kind of normal for every generation to desire to “go back” to a previous time when things were “better.” Many Americans want to restore our country, like one would restore an old car or restore an old piece of furniture. I think, generally speaking, we want to restore our country because the “bank account” of morality is almost dry. At least on the surface, Christianity does not have the influence that it once had. So, we want to “restore” the better days. This is evident even with the words of President Trump as he said “*my life was spared*” in order to “*restore America to greatness*.” On Wednesday the headlines read: “*Trump Vows to Usher in Golden Age of America*.” Brothers and sisters, we may or may not be “restored” to some kind of “greatness.” (whatever this means). But, the kingdoms of this earth are passing away. There is only One True King: His name is Jesus. HIS kingdom will stand forever! **“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God”** (Ps. 20:7). The kingdoms of this earth will all fall in judgment. This is why we still pray, **“Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven”** (Matt. 6:10). In fact, this is what the entire Bible teaches us. It teaches us about the kingdom of God coming to earth as it is in heaven. And this truth comes to us in Zech. 9 through the lens of “restoration.” In this chapter I will highlight 3 truths: 1) A Restored Land, 2) A Restored King, and 3) A Restored People.

1. A Restored Land. In vv. 1-8 we see a general picture of restoration as God judges the surrounding nations and restores Israel. Let me read those verses. **“The oracle of the word of the LORD is against the land of Hadrach and Damascus is its resting place. For the LORD has an eye on mankind and on all the tribes of Israel, and on Hamath also, which borders on it, Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise. Tyre has built herself a rampart and heaped up silver like dust, and fine gold like the mud of the streets. But behold, the Lord will strip her of her possessions and strike down her power on the sea, and she shall be devoured by fire. Ashkelon shall see it, and be afraid; Gaza too, and shall writhe in anguish; Ekron also, because its hopes are confounded. The king shall perish from Gaza; Ashkelon shall be uninhabited; a mixed people shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of Philistia. I will take away its blood from its mouth, and its abominations from between its teeth; it too shall be a remnant for our God; it shall be like a clan in Judah, and Ekron shall be like the Jebusites. Then I will encamp at my house as a guard, so that none shall march to and fro; no oppressor shall again march over them, for now I see with my own eyes.”**

These are clearly words of judgment. And they fall upon the neighboring nations of Israel. These words contain a lot of mystery. But, I think we can get the main point. It is interesting that these nations are not big nations (Syria, Philistia, Phoenicia). They are the same nations that would have also been conquered by the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Persians. They would have given no threat, at least militarily, to Israel at that time. This is why I believe Zechariah was ultimately looking to a future time.

Now, there was relative peace in those days with the surrounding nations as God allowed Israel to reinhabit the land (there was “restoration” in their day). But, these words go beyond that time. In v. 1 we see God has an eye on “*all mankind*” and on “*all the tribes of Israel*.” This text sees a time when ALL God’s people are united. And, clearly, this is a prophecy that includes all the peoples of the earth. In v. 7 he reminds them of the Jebusites. Do you remember them? Israel conquered them from the old town of “*Salem*,” which becomes Jerusalem. They are merely incorporated into Israel. And look at v. 8: After judgment, God will “*encamp at my house as a guard, so that none shall march to and fro . . .*” (We see this in their time as God protects his people during the rebuilding of the temple and the walls of Jerusalem.) But, this prophecy goes further. V. 8b says, “**No oppressor shall AGAIN march over them . . .**” There must be an ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy.

Throughout the history of Israel, we see partial restorations. They break God’s covenant. God judges them. And then, in repentance and faith the people are restored. This is exactly what we see in Zechariah’s day. He is giving them another “restoration” in the land. Brothers and sisters, this “restoration” was not full. Zechariah’s prophecy looks forward (as we will see). I think the main truth (which we will apply later) is this: When God comes to rule the world, all his enemies will be as these nations and cities are (surrounding Jerusalem). His people will no longer have any cause either to fear or to envy them.

2. A Restored King. After God restores the land, there must be a restored king to rule. I get this from vv. 9-13: “**Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double. For I have bent Judah as my bow; I have made Ephraim its arrow. I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece, and wield you like a warrior’s sword.**” Wow! Brothers and sisters, without any explanation, “*Has there ever been a king like this in the history of Israel or in the history of mankind?*” Righteous. Having salvation. Humble. Powerful as conqueror and ruler over the whole earth. One who can free all prisoners. When the people of Zechariah’s day heard these words, what did they think? Was this person Zerubbabel? I don’t think so!

The context of this passage and other OT texts looks back to the Davidic Kingdom. In their minds, they knew God would restore David’s line. This is why Zechariah and the other prophets speak of the “root” of Jesse. This is the “root” or the “stump” that God will bring forth. This is all about the “restoration” of God’s king, to which in great error, religious Jews are still waiting for today. But, when we come to the NT, how do the authors view this passage in Zechariah?

Who is this person? How do they see this prophecy fulfilled? If we do not go there, we have missed the entire point of the Bible. The Restored King is none other than the Lord Jesus.

Let me ask, “*What kind of king will he be? What will his kingdom look like?*” These verses give us the picture. He is “righteous” (v. 9). This doesn’t merely mean that he is a good person who does good things. No. He is just; EVERYTHING He does is right and just. He is righteous in the same way God is righteous. He is no sinful king. In this way he is greater than David; He is greater than Solomon. He is next described as “saved.” The translation of this word is not clear. Some say it means God saves him. Others believe it means one who “brings salvation” or victory. Well, BOTH are true of this restored king. As we look to Jesus who died on the cross, he laid down his life as a sacrifice. This is his passive obedience. But, then what happened three days later? He rose from the dead, victorious. In a manner of speaking, we can say, “*As God, he rose from the dead*” or “*God rose him from the dead.*” In this way he is saved. But, he also brings salvation. Because of his death and resurrection, he sets the prisoners free (back to v. 12).

Let’s continue. These verses also speak of one who is humble. In v. 9 he is riding on a male donkey. If you remember back to Zechariah’s first vision, how is God’s king described? He is riding on a war horse, ready to conquer the nations. But, here, in humility, he rides a humble donkey. This is probably a picture of King David. After great suffering and humiliation during Absalom’s civil war, David rides back into Jerusalem with great humility. The picture is this: God saved David. He trusted God to save him. And this came through great humility and suffering. In the same way, Jesus trusted God in every way. In the greatest humiliation and much affliction, he was “saved.” We see this in the resurrection! And now, he sits at the right hand of God.

Now, I must say, “*It is of utmost importance that we use the NT to interpret the OT.*” And what do the Apostles say about this passage in Zechariah? You know the answer! All four Gospels record what we call the “*Triumphal Entry*” of Jesus. Right before he went to the cross, he came down the hill into Jerusalem, to Mt. Zion and the Temple. Do you remember his transportation? Was it a warhorse? No, it was on a humble donkey. And what did the people do? They threw down their cloaks and worship him, saying, “**Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! “Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”** (Luke 19:38). This means that the NT writers see Zechariah’s prophecy fulfilled in Jesus as King. Israel’s King is restored.

3. A Restored People. We saw this back in v. 7 as God will take a “remnant” from the surrounding nations (people). In v. 11 we see that God’s king will set prisoners free. And in vv. 14-17 we read: “**Then the LORD will appear over them, and his arrow will go forth like lightning; the Lord GOD will sound the trumpet and will march forth in the whirlwinds of the south. The LORD of hosts will protect them, and they shall devour, and tread down the sling stones, and they shall drink and roar as if drunk with wine, and be full like a bowl, drenched like the corners of the altar. On that day the LORD their God will save them, as the flock of his people; for like the jewels of a crown they shall shine on his land. For how**

great is his goodness, and how great his beauty! Grain shall make the young men flourish, and new wine the young women.” In the immediate context we see pictures of war as God will save his people. He will establish his people in the land. He will protect his people. This is what happened with Israel in Zechariah’s day. God restored his people. But, if we move forward through the history of Israel, what happens . . . again? They are not faithful. They break his covenant. And when God DOES send the KING as Zechariah prophesied, what happens? The Jews (at least the great majority of them) reject him. And then, later in 70 AD, Jerusalem will again be destroyed. And to this day the majority of the Jewish nation still reject Jesus.

So, let me ask, “*Who is being restored?*” You know the answer. We’ve moved through 9 chapters of Zechariah and over and over again we see that the nations will come to “Jerusalem,” they will come to “Israel.” Some of the most clear words on the fulfillment of the prophets regarding the Gentiles (nations) is found in Eph. 2:13-22. Turn there with me. Speaking of us Gentiles he says, **“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”** Today, ALL those who believe in the Lord Jesus are God’s restored people. We are brought “near.” We have “peace.” There is no more “hostility” between Jew and Gentile. Because of the cross of Christ, we are both “reconciled” to God. We both have “access” to God through the “Spirit.” We are “fellow citizens” in the “household of God.” In Christ, we are God’s “temple” in which the Holy Spirit dwells. As the church, we are the restored people of God. In this text we see a restored LAND and restored PEOPLE ruled by God’s KING.

Now, with these things in mind, I want to end with some comments about prophecy in general and then some applications about restoration.

On Prophecy: I must admit that I certainly do not understand everything when it comes to the wording of prophecy in the OT and its fulfillment. But, generally speaking, we see different levels of fulfillment. We see some kind of “immediate” fulfillment in the OT. So, when we read Zechariah (or the other prophets) concerning restoration, what do we see? We see God restoring his people in THAT day. They return to Jerusalem (land), rebuild the temple. There is peace and safety. God “rules” over his people in these ways. But, there is always more. There are things in those prophecies which do not make sense, unless there is more coming in the future, things they

did not see, but looked forward to them by faith. Think of a mountain range. When I drive to Boone, somewhere between Statesville and this side of N. Wilkesboro, I start to see mountains. And they look big. But, as I continue driving into the mountains, I see a higher range that is even more clear. And as I continue, the same thing happens. Well, prophecy is like this. For Zechariah's listeners, the restoration of the land, the temple, Zerubbabel as governor, peace as a people, etc., this is the first mountain range. But, then, when we come to the birth of Christ, folks like Anna and Simeon (Luke 2) see another mountain range. They see the birth of Israel's king, the Messiah. And then, 33 years later Jesus dies on the cross and rises again. Here is another mountain range, greater fulfillment! And for the next 40 days Jesus spends time explaining how ALL the prophets of the OT spoke of Him. Deeper into the mountains. And then, he ascends to the Father and sends the Holy Spirit; another higher range of mountains. And one day, Jesus will return; He will come in judgment, not on a donkey, but on a war horse, and he will separate the sheep from the goats. And He will create a new heaven and a new earth. He will wipe away all tears. Faith will be no more. And, though this is very mysterious, he will hand all things over to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24).

Now, back to the topic of restoration. What can we learn in application.

Application: Do not put your trust in the kings and rulers of this world. Jesus is God's king! Trust in Him! Believe in Him. Follow Him. The restoration President Trump speaks of may be good, or it may not. I don't know. But, the things of this world are passing away, but those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will certainly find restoration. I think of Ps. 2: 10-12: **"Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him."** An implication of this truth is that those who do not trust in the Son will perish. This means we must get this message out to the nations, starting here and going to the ends of the earth! Brothers and sisters, WE have the message of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19). We, members of the Church of Christ, are God's ambassadors. We represent the King and his kingdom. We are salt and light. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Therefore, be bold, be courageous, know that your labor is not in vain.

Application: Restoration comes through repentance and faith in the promises of God. This week, I looked up the word "restore" and it came up 73 times in the ESV. Particularly in the OT, over and over again, God says to a rebellious people, *"I will restore you."* (The Book of Jeremiah has the most references.) But, when does restoration happen? It happens when the people repent of their sins and turn to him. Look back at Zech. 1:2: **"The Lord was very angry with your fathers. Therefore say to them, Thus declares the Lord of hosts: Return to me . . . and I will return to you."** This means there will be no restoration without repentance and belief in the promise of God. And what is God's promise? All that believe on the Son ("kiss the Son" of Ps. 2) will be saved. This IS restoration! This is LIFE from death. For those who repent and trust in the Son, Isaiah says, **"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow"** (Is. 1:18). **"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation"** (2 Cor. 5:17).

This principle also applies as we live the Christian life. A heart of repentance and faith is always necessary. Life is up and down. It is also short and full of troubles. There are hills. There are valleys. There are ups and there are downs. There are times of great persecution, and there may be times when there is more peace. But, a heart of repentance and belief in the Son are always necessary as God restores his people. I will end with 1 Peter. 5:10: **“And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.”**