

CHAPTER 9-14 Zechariah



READING TO SEE VOCATION



Alexander the Great

Swept through area, conquering from Egypt to India in thirteen years. But died in 323, just 33 years old, without a succession plan.

With Alexander's sudden death the kingdom was divided between his generals. Ptolemy (Egypt) and Seleucid (Syria) fought over Israel and the land traded hands multiple times. Starting in 301 Ptolemy held control, but Seleucid gain control in 198. (Map is 270bc)

Jewish Rebellion

Antiochus Epiphanes (Seleucid) desecrated the Temple, by sacrificing a pig on the altar to Zeus ★. Judas Maccabaeus led Israel to revolt. Through guerrilla warfare they were

successful and the temple was rededicated in 164 (Hanukkah celebrates this victory). The Hasmonean destiny began and would continue to have influence into the time of Jesus (Herod the Great married a Hasmonean).

Roman Control of Israel

Pompey, Roman general, "conquered" Israel (quotes because an arrangement allowing Israel to maintain some anonymity). He entered the Holies of Holies, again the Temple was desecrated. ★

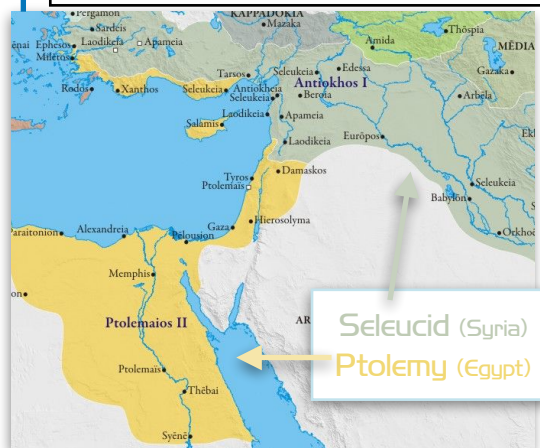
★ Abomination of Desolation

Most see Antiochus as the fulfillment of Daniel 9:27, the "abomination of desolation". Many in Jesus's time connected Pompey's desecration with Daniel and the Maccabean revolt. They expected the Messiah would come and lead a military revolt. NT Wright proposes this understanding had become "dangerously determinative." (158).

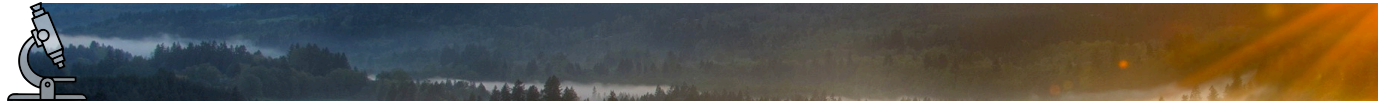
The prophecy of Daniel is restated by Jesus. Only this time the words are tied to prophetic warning ("Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. 'Not one stone here will be left on another.', Mk 13:2). The Maccabean revolt will not be repeated, Jerusalem and Temple will be destroyed. So Christians should flee! (To emphasize the symbolism the gospel writers add "let the reader understand", Mk 13:14)

Hellenization

One of the key aspects of Alexander's strategy, which was implemented by the divided Greek powers, created a shared culture. "[Hellenism] included Homer as a virtual holy book and the philosophy of Plato as a guiding influence. It expressed itself in Greek language and customs, in religious observations, in the style of coinage, in literary and theatrical conventions.... Hellenism was everywhere and everything was Hellenistic" (Wright NTPG 153). In every city temples were built to Greek gods and amphitheaters for Greek plays. This whole model was continued by the Romans (given a Roman twist), so that Jesus could have easily taken the disciples to see a play by Euripides. (157)



Zechariah 9



The first century's reading of the prophets and old testament missed the Messiah. What appears so clear from our place - Jesus as the One sent - was completely obscured to the Jewish leaders. Yet, Jesus, growing up in this environment, was able to discern his vocation from within the same scriptures. Of course, as God - in relationship with the Father, Jesus had a clearer picture. The question is, how did Jesus read the Old Testament? How can this reading guide us as we seek the truth of the scriptures?

Keys in Zechariah 9

This prophecy begins with the “word of the Lord against the lands,” but what does against the lands mean? As the passage flows the locations make a circle around Israel. Is God destroying human enemies and building a wall? That was my first reading, but how did Jesus fulfill that interpretation?

Focus on verse 7. The Philistines, one of their capitals Ekron, are caught up in the wave of destruction (v5-7a). Then, 7b, “Those who are left will belong to our God and become a clan of Judah. Ekron will be like the Jebusites.”

Who are the Jebusites? The people who lived in Jerusalem, before David conquered the city (1Chronicles 11). They were allowed to continue living in the city (see 1Chronicles 21:18 — and the Jebusite house referenced there became the location for Solomon's Temple, 2Chronicles 3:1).

The first reading I believed God was destroying enemy people. But what if instead God destroyed what prevented these nations from becoming part of the people of God? Things, politics, culture than the people? What if God was not building a wall, but expanding borders? This sounds a lot more like the savior riding on a donkey. Who, in verse 10, takes away the tools of war. And in the gospels commands we love our enemies! — [Anchor Bible Commentary on Philistines](#) — What if we apply this reading to the whole passage? Even the whole Old Testament?!

“As the historic enemies of Israel, they nonetheless occupy a special place in this eschatological vision. They will not suffer material devastation; rather, they will lose their political identity as their rulers are removed, and their religious-ethnic identity as they cease following their own cultic practices. God's mercy extends, in achieving the ultimate aims of restoring Israel, even to Israel's traditional nemesis, the Philistines”

Carol and Eric Meyers, Anchor: Zechariah 9-14

Quick Notes: v9 — the second “shout” is literally a war cry or to sound the battle horn.

v11 — Turns the focus toward the exiles, who will be raised up from the pit (Joseph).

v12 = “fortress” — This Hebrew word is closely related to the word for “sheepfold” — changing the image from stone walls to John 10. This also connects with the passage's reference to flock (v16) and following chapter's shepherd imagery.

v15-17 — Provision “on that day” is eschatological

Next week:

Read Chapter Ten and Eleven.
Read as Jesus! Seek your Vocation!

