



Community Group Discussion Guide

January 18, 2026

Zechariah 9:9-17 | God's King Promised

MOTIVATE

⇒ *Starter Question: Share about a time you were given something you needed even if it was not what you wanted.*

DISCUSS

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.

⇒ *When did you come to understand that Jesus is what you really needed?*

In His perfect timing, God used prophets to deliver divine messages of hope to His people in the midst of their great need. Zechariah was one of these prophets. Nehemiah 12:16 identifies Zechariah as the head of the priestly family of Iddo. Zechariah means “the LORD remembers,” a fitting name considering the prophet’s message of restoration and hope for the refugees returning from Babylonian exile. Along with Haggai, Zechariah encouraged the people with prophecies, calling them to rebuild the temple (Ezra 5:1; 6:14).

Classified as a Minor Prophet, the book of Zechariah contains more messianic references than any prophetic book except Isaiah. Zechariah’s prophecies are quoted or alluded to seventy-one times in the New Testament. One feature of predictive prophecy contained in books like Zechariah is often called “telescoping of prophecy.” Sometimes near and remote prophecies are so compressed that it is difficult to tell whether the specific prediction is near or distant. This is like looking at two mountaintops through a telescope: they appear to be close together, but are miles apart. ¹

⇒ *Why is it important for biblical context to remember that prophecies can have both a “now and not yet” quality?*

Chapters 1-8 of the book of Zechariah brim with commands and promises God gave His people in Jerusalem. Historically, this period was marked by political instability and opposition from surrounding nations, making the temple reconstruction difficult. The Jews were to reject complacency, return to God, and resume work on the temple. Their rebuilding would succeed and their future as a nation was assured.

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 greatest longings. Though Zechariah’s words addressed his 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. Zechariah 9:9-17 promises that God, in His sovereignty, will provide a messianic King who will restore and save His people.

⇒ *How can an ancient prophecy give hope and joy to Christ-followers today?*

1. Zechariah 9:9-13: The promised messianic King will be righteous, victorious, and humble.

Zechariah 9:9: *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

Zechariah 9 begins the first of two major oracles of chapters 9–14. The oracle in Zechariah 9 stretches all the way to 11:17, and it contains prophecy concerning leaders and the people whom they were to serve. Zechariah 9:1-8 describes God’s judgment on enemies of Israel and God’s defense of His people. Zechariah’s prophecy spoke about the King subduing His enemies and setting up His reign in Jerusalem. God is seen as the divine warrior who will bring judgment to those who seek to oppress His people.

⇒ *How does viewing God as a "divine warrior" bolster your trust in Him?*

Zechariah 9:9 commanded Daughter Zion—a poetic name for Jerusalem—to “rejoice greatly” and “shout aloud.” The reason to do so is one of hope: Your King is coming to you. The King had conquered Israel’s enemies and now His triumphal entry would be proclaimed as He entered Jerusalem. For the Jewish people who had gone through exile, this would have been good news. God had promised King David that if his sons obeyed God’s covenant, he would always have a son to sit on the throne, culminating in one Son who would reign forever (2 Samuel 7:13-16).

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—He is coming “to you.” God’s people could expect this promised One to come to them.

⇒ *How does the prophecy "your King is coming to you" give you hope today?*

Zechariah described this coming King as:

a. Righteous: Jesus not only rules rightly and justly, but He is justice and righteousness personified. Jesus is the perfect King, reigning in holiness. Jesus alone could fulfill the law’s righteous demands.

b. Victorious: The Hebrew word means “to save.” This word carries with it the idea that the King experienced victory or that He brought victory for other people, or it could be a combination of both. When it comes to the work of Jesus, we understand that He gained victory over sin and death, and this victory was then given to all those who place their faith in Him as Savior. Jesus will not bring about a temporary peace that will one day be no more. Jesus brings an eternal peace where God and sinner are reconciled. His peace and dominion will be an everlasting kingdom for those who believe in Him.

⇒ *How does recognizing Jesus as the righteous, victorious King shape your understanding of His rule in your life today?*

c. Humble: The King will ride on a donkey’s foal. On this side of the New Testament, we know this

that prophesied Jesus as King. All four Gospel writers explained how Jesus' entrance fulfilled Zechariah 9:9 when He triumphantly rode into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey a week before His death and resurrection (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19).

In the ancient Near East, when a king went into a city to conquer, he would ride in on a warhorse. When a king rode into a city peacefully, he would ride on a donkey. So many kings throughout history were known for their pride and arrogance, but this King entering Jerusalem was far different. When Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey, He entered not as a political revolutionary to overthrow Rome, yet, but as One who would humble Himself to death on the cross to bring salvation to His people.

- ⇒ *Why is the King's humility such a unique characteristic to highlight?*
- ⇒ *How is Jesus truly the King unlike any other king?*
- ⇒ *Though much of what Zechariah foretold has been accomplished, how does God's restoration plan continue?*

Zechariah 9:10-13: *¹⁰ I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. ¹¹ As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. ¹² Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double. ¹³ For I have bent Judah as my bow; I have made Ephraim its arrow. I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece, and wield you like a warrior's sword.*

While verse 9 was fulfilled in Jesus' first coming, verses 10-13 describe much of what will happen at Jesus' second coming. Jesus' kingship here on earth has not fully arrived but will be here fully when He returns. In verses 10 and 13, Zechariah mentioned Jerusalem, Judah, and Ephraim. These geographical markers indicate that there will be a reunion of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms under the King. The unification will ultimately take place in the hearts and lives of those who are "one in Christ."

- ⇒ *How is "one in Christ" expressed in the church today?*

The King will also remove war and bring peace to the nations. This is a true and lasting peace. He will set all wrongs to right and there will be no more sin (Revelation 21:4). This peaceful rule will extend from sea to sea, and from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth. This will not be a localized peace but a worldwide peace. Instead of having world wars, we will truly have world peace. This peace will come about "because of the blood of my covenant."

When covenants were written, sacrifices were offered to display the consequences for breaking the covenant. Zechariah's words point us forward to the new covenant Jesus initiated through the shedding of His blood on the cross. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He said of the cup, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:20). This shedding of blood will bring about freedom. Jesus is the righteous, victorious, humble King who gave Himself for humanity.

As the blood of the covenant is shed, the King "will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit." This waterless pit was an empty cistern used as a prison. This King comes not just to establish world

peace but to set people free from the great enemies of sin and death. Those who trust in this King are set free to serve Him faithfully.

- ⇒ *Does this mean we no longer struggle with sin and temptation in our daily lives? When will this struggle finally come to an end?*
- ⇒ *Can you give testimony to being freed "from the waterless pit?" What has Jesus done to bring you out?*

2. Zechariah 9:14-17: God will defend and save His people through His Messiah-King.

Zechariah 9:14-15: ¹⁴ *Then the LORD will appear over them, and his arrow will go forth like lightning; the Lord GOD will sound the trumpet and will march forth in the whirlwinds of the south.* ¹⁵ *The LORD of hosts will protect them, and they shall devour, and tread down the sling stones, and they shall drink and roar as if drunk with wine, and be full like a bowl, drenched like the corners of the altar.*

The next section of this prophecy concerning the coming Messiah-King covers His defense of His people and their response to His victory. The images used to describe God's defense of His people are similar to those of a great storm. His arrows will "go forth like lightning" and "the Lord GOD will sound the trumpet and will march forth." This is frenetic battle language. Zechariah paints the sovereign LORD of Hosts as defending and saving His people. This provision descends from above, as He "will appear over them." The fire of His glorious presence guides and guards His people—echoing His guidance and provision in the Israelites' exodus from Egypt. As the nations around Israel constantly warred back and forth, the people could take comfort in knowing that God would faithfully preserve them.

- ⇒ *Discuss this statement: For those in Christ, we know that God will deliver and defend us. As the world constantly changes around us, we know that we have the constant promise of God to defend and protect His people.*
- ⇒ *What victories has God provided that you can celebrate today?*

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

The next image that Zechariah used to describe God's defense of His people is gruesome: He will lead them to devour their enemies. The people of God will "be full like a bowl, drenched like the corners of the altar." This graphic image describes the total victory of God's people over their enemies. The language of the sprinkling basin and the corners of the altar is sacrificial language (Leviticus 4:7).

The sin of the enemies of God is being paid through this victorious judgment upon their lives. Countless people today struggle with the fact that God would judge and punish anyone. But when we come to truly understand our sin against God, we should be shocked that God would save any of us. We all deserve God's righteous wrath against our sins. While God judges and punishes sin, we must also remember that God does not punish unjustly. When it comes to Israel's enemies, they were given countless opportunities to repent, but they did not.

⇒ *Do you struggle with God's judgment? How do you reconcile it with His great mercy?*

Zechariah 9:16-17: ¹⁶ *On that day the LORD their God will save them, as the flock of his people; for like the jewels of a crown they shall shine on his land. ¹⁷ For how great is his goodness, and how great his beauty! Grain shall make the young men flourish, and new wine the young women.*

Not only is God described as the defender of His people, but He also saves them. Zechariah said, "On that day the LORD their God will save them." The phrase "the LORD their God" is a covenantal phrase. When God made a covenant with Abraham, He said, "To you and your future offspring I will give the land where you are residing—all the land of Canaan—as a permanent possession, and I will be their God" (Genesis 17:8).

God is not some impersonal force or a distant being. The one true God is personal and desires to be known by His people who are described as "the flock" of God. The picture of God as shepherd occurs throughout the Old Testament. Often Israel's evil leaders were portrayed as bad shepherds who did not care for their flock. Here God is shown to be the shepherd who saves His people.

Despite their unfaithful history, God was committed to His people and cared for them. The King returning to defend and save His people is a wonderful sight that leads to the celebratory shout "How great his beauty!" The King in His beauty will lead the people to celebrate His deliverance. The image of grain and wine are symbolic of health and wellness that come with the King's reign in their lives. Grain and new wine were also seen as covenantal blessings (Deuteronomy 33:28).

⇒ *When was the last time you celebrated what God has done in your life?*

⇒ *Why is it so easy for us to forget what God has done?*

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. God cherishes His sheep "like jewels of a crown," treasuring them as His prized possession. He nourishes and cares for them, and they grow lovely and beautiful. The fact that God saved and delivered His people allowed them to walk victoriously and to celebrate the work He has done.

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

God promised that He would return to His people, and in Zechariah 9, we are given this glorious vision of God's promise coming true through the King riding on a donkey, righteous, victorious, and humble. The portrait of the Lord of Armies who comes to save His people is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. This wonderful picture of the King in His beauty is revealed in Jesus Christ. Jesus, as the Good Shepherd (John 10 :1-18), possesses the power to defeat His enemies and care for His flock. His people are His treasured possession, and He blesses those who follow Him. His salvation is not just for the people of Israel but given to all who call upon His name.

⇒ *Why did God promise a King who would restore His broken world and deliver His people?*

⇒ *How does God's promise of a coming King finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ?*

TRANSFORM

Zechariah 9 paints a vivid picture of the promised King—One who is both humble and victorious. This prophecy, fulfilled in Jesus' triumphal entry, 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. 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.

1. 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 you focus on Christ as your King this week and submit to His rule?*

2. 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 you can nurture your relationship with God as both your Conquering King and your Good Shepherd?*

3. 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?*

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The Gospel Project® for Adults

Leader Guide, Unit 17, Session 3

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¹ *Holman Illustrated Bible Handbook*, Holman Bible Publishers (2012), Nashville, TN, page 291.