



Structure

As we have seen, chapters 1 through 6 form a single unit of thought within the book of Zechariah that includes the 8 night visions with a heavy focus on the coming Messiah. Chapters 7 and 8 form a hinge unit that looks back at prior failures by the Jewish people but also shows a glorious future for both Israel and Gentiles. The final six chapters (9-14) of the book are divided into two units or "burdens" the prophet received from God to deliver to the people. The first burden includes chapters 9-11 and the second includes chapters 12-14. Both sections include material concerning the first and second advents of Jesus Christ, and both include passages quoted in the New Testament. Today's lesson on chapter 9 foretells the event we know as the "triumphal entry," which is recorded in all four Gospels. There is much debate about the meaning of Zechariah 9:1-8, which many understand as a prophecy of the conquest of Alexander the Great. I will argue this interpretation misses the mark, but we will see in the text why so many see the work of Alexander. There is something bigger happening here.

1. **The March Begins (9:1-2)**: The message is directed first against Hadrach (or Hatarikka) and Damascus, cities in Syria. All the tribes of Israel and everyone else will witness what God is doing. The march will continue to Hamath, Tyre, and Sidon. Hamath was a city about 130 miles north of Damascus. Tyre and Sidon were coastal cities in Phoenicia (not Lebanon).

— Alexander defeated the Persians in Oct. 333 BC at Issus, then marched toward Egypt conquering Syria, Phoenicia and Philistia, but did not attack Israel

2. **Victory Over Tyre (9:3-4)**: Tyre was an influential and wealthy center of commerce that no one thought would fall. It had a mainland city and an island city in the Mediterranean. The Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar conquered the mainland city after a 13-year siege (585-573 BC). Alexander attacked the island city for 7 months in 332 BC and prevailed, but Tyre and Sidon survived and eventually thrived again and Jesus ministered to its inhabitants. (Matthew 15:21; Mark 3:8)

3. **Victory over Philistia (9:5-8)**: Askalon was a coastal city in Philistia. Gaza was a city fortress atop a 60-foot mound, and it held off Alexander for 2 months before it was defeated. Ekron was a Philistine city west of the coastal city of Ashdod.

— NOTE on v. 7: Alexander conquered to secure land, power and resources, but the purpose of these events is to remove Israel's enemies BUT ALSO to remove idolatry from the Philistines and turn a remnant to the Lord.

— No Gentile conqueror arrives in Jerusalem, but God arrives to permanently protect her from enemies.

4. **Triumphal Entry (9:9)**: The people are called upon to greet their King as he enters Jerusalem. This verse finds LITERAL fulfillment at the beginning of the passion week when Jesus arrives in Jerusalem on a donkey, welcomed by the masses. See Matt. 21:4-5; John 12:12-16.

5. **Second Advent (9:10-17)**: The balance of the chapter looks to the second advent when all of Israel's enemies are defeated. We can readily see how first century Jews expected Jesus to accomplish these victories at the first advent because Zechariah 9:9 seamlessly proceeds into the balance of the chapter with no indication of an intervening "church age." But consider Jesus' reading from Isaiah 61:1-2 as recorded in Luke 4:18-20. Also note in verse 10 the switch from the first person (Lord of Hosts) to third person (the King). Compare the extent of the kingdom in v. 10 to Daniel 2:44, 7:14.