

Post-Exile Prophets  
**WAR & PEACE**  
Tuesday, August 26  
Reading: Zechariah 9:1-8

**Zechariah 7:11** *"But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and covered their ears. 12 They made their hearts as hard as flint..."*

Zechariah begins this first prophecy with a catalog of war. The prophet has spoken frequently of God's judgment on the nations from the north and the south. Here, the names of Israel's enemies are listed starting in the north with Hadrach and Damascus (9:1-2), heading south to Tyre and Sidon on the Mediterranean coast (9:3-4), and finally to the Philistines on the southern coast (9:5-7). The LORD will then camp by Jerusalem's temple to protect His people.

God is fighting for His people. And the instrument He will use to bring this judgment is Alexander the Great. These verses predict the conquest of Alexander the Great which began in 333 BC. This becomes evident when we notice Greece is mentioned in Zechariah 9:13. Alexander's army took this route as he conquered the Middle East about 170 years after Zechariah wrote these words. One by one the cities fell. Curiously, though he passed by Jerusalem several times, Alexander's army never touched Jerusalem. Jewish legend says the high priest opened the gates to Alexander and showed him the prophecy of Daniel 8 which speaks of Greece (goat) defeating Persia (bear). This impressed the conqueror and he left Jerusalem in peace.

That "the eyes of all people and all the tribes of Israel are on the LORD" reminds us of God's control. As people watched the army of Alexander march through the land, it was really God's moving in history that they were watching. God is setting the stage for the arrival of another King. The apostle Paul wrote centuries later: "But when the set time had fully come, God sent His Son... (Galatians 4:4).

Zechariah's prophecy has started off with a bang, as wars and conquest dominate the landscape. But it all gets interrupted by the promise of the coming King who will bring peace (more on this tomorrow). In this time of wars and global conflicts, we can have the same confidence God gave to His people:

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; He lifts His voice, the earth melts. The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress...He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. (Psalm 46:1-7, 10-11)