

Zechariah 9:14-10:12 – The Return of Israel

Chapters 9 through 14 contain two longer oracles. Chapters 9 through 11 make up the first oracle. The second oracle is found in chapters 12 through 14. The exiles who returned were largely from the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi. Chapter ten talks about the return of all the tribes of Israel from exile.

Read Zechariah 9:14-17.

Mark J. Boda points out that verses 9:14-17 switch to speaking of God in the third person compared to God speaking in the first person as found in verses 9:10-13. What do verses 14 and 15 describe? (9:14-15)

In verse 15, ESV has “tread down the sling stones”. NASB has “trample on the sling stones”. KJV has “subdue with sling stones”. NIV has “overcome with slingstones”. KJV and NIV translate the verse so that it reminds us of David slaying Goliath with his sling and stone. The ESV and NASB translations don’t allow for a reference to David and Goliath. Which do you think is the better translation based on the context? Does the end of verse 15 provide a picture after victory in battle or is it a reference to the blood of battle? (9:15)

In verse 16, when is “that day” when God will save his people? How did God describe his people? (9:16)

In verse 17, ESV and KJV have “how great is his goodness, and how great [is] his beauty”. NASB has “how great will their loveliness and beauty be”. NIV has “how attractive and beautiful they will be”. How often in scripture is God described as beautiful? How was this time period described at the end of verse 17? (9:17)

Read Zechariah 10:1-5.

Chapter 9 ended with talking about abundant grain and new wine. What were God’s people exhorted to pray for? How would God respond to this prayer? (10:1)

In verse 2, ESV has “household gods”. KJV and NIV have “idols”. NASB has “household idols” or “teraphim”. What situation is described in verse 2? What time period do you think this was referring to? Was it during Zechariah’s time or was it after Zechariah? (10:2)

In verse 3, ESV, KJV, NASB and NIV all have “shepherds” in the first phrase. For the next phrase, ESV and NIV have “leaders” while ESV has a note that indicates “leaders” is literally “male goats”. NASB has “male goats”. KJV has “goats”. There are at least two ways to reconcile the lack of shepherds in verse 2 with the existence of shepherds in verse 3. One way is to understand that verse 2 is talking about Judah’s lack of a good shepherd or even a king. Verse 3, refers to bad leaders who have filled the void. Another way to understand the difference is that verse 3 is talking about foreign leaders / kings. This is based on the term “male goats”. They are contrasted with God’s flock (of sheep). Which do you think best fits the context? What did God say he would do in verse 3? (10:3)

In verse 4, does “from him” refer to God or Judah? The three terms “cornerstone”, “peg” and “battle bow” can all represent leaders. “All of them together” seems to indicate more than one leader. The Messiah would most likely be a part of this group. Who do you think these leaders are? Do you think these leader references all refer to the Messiah? Who does “they” refer to in verse 5? What is described in verse 5? (10:4-5)

Read Zechariah 10:6-12.

In verse 6, what does “house of Joseph” refer to? What did God say to the house of Judah and the house of Joseph? In verse 7, does “Ephraim” represent just one tribe or does it represent something else? What did God say about Ephraim? (10:6-7)

In verse 8, ESV, NASB and NKJV have “whistle”. NIV has “signal” and KJV has “hiss”. Is this God whistling to gather his sheep or is this another “signal”. If so, what signal is it? Whom had God redeemed? What did God promise about their population? (10:8)

In verse 9, ESV has “scattered” while NASB and NIV have “scatter”. KJV has “sow”. “Scatter” would contrast with “gather” in verse 8. Some prefer the translation “sow” and say that it is appropriate given the length of time some of the people of the northern tribes were in exile (Mark J. Boda). Which do you think best fits the context? In verse 10, where would God bring the exiles from? Where would God bring the exiles to? What is the significance of each country/region: Egypt, Assyria, Gilead and Lebanon? Again, population was referenced. There would no longer be room. (10:9-10)

Does verse 11 remind you of a previous exodus? How is it different? What would God do to Assyria and Egypt? In verse 12, what would be true of God’s people? (10:11-12)