

# Zechariah & Luke: The Returning King

## Lesson 11: The King of Kings

**Key Verse:** *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. ~Zechariah 9.14*

According to developmental psychologists, the reason young children love to have the same story read to them over and over and over again is because they find much comfort in knowing how the story ends. Knowing how the story ends builds their confidence as they learn how to function in a world where they have little control. In addition, indulging in re-reading their preferred story you have re-read to the point of memorization builds their social-emotional confidence and esteem as they bravely take risks in learning how to navigate relationships. Knowing how the story ends is directly tied to how we navigate each day! Because we know **Jesus will return at His Second Coming**, we are provided the same comfort as a toddler: comfort, confidence, and a willingness to be brave as we share the gospel of salvation. We need to approach Jesus's return with a toddler's enthusiasm, "Father, read it again"! As we settle in and remember how the story ends, our **Kings of kings** assures us that no matter the twists and turns of the storyline of our lives, He reigns over ALL!

*Hallelujah! What a Savior! Lord, after we complete this lesson, may we land at your feet like the leper, praising you with the deepest gratitude our mind, body, heart, and soul can bear to offer. Then, may we enter the world proclaiming your good news of salvation for all. Having served you obediently and faithfully, may we come to You with toddler-like enthusiasm, begging You, our Father, to strengthen us, encourage us, remind us of how this world's story ends! Then send us out again, to build your Kingdom.*

**Zechariah 9.1-17** The oracle of the word of the LORD is against the land of Hadrach and Damascus is its resting place. For the LORD has an eye on mankind and on all the tribes of Israel, **2** and on Hamath also, which borders on it, Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise. **3** Tyre has built herself a rampart and heaped up silver like dust, and fine gold like the mud of the streets. **4** But behold, the Lord will strip her of her possessions and strike down her power on the sea, and she shall be devoured by fire. **5** Ashkelon shall see it, and be afraid; Gaza too, and shall writhe in anguish; Ekron also, because its hopes are confounded. The king shall perish from Gaza; Ashkelon shall be uninhabited; **6** a mixed people shall dwell in Ashdo and I will cut off the pride of Philistia. **7** I will take away its blood from its mouth, and its abominations from between its teeth; it too shall be a remnant for our God; it shall be like a clan in Judah, and Ekron shall be like the Jebusites. **8** Then I will encamp at my house as a guard, so that none shall march to and fro; no oppressor shall again march over them, for now I see with my own eyes.

**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. **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. **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.

**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.

**Luke 17.1-37** And he said to his disciples, "Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! **2** It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. **3** Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, **4** and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

**5** The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" **6** And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. **7** "Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and recline at table'? **8** Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink'? **9** Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? **10** So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"

**11** On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. **12** And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance **13** and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." **14** When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. **15** Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; **16** and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. **17** Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? **18** Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" **19** And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

**20** Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, **21** nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." **22** And he said to the disciples, "The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. **23** And they will say to you, 'Look, there!' or 'Look, here!' Do not go out or follow them. **24** For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day.

**25** But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. **26** Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. **27** They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. **28** Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, **29** but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all— **30** so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

**31** On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away, and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back. **32** Remember Lot's wife. **33** Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it. **34** I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed. One will be taken and the other left. **35** There will be two women grinding together. One will be taken and the other left." **37** And they said to him, "Where, Lord?" He said to them, "Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather."

**Diamonds:** After Zechariah had eight action-packed visions in one sleepless night, it seems God allows him many well-deserved nights of restful sleep! After a period of time, Zechariah's writings shift from calls, instructions, and prophecies of hope regarding the immediate issues and hardships of God's people to futuristic prophetic oracles against those oppressing His people. In fact, the historical accuracy of these prophecies is one of several historical proofs of God's sovereignty and the accuracy of His Word.

Recall Zechariah's timestamp by identifying the ruler when his writing began: 520 BC (Zechariah 1.1). The oracles in the first 8 verses of Zechariah 9 begin their fulfillment with Alexander the Great's conquests initiated in 333 BC.

1. Let's discover the mathematicians in your small group! About how many centuries was it between Zechariah oracles in Chapter 9 and their initial fulfillment through Alexander the Great in 333 BC?
2. What does the roundabout answer to this math problem teach you about God?

There is no doubt Alexander the Great's brilliant military prowess brought forth ruthless military strategies leading to the absolute destruction of these cities, and more<sup>1</sup>. (After all, he is called "the Great"! ) However, there is also no doubt of God's sovereignty on display in His use of Alexander's brilliance and ruthlessness to carry out His will for His people.

3. In the midst of the prophesied destruction, what is God's role on behalf of His people? What does He promise in Zechariah 9.8-12, 15-17?

<sup>1</sup><https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-greece/alexander-the-great>

The people living in “a waterless pit” are God’s people (9.11). Recall that as Zechariah is writing this oracle, God’s people have been scattered across nations, with some remaining in exile. Though He has called His people to return to Jerusalem, some are stuck in circumstances that prevent this from happening (Zechariah 6.15). In addition, earlier in Zechariah’s prophecies God admonishes His people who do not wish to return to Jerusalem because they have become comfortable living in their pagan cultures. Though He has provided the way of their return through the defeat of their oppressors, some remain caught in their “waterless pit” through their own choice, or through insurmountable circumstances.

4. Describe a “waterless pit”. What would it be like to live inside one? How would it feel to live trapped in a waterless pit?
  
5. Remembering that the “prisoners” of the waterless pit were God’s own people, recall a time when you were imprisoned at the bottom of a waterless pit. Without describing the details of the circumstance, describe how you felt, and how you survived?

We studied the role and types of covenants in Lesson 9, “The Covenant King.” In V 11, Zechariah is referring to the Mosaic covenant, ratified in Exodus 24. Notice that in addition to rescuing His people, God transforms them into a new kind of prisoner (V 12): “prisoners of hope”!

6. Are you a prisoner of hope or a prisoner of the pit? Think of someone you know who is living as a prisoner of the pit. How will you support them in their journey to freedom as a prisoner of hope? If this is you, allow your group the opportunity to prayerfully support your journey with God as a prisoner of hope.

Having created fresh wounds with His warning to the Pharisees of their hell-destined hearts (Luke 16), Jesus instructs His disciples on how to respond in a world where everyone is both a victim and a perpetrator: unending, gracious forgiveness. While we are eager to note the conditions of such lavish (or prodigal!) forgiveness, Jesus’s instructions are not prescriptive in *when* to forgive those who have wronged you. Rather, Jesus’s disciples are to *stand ready* to forgive!<sup>2</sup> (See also Lesson 6, “The Servant King”, Question 11, or Lesson 7, “The Promised King”, Question 7.)

7. Having identified the mathematicians in your small group, how many times are we required to forgive in one day (V 3-4)? What if people transgress you daily, requiring forgiveness every day for one year (your own offspring/family members are likely candidates for this thought exercise!)?
  
8. How many times have you asked Jesus to forgive you? How many times has He forgiven you? What has His response been to your repeated request for forgiveness?

Scholars debate why the disciples interrupted Jesus’s caution against leading new followers (or “little ones”) of Jesus astray (Luke 17.1-2). Immediately after His caution, He instructs His disciples to pursue unity in His teaching and work through prodigal forgiveness (17.5-6). There are two broad thoughts regarding the disciples’ motive to cry out for an increase in faith (V 5): the recognition of the human impossibility to forgive so lavishly, or pride demanding a way out of such lavish forgiveness. No matter the motive, Jesus’s response seems to please our desire to find a prescriptive and technical method for increased faith. However, that misses Jesus’s teaching! Jesus is instead revealing the character and power of God.

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<sup>2</sup> Sproul, 9.439

9. Recall Gabriel's words to Zechariah (the priest, not the prophet) and Mary in Luke 1.18-20, 34-38. Now consider the outrageous illustration Jesus uses to point us to faith in God's power in Luke 17.6. What is Jesus teaching us about human improbability versus His power? How and what do the responses of Zechariah and Mary teach us about "increased" faith?

Jesus's illustration of the servant being given the unique and unheard-of honor of sitting at his master's table, treated like a family member, had to bite at the disciples' hearts (17.7-10). No matter the amount of faith we may believe we have, there is no commendation for doing as Jesus instructed. The lepers illustrate this for Jesus. What did any of the ten do to deserve their healing and legal restoration back to their families and community? "A servant who excels at serving is still only a servant and does not thereby earn the right to become the master...The truth is that God does not owe us anything."<sup>3</sup> Your obedience to God, increase in faith, or excellence in service to Him does not tip God's imaginary "cosmic scale" in your favor! "If a master decides to serve his servants, it is not because they have earned the right to be served, but only because of his amazing grace."<sup>4</sup>

10. Why do you think the one leper returned to Jesus (Luke 17.11-19)? What do you imagine was his thought process that compelled him to turn around, returning to Jesus before he finished obeying Jesus's command to go present himself to the priest (so that he would be legally restored to his community)?
11. What did the one leper learn about faith? What about the other nine lepers? What do you imagine they learned about faith?

**Deity: King of kings (*Marey Malek*)**~ (Zechariah 9.9-10) "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."<sup>5</sup>

Recall your rich study of the Kingdom of God in Lesson 8, "The Rabbi King". Briefly though, the Kingdom of God has been "inaugurated through Jesus Christ. His kingdom is greater and more powerful than all other kingdoms...Comparing the authority of God to that of an earthly ruler is like comparing a massive mountain to a handful of dust. God is Supreme Ruler above all power, rule, and authority. The Lord is the King who is to be worshipped and honored by kings. He alone is King of kings."<sup>6</sup>

12. How does the cleansing of the ten lepers illustrate Jesus as a King who is building His Kingdom? How do the actions of the one leper illustrate his fresh understanding of Jesus as King of even earthly kings as well as the ruling religious priests?

<sup>3</sup> Ryken, p.221

<sup>4</sup> Ryken, p.223

<sup>5</sup> The Gospel Project, *The 99 Essential Doctrines*, LifeWay Christian Resources (2018), #54

<sup>6</sup> Kassian, Mary A., *Knowing God by Name: A Personal Encounter*, (Nashville, TN: Lifeway Church Resources, 2008) pgs.86-89

As we think about Jesus as King of kings in heaven, it is wise to also consider Jesus as King over Satan and his demons here on earth. Often, we feel good about God as King, and Jesus having been crowned King of kings when He ascended back to heaven. But this incomplete understanding prevents us from applying His truth as we wait to experience His rule in heaven. You see, this title carries great significance for His children right now!

Satan is the current ruler (or “god”) of earth, as well as both king and prince over demons.<sup>7</sup> (Matthew 12.24; John 12.31; 14.30; 16.11; 2 Corinthians 4.4; Ephesians 2.2; 6.12; 1 Peter 5.8; 1 John 5.18-19; Revelation 9.11. See also the Doctrine of Lesson 5, “The Omniscient King”.)

But even today God is King over Satan’s temporary kingship and authority! We see this over and over with the demons’ responses to Jesus’s presence and to their unavoidable obedience to His commands. Jesus’s intellectual and spiritual defeat of Satan’s temptations confirms and establishes Jesus as King over Satan, even though God has allowed Satan to currently reign as king of the earth (Luke 4.1-12). While it is beyond comprehension to know we will one day behold Jesus as King of kings in heaven, we must also behold Him today as King of kings over our sin, temptations, and the current ruler of this earth. Hallelujah!

13. Using this definition and, most especially the lecture, how does Zechariah 9.9-10 reveal Jesus as King of kings today and eternally?

**Doctrine: Second Coming of Jesus, the Christ**<sup>8</sup>~ (Zechariah 9.14-16; Luke 17.26-35) “The Bible is clear that one day Christ will return in bodily form (Matthew 24-25) to rule and reign over all creation. Scripture gives no timeline as to when it will occur (Acts 1.7), only assuring that it will be unexpected (Matthew 25.8-10) and glorious (Matthew 24.30).

“Because of the mystery surrounding these events, several views have emerged in Christians’ attempts to understand everything the Bible teaches about this return and His millennial reign. One view holds that upon His return, Jesus will begin a literal 1,000-year reign on earth. Another holds that this millennium occurs in this church age, to be followed by His return. Another still holds that the millennium symbolically represents Christ’s reign in heaven and in the hearts of God’s people while we wait for His return.

“Despite these differences, all views agree that the imminent return of Christ is the hope of every Christian, knowing that when Christ returns, all things will be made new.”

Jesus was a well-regarded rabbi. It seems that the Pharisees’ question about when the Kingdom of God would come has no pretense or underlying motive. Rather, they were curious – and aren’t we, too! Previously, Jesus had compared the Kingdom of God to yeast slowly working its way through bread dough and to a magnificent tree over time having grown from a small seed (Luke 13.18-21). Now, He continues to illustrate its slow, steady, miraculous, uncontainable, magnificent growth all the way until He returns in His full glory to reign as King (Luke 17.20-21).

14. Because of the Kingdom’s slow and progressive revelation and growth, Jesus makes us aware of how we can miss what is in front of us. What warnings does He provide against what causes us to miss His Kingdom growing in our midst (Luke 17.20-36)?

<sup>7</sup> MacArthur & Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Biblical Truth*, pg.680-681

<sup>8</sup> The Gospel Project, *The 99 Essential Doctrines*, LifeWay Christian Resources (2018), #96

The examples of Noah and of Lot's wife illustrate our need for faith in Jesus's promise to return (Luke 17.26-30). We need to hear this truth with a toddler-like enthusiasm: to have His return read to us again and again! Scholars debate the concept of the "rapture", where one person is taken to heaven and the other is left behind. There is room for Luke 17.26-35 to be read in light of 1 Thessalonians 4.17, where those who believe in Jesus are "left behind" while those taken are subject to His judgment.<sup>9</sup> No matter, the truth remains that "God will cut right down the center of the human race and make a final division between the redeemed and the damned. This eternal separation – this great divorce – will divide even the closest relationships like the husband and wife who share the same bed or the collaborators who work side by side in an office. People who share almost the exact same situation in life will find themselves on opposite sides of eternity."<sup>10</sup> (Luke 17.31-36)

15. In response to the disciples' completely understandable fear of being taken away for judgment in V 37, Jesus provides a grotesque image of vultures surrounding a dead corpse. This is meant to spur us to soberly consider whether we are dead in our sins or alive in Christ (Romans 6.1-11). As one of Jesus's disciples, you stand in the crowd listening to your Rabbi spur you into sober reflection. Prayerfully write out your reflections and response below in your SSP.

### **Your Scripture-Soaked Prayer:**

#### **Lecture Outline:**

**Aim:** Kingdom-minded people rivet their hearts on King Jesus.

- I. Riveting Prophecy (Zechariah 9.1-17) **T1:** A riveted heart focuses on the goodness, beauty, and graciousness of King Jesus.
  - a. Who or what has riveted your heart?
  - b. How might developing a heart that is riveted on King Jesus change the way you live?
- II. Riveting Practices (Luke 17.1-19) **T2:** A riveted heart grows through loving care and forgiveness for one another, and humility and gratitude toward God.
  - a. What are some specific new habits you need to develop to rivet your heart to Jesus?
  - b. Which old habits do you need to repent of to do so? A lack of love, forgiveness, humility, or gratitude?
- III. Riveting Promise (Luke 17.20-37) **T3:** A riveted heart focuses on King Jesus and the hope of heaven, not the hopelessness of this world.
  - a. Where is your hope anchored? On the things of this world or on the King of the universe?
  - b. Which attributes of King Jesus do you need to meditate upon to keep your heart riveted on Him?

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<sup>9</sup> Ryken, p.241

<sup>10</sup> Ryken, p.241