

THE KING PROMISED

CORE PASSAGE: ZECHARIAH 9:9-17

CONTEXT

In His perfect timing, the Lord used prophets as His mouthpiece to deliver divine messages to His people. Often they warned the people of consequences for their sin while also holding out a future hope. The book of Zechariah is split into two sections. Chapters 1–8 called the Jews to reject complacency and return to God. After declaring God’s call to repentance and the restoration obedience would bring, Zechariah unveiled in chapters 9–14 a hope-filled, divine plan—a promise that stretched far beyond their immediate horizon and wildest dreams.

KEY CONCEPT

God will provide a messianic King who will restore and save His people.

As you examine Zechariah 9:9-17:

- Notice how Zechariah described the coming king who would restore God’s people and kingdom.
- Take comfort in the truth that the Lord will save His people because they are precious to Him.



TIMELINE

The First Group of Jews Returns, Builds the Altar, and Lays the Foundation for the Temple (Ezra 1–3)

Haggai and Zechariah Encourage the Building to Resume (Ezra 5)

The Temple Is Completed and Dedicated (Ezra 6)

The Jews Face Opposition and Pause Rebuilding the Temple (Ezra 4)

SESSION STUDY: Zechariah
Prophesies of the Coming Messiah (Zechariah 9)

Ezra the Priest Returns to Judah and Instructs the People in the Law (Ezra 7–10)

Daily Readings

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 1: Haggai 1–2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4: Zechariah 7–8 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2: Zechariah 1–3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5: Zechariah 9–14 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3: Zechariah 4–6 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 6: Psalm 2 |



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

THE PROMISED MESSIANIC KING WILL BE RIGHTEOUS AND HUMBLE, RIDING ON A DONKEY (ZECHARIAH 9:9-13).

Circle everything attributed to the promised King in this passage.

9 Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout in triumph, Daughter Jerusalem! Look, your King is coming to you; he is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. **10** I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem. The bow of war will be removed, and he will proclaim peace to the nations. His dominion will extend from sea to sea, from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth. **11** As for you, because of the blood of your covenant, I will release your prisoners from the waterless cistern. **12** Return to a stronghold, you prisoners who have hope; today I declare that I will restore double to you. **13** For I will bend Judah as my bow; I will fill that bow with Ephraim. I will rouse your sons, Zion, against your sons, Greece. I will make you like a warrior's sword.

LEADER NOTE: The first half of the book of Zechariah brims with commands and promises God gave His people in Jerusalem through Zechariah's night visions—they were to resume rebuilding the temple. Chapters 9–14, however, shift focus. Though these oracles addressed Zechariah's original audience, God also intended them for a broader group, unveiling His plans for a distant future. This promise sparked hope and joy for the Jews and ultimately for all of God's people.

Verse 9 reveals much about the promised Messiah-King. First, He emerges as “your” King. He will belong to God's people; He won't be a foreign king like those who had subdued them for nearly a century. This King most certainly would be of David's line, a true and proper King of the Jews.

Second, this promised King is “coming.” There is a divine plan in place surrounding Him, which leads to the third detail to see—He is coming “to you.” God's people could expect this promised One to come to them. Next, the text lists various traits of this Messiah: righteous, victorious, humble. Most rulers barely embody one of those characteristics, never all three.

Lastly, verse 9 tells us the King will ride on a donkey's foal. With New Testament insight, we see this fulfilled in Matthew 21, when Jesus triumphantly rode into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey a week before His death and resurrection—a day we celebrate each year as Palm Sunday.

Why is the King's humility such a unique characteristic to highlight?

Key Concept: God will provide a messianic King who will restore and save His people.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus is the coming King riding on a donkey, as prophesied by Zechariah. His peace and dominion will be an everlasting kingdom for those who believe in Him.

Zechariah also declared the King's victory. War will cease. He will proclaim peace to the nations. He will rule from sea to sea. His kingdom will extend to the ends of the earth.

Though much of what Zechariah foretold has been accomplished, God's restoration plan continues. From where we stand, we see more clearly than the people of Zechariah's time, yet the Messiah's kingdom awaits completion. So until that day when Jesus comes again, with Christ we pray: "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

LEADER NOTE: In addition to Zechariah's prophecy that Jesus, the messianic King, would ride on a donkey (Zech. 9:9), he also prophesied the thirty pieces of silver that Judas would throw into the temple (Zech. 11:12-13; cf. Matt. 27:3-10), the scattering of the disciples at Jesus's arrest (Zech. 13:7; cf. Matt. 26:31,56), the piercing of Jesus on the cross (Zech. 12:10; cf. John 19:34-37), and the rule of Jesus from Jerusalem upon His second coming (Zech. 14:3-11; cf. Rev. 21-22).

What might life look like if God's kingdom ruled in every corner of this earth?



Notes

GOD WILL DEFEND AND SAVE HIS BELOVED PEOPLE THROUGH HIS MESSIAH-KING (ZECHARIAH 9:14-17).

Circle every action of the Lord in the text.

14 Then the LORD will appear over them, and his arrow will fly like lightning. The Lord God will sound the ram's horn and advance with the southern storms. **15** The LORD of Armies will defend them. They will consume and conquer with slingstones; they will drink and be rowdy as if with wine. They will be as full as the sprinkling basin, like those at the corners of the altar. **16** The LORD their God will save them on that day as the flock of his people; for they are like jewels in a crown, sparkling over his land. **17** How lovely and beautiful! Grain will make the young men flourish, and new wine, the young women.

LEADER NOTE: The exodus marked a pivotal moment for God's people. Through it God displayed His power in magnificent, unprecedented ways, one of those being the Lord went ahead of them to lead them in a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night (Ex. 13:21-22). The pillar was a tangible sign of His majesty, a constant assurance of His presence, and a vivid testament to His special care for His people. When Zechariah prophesied that God would appear over His people like a storm, this vivid imagery certainly recalled the faithful provision and powerful guidance God previously granted His people in the exodus.

This passage reveals two vivid portraits of God's provision. First, God emerges as the divine, majestic commander. Arrows fly, trumpets sound, storms surge—this is frenetic battle language. Zechariah paints the sovereign Lord of Armies as defending and saving His people. This provision descends from above, as He “will appear over them” (Zech. 9:14). The fire of His glorious presence guides and guards His people—echoing His guidance and provision in the exodus (Ex. 13:21-22).

As a result, God's people will conquer, celebrate, and flourish (Zech. 9:15,17). Yet they will not sit on the sidelines; God will lead them to action—they will “conquer with slingstones.” Just as David toppled Goliath the giant with humble stones and faith in God (1 Sam. 17:49-50), they too will claim victory and rejoice as they trust in their heavenly King.

What victories has God provided that you can celebrate today?

God stands not only as the strong and stately Lord of Armies but also as the Savior of His flock. As Jesus later declared, He is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep (John 10:11). This second portrait of provision, that of Savior, pulses with deep tenderness. The Lord cherishes His sheep “like jewels in a crown,” treasuring them as His prized possession (Zech. 9:16). He nourishes and cares for them, and they grow lovely and beautiful.

What a striking contrast of provision! The Lord’s glorious salvation spans the powerful deliverance of troops in battle and the nurturing care of treasured souls. The Lord Jesus came to save His people. The Good Shepherd rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, yet within a week, He was crucified on a cross. The war His people expected never erupted. Instead, King Jesus triumphed in a greater battle, saving His people from sin and death. Though His work on the cross stands complete, the Good Shepherd still seeks and saves the lost, desiring all to come to repentance until He returns for His treasured people (Luke 19:10; 2 Pet. 3:9).

LEADER NOTE: Interpreting biblical prophecy can be challenging. Old Testament prophets primarily spoke to their original audiences, and many of their prophecies found fulfillment long ago. Yet some passages carry a double horizon: an immediate message for God’s people then and a second foreshadow that hadn’t happened. Some second-horizon prophecies found full realization in Christ during His time on earth, while others still hold yet-to-be-realized messages for us today as we await the final Day of the Lord to arrive.

How have you experienced the tender care of the Good Shepherd lately?

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

CHRIST AS KING: God has always been King over His creation, whether in heaven or on earth. Yet some of His creatures in both realms have rebelled against Him, leaving destruction in their wake. To restore His broken world, God promised a King who would deliver His people and restore all of creation. The promise of a coming King finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ and looks forward to its perfection when Jesus returns for His bride, the church.

Notes

ARRIVAL

ENGAGE: As adults arrive, invite volunteers to share about a time they were given something they needed even if it was not what they wanted.

TRANSITION: Many times in life, what we long for is not ultimately what we need. The people of Israel understood this all too well. God, in His great mercy, had greater plans than simply giving His people what they desired. Instead, He gave them what they really needed: a messianic King who would restore and save His people, not just from political division or war but from the greatest problem in the world—sin.

CONTEXT

SAY: Zechariah prophesied to the post-exilic Jewish community in Jerusalem around 520–518 BC, encouraging them to finish rebuilding the temple after their return from Babylonian exile (Ezra 5:1-2). Historically, this period was marked by political instability and opposition from surrounding nations, making the temple reconstruction difficult. But Zechariah emphasized God's sovereignty, the coming of the Messiah, and the ultimate restoration of Israel through his visions. His prophecies foreshadow Christ as the true King and High Priest (Zech. 9:9; 12:10), pointing to His first and second comings.

TRANSITION: Pass out copies of **Pack Item 10: Kings of the Exile** and discuss the significance and impact of the foreign kings the Jews had experienced so far. Say: “Zechariah 9 paints a vivid picture of the promised King—One who is both humble and victorious. This prophecy, fulfilled in Jesus’s triumphal entry (Matt. 21:1-10), contrasted earthly kings who came into power through warfare. The people of Israel longed for a political deliverer, yet Zechariah pointed to a greater reality—the Messiah’s kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). Through His rule, God would bring salvation, restoration, and ultimate peace.”

RECAP

ENGAGE: Ask your group what stood out to them in their personal preparation this week. Clarify any questions they might have about Zechariah’s prophecy.

TRANSITION: In Zechariah 9, God divinely promised a coming King who would bring ultimate salvation. As we study, consider how God’s promises point to the greater hope of the Messiah’s reign.

NAME	SCENARIO	PROPHETIC AND BIBLICAL
NEBUCHADREZZAR King of Babylon 605-562 BC	The first major exile of the Jews to Babylon (2 Kings 24:1-20; Jeremiah 39:1-10). He captured King Zedekiah and destroyed the temple.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isaiah 46:1-10: “I will be exalted above all idols; for I will be the Father of the fatherless and the Friend of the widow, says the Lord, the God of Israel.” Jeremiah 27:1-22: “The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet in the fourth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: I have said to you, and you have not listened. I have said to you, and you have not listened. I have said to you, and you have not listened.’”
BAALSHAZR King of Babylon 562-561 BC	The second major exile of the Jews to Babylon (2 Kings 25:1-21). He captured King Zedekiah and destroyed the temple.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isaiah 46:1-10: “I will be exalted above all idols; for I will be the Father of the fatherless and the Friend of the widow, says the Lord, the God of Israel.” Jeremiah 27:1-22: “The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet in the fourth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: I have said to you, and you have not listened. I have said to you, and you have not listened. I have said to you, and you have not listened.’”
SHENQUR King of Babylon 561-560 BC	The third major exile of the Jews to Babylon (2 Kings 25:22-26). He captured King Zedekiah and destroyed the temple.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isaiah 46:1-10: “I will be exalted above all idols; for I will be the Father of the fatherless and the Friend of the widow, says the Lord, the God of Israel.” Jeremiah 27:1-22: “The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet in the fourth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: I have said to you, and you have not listened. I have said to you, and you have not listened. I have said to you, and you have not listened.’”



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Key Concept: God will provide a messianic King who will restore and save His people.

GROUP ACTIVITY

BLOCKS: Direct your group to page 74 in their Personal Study Guide (PSG), where they will find four blocks for the activity “Expectations vs. Reality.” Recreate this activity on a board in your room so you can record the group’s responses.

Expectations vs. Reality	
Read the Scriptures below. In the space provided, write how the reality of the kingdom of God far exceeds our expectations.	
ZECHARIAH 9:9-10 EXPECTED: A Conquering King REALITY:	JOHN 18:33-37 EXPECTED: Political Dominance REALITY:
HEBREWS 9:11-14 EXPECTED: Temporary Deliverance REALITY:	PHILIPPIANS 2:5-8 EXPECTED: Strength Through Force REALITY:

READ: Invite four volunteers to read the Scripture passages listed in the activity: Zechariah 9:9-10; John 18:33-37; Hebrews 9:11-14; and Philippians 2:5-8.

COMPARE: Form four smaller groups and assign each group one of the passages. Within the groups, guide adults to compare the expectation the people might have had regarding God’s plan for their salvation with the reality of what kind of King Jesus truly is. After a few minutes, reconvene and ask a volunteer from each group to share their ideas. Record these in the blocks on the board so they can also write them down in their PSG.

SAY: During Zechariah’s time, the Jews had been granted permission to return to their land, but they were still under the control of King Darius. It may have seemed to them that the only way God would fulfill His covenant with David to keep a king on the throne would be through an uprising or battle.

Notes

Notes

ASK: “What kind of king did Zechariah describe instead?” (*a humble king, coming in peace*) “When Jesus appeared hundreds of years later, the Jews were under Roman rule. They wanted Him to set up God’s kingdom on earth at that time, but what did Jesus say to Pilate?” (*His kingdom is not of this world*) “As we read last week, the Jews reinstated sacrifices in Jerusalem thanks to Zechariah’s encouragement for them to complete the temple. They expected a temporary deliverance, which would need to be repeated year after year on the Day of Atonement. When Jesus died on the cross and rose again, what did He accomplish for all those who trust in Him for salvation?” (*one sacrifice for all time to cleanse us from sin*) “When Jesus came to earth the first time, many people rejected Him as the Messiah because they expected a king who would come to power through force. In what manner did Jesus come the first time?” (*He humbled Himself, even to death on the cross*)

DEBRIEF

How does recognizing Jesus as the humble, righteous King shape our understanding of His rule in our lives today?

How might we expect Jesus to fit our own desires rather than submitting to His reign?

SUMMARIZE


Pass out copies of **Pack Item 11: Prophets of the Exile and Return** and review a few of the messages the Jews had received. Say: “Sometimes we expect the Lord to give us what we desire in our timeframe or by the means that we want. Zechariah’s prophecy reminds us that God’s ways are higher than ours and are always greater than what we could have imagined. Jesus, the humble King, brought peace not through military conquest but through His sacrificial death and resurrection. As a result, His salvation is not just for the people of Israel but given to all who call upon His name. His kingdom continues to grow as people repent and submit to His reign.”

PROPHETS OF THE EXILE AND RETURN			
	PROPHET	YEAR BC	POINTS TO REMEMBER
JEREMIAH	Jeremiah	626	<p>He was a prophet of the exile. He was the first to prophesy the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC.</p> <p>He was a prophet of the return. He was the first to prophesy the return of the Jews to Jerusalem in 539 BC.</p>
	Ezekiel	605	<p>He was a prophet of the exile. He was the first to prophesy the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC.</p> <p>He was a prophet of the return. He was the first to prophesy the return of the Jews to Jerusalem in 539 BC.</p>
	Daniel	605	<p>He was a prophet of the exile. He was the first to prophesy the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC.</p> <p>He was a prophet of the return. He was the first to prophesy the return of the Jews to Jerusalem in 539 BC.</p>
JESAYAH	Isaiah	740	<p>He was a prophet of the exile. He was the first to prophesy the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC.</p> <p>He was a prophet of the return. He was the first to prophesy the return of the Jews to Jerusalem in 539 BC.</p>
	Jeremiah	626	<p>He was a prophet of the exile. He was the first to prophesy the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC.</p> <p>He was a prophet of the return. He was the first to prophesy the return of the Jews to Jerusalem in 539 BC.</p>
	Ezekiel	605	<p>He was a prophet of the exile. He was the first to prophesy the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC.</p> <p>He was a prophet of the return. He was the first to prophesy the return of the Jews to Jerusalem in 539 BC.</p>

HEAD, HEART, HANDS

Walk the group through the Head, Heart, Hands section in the PSG (p. 75). If running short on time, specifically highlight the **Heart** section in this week's study, inviting volunteers to share their responses to the question in this section.



 **HEAD:** In a world mostly removed from monarchical rule, especially as compared to the experience in the ancient world, it can be hard to grasp the ultimate rule of kings. But one thing is true of all sovereign rulers: by nature, the kingdom demands submission of all under its protection. Zechariah proclaimed a promise that has been fulfilled. The promised King has come. We are no longer waiting, and thus, we are under the King's rule. We now have a choice of how we will live our lives: in complete obedience or in rebellion.

How can we focus on Christ as our King this week and submit to His rule?



HEART: Jesus powerfully delivers and faithfully provides. He has fought for His people through both grand battle campaigns involving nations and the search and rescue plans for one soul. He knows and cherishes the bride of Christ, the church, as a whole while tending to each of us personally.

What are some ways we can nurture our relationship with God as both our Conquering King and our Good Shepherd?



HANDS: Though the King has come, time remains for those who haven't joined the kingdom to hear and believe the gospel. That window of opportunity will close one day. We don't know if that will be today, tomorrow, or in a thousand years. But when it does, only those who cling to the gospel will dwell with Christ forever.

With whom will you share the good news of our humble, victorious, and righteous King Jesus?

NEXT STEPS

Challenge the group to consider these actions as responses to this session.

- Take some time to journal and reflect this week on what it means to see Jesus as King based on Psalm 2.
- Ask God to help you submit to Christ as King in every area of life.
- Share with someone in your life how Jesus is the true King who brings peace and salvation.

Invite volunteers to share prayer needs for this week. Encourage them to record these in the space on page 75 in their PSG so they can pray for others throughout the week.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

CLOSE: Pray through Psalm 2:10-12 with your group. Pray for those with whom your group are trying to share the gospel that they would be wise and humble to hear and believe the good news and be happy in Jesus.