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2019

The Motif of the Messiah in Zechariah 9-14

Caroline Stanke

ABSTRACT

THE MOTIF OF THE MESSIAH IN ZECHARIAH 9-14

by

Caroline Stanke

Adviser: René Gehring

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE RESEARCH

Thesis

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: THE MOTIF OF THE MESSIAH IN ZECHARIAH 9-14

Name of researcher: Caroline Stanke

Name and degree of faculty adviser: René Gehring, Ph.D.

Date completed: November 2018

Topic

Zechariah 9-14 is full of prophecies regarding the coming of the messiah. The Jews at the time of Jesus awaited a messiah different from the one that came but how so? Did they misunderstand the prophecies or, by any chance, were the prophecies not clear enough?

Purpose

Firstly, it will be given an overview of the Book of Zechariah. Then, the messianic prophecies in Zechariah 9-14 will be examined closer and how they fit into the context of the prophets, the book of Zechariah, and the different chapters. An analysis of the similarities and differences will be written afterwards. Then Jewish expectation will be analysed. Afterwards, a conclusion will be drawn.

Sources

To have an in-depth study of the Texts of Zechariah, each messianic prophecy is translated with my own words from Hebrew into English. The context of the prophecies will be closer examined and the most recent and important commentaries will be considered. To understand the Jewish expectation of the messiah, Jewish literature and statements of Rabbis will be considered before a conclusion will be drawn.

Conclusions

The in-depth study of Zechariah showed that the messianic prophecies are in fact always in a military and judgment setting. However, it is not the messiah who acts belligerent, but it is the Lord who is fighting for his people. Zechariah shows that the messiah, was supposed to come as someone who restores the leadership and the nation, someone who restores the spiritual constitution. After this is accomplished, the restoration of the land will be the next goal. The Jews did not recognize their messiah because they did not anticipate forgiveness of their sins.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

THE MOTIF OF THE MESSIAH IN ZECHARIAH 9-14

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Caroline Stanke

2018

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A thesis
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To the one, who made me fall in love with the Old Testament.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In Eden, the coming of the messiah was prophesied. Adam and Eve already looked forward to the fulfillment of the promise: “They joyfully welcomed their first-born son, hoping that he might be the Deliverer.”¹ But Cain was not. Generation after generation, Israel waited for the messiah to arrive and for the promise to be fulfilled. For centuries the hope was kept alive through Patriarchs and Prophets, but he did not come. “The voices of the prophets ceased. The hand of the oppressor was heavy upon Israel, and many were ready to exclaim: ‘The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth.’ (Ezek 12:22)”² However, when the glorious day finally came that the messiah was to arrive, almost no one was ready to meet him.³ When Jesus’ time of preparation was done and he began to proclaim the gospel, he healed the sick (Matt 15:29-31; Mark 6:53-56) and fed the hungry (Matt 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-10).

Unfortunately, the Jews who had waited so long were not ready to follow him. The Jewish leaders got jealous, (Matt 27:18) and ultimately they crucified him (Matt 27:22-25, 33-56; Luke 23:33-49). The one that they had longed for. The one they had told their children about. Even today, Jews all over the world still long for their messiah, the very same they already crucified.

¹ Ellen Gould Harmon White, *The Desire of Ages: The Conflict of the Ages Illustrated in the Life of Christ* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2005), 33.

² *Ibid.*, 31.

³ The only ones ready to meet him were the shepherds (Luke 2:8-18) and the Magi (Matthew 2:12), as well as Simeon (Luke 2:25) and Anna (Luke 2:36).

But why? Why weren't the Jews ready to meet their messiah? Why did they not realize God⁴ himself dwelled in their midst? The messianic prophecies were often heard by the average Jew weekly, if not daily.

So which side is at fault? Were the prophecies unclear? Few scholars have addressed the question of why the Jews did not recognize their longed-for messiah. Why? First, there is little material regarding the topic. Second, the topic is a sensitive one. In the past, antisemitic thoughts have resonated with this question and were the pillar for hatred towards Jews. This study does not seek a scapegoat, but rather wants to highlight that it could have happened to anyone clinging too closely to false hopes and expectations. Why not learn from the past to prevent making the same mistakes in the future? Basing on the prophecies of Zechariah, this study wants to enlighten how the messiah is depicted by Zechariah. An obvious question is why choose Zechariah instead of a more well-known prophetic book, such as Isaiah? Zechariah was one of the “younger” prophets and is filled with different prophecies of the messiah, also most of the Old Testament quotes in the gospels are from Zechariah. The different prophecies will be examined to gain a deeper understanding of the biblical text and, hopefully, clarify any ambiguities. Another reason to focus this work on Zechariah is that, as Ferreiro observes, the early church was fixated on the books of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi for their understanding of Jesus Christ.⁵ Zechariah built his prophecies on the messianic hope of former prophets, but he did more than that. Baron observes: “We have in it, as it were, an inspired condensation, or summary, of the great

⁴ Out of piety the name of “God” will be capitalized.

⁵ Alberto Ferreiro and Thomas C. Oden, eds., *The Twelve Prophets*, Ancient Christian commentary on Scripture 14 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 219–313.

prophecies and promises contained in the earlier prophets.”⁶ But there is more than that. Zechariah not only builds his prophetic statements on earlier prophecies, but also develops his own messianic expectation. Throughout the thesis the question of this paper will change. The motif of the messiah will still be examined, but the question will be reformulated as to why the Jews anticipated such a different messiah than the one that came.

To focus on the main point, this paper must be delimited. Since this thesis focuses on six biblical chapters, not every aspect of every chapter is considered. Some passages could demand more in-depth studies, e.g. in chapter 9 verses 11 and 12 where Zechariah refers to the prisoners of hope. What is meant by that statement? Or what about God’s whistling in Zech 10:8? However, this paper focuses only on the important statements about the messiah in Zechariah 9-14 and other topics are left out, even though they might be interesting for later study. The chosen verses about the prophecies of the messiah are widely accepted as messianic prophecies. Also, all of them have either a direct application in the New Testament or are recalled.

Chapters 1-8, on the other hand, focus thematically on the completion of the temple. Even though there are some passages that might have a messianic background (Zech 1:16-17, 2:14-16, 3:1-5.8, 6:12, 8:20-23) these texts are not considered in this thesis. The main reason is because most of the texts have an ambiguous meaning and do not give too much information (except Zech 3:8 and 6:12 where the messianic reference is obvious). However, it can be shortly noted, that the messiah is depicted not so differently in the first 8 chapters than in the last 6. Therefore, this thesis only focuses on the main chapters and does not take into view the first 8 chapters.

⁶ David Baron, *The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1972), 315.

To investigate the motif of the messiah in Zechariah, a general overview over the book of Zechariah will be given: historical background, literary characteristics, and so on. Subsequently, the focus will be laid on the messianic prophecies in the second part of the book, their similarities and differences, as well as their relevance in the New Testament will be investigated. After that, Jewish expectation of the messiah will be closer examined, before drawing a final conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

Historical Background

Who was Zechariah and in what time did he live? Zechariah means “YHWH remembers” and is a quite common name in scripture (2 Kgs 14:29; Isa 8:2).¹ Zechariah himself is a prophet and a priest (Neh 12:4, 16). It was not unprecedented in Israelite history that Prophets arose from priestly ranks (see f.e. Moses [Exod 2, Deut 34:10-12], Samuel [1 Sam 1-3], Jeremiah [Jer 1:1], Ezekiel [Ezek 1:3]). He probably returned, together with his grandfather Iddo from the exile in 538 BC. Many commentators suggest that Zechariah was probably very young when he began his ministry. They build this argument upon Zech 2:8 where the term הַנֶּעַר “young man” is mentioned, meaning he did not surpass the age of full manhood, although his exact age is not specified.² In the book of Zechariah itself we can find two different time specifications. The first one is in Zech 1:1 which marks the calling of Zechariah: the eighth month of the second year of Darius, approximately 520 BC. For context, the prophet Haggai only started to prophesy two months earlier (Ezra 5:1; Hag 1:1-11). The last-mentioned time specification in the book of Zechariah is the fourth year of Darius

¹ Mauch identifies thirty-one people with the name “Zechariah.” See: Theodor M. Mauch, *Zechariah*, *The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible* 4 (Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1962), 941–943.

² For further information see for example: Charles Lee Feinberg, *God Remembers: A Study of Zechariah*, 3d ed. (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1977), 2.

(Zech 7:1), approximately 518 BC. It is very likely, then, that Zechariah witnessed the completion of the temple restorations in 515 BC.³

Clearly, Zechariah prophesied during the time of the Persian empire. The Jews were permitted by Cyrus to leave the Persian empire and return to Israel in 538 BC (Ezra 1). At that time, around 50,000 Jews returned to Jerusalem (Ezra 2; Neh 7). In 536 BC the altar was rebuilt, and sacrifices offered (Ezra 1:2-3). By 535 BC the work on the temple had started, but probably due to hardship and economic depression the project was neglected shortly after (Ezra 3:1-4). To selfishly take care of their own needs, the people abandoned the temple (Hag 1:2). Darius became king in 522 BC after the death of Cambyses the II. Fortunately, Darius was very favorable to the Jews. He not only confirmed the decree of Cyrus but also supported the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 6:1-14). All this created the historical backdrop for the prophecies in Zechariah. Cyrus's decree bolstered the Israelites' spirit, until they met oppression from the Samaritans (Ezra 4-6). After this, it took the Israelites over 14 years to finally continue their work on the temple. At that time, Haggai and Zechariah arose to awaken the people who neglected the temple because of their selfish needs.

It was not the kind of crisis obvious to all, as when a threat of invasion shocks a whole population into action, but the dangerous state of moral paralysis which accepts as normal conditions that demand drastic changes. Unless a man of vision and determination can intervene in time there is hope of recovery.⁴

Fortunately for Israel, Zechariah was that man of vision called to awaken them.

³ Erhard Gerstenberger, *Israel in der Perserzeit: 5. und 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr.*, *Biblische Enzyklopädie* Bd. 8 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2005), 157.

⁴ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1972), 29.

Authorship

It might be expected that this thesis is assuming that there are three different authors due to the focus of the thesis on the chapters 9-14. Typically, scholars tend to separate Zechariah into three main parts: Zechariah 1-8, 9-12, and 12-14. It is divided as such for a few reasons. The first 8 chapters are ascribed to Zechariah the son of Iddo. Chapters 9-11 are the so-called Deutero-Zechariah and are dated around 330 BC. The chapters 12-14 are dated after 330 BC, but before 170 BC, and mark the so-called Trito-Zechariah. There are four main reasons for this categorization:

1. An analysis of the text showed that the optimistic sound of the messages changes into threats and aggressive remarks in 9-14. Many draw the conclusion that it must be another author.

2. In 9:13, Greece is mentioned and seen as an ambitious nation. Since 520 BC Greece was troublemaker, but not the global power that is described in the verse. Therefore, scholars tend to date this section into 330 BC, when Greece is already a global power.

3. Apocalyptic literature is, according to history of religion, the latest product of the Jewish religion. In the chapters 12-14 of Zechariah, some apocalyptic tendencies can be found. Therefore, these chapters are dated into a later period.

4. Finally, the wages of the shepherd (thirty shekels) in Zechariah 11:12-13 are mentioned in Matthew 27:9-10 as a saying of the prophet Jeremiah.⁵ Therefore, Jeremiah

⁵ One of the first to cast doubts on the authorship of Zechariah was Joseph the Mede in 1653. J. Mede states in his remarks about this passage: "It may seem, that the Evangelist would inform us, that those later chapters ascribed to Zachary (namely, the 9, 10, 11 &c.) are indeed the prophecies of Jeremy; and that the Jews had not rightly attributed them." He is followed by Newcome, who wrote: "But whoever wrote them, their divine authority is established by the two quotations from them in the New Testament" William Newcome, *Attempt towards an Improved Version: A Metrical Arrangement, and an Explanation of the Twelve Minor Prophets (Classic Reprint)*. (Forgotten Books, 2015), 303–304.

is seen as the author of chapters 9-14.⁶ Berthold's thesis made in 1814 served to strengthen this point. In his thesis he pointed out that chapters 9-11 were written by a Zechariah ben-Jeberekja, who is mentioned in Isaiah 8:2 and that the two Zechariah's melted into one.⁷

But are there any other possible theories, rather than simply assuming Zechariah has at least two, or maybe three, different authors?⁸

1. A change of mood is usually no indicator to prove the change of author. Isn't a prophet that preaches hope allowed to preach about destruction as well?

2. Since 1520 BC, the Greeks were known as troublemakers for the Persian Empire.⁹ But we should keep in mind that 9:13 talks about a loss for Greece and not about a victory. Zechariah could have already seen the Greek nation as a threat for Persia (as shown to him by God). This does not necessarily mean they were a world power at that specific time. Greece is also mentioned in Isa 66:19, Ezek 27:13 and Dan 8:21, 10:20, 11:2. Just because the name of the nation was mentioned, it does not have to be written in 331 BC.

⁶ See: Otto Eißfeldt, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament: unter Einschluß der Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen sowie der apokryphen- und pseudepigraphenartigen Qumran-Schriften; Entstehungsgeschichte des Alten Testaments*, 4. Aufl., unveränd. Nachdr. der 3., neubearb. Aufl., Neue theologische Grundrisse (Tübingen: Mohr, 1976), 587.

⁷ See: Leonhardt Bertholdt, *Historisch-Kritische Einleitung in sämtliche kanonische und apokryphe Schriften des Alten und Neuen Testaments* (Erlangen, 1812), 1697–1728.

⁸ The following arguments against more than one author are taken from: Udo Worschech and Siegfried Horn, *Einleitung in das alte Testament* (Bern: Europäisches Institut für Fernstudium, 1978), 186–187.

⁹ In 449 BC the Athenians destroyed the Persian fort in Sardis. In 490 BC they defeated the Persian in Marathon and in 480 BC they defeated them in Salamis. From 500 BC on their ships also made attacks along the Palestinian coast (see: *Ibid.*, 186).

3. The bible shows that prophecies exist and there is no need to date Zechariah 12-14 in a later period. Isaiah as a pre-exile prophet had apocalyptic prophecism in his writings (Isa 11:6-10; 24:1; 26:1).

4. If we take a closer look at the Matthean account, there are a few reasons why Matthew ascribes the quote in question to Jeremiah rather than to Zechariah. Some scholars suggest that it is because in some Hebrew collections, Jeremiah is the head of the “prophetic section”.¹⁰ Or, it might be the case that the quotation in Matthew is a combination of several different texts. Three of the phrases in Matthew come from Zechariah (Matt 27:9a, 10a, 10c), the second phrase in Matt 27:9 comes from Exod 21:32, but the main action – the purchasing of the potter’s field – relates to Jer 19:1-10.¹¹ Thus, it is no indicator for a dual authorship of Zechariah if Matthew applies this account to Jeremiah and not to Zechariah, since the main part (act) of this verse relates to Jeremiah and not to Zechariah.

Interestingly though, Zechariah shows stylistic and terminological characteristics that point to the unity of the book:

1. “declares the Lord” – Zech 10:12, 12:1, 13:2.7-8 and 14 times in 1-8
2. “the eyes of the Lord” – Zech 4:10, 8:6, 9:8, 12:4
3. “in that day” (eschatological focus) – 2:11, 15; 3:10; 9:16; 12:3-4, 6, 8-9, 11; 13:1-2, 4; 14:4, 6, 8-9¹²

¹⁰ See: Walter C. Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan Pub, 1995), 222.

¹¹ For a more exhaustive discussion see: Martin Pröbstle and William Shea, eds., “The Seleucids as Cedars and the Maccabees, Messiah and Herodians as the Shepherds in Zechariah 11,” in *For you have strengthened me: Biblical and Theological Studies in honor of Gerhard Pfandl in celebration of his sixty-fifth Birthday*, (St. Peter am Hart: Seminar Schloss Bogenhofen, 2007), 158. See also: Catherine Sider Hamilton, “The Death of Judas in Matthew: Matthew 27:9 Reconsidered,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 137, no. 2 (2018): 429–431.

¹² Yohan Im and Pieter M. Venter, “The Function of Zechariah 7–8 within the Book of Zechariah,” *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 69, no. 1 (January 14, 2013): 8.

4. the word “return” – 1:3-4, 6, 16; 4:1, 5:1, 6:1, 7:14, 8:3, 9:8, 12; 10:6, 9-10; 13:7
5. the word “spirit” – 2:10; 4:6, 5:9, 6:5, 8; 7:12, 12:1, 10; 13:2
6. the word “save/deliver” – 8:7, 13; 9:9, 16; 10:6, 12:7
7. The vocative in the form of address – Zech 2:7, 3:2.8, 4:7, 9:9, 11:1, 13:7
8. A preference for the number “two” – Zech 4:3, 5:9, 6:1, 11:7, 13:8
9. Returning of themes: security of Jerusalem (2:5, 9:8, 14:11), judgment and conversion of the nations (1:18, 8:20, 14:6, 16), paradisaical fertility (8:12; 14:6, 8), the gathering of the exiles (8:7; 10:9), cleansing and the outpouring of the Spirit (4:6, 5:4; 12:10; 13:3), messianic figure (3:8; 6:12; 9:9-10).¹³

Either the “other” author of Zechariah did a good job in copying the first part of Zechariah, or the similarities are leading back to the same author. It should also be noted that in the Hebrew canon, Zechariah is considered a coherent prophetic book. In this thesis, it is presupposed that Zechariah was the author of this book in its entirety. So, the division of the thesis is just due to the thematic focus on the messiah in the second part of the book of Zechariah not to any suspected differences in authorship.

Structure

As most scholars agree, there are at least two main sections in the book of Zechariah between the chapters 1-8 and 9-14, because of the apparent change of genre. However, more recent scholars suggest parting the book in two different sections, with the first section 1:1-6:15 and the second 7:15-14:21.¹⁴ They are basing this

¹³ Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 482–483.

¹⁴ See: Marvin A. Sweeney, “Sequence and Interpretation in the Book of the Twelve,” in *Reading and Hearing the Book of the Twelve: James D. Nogalski and Marvin A. Sweeney, Editors*, ed. James Nogalski, Society of Biblical Literature symposium series no. 15 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical

cut on the dating at the head of each section. Other scholars divide the book into three main parts, because they see 7:1-8:23 as a separate section.¹⁵ Petterson also cuts 9:1-14:21 into another subdivision (9:1-11:17 and 12:1-14:21).¹⁶ Of all the different divisions, Petterson and Boda have the most convincing structures, since they orientate their structures coherent with the themes that the biblical text itself dictates.

Therefore, the structure of this thesis is adjusted to theirs.

1:1-6: Introduction, Call for Repentance

1:7-6,8: Eight Night Visions

1:7-17: The first vision: riders on horses

1:18-21: The second vision: four horns and four craftsmen

2:1-13: The third vision: Measuring Jerusalem

3:1-10: The fourth vision: the high priest and the adversary

4:1-14: The fifth vision: the golden lampstand and two
olivetrees

5:1-4: The sixth vision: the flying scroll

5:5-11: The seventh vision: the woman in a basket

6:1-8: The eight vision: the four chariots

6:9-15: Conclusion: Joshua and the building of the temple

7:1-8:23 Bridge between Chapter 1-6 and 9-14

Literature, 2000), 49–64. See also: Serge Frolov, “Is the Narrator Also among the Prophets? Reading Zechariah without Presuppositions,” *Biblical Interpretation: A Journal of Contemporary Approaches* 13, no. 1 (January 1, 2005): 13–40.

¹⁵ Mark J. Boda, “From Fast to Feasts: The Literary Function of Zechariah 7-8,” no. 65, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (2003): 390–407. Al Wolters, “Zechariah,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, ed. Mark J. Boda and J. G. McConville (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2012), 889–899. Anthony R. Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, Apollos Old Testament commentary 25 (Nottingham, England; Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2015).

¹⁶ Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, 96.

7:1-14: Question about relevance of fasting and repentance

8:1-23: Judah's restoration and glorious future

9:1-14:19: Yahweh returning to his people and establishing his kingdom

9:1-11:17: First oracle

9:1-8: Judgment on Judah's enemies

9:9-10:12: Coming King, judgment and hope

11:1-17: Shepherds and Sheep

12:1-14:19: Second oracle

12:1-9: Jerusalem's enemies destroyed

12:10-13:9: Mourning and cleansing in Judah

14:1-19: Judgment and salvation for Judah and
the nations

14:19-21: Conclusion: Holiness of Judah and Jerusalem

As presented, the book has two different main parts with a bridge between them. Because of the obvious thematic differences between Zechariah 1-8 and 9-14, this thesis excludes Zechariah 1-8.

Message of Zechariah

The book presents an account of the visions of Zechariah concerning the significance of the reconstruction of the Temple, and it looks forward to the time when YHWH will remove the corrupt "shepherds" or leaders of the people (...) in order to manifest divine sovereignty over the cosmos and nations at large from Zion.¹⁷ Luther

¹⁷ Marvin Alan Sweeney, "Zechariah," in *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, by David W. Cotter et al., *The Twelve Prophets Vol. 2* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 561.

even called the book of Zechariah “the quintessence of the prophets.”¹⁸ The main themes of Zechariah are the return and sovereignty of Yahweh, hope and the failed leadership for which god will provide a solution.

The Return and Sovereignty of Yahweh

Seventy years after the destruction of Jerusalem and around 20 years after the first Jews returned from the exile, Zechariah proclaims that Yahweh has now turned from judgment to mercy (1:16, 8:3). Zechariah repeats Ezekiel’s promise (Ezek 26:28; 37:26-28) that the Lord will return to dwell among his people (1:3, 16; 2:5; 10-22; 4:9-10; 8:3, 9:8, 14; 14:4, 9, 16-17). God is presented as someone, who longs for a covenant relationship with his people (1:3). God is repeatedly called “the Lord of hosts” (1:3, 4, 6, 12, 14, 16, 17; 2:8, 9, 11; 3:7, 9, 10; 4:6, 9; 5:4, 6:12, 15; 7:3, 4, 9, 12, 13; 8:1-9, 11, 14, 18-23; 9, 15; 10,3; 12:5; 13:2, 7; 14:16, 17, 21) and therefore presented as the ruler of the world (14:9). This is one of the reasons why we can find judgments over rebellious nations in Zechariah (1:14-15; 2:1-4; 2:12.13; 6:8). Interestingly though, they also get the chance to submit to Yahweh and enjoy a covenant relationship with him (2:15; 8:13; 20.23; 9:7, 10; 14:16-19).

Hope

Hope is a very significant topic in Zechariah. Yahweh’s return to dwell among their midst is an important part of that hope. There is also the promise of the future Davidic king, who is central to the purpose of restoration. This future king is called a shoot (3:8, 6:12, which recalls Jeremiah (Jer 23:5; 33:15), as well as Isaiah (Isa 11:1) and Ezekiel (Ezek 17)), and will not only serve as a king but also as a priest (6:13).

¹⁸ Martin Luther, *Auslegung der großen und kleinen Propheten: Achter Teil* (Zedler, 1730), 562. Luther writes in German “der Ausbund der Propheten” which can be translated as model, pattern or quintessence of the prophets.

Zechariah has his priority on the covenantal renewal which will result into an even broader restoration of the infrastructure (temple, city, province) which differs from Haggai, who focuses on the restoration of the temple. “As repentance becomes an unobtainable goal through Zechariah 9-14, Yahweh adopts a second strategy for the transformation of the community, a purification through severe judgment (chs.12-14).”¹⁹

Failed Leadership and Its Solution

The third and fourth chapters of Zechariah focus on the renewal of the priestly, royal, and prophetic leadership positions. In chapters 7 and 8 Zechariah reproaches them for their lack of attention to social justice (7:4, 8-11, 8:4, 10, 16-17).²⁰ He claims in chapter 10 that Israel has no shepherd, but that the anger of the Lord rises against (the non-existent) shepherds (10:2-3). It is very likely then that Israel had shepherds, but those shepherds were not good, and could have been done away with. False prophets are also under attack (13:2-6), and it seems that the original role of prophecy has been lost. However, God provides a solution for failed leadership in Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. These three books are literarily linked inter alia through the recurring term *נָאִיִּם*. This is used either for prophets (Hag 1:3), to a royal figure (Zech 12:8), or a priest. This title is not only linked to messengers of the Lords but indicates, that they have heavenly contact if not origins.²¹ But what does that mean?

¹⁹ Mark J. Boda, *The Book of Zechariah*, The New International Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2016), 43.

²⁰ Mark J. Boda, “Perspective on Priests,” in *Prayer and Poetry in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature* (Boston: Leiden, 2012), 13–33.

²¹ See Naomi G. Cohen, “From Nabi to Mal’ak to Ancient Figure,” 26, *Journal of Jewish Studies* (1985): 12–24. Prophets were always associated with the heavenly realms and had access to the divine council (Isa 6, Ezek 1-3, 2 Kgs 20). The priestly association with the heavenly realm comes through his role as being the mediator between God and the people and his access to the sanctuary. And the king is called the adopted son of deity and is functioning as vice-regent of God on earth (Psalm 2).

Even though the times darken, the focus is shifting to heavenly prophetic, royal, and priestly figures that can lead Israel in contrast to their current leaders.²²

²² Mark J. Boda, "Messengers of Hope in Haggai - Malachi," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* no. 32.1, (2007): 113-131.

CHAPTER 3

THE MESSIAH IN ZECHARIAH 9-14

The second part of Zechariah contains more messianic prophecies than the first part. This part of Zechariah “has often been referred to as the most difficult section in the prophetic corpus.”¹ Rabbis even state: “We are unable to fathom its true meaning until the Teacher of Righteousness comes.”²

There have been many writings and discussions about this part of Zechariah. Some common questions that arise: Who is the king entering Jerusalem in Zechariah 9:9, and how does this royal entry fit to the allegory of the shepherd in Zechariah 11:4-17. Also, if the king entering Jerusalem in Zechariah 9:9 is a Davidic king,³ how does it fit with Zechariah 12:10, where the house of David will mourn over the one that they pierced? And why is there no messianic figure in Zechariah 14? The main stance scholars take is that Zechariah 9-14 is a collection of different sayings from different authors that have been compiled.⁴ This thesis already established that it operates under the premise of only one author of the Book of Zechariah: Zechariah him-

¹ Adrian M. Leske, “Context and Meaning Zechariah 9:9” 24, no. 64, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (2000): 663.

² Tg. Ps.-J. (Rashi on Zech 1:1). See: Hayyim J. Angel, *Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi: Prophecy in an Age of Uncertainty*, First edition., Maggid studies in Tanakh (New Milford, CT: Maggid Books, an imprint of Koren Publishers Jerusalem Ltd, 2016).

³ This is a widely accepted interpretation among scholars, even though there are a few exceptions. One is for example: Joachim Becker, *Messianic Expectation in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 72–73.

⁴ Wilhelm Rudolph, *Haggai, Sacharja 1-8, Sacharja 9-14, Maleachi*, 1. Aufl., Kommentar zum Alten Testament Bd. XIII, 4 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1976), 162–163.

self. But, as previously noted, there are still some open questions that need to be examined further, even though we look in retrospect on Christ who was already crucified. Could it be that Jews could not quite comprehend what those texts wanted to tell them?

Interestingly, most of the messianic texts in Zechariah find an application in the New Testament as seen in Table 1:⁵

Table 1. Messianic Prophecies of Zechariah in the Gospels

<i>Passage in Zechariah</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Passage in the New Testament</i>
Zechariah 9:9	The king comes to Jerusalem riding on a donkey	Mattt 21:5; John 12:15
Zechariah 11:12-13	(God) insultingly paid off for thirty pieces of silver	Mattt 27:9-10
Zechariah 12:10	Mourning for the one they pierced	John 19:37
Zechariah 13:7	The shepherd struck, the sheep scattered	Matt 26:31; Mark 14:27

Many of the applications are made in Matthew. Therefore, we will also take a closer look to the Matthean account and in which context Matthew used Zechariah's prophecies.

Zechariah 9

There are different factors that suggest that Zechariah 9:9-10 is really a messianic prophecy: First, it's application in the New Testament. Matthew and John apply this verse to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Matt 21:5, John 12:15). There is the mentioning of a king who will bring peace to Judah, and the promise that the dominion of

⁵ The following table is found in: Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, 101.

the king shall be over the whole earth (Zech 9:10) indicates that the messianic kingdom of peace is now ruling the world, which the Israelites anticipated since Isaiah. “Isaiah spoke more than any other prophet of the great kingdom in which Israel would enter at the Second Advent of the Messiah.”⁶

Zechariah 9 and Zechariah 14 build the framework for the messages of Zechariah 9-14, since they have similar descriptions of Yahweh and how survivors are part of the worship community.⁷ Chapter 9 can then be thematically structured in the following way:⁸

9:1-8 – The restored land

9:9-10 – The restored king

9:11-17 – The restored people

The analysis and exegesis of this chapter will follow this structure.

Zechariah 9:1-8

Zechariah 9 begins with the word $\alpha\psi\eta$ which is either translated as “burden”⁹ or “oracle.”¹⁰ In Zechariah it is found twice and marks bigger prophetic sections

⁶ John F. Walvoord & Roy B. Zuck, “*The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*” (Victor Books, 1985), 1029. Isaiah speaks about the coming kingdom of God in e.g. Isa 2:1-4; 9:2-7; 11:1-10; 25:6-9; 35:1-10; 51:3-8; 60:1-22; 61:1-7; 65:17-25).

⁷ Paul L. Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi: Based on the Revised Standard Version*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, Mich: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1995), 115.

⁸ Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, 216.

⁹ This translation is probably more accurate since $\alpha\psi\eta$ derives from the root $\alpha\psi\eta$ which basically means ‘carry’ or ‘lift up’. It can also refer to something that is (figuratively) weighty or burdensome. See for example: Ex 23:5; Num 4:15, 19, 24, 27; Deut 1:12, 2 Sam 15:33; 2 Kgs 15:7, Isa 22:25; Jer 17:27, Hos 8:10; Ps 38:5. If translated as burden, it might suggest, that the message that is given by the prophet is a message of doom (see: Henry S. Gehman, “The ‘Burden’ of the Prophets,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 31, no. 2 (October 1940): 107–21).

¹⁰ Revised Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version, New English Bible, New American Bible, New International Version.

(Zech 9:1; Zech 12:1). The repetition of the term can be a sign for the literary and thematic relationship of Zechariah 9-14.¹¹ As we can see in the Book of Isaiah, this term can also introduce an eschatological context (Isa 13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1, 11, 13; 22:1; 23:1). Since we do find eschatological references in Zechariah 9-14¹², this term could indicate it here as well.¹³ Goldingay also noted:

To judge from the contents, *massá* does not necessarily suggest an oracle in the narrow sense of an actual word from Yahweh. It can be (among other things) an imaginative picture, a lament, or a poem – in other words, any kind of prophetic composition.¹⁴

“Zechariah 9 first depicts Yahweh as a Divine Warrior, marching from north to south in the Levant and on the way defeating Israel’s traditional enemies.”¹⁵ Petersen notes that the author of Zechariah is creating a “geographic half-arc”¹⁶ which moves from north to south. He also sees strong similarities to Amos 1, since the judgment against “the nations” in Amos is also only against Syria-Palestine nations. Also, those regions are not mentioned because of “particular events” but rather because they

¹¹ Since this term is also used in Malachi 1:1 it forms a relationship between Zechariah and Malachi. Sometimes commentators see this as a case that Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi form a separate biblical book. But that view should not be adopted. Floyd makes clear that even though this term connects those two biblical books, it is no indicator that they are from one author. It is more likely that this term is “showing how Yahweh continues to be involved in a changing situation or course of events and gives directives about the response to be made or the insight to be gained from the initiative of Yahweh’s part.” See: Michael H. Floyd, “The Massa’ as a Type of Prophetic Book,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, no. 3, 121 (Autumn 2002): 421.

¹² Of eschatological character are Zech 9:13-17 as well as chapters 12 and 14. Some authors even write about Zechariah: “In the present writer’s judgment, his book is the most Messianic, the most truly apocalyptic and eschatological, of all the writings of the Old Testament”; Retrieved from <https://www.biblestudytools.com/encyclopedias/isbe/zechariah-book-of.html>, accessed 13.08.2018.

¹³ Eugene H. Merrill, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (Chicago: Moody, 1994), 241.

¹⁴ John Goldingay, *Isaiah* (Peabody; Carlisle: Hendrickson Publishers: Paternoster Press, 2005), 91.

¹⁵ Boda, *Zechariah*, 527.

¹⁶ David L Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 46.

are cities in Syria-Palestine.¹⁷ The toponyms start in the northern inland, where traditionally the Arameans were located (Zech 9:1b-2a), then move to the Mediterranean coastal territory of the Phoenicians (Zech 9:2b-4), then along the traditional coastal regions of the Philistines (Zech 9:5-7), before landing in Jerusalem (Zech 9:8). This text also mentions the “resting places” of Yahweh (Damascus and Jerusalem, Zech 9:1, 8). It seems to be the case, that the first three verses are the “introduction” since the word הַנְּחָה appears in Zech 9:4 and points afterwards to the first actions of Yahweh that are prophesied which would make the recipients of this message Hadrach, Damascus, Hamath, Tyre and Sidon.¹⁸ The first geographical designation that is mentioned is “Hadrach” (Zech 9:2) which does not occur anywhere else in the Bible. This city has been unknown for a very long time but was identified in Assyrian texts.¹⁹ The second Aramean city that is mentioned, Hamath, occurs elsewhere in the bible. It marks the northern border of Israel (Josh 13:5, Judg 3:3, 1 Kgs 8:65) and was at times even incorporated into the Israelite kingdom (2 Kgs 14:28; 2 Chr 8:4).

¹⁷ Still, there have been big discussions about why exactly those cities are mentioned. Some scholars propose that these cities correlate with a military campaign, either of the Neo-Assyrian monarchs in the eight century (Sweeney, “Zechariah,” 661.), or with Alexander the Great (Bernhard Stade, “Deuteriosacharja: Eine Kritische Studie,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* (1881): 1–96.) – but those assumptions have been proven wrong (Byron G. Curtis, *Up the Steep and Stony Road: The Book of Zechariah in Social Location Trajectory Analysis*, Society of Biblical Literature, Academia Biblica no. 25 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2006), 167. Another proposition is that those cities mark the ideal land of Israel (Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology*, Rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 317.), or the boundaries of the old Davidic Empire (Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 102.), or – and which I think is the most likely one – is that Zechariah is building his oracle on earlier prophetic oracles as Amos 1, Jer 25 or Ezek 26-28 (Heiko Wenzel, *Reading Zechariah with Zechariah 1:1-6 as the Introduction to the Entire Book*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology 59 (Leuven; Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2011), 209.)

¹⁸ Boda, *Zechariah*, 531.

¹⁹ In Aramean sources Hadrach is called Hazrak or Hatarikka. James Bennett Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3. ed. with suppl., 5. printing. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1992), 282–283.

The next mentioned city, Damascus, is probably the most prominent to biblical readers, because it is mentioned many times in the Old Testament. Damascus was lost under the reign of Solomon to Hadadezer (1 Kgs 11:23-25). Traditionally, Damascus is identified as the capital of this region.²⁰ Damascus and Sidon were the most influential centers.²¹ Hence, it is no surprise that Tyre and Sidon are mentioned, since they offered Persia naval support during their wars with the Greeks.²² Tyre is the only mentioned city in the introduction that gets special attention (Zech 9:4). Tyre had a reputation for impregnability and wealth.²³ The destruction of the Phoenician city had implications on the Philistine cities as well, since they are strongly influenced by the Phoenician culture.²⁴ Joel 3:4 also interlinks these two regions. The mentioned Philistine cities are familiar ones: Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, Ashdod. They are also mentioned in Amos 1:6-8 and were generally known to ancient Jews.²⁵ Interestingly, in Zech 9:5 are the cities chiastically arranged:

Ashkelon

Gaza

²⁰ Anson F. Rainey, "The Satrapy 'Beyond the River,'" *Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology* (1969): 11–12. Even though there are scholars who suggest that the capital might have been Sidon. E.g.: Josette Elayi, "The Phoenician Cities in the Persian Period," *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* (1980): 13–28.

²¹ Josette Elayi and Jean Sapin, *Beyond the River: New Perspectives on Transeuphratene* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 18–19.

²² Elayi, "The Phoenician Cities in the Persian Period," 19–21.

²³ Boda, *Zechariah*, 546. Because the inhabitants of Tyre are arrogant and self-reliant, Isaiah declares the doom of Tyre (Isa 23:8, 9). This prophecy is fulfilled by Alexander the Great, who destroyed the city to an extent that it was never again rebuilt.

²⁴ Ephraim Stern, *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period, 538-332 B.C.* (Warminster, Wiltshire, England: Jerusalem, Israel: Aris & Phillips; Israel Exploration Society, 1982), 243–244.

²⁵ Another prominent city of the Philistines would be Gath, but that one is probably not mentioned in later prophetic literature, because the Assyrians destroyed it in 711 BC (see: Isaiah 20, Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 286.)

Ekron

Gaza

Ashkelon

The first two lines (Ashkelon, Gaza) talk about the fear that will grip the Philistines, while the last two focus on the fate of these two cities. The middle line talks about hope that will be dashed. The fourth Philistine city introduced is Ashdod in Zech 9:6. In the middle of this verse, the perspective shifts and it is no longer written in third person, but in first person perspective. This is because God wants to show Zechariah what he is about to do. In verse 7, Zechariah refers to “blood” and “detestable things”²⁶ which might be an allusion to idolatry of the Philistines. As Meyers and Meyers conclude perfectly:

In the late biblical period, the emphasis on and development of purity law – including those governing what can or cannot be eaten – was one of the mechanisms for social survival that characterize the adaptations of both the Yehudites and the exiles to their radically altered status. Thus, the removal of the blood from the mouths of the Philistines – along with the “abominations” – is as powerful an image as any biblical author could conjure up. Certainly, it carries more than the mere nuance of consuming the lifeblood of animals. It is also a matter of Israelite identity.²⁷

Food behavior became the most significant sign to define to which ethnic or religious group one belongs to – especially if you had one nation that ruled the world, like the Persians did. If the Philistines would stop with this kind of behavior, they would be identified as Israelites. The story of the Jebusites is the practical example of this possibility (2 Sam 24:16). When David conquered Jerusalem, he decided to not destroy the Jebusites, instead they became Israelites as well. The same “hope” was

²⁶ Which usually refers to non-kosher food, especially animals (Lev 7:21, 11:10-12, 20, 23).

²⁷ Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2009), 114.

given here to the Philistines, even though I am not sure, that the Philistines would have called it hope. They – the Philistines – will be delivered from their idolatry and sin and become part of Israel.²⁸ As Unger shows, verses 7 and 8 state the following: “Judgment will not only fall on the neighboring nations who have been Israel’s ancient enemies, and a remnant of them be converted, but the Lord will carefully protect and preserve his own people for the coming of Messiah their savior and eventual World Conqueror.”²⁹

Verses 1-8 therefore “continue the holy war tradition found throughout the Old Testament. From Exodus 15 to Habakkuk 3 to the book of Zechariah, the Lord appears as mighty warrior, victorious over evil forces that oppose his righteous kingdom.”³⁰

Verse 8 foreshadows what is soon to come: the divine king, the one who will build his kingdom, because Zechariah declared that no oppressor will “pass over them anymore” (Zech 9:8). So, who is this divine king and how does Zechariah describe him?

Zechariah 9:9-10

After the land was reclaimed by Yahweh,³¹ Jerusalem and Zion rejoice over the fact that their king is coming. This recalls the earlier prophetic envisioning of the ideal king that is about to come. When Zechariah is writing that the “daughter Zion”

²⁸ Part of this Prophecy was fulfilled in Acts 8:40. Here Philip brings the Gospel to Azotus, which is the Roman name for Ashdod. See: Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 161.

²⁹ Merrill Unger, *Unger’s Bible Commentary: Zechariah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1963), 157.

³⁰ George Klein, *Zechariah* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Pub. Group, 2008), 269.

³¹ Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, 220.

is to rejoice, it recalls Zech 2:10, where Yahweh is coming to dwell in her midst. In the first two lines of verse 9 we have a poetic parallelism, a so-called synecdoche. The New American Commentary suggests that this synecdoche “stands for all her inhabitants, thus summoning all people to “rejoice greatly.”³² Interestingly, “rejoice greatly” (גִּילִי מְאֹד) is an imperative and commands everyone who hears to obey.³³ This “rejoicing” also seems to have a military context, because women on the winning side usually sang songs of joy (e.g. Ex 15:20-21; Judg 11:34; 1 Sam 18:6-7). גִּילִי is not only used in a shout of triumph after a victory in war (Ps 41:12), but it is also used to shout for the affirmation of the king (1 Sam 10:24), which fits perfectly in this context: First, the victory of Yahweh is celebrated, then the coming king of Zion is celebrated. In the next four lines, special attention is given to the character of the king. In Verse 10, the accomplishments of the king are envisioned.

The Hebrew Text According to the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia

גִּילִי מְאֹד בְּתִצִּיּוֹן הָרִיעִי בֵּת יְרוּשָׁלַם הִנֵּה מֶלֶכְךָ יְבוֹא לָךְ צְדִיק וְנוֹשֵׁעַ הוּא עִנִי
וְרָכַב עַל־חֲמֹר וְעַל־עֵיר בְּנֵי־אֶתְנֹת:

Notes on the Text

9. הִנֵּה: “Behold”. “Hinneh” is focusing the attention on what follows. Attention is given to “events that are surprising or unexpected for the person addressed.”³⁴

³² Klein, *Zechariah*, 270.

³³ Ludwig Köhler et al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 1st English ed. (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1994), 189-190.

³⁴ Mark J. Boda, *Exploring Zechariah* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017), 560.

נושע: „Saving“. „Noscha“ is a Niphal particip and has an underlying connotation of complete action.³⁵ LXX, Syr, Vg and Tgs all have the active form. It can also be translated reflexive. See “Attributes of the coming King.”

English Translation

“Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Rejoice, Daughter of Jerusalem. Behold! Your king is coming to you, righteous and saving (saved). He is humble and riding on a [male] donkey, on the colt of a [female] donkey.”

Attributes of the Coming King

Righteous

The king is envisioned as being “righteous.” קָדִיץ is a very important theological term in the Old Testament.³⁶ It does not only mean that a person is just, but has a much deeper connotation. קָדִיץ is something that is examined and found to be in order (Isa 41:26), people who are innocent, or in the right (Deut 25:1; Exod 23:7), someone who is morally in the right (Gen 18:23-25). In a religious sense, it can also mean that it is someone who is just, upright or devout (Gen 6:9), or a pious person who finds pleasure in the commandments (Ps 1:5; 112:4). In the royal context, a king who is קָדִיץ can be the chosen and legitimate king (e.g. Jer 23:5, where the branch is the legitimate and chosen king). In several instances, God is also described as being just (Ps 7:12; Isa 24:16; Deut 32:4; Job 34:17, Ezra 9:15; Neh 9:8). Under the lens of this term, we can see that the coming king gets divine attributes.

³⁵ Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 78.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1001-1002.

Saving

The word $\nu\psi\text{in}$ in this verse is translated very differently. Some English Bibles translate it as “victorious” (e.g. New Revised Standard Version), or “his victory gained” (New English Bible), probably because of the military context in Zech 9:1-8. $\nu\psi\text{in}$ is written in Niphal, which conveys a passive sense, roughly translating “to be saved” or “delivered.” We find the Niphal of $\nu\psi\text{a}$ 21 times throughout the Hebrew Bible (Isa 45:22; 64:4; Jer 4:14; 8:20; 17:14; 23:6; 33:16; Ps 80:4, 7, 20; 119:117, Prov 28:18; Num 10:9; 2 Sam 22:4; Jer 30:7; Ps 18:4; Deut 33:29; Isa 30:15; 45:17; Zech 9:9). If we take a closer look at these verses, it becomes clear that “being saved” often refers to relying on God (e.g. Num 10:9, Deut 33:29; 2 Sam 22:4; Ps 33:16), meaning that “this king is one who has relied on the Lord for salvation.”³⁷ “In short, the king will be restored only because God will have intervened, rescuing him from his captivity or enemies and allowing him to return to the capital Jerusalem (Zion) from whence his eschatological rule will be worldwide.”³⁸ It seems that Zechariah has a suffering king in mind, since the coming king has been saved by Yahweh. “The second term ‘saved’ emphasizes that the king’s status is dependent upon divine action.”³⁹ But apparently, the Niphal form of this verb cannot only be translated passive, but reflexive.⁴⁰ If doing so, it would have the meaning of “manifesting himself as a savior.” “The reflexive idea maintains that the Messiah, by virtue of his own might, saved

³⁷ Mark J. Boda, *Haggai, Zechariah*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 416.

³⁸ Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 127.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Joel S. Baden, “Hithpael and Niphal in Biblical Hebrew: Semantic and Morphological Overlap,” *Vetus Testamentum* no. 60, (2010): 33.

himself.”⁴¹ What would it mean, in perspective of the messiah, to translate this verb either passive or reflexive? The passive aspect would mean that the messiah himself needs to be saved by the Lord or is delivered by the Lord. If translated reflexive, it shows that the messiah can save others. Which translation makes more sense? Barker e.g. suggests that it would make sense to translate it as “saving” to capture both meanings.⁴² But which term makes more sense in a New Testament context? More than likely, as Barker suggests, both. If the verb is only translated passive, the saving role of the messiah does not become obvious. But how was Christ delivered or saved by God? Does it mean that he needed a savior himself? No, that is not the case. The passion of Christ shows that Christ had to be resurrected by God (1 Cor 6:14; Eph 1:15-23; Acts 2:24) and he was instituted by God and never tried to raise himself up. But, the passive verb is not enough. It is important to also have the reflexive meaning, where the saving role of Christ becomes obvious (John 3:16; John 1:26). Therefore, both roles of the messiah are acknowledged if we translate it the way that Barker suggest to translates it.

Humble and Riding on a Donkey

The next description of the king is that he is “humble.” In most cases 'אֲנִי is translated as being poor (21 times, e.g. Exod 22:25; Deut 24:12; Job 29:12, Ps 68:10; Prov 14:21; Isa 10:2; Ezek 18:12) or afflicted (46 times, e.g. 2 Sam 22:28; Job 34: 28; Ps 9:12; Prov 22:22; Isa 41:17; Zech 11:7, 11), as well as humble (e.g. Num 12:3; Ps 18:28; Isa 66:2; Zeph 3:12). The humility of the king also echoes other prophets (Isa 14:32; 51:21; 54:11).

⁴¹ Klein, *Zechariah*, 272. For further information see: George L. Klein, *The Meaning of the Niphal in the Hebrew Bible* (Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning: Annenberg Research Institute, n.d.).

⁴² Barker, *Zechariah*, 667.

The translation of יָגֵן depends on the right understanding of the “riding on a donkey.” It was very unusual for a king to ride on a donkey. Even though it occasionally happened, it always was more of an exception (Judg 5:10; 10:4; 12:14; 2 Sam 16:2). Horses represented the most advanced military weapons of this time and there are several passages in the bible that remind Israel that they should not put their trust into horses (Isa 2:7; 31:1; Mic 5:10, Hag 2:22; Ps 147:10). Some scholars argue that the background of this passage is 2 Sam 16:2.⁴³ In this episode, David was humiliated and nearly defeated by his enemies, before God saved him. If we now have in mind the suffering servant from Isaiah, and David who suffered, it makes sense that Zechariah had this in mind when he wrote about the “afflicted” king riding on a donkey. Zechariah probably also drew from Gen 49:11, since it’s the only other passage where אָתָּן יָגֵן is mentioned. This fits the context of the king perfectly, since Gen 49:10-12 is the blessing to Judah with the promise that the scepter shall not depart from Judah.

Because the king is riding on a donkey and not on a horse, it also implies that he will take away all weapons and build a kingdom of peace. Instead of riding a horse, he rides a beast of burden and shows his peaceful mission.

Accomplishments of the Coming King (Zech 9:10)

The second part of this messianic prophecy talks about the accomplishments of the king: he will cut off the chariot from Israel, the horse from Jerusalem and the bow of war; instead he will speak peace to the nations. What is already suggested through the humble king, who is going to ride on a donkey, is now further described in verse 10. Maybe Zechariah had the prophecies of Isaiah in mind, where it is written

⁴³John Goldingay and Pamela J. Scalise, “Zechariah, Malachi,” in *Minor Prophets II*, New International Biblical Commentary. Old Testament Series 18 (Peabody, MA: Milton Keynes, UK; Colorado Springs, CO: Hendrickson Publishers; Paternoster, 2009), 274.

that swords would become plowshares (Isa 2:4), that the boots of the warriors will be burning (Isa 9:4), and that the wolf and the lamb will be living peacefully besides each other (Isa 11:6). Chariots and horses were the main assets of ancient Israel's warfare (Mic 5:10).⁴⁴ God never intended kings to trust into horses and chariots (Deut 17:16), even though the biblical report indicates that Solomon established a chariotry and cavalry (1 Kgs 9:22; 10:26-29).

When God created the earth, he established a peaceful universe that was shattered because of disobedience (Gen 1-3). But what Zechariah indicates here is that when the king comes, God will return to that ideal kingship (and kingdom). Through the mentioning of Ephraim and Jerusalem, "the first half of the verse highlights this king's authority throughout the traditional lands of Israel, the second half of the verse reveals that his authority will extend over the surrounding nations, encompassing the known world."⁴⁵

What Zechariah writes again parallels Isaiah (see: Isa 52:7; 40:9; 9:6). The peace which the king will proclaim is not only the absence of war – which is also very reassuring, since kings who established a new kingdom usually took revenge on their opponents – but peace that is also "the peace of salvation, the peace of God's kingdom being re-established with its entire covenant blessings."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Deborah O'Daniel Cantrell, *The Horsemen of Israel: Horses and Chariotry in Monarchic Israel (Ninth-Eighth Centuries B.C.E)*, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns), 143.

⁴⁵ Boda, *Zechariah*, 572.

⁴⁶ Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, 222.

The Restoration of the People

“As we could see, the message of Zechariah 9:9-10 makes the transition from the threatening situation caused by the enemies of Israel (Zech 9:1-8), to the promise of Yahweh addressed directly to Judah and Israel (Zech 9:11-12).”⁴⁷ This section “continues the theme of God’s kingdom, overviewing the process by which the Lord would establish his promised kingdom of peace by conquering his foes and saving his people.”⁴⁸ God intends to do so because “of the blood of your⁴⁹ covenant.” This expression is only found elsewhere once: Exod 24:8, where it refers to the covenant at Sinai. The Israelite’s promise here is to obey the commandments, and God binds himself to keep his word. Therefore, God is setting them free. Verses 11 and 15 contain a lot of military expressions: “prisoner,” “fortress,” “bow,” “sword,” “trumpet,” “sling stones.”

God also calls the Israelites to return to him (בָּשׁוּ) and promises to return double to them (Zech 9:12). We do not know exactly what he returns double to the Israelites (maybe it refers to Isa 61:7, where freed prisoners get the double portion of the land), but this verse sounds a lot like 1:3 (“return to me and I will return to you”). Even though the king will proclaim peace to the nations, this peace will come through war. Verse 10 marks the outcome and verses 13- 15 how this outcome will occur.

Verses 16 and 17 mark the summary of all that has happened before in this chapter.

⁴⁷ Mihai Handaric, “Zechariah 9,9-10 in the OT and Early Judaism,” *Sacra Scripta*, no. 12 (2014), 10.

⁴⁸ Klein, *Zechariah*, 276.

⁴⁹ Addressed is probably the “daughter of Zion” because the “you” is a feminine singular.

Who is the King?

After taking a closer look to the attributes and the accomplishments of the king the question remains as to who the coming king might be. Since Zechariah 9:9 has a lot of parallels to Zeph 3:14-15,⁵⁰ it could be that the same person is in view in Zechariah 9.

However, extensive military imagery brings to mind the concept of the “divine warrior.” The language that Zechariah uses, language we might consider bloodthirsty, is a message of hope at the time of Zechariah. “In the ancient world war was seen not as the antithesis of peace but of chaos – that is, war was the means by which order, security, justice, and prosperity were assured.”⁵¹ This means that ancient battles were not simply humans fighting against each other, but also the gods of the different nations fighting against each other (e.g. Josh 1:1-5; Exod 15:3, 14:14; Deut 1:30). The message of war was a message of hope that God will deliver his people and restore the land. It is God who says that he is going to fight for his people, and then the king of peace will come. It seems that there must be some sort of chronology: First the divine war, which will then establish the kingdom of peace.

It is also worth noting that the roles and acts are separated, so that no one can get the impression that the coming king is the one who is going to fight, rather it is

⁵⁰ The same people are addressed (Daughter of Zion/Jerusalem). According to Crüsemann, this section forms an “Aufruf zur Freude” which has three divisions: an imperative address to an audience (city, land) personified as a woman, celebratory shouts, and the reason for rejoicing. See: Frank Crüsemann, *Studien zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus und Danklied in Israel*, Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament (Neukirchen, Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969), 55–65.

⁵¹ John H. Walton, ed., *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 221.

God who is fighting for his people. “But by testifying that God is the Divine Warrior, the Bible is saying that the ultimate destruction of evil belongs to him.”⁵²

“Zechariah’s portrait of a suffering Messiah, of weakness and power, is clearly seen in Jesus’ life, climaxing in his crucifixion and resurrection.”⁵³

Matthew and John cite Zechariah 9 when they are reporting Jesus “triumphant entry” into Jerusalem.

Jesus’ donkey ride was a matter of deliberate choice, and indeed probably of careful planning, rather than a matter of necessity. Among a crowd of pilgrims on foot the rider on the donkey intended to be noticed and expected his supporters to draw the appropriate conclusion.⁵⁴

Even though the crowds cheered to him – John even tells us that the people came out of the city (John 12:13) – and declared him to be the one who has to come,⁵⁵ they did not fully realize the extent of what Jesus had to do.

Conclusion 1: The Messiah of Zechariah 9

Zechariah 9 depicts the messiah as someone meant to be different. He would not be a war hero, defeating any oppressor of the Israelites. Rather, Zechariah depicts him as someone who is righteous, saving and humble. Even though he possesses the ability to save others, he in turn will also be saved. How this “being saved” manifests itself is not explicitly spelled out. The Hebrew grammar simply indicates that the coming messiah will not only save, but also be saved.

⁵² Achtemeier, *Nahum-Malachi* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1986), 149.

⁵³ Anthony R. Petterson, *Apollos Old Testament Commentary: Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, (InterVarsity Press, Nottingham, England, 2015), 226.

⁵⁴ Richard T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The new international commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub, 2007), 774.

⁵⁵ It is interesting to note, how Borchert sees an irony in this passage. On the one hand, the people are crying “Hosanna” which means as much as “salvation now” meaning, that they begged for something, that they could not quite comprehend, but on the other hand they did not understand, what the implications for their cry of salvation were: the road of suffering for Christ. (see: Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12-21*, vol. 25, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 42–44).

Zechariah 10:4

The Hebrew Text According to Biblia
Hebraica Stuttgartensia

מִמֶּנּוּ כֹנֶה מִמֶּנּוּ יִתֵּד מִמֶּנּוּ קֶשֶׁת מִלְחָמָה מִמֶּנּוּ יֵצֵא כָּל-נוֹגֵשׁ יִחָדוּ:

English Translation

From him corner, from him the peg, from him the battle bow, from him comes out every ruler together.⁵⁶

Restored Leadership

Not everyone is declaring Zechariah 10:4 as a messianic prophecy. Wright states for example that the messianic interpretation “cannot be defended on any rational principles of exegesis.”⁵⁷ However, Baron states that this verse is “one of the richest Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament.”⁵⁸ What is the issue in Zechariah 10? The theme of Zechariah 9 is continued: Restoration of the Land and of the people. But before God promises restoration, his anger erupts against the shepherds of Israel.⁵⁹ But then, suddenly the theme shifts, and someone comes in focus who will restore the leadership in Israel. This person is described in verse 4 and is given three different attributes: the corner, the tent peg, and the battle bow.

⁵⁶ The critical apparatus was considered. However, it does not register any various deviations.

⁵⁷ Charles H. H. Wright, *Zechariah and His Prophecies* (New York: Dutton, 1879), 275.

⁵⁸ David Baron, *The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah*, 345.

⁵⁹ Interestingly, in verse 2 it is said that Israel has no shepherds, while Verse 3 is the judgment against the shepherds of Israel. It seems to be the case that even though Israel had shepherds, they weren't good ones, because they turned to idols instead to God. Probably it would have been better to have no shepherds at all, than those bad ones.

But who is he? Zechariah 10:4 tells us, that he will come forth “from him.” There are two different options as to the identity of this “him”: either that person will come from the house of Judah (V. 3) or from Yahweh. Scholars usually lean towards the interpretation that “from him” means from the house of Judah, since Judah is mentioned in verse 3 and is the tribe from which the leaders came forth throughout the Old Testament.⁶⁰ However, the Hebrew grammar in this verse implies something else. In verse 3 the pronoun that follows “Judah” is a third person masculine plural, while the pronoun that correspond with Yahweh is singular. Verse 3b also shows the shift of perspective to God and is closer to “from him” in verse 4. The “from him” in verse 4 probably refers to Yahweh and not to the house of Judah.⁶¹ The context also stresses that it is Yahweh who is active in these verses.⁶² The most “likely... antecedent of the singular pronominal suffix is Yahweh.”⁶³ Boda suggests that there is a connection between the “from him” and the “goes out” in the last line of Verse 4. It might seem unusual for us, that the verb comes in the last line of the Verse, but it is not so unusual in Hebrew and can be called “reverse gapping.” This means that the verb needed for the first three lines comes at the end of the Verse.⁶⁴ “Going out” has a strong military connotation (Deut 20:1; 23:10; 1 Sam 8:20; 17:4; 1 Chr 5:18; 20:1; 2 Chr 1:10; Prov 30:27; Amos 5:3; Zech 6:1) which fits the context, since verse 3 ends with a military connotation and verse 5 continues the military theme.

⁶⁰ See: Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 199.

⁶¹ However, there would be no theological problem if one would say that the “from him” has also a connotation to the House of Judah, since Gen 49:10 depicts the messiah coming out of this tribe.

⁶² Rex A. Mason, “The Relation of Zech 9-14 to Proto-Zechariah” 2, no. 88, *Zeitschrift für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* (1976): 236–237.

⁶³ James E. Smith, *What the Bible Teaches about the Promised Messiah* (Nashville, Tenn: T. Nelson, 1993), 430–443.

⁶⁴ Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 199.

His Characteristics

The coming leader is called the “corner” (קַנֶּפֶת). Unsurprisingly קַנֶּפֶת is usually used in architectural contexts (Job 1:19; Zeph 1:16; 2 Chr 26:15). It either refers to the capstone that complements buildings (Ps 118:22), or the cornerstone of the foundation (Exod 27:2). Despite this, קַנֶּפֶת is also used as a metaphor for leadership, which fits the context of Zechariah 10 perfectly (e.g. see: Judg 20:2; 1 Sam 14:38; Isa 19:13). Psalm 118:22 is very important in this context. This verse is quoted in the New Testament as a metaphor for Jesus (Mark 12:10-11; Acts 4:11; Eph 2:20-21; 1 Pet 2:4-8) which also strengthens the view that the “corner” meant here is a metaphor for the coming messiah. Isaiah also uses קַנֶּפֶת as a metaphor for a coming leader chosen by God (Isa 28:16). The corner (or cornerstone) “symbolizes the steadfast strength on which a whole edifice can depend.”⁶⁵

Another metaphor used for the coming leader is a “peg” (קַנֶּפֶת). Elsewhere, it refers to the pegs that secured the tabernacle (Exod 27:10; Num 3:37), but it can also refer to a peg that is driven into a wall to hang something up (Isa 22: 23, 25; Ezek 15:3). Metaphorically speaking, it can also mean a secure and safe dwelling place (Ezra 9:8). Kitchen notes that “tent” came to be used of any kind of dwelling.⁶⁶ “In v. 4 the peg thus symbolizes the support for the people, the one on whom the weight of the nation’s needs rests.”⁶⁷ „Accordingly, the Messiah will be the Nail in a sure place on whom his people can hang all their burdens, cares, and anxieties.”⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 174.

⁶⁶ K. A. Kitchen, “Tent” in D. R. W. Wood and I. Howard Marshall, eds., *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 1175.

⁶⁷ Klein, *Zechariah*, 294.

⁶⁸ Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 219.

The description of “battle bow” (הַפָּנֶה) is the only one that is not used in the Old Testament as a metaphor for leadership. The “battle bow” is the same object as in Zech 9:10 which Yahweh will cut off. In 9:10, it was not only the battle bow but also the horse, which is restored in 10:3 as well as the battle bow in 10:4. Most likely, the battle bow is a symbol for the restoration of the royal leadership. In ancient Egyptian texts we can find a reference to the title of kings, who were called “he who repels the nine bows”, the bows referring to the kings of their enemies.⁶⁹ “This image connects with the warfare that will secure the salvation of the house of Judah and the house of Joseph from their enemies.”⁷⁰ “These three metaphors represent the great responsibilities that accompany the leadership of God’s people, responsibilities that only the Messiah could perfectly fulfill.”⁷¹

At first glance, the fourth term seems totally out of context, because it is the only one that refers to a human being. This term chosen by Zechariah is very interesting, because the term שׁוֹרֵץ usually refers to oppressors and means the oppressors of Israel (Exod 3:7; 5:6, 10). Rarely does this term refer to a righteous ruler (Isa 60:17). In the book of Zechariah itself, the term appears in 9:8 and refers to the oppressors of Israel (who will no longer be). This is most likely a role-reversal: those who had been oppressors of Israel will now be oppressed by someone who was raised by Yahweh.⁷²

⁶⁹ Rex A. Mason, “The Use of Earlier Biblical Material in Zechariah 9-14: A Study in Inner Biblical Exegesis,” in *Bringing out the Treasure: Inner Biblical Allusion in Zechariah 9-14*, ed. Mark J. Boda and Michael H. Floyd (London; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 82–83.

⁷⁰ Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, 233.

⁷¹ Klein, *Zechariah*, 295.

⁷² Mason, “The Use of Earlier Biblical Material in Zechariah 9-14,” 83.

God's Actions

In verse 4, God presented everything that he will need to restore the people. “A chain of waw-consecutive statements in verses 5-12 then builds upon verse 4 by presenting a scenario in which YHWH strengthens Israel/Joseph and Judah so that they can be restored.”⁷³ However, it is no longer the Lord alone who takes action, but rather it is the Lord who strengthens his people, so that they might take action (v.5). Even though they show differences, these two chapters also show many similarities through their positive tone, concern for Judah and Ephraim, and their focus on the return from the exile.⁷⁴

Verse 5 is full of military vocabulary. *קַגְבְּרִים* are skilled warriors (e.g. Goliath, 1 Sam 17:51; Gen 6:4; 1 Sam 14:52; 2 Kgs 24:16; Neh 11:14; Song 3:7; Isa 21:17) and they are pictured in the “heat of battle.”⁷⁵ In verse 5 we can also find the secret of Judah's victory: “They shall fight because the Lord is with them.”

From verse 6 on, we have a change of perspective. In verses 1-5 the house of Judah is addressed, followed by the house of Joseph. It is no longer the voice of the prophet that is speaking, but the voice of Yahweh directly. It is very unusual that Joseph is mentioned, but this depicts the theme of the Exodus in vv. 8-12. Verse 11 completes with the judgment upon the most powerful kingdoms of the ancient world. Verse 12 marks the theological conclusion of chapter 10: It is the Lord who strengthens his nation, and only in his might will they find salvation.

⁷³ Sweeney, “Zechariah,” 672.

⁷⁴ Cf.: Boda, *Exploring Zechariah*, 165.

⁷⁵ Boda, *Zechariah*, 617.

Conclusion 2: The Messiah of Zechariah 10

Again, the theme of war is taken as a message of hope for the Israelites. Chapter 10 is a continuation of chapter 9 and shows more insights about that battle, even though the focus in this chapter is on leadership. Since the king was the key of the restoration of Israel in chapter 9 (Zech 9:9-10) it stands to reason that this king is continuing his role in chapter 10. The themes of war, messiah, hope and redemption are so closely related that it might be difficult to discern between them. “Daraus lässt sich schließen, dass Gott aus Juda all das erwecken wird, was Gott zum Sieg über Judas Feinde braucht.”⁷⁶ Zechariah 10:4 marks a sudden interruption in the proclamation of the judgment given beforehand. Now, God promises a leader with four typical characteristics who will come directly from him. “Even though several passages imply that the Messiah will come from God the Father, this is the only one that states it directly.”⁷⁷ The messiah is depicted as being the cornerstone which also stands for reliability and headship. Another characteristic is that of a tent peg, meaning that he is the one who secures his people so that they might rely on him, as well as take refuge and find a safe place in him. The messiah is also depicted as being a battle bow, referring to the fact that the messiah is going to be a king. This assumption is supported by the last characteristic of the messiah: the oppressor of the oppressors, someone who will bring justice for his people.

Zechariah 11

“Within its confines, chapter 11 is one of the more difficult of its already enigmatic narratives in the entire Hebrew Bible.”⁷⁸ Driver even says that Zechariah 11 is

⁷⁶ Paul L. Redditt, *Sacharja 9-14* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2014), 71.

⁷⁷ Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 218.

⁷⁸ Pröbstle and Shea, “The Seleucids as Cedars and the Maccabees,” 141.

the most enigmatic passage in the Old Testament.⁷⁹ Some of the challenges of this chapter are to distinguish between figurative and non-figurative language, identifying the points and metaphors, and locating specific historical references. While in chapter 9 and 10 we find the promised blessings for the Israelites, in chapter 11 the tone changes. In the first three verses we can find six verbs of violence, and in the verses 4-17 twenty-five more. The broad outline of content in Zechariah 11 is very clear. First there is a poetic parable about the cedars of Lebanon, then comes the theme of the bad shepherds who victimize the sheep, followed by a good shepherd unwelcomed by the sheep, and they become hostile towards him. Hence, he breaks the covenant with them and they fall, again, into the hands of the bad shepherds and suffer accordingly. Zechariah 11 ends with a poem of judgment against the last bad shepherd. “While the wider context of the book of Zechariah certainly speaks of difficult days ahead for the people of Yahweh, elsewhere suffering always ends with salvation, but here, suffering ends in decimation.”⁸⁰ The chapter can be structured the following way:⁸¹

A. A prophetic oracle declares certain judgment on Israel (Zech 11:1-3)

B. Yahweh declares that the unfaithful shepherds will fall into the hands of another judgment (Zech 11:4-6)

C. The sheep are to be judged with death for rejecting the leadership of Yahweh (Zech 11:7-11)

⁷⁹ Samuel R. Driver, *Minor Prophets*, (London: Forgotten Books, 2015), 23.

⁸⁰ Anthony R. Petterson, “The Shape of the Davidic Hope across the Book of the Twelve,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 35, no. 2 (December 2010): 230.

⁸¹ The structure is taken from: Ronald N. Cousineau, “An Exegetical Study of Zechariah 11 and the Shepherd Motif in the Gospel of John” (Master Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Department of Semitics and Old Testament Studies: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1984), 19.

C'. The sheep are to be judged with disunity for holding the leadership of Yahweh in contempt (Zech 11:12-14)

B'. Yahweh will raise up a despot as an act of judgment, and will not administer true pastoral care to the people (Zech 11:15-16)

A'. A prophetic oracle declares certain judgment upon the despot for neglecting pastoral care of the people (Zech 11:17)

Zechariah 11:1-11

Zechariah 11 starts with a poem about the cedars of Lebanon. “The tragic note of the dark chapter is struck in the opening verses which form a prelude to the sinister events narrated in it.”⁸² Scholars currently discuss whether the first three verses belong to chapter 10⁸³ or chapter 11,⁸⁴ but it is most likely the transition from the hopeful sound of chapter 10 to the dramatic and negative tone in chapter 11. Sæbø points out that in the first three verses, there is an *Aufforderung zur Klage*.⁸⁵ The verb טָרַף (devastated), which is regularly used in invitations to lament (Isa 23:1, 14; Jer 25:34-36; 48:20; 49:3; Joel 1:10-11) is apparent here.⁸⁶ Even though different audiences are addressed in the first three verses, there are elements that connect them as a coherent unit. The metaphorical images are all botanical in nature (Cedars, Juniper, Oaks, Forest, lush thicket of the Jordan), and are all destroyed. We can also find a geographical

⁸² Unger, *Unger's Bible Commentary: Zechariah*, 188.

⁸³ Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 177–179.

⁸⁴ Feinberg, *God Remembers*, 197–200.

⁸⁵ Magne Sæbø, *Sacharja 9 - 14: Untersuchungen von Text und Form*, Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 34 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verl. des Erziehungsvereins, 1969), 233.

⁸⁶ Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 242–243.

progression, starting from the peaks of Lebanon (v. 11a), south to the heights of Bashan (v. 2b) and then to the Jordan valley (v. 3b).⁸⁷ Rudolph concludes about Zechariah 11:1-3: “Es ist ein höhrendes Triumphlied über alles, was sich gewaltig, herrlich, unangreifbar und geschützt dünkt und doch erleben muß, daß alle Sicherheit ein Wahn ist.”⁸⁸

In verse 4, Zechariah is commanded to do a “sign action”. “Sign actions” are visible representations of the message of the prophet (e.g. Isa 20:1-4; Jer 13:1-11; Hos 1:2-9; 3:1-5). However, it is not clear how this sign action might have taken place. Petersen therefore suggests naming the genre as “report(s) of symbolic action.”⁸⁹ Even if he did not play out the message, it shows the personal involvement of the prophet.

Baldwin sketches the theme of this section in Zechariah 11:

Without passing premature judgment on this difficult passage, it is possible to say at the outset that the central subject is leadership. It is often assumed that if a country were to find a ruler totally dedicated to the good of his people, who would rid the land of injustice and encourage all that makes for harmony, peace and happiness would prevail. One insight of this prophet is that such a ruler would not only not be welcomed, but he would be positively hated and rejected.⁹⁰

In the following section “it is clear, that YHWH is directing the entire course of events.”⁹¹ Something else is important to understand this passage correctly: the motif of the shepherd as a metaphor for Leadership. Cousineau describes that there are either “Shepherd-Kings” or a “Shepherd-God”. Shepherd Kings were common in the Old Testament (e.g.: Num 27:17; 2 Sam 5:2) and had the responsibility to provide

⁸⁷ Boda, *Zechariah*, 640–641.

⁸⁸Rudolph, *Haggai, Sacharja 1-8, Sacharja 9-14, Maleachi*, 199.

⁸⁹Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 89.

⁹⁰Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 179.

⁹¹Thomas J. Finley, “The Sheep Merchants of Zechariah 11,” *Grace Theological Journal* 3, (1982): 62.

(Ezek 34:23), keep the flock from scattering (Zech 10:2-3), provide tender care (Zech 11:6), and be faithful in their responsibilities (Isa 44:28), including deliverance from distress. The “shepherd-God” motif is also a common one. He saves (Ezek 31), leads to safety (Gen 48:15), delivers from captivity (Isa 40:1-5), gathers Israel together (Micah 2:12), feeds and gives rest (Zech 2:6), ensures fertility (Ezek 36:37-38) and provides protection (Ps 107:41).⁹²

However, throughout the verses we will observe that Zechariah’s efforts to save the flock do not succeed. Verse 7 marks the beginning of the executive stage of the sign act that Zechariah must do. The focus of Zechariah’s act is on the poor of the flock. There are two staffs that Zechariah takes to represent the objectives of his ministry: beauty and bonds. These two words also summarize the hopeful message of Yahweh from chapter 9 and 10 (see: Beauty in Zech 9:16-17 and Bonds in Zech 10:8-9). The naming of the staffs might seem odd to some,⁹³ but they are a sign that the shepherd has nothing but good intentions. Their significance becomes more clear in verses 10 and 14. Verses 8 and 9 reflect Zechariah’s action the “way that Yahweh’s longsuffering patience with his people ran thin (e.g. Num 21:4; Mic 2:7; Job 21:4) and the people’s soul abhorred or detested him.”⁹⁴ When Zechariah breaks the first staff (“beauty”), it symbolizes the breaking of the covenant (vv.10-11). However, one wonders which covenant is broken. It was either the covenants with Noah or Abraham, since they had a universal aspect, or the covenant God made with Israel and Judah.

⁹² See: Cousineau, “An Exegetical Study,” 29–30.

⁹³ Naming is seen also in other sign-act reports as in Isa 8:1-4; Ezek 37:13-23; Hos 1:4-11, see: Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi*, 94.

⁹⁴ Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, 247.

Meyers and Meyers,⁹⁵ as well as Redditt⁹⁶ propose that “people” could refer to tribes and people groups of Israel (e.g. Gen 27:29; 48:4; 49:10; 1 Kgs 22:28; Isa 3:13; Mic 1:2) or that it can refer to a single nation (1 Kgs 22:28; Job 36:20) even though it is written in plural. Therefore, the covenant most likely broken is the Mosaic covenant (Exod 19:5, 6; 24:3-8), whose purpose was that Israelites might be a blessing for the world (Gen 12:2).⁹⁷ In OT history, it was typically the people who broke the covenant off (Jer 31:32; Ezek 44:7), while Yahweh promised to never break his covenant (Lev 26:44; Judg 2:1). Even though the covenant was broken by the shepherd (who is a metaphorical figure for God or the messiah⁹⁸), the curses are still active (Deut 28:45-68) and the people suffer from them. “The Mosaic covenant itself anticipates restoration after exile upon repentance and a new work of Yahweh where he will circumcise the hearts of his people (Deut 30:1-10).”⁹⁹ Petterson solves this problem with an explanation about the similarities and discontinuity of the new covenant and the old one.¹⁰⁰ “The new covenant will be the same as the old one but will be constructed in such a way that the people will no longer be able to violate its terms. It will be written on the hearts of the people.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 270–271.

⁹⁶ Paul L. Redditt, “The Two Shepherds in Zechariah 11:4-17” 55, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* no. 4 (1993): 683.

⁹⁷ See: Francis D. Nichol, ed., *Isaiah to Malachi*, vol. 4, The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1977), 1110.

⁹⁸ See e.g. Zech 9:16, 10:3b, 8. For a more extensive discussion of the shepherd imagery see: D. F. O’Kennedy, “The Shepherd Imagery in Zechariah 9-14,” *Old Testament Essays*, no. 22/2 (2009): 404–421.

⁹⁹ Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, 248–249.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* 249.

¹⁰¹ Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 269.

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וַאֲמַר אֲלֵיהֶם אִם-טוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם הִבּוּ שְׂכָרִי וְאִם-לֹא חֲדָלוּ וַיִּשְׁקְלוּ אֶת-שְׂכָרִי שְׁלֹשִׁים כֶּסֶף:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי הַשְּׁלִיכֵהוּ אֶל-הַיּוֹצֵר אֲדָר הַיֶּקֶר אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָתִי מִעֲלֵיהֶם וְאֶקְחָה שְׁלֹשִׁים

הַכֶּסֶף וְאֲשַׁלְּךָ אֶתוֹ בְּיַד יְהוָה אֶל-הַיּוֹצֵר:

Notes on the Text

יוֹצֵר: “the moulder.” It is often translated as “potter” “but this is too restrictive, and limits it to one who works with clay.”¹⁰² Syr. Has “the treasury” and LXX has “the furnace.”

English Translation

And I said to them: If good in your eyes give my wages but if not, let it go. So, they weighed my wages thirty silver. And Yahweh said to me: Throw it to the moulder (potter/furnace) the magnificent price I was valued by them. And I took the thirty silver and threw it in the house of Yahweh to the moulder (potter/furnace).

Rejection of the Shepherd

Verses 12 and 13 deal with the rejection of the shepherd. Since the shepherd broke off the covenant, he lets the people choose to whether pay him his wages or not. It seems to be the case that his request is one final chance for them to consider their actions before he breaks his second staff (v. 14). The amount that they decide to pay, 30 pieces of silver, was the amount of a slave (Exod 21:32).¹⁰³ “Since he received his

¹⁰² Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, 241.

¹⁰³ Thomas Edward McComiskey, *The Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2009), 1200.

payment in the house of the Lord he undoubtedly received his payment from the priests who were the officials of that house. It is they who have undervalued the shepherd, his work for the sheep, and the Lord for whom he worked.”¹⁰⁴ The way the sheep respond to Zechariah proves that their attitude is no better than that of the (bad) shepherds.¹⁰⁵ “The exchange drips with the people’s disdain for their estimation of the value of the shepherd. His value to the entire nation did not even surpass the worth of one slave to a single family.”¹⁰⁶ Some scholars suggest that the negative reading of this act is because of our knowledge about what Judas did,¹⁰⁷ but it’s not. “For the money is payment, in Zech 11, from the sheep merchants who buy and kill the sheep (Zech 11:5, 7, 11–13). This is tainted money, the price of innocent blood.”¹⁰⁸ In verse 13, he is to throw the silver to the potter. Klein proposes that Zechariah could be alluding to Jeremiah 19 where the prophet went to the potter’s house to foretell the destruction of Jerusalem.¹⁰⁹

These two verses are an evidence of incapacity. The shepherd was to present righteous leadership. On the other hand, we have a nation that did not long for this kind of shepherd. Instead, they rejected him, and he was of no more worth than 30 pieces of silver. This shows clearly what they thought about righteousness. The Lord himself is ironic in this passage because he says: “that magnificent price I was valued by them.” As if the price they paid was magnificent. Rather, God is mocking them

¹⁰⁴ Pröbstle and Shea, “The Seleucids as Cedars and the Maccabees,” 156.

¹⁰⁵ Wenzel, *Reading Zechariah with Zechariah 1*, 232.

¹⁰⁶ Klein, *Zechariah*, 338.

¹⁰⁷ Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 278.

¹⁰⁸ Hamilton, “The Death of Judas in Matthew,” 430.

¹⁰⁹ Klein, *Zechariah*, 340.

here. They should have paid more for the good works that the good shepherd has done. “In rejecting the shepherd, they have rejected the Lord of the shepherd.”¹¹⁰ But could there be more behind this statement from God? Who is the righteous shepherd? The one that fulfills all the tasks of a shepherd completely? No one else than the messiah. Interestingly, Yahweh already indicates that this righteous leader will be more than just a human leader. In rejecting the leader, they rejected God. It seems to be the case, that the leader has not only human nature but a godly nature as well.

The irony of the whole affair consists in this that the wages the good shepherd demanded for his work was not money but the submission of the sheep, their good will, their fidelity, their gratitude, etc. The people who, instead of being submissive, faithful and thankful, gave the shepherd money, were indeed showing themselves rebellious, ungrateful, unwilling to obey Yahweh who has been speaking to them through his spokesman. The sum they handed over to the pastor is indicative of contempt, derision, and, in the final analysis, of the flat refusal of the gift of salvation that God was most generously offering them.¹¹¹

It stands to reason, then, that the sheep must blame themselves for the judgment that is to come.

Zechariah 11:14-17

In verse 14, the second staff “union” is broken. It is broken to “break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.”

The impact of the severing of this relationship between the prophet-shepherd and the nations, and between Judah and Israel, can be discerned throughout the prophetic material which follows in Zechariah 12-14. (...) Zechariah 12-14 lacks any reference to Ephraim/Joseph, and instead focuses on Jerusalem and Judah.”¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Pröbstle and Shea, “The Seleucids as Cedars and the Maccabees, Messiah and Herodians as the Shepherds in Zechariah 11,” 155.

¹¹¹ K. Luke, “The Thirty Pieces of Silver,” *Indian Theological Studies*, 19 (March 1982): 22.

¹¹² Boda, *Zechariah*, 672.

In the verses 15-17, they receive the leadership they deserve for rejecting the good shepherd.¹¹³ Merrill puts it another way: “Without the arm to retrieve and carry the sheep (cf. Luke 15:5) and the eye with which to search and find (cf. Matt 18:12), the shepherd truly is worthless, now not only in a moral sense but in a practical, functional sense as well.”¹¹⁴

Conclusion 3: The Messiah in Zechariah 11

Many commentators have argued and discussed about the historical significance of Zechariah 11. Some argue that Zechariah 11 refers to the last three kings of Israel (Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah)¹¹⁵, while others see the Maccabean period in Zechariah 11¹¹⁶ or the time of the Roman Empire.¹¹⁷ It is not important to determine exactly what metaphor suits which historical significance. The most important thing is to understand that God sent a righteous shepherd and that he was rejected. Matthew connects the betrayal of Judas to Zechariah, and helps to understand that the good shepherd, the one which actions Zechariah should reprehensively perform, was Christ. That is an indication for us to know, that the other metaphors probably refer to something that is close to Jesus’ time. However, the Jews in Jesus’ time did not know this. Zechariah 11 only tells us that the messiah will be a righteous

¹¹³ Barry G. Webb, *The Message of Zechariah: Your Kingdom Come*, The Bible speaks today (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2003), 152.

¹¹⁴ Merrill, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 305.

¹¹⁵ W. Emery Barnes, *Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1917), 86.

¹¹⁶ William O. E. Oesterly, *A History of Israel* (London: Oxford, 1932), 182.

¹¹⁷ Pröbstle and Shea, “The Seleucids as Cedars and the Maccabees.” Shea even goes as far as to name every ruler that he might think applies to the different metaphors.

leader and, in truth, the leader that Israel so desperately needs. Unfortunately, he will be rejected, resulting in the breaking of the covenant on God's side.

Zechariah 12

Chapter 12 is the beginning of the final movement in the last chapters of Zechariah, since this section starts again with the Hebrew word **אִשָּׁמ**. If Zechariah would have finished his book with chapter 11 we would still have some serious questions about the future of Judah. Had God's patience finally reached its end and is the seed of Abraham finally rejected? Or did they still have hope and a future in God's plan?¹¹⁸ The final chapters of Zechariah answer these questions. The chapters 12-14 have the future and an eschatological deliverance in view.

Zechariah 12:1-9

“The universal scope of the battle, the struggle between good and evil, the ultimate victory from the Lord's hands, and the highly figurative language all illustrate features of biblical apocalyptic literature.”¹¹⁹ The first 9 verses of Zechariah 12 show the troubles Israel faces, how the Lord will watch over the house of Judah (v. 4), and that he will take care of their enemies. Through the usage of the phrase “in that day”, an eschatological perspective is added to the text.¹²⁰ “In that day” (which occurs 7 times in chapter 12) underlies the expectation of a coming future day, in which God will establish his kingdom on earth.¹²¹ Verse 2 begins with the word **הַיּוֹם** indicating

¹¹⁸ McComiskey, *The Minor Prophets*, 1201.

¹¹⁹ Klein, *Zechariah*, 350.

¹²⁰ Rex Mason, ed., *The Books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary, New English Bible (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 114–115.

¹²¹ Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, 260. Other references where “in that day” has an eschatological meaning (e.g. Isa 24:21-22; Isa 19:16-17; Isa 27:1; Amos 5:18-20).

that the information that follows is new or unexpected.¹²² But what is so unexpected? Usually, it was Jerusalem who had to drink the cup of Judgment (e.g. Jer 25:25-31) but now Jerusalem will be the cup through which the nations will receive the judgment (Zech 12:2). Interestingly, the background of Verse 4 are the curses of the covenant in Deut 28 (especially Deut 28:28). But instead being against Israel, it is turned against their enemies.¹²³ There will be chaos, mayhem and madness among all who will come against Jerusalem. Verse 7 speaks about the house of David. To understand verse 10 correctly, one has to understand what or who is meant with the designation “house of David:” It is a common expression in the Old Testament and can have three different meanings: 1. King David’s immediate family or household (2 Sam 3:1), the sitting Davidic king (Isa 7:2) and the Davidic dynasty (2 Kgs 17:21). McComiskey alleged that none of these terms fit the context and proposes, that “the inhabitants of Jerusalem” are in view here.¹²⁴ The problem with his proposition is that it is lacking evidence in the Old Testament. The most fitting interpretation is probably the Davidic dynasty since throughout Zechariah the hope rests on the coming king, and the messiah is the coming Davidic king.¹²⁵

“The outcome of God’s actions is spoken in terms of salvation. There is a clear parallel with earlier material where Yahweh’s salvation also flows directly from the military victory he is said to give to his people (9:9, 16; 10:6, 8).”¹²⁶ Verse 9 is the outcome of the first 8 verses and summarizes them.

¹²² Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé and C. H. J. van der Merwe, “Hinneh and Mirativity in Biblical Hebrew,” *Hebrew Studies* 52, no. 1 (2011): 53–81.

¹²³ Raymond F. Person, *Second Zechariah and the Deuteronomistic School* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1993), 130.

¹²⁴ McComiskey, *The Minor Prophets*, 1211.

¹²⁵ Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 329.

¹²⁶ Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, 261.

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וְשָׁפַקְתִּי עַל־בֵּית דָּוִד וְעַל יוֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם רוּחַ חַן וְתַחֲנוּנִים וְהִבִּיטוּ אֵלַי אֶת אַשְׁר־דָּקְרוּ
וְסָפְדוּ עָלַי כְּמִסְפַּד עַל־הַיָּחִיד וְהִמְרָ עָלַי כְּהִמְרָ עַל־הַבְּכוֹר:

Notes on the Text

וְתַחֲנוּנִים: „supplication.“ וְתַחֲנוּנִים is plural, but LXX, Tg and Syr translate it as „mercy.“

English Translation

And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication (mercy). And they shall look on me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only son and will be bitter over him like the bitterness over the firstborn.

The Prediction of the Messiah

Referring to Zechariah 12:10, Webb says that “we are on holy ground” and “there is mystery here.”¹²⁷ Zechariah still focuses on “the house of David”, and the mentioning of “a pierced one” suggests “the aftermath of a battle.”¹²⁸ This should be read in context with the previous 9 verses. Yahweh promised to pour out a spirit on the inhabitants of Jerusalem and on the house of David. The outcome of “I will pour out” is often negative (Hos 5:10). However, when God is pouring out his spirit it is always a sign that he is dwelling among his people (e.g. Ezek 39:29, Joel 2:28-29 [Joel 3:1-2]) and it is connected to the day when his kingdom comes (e.g. Isa 32:15; Ezek

¹²⁷ Webb, *The Message of Zechariah*, 159–160.

¹²⁸ Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, 262.

39:29; Joel 2:28-32). The spirit of God in his fulness was promised to the messiah (Isa 11:1-2). Tigchelaar notes: “this spirit effects two complementary aspects: being favorable and asking someone to look in favor.”¹²⁹ But what does the term “spirit” refer to? On the one hand, it can refer to God himself (e.g. Isa 32:15; Zech 4:6, 6:8), although in this passage it does not quite fit, because if the term “spirit” occurs in the construction “spirit of”, it usually refers to something emotional. In Numbers 5:14, we have the “spirit of jealousy” or the “spirit of justice” in Isaiah 28:6.¹³⁰ The term “grace” “represents God’s favor granted to those who deserved anything but divine blessing.”¹³¹ The term “pleading for favor” occurs in texts where the people are rueful and repent from their sinful doings (e.g. Jer 31:9; Dan 9:3, 17, 18). Another “pleading for favor” is found in Ps 143:1: “O Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief.” The following lines reveal that the people are seeking favor from Yahweh himself, the one who also provided the spirit.¹³² So, what does the spirit symbolize? Most likely, the transformation of the heart of God’s people that is echoed in Ezekiel 36:26.

After they received this spirit, they “will look upon me [Yahweh] whom they have pierced.” There are two reasons why commentators discuss whether this is the original reading or not. First, Revelation 1:7 and John 19:37 read “him” and not “me.” However, since NT authors usually quoted very loosely,¹³³ this is not a main indicator

¹²⁹ Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *Prophets of Old and the Day of the End: Zechariah, the Book of Watchers, and Apocalyptic*, Oudtestamentische studiën d. 35 (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1996), 124–125.

¹³⁰ Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 335.

¹³¹ Klein, *Zechariah*, 364.

¹³² Boda, *Zechariah*, 715.

¹³³ See for example the discussion about Matthew 27 in the Introduction.

to suggest that “me” is the wrong reading. “All of the major ancient versions support the reading”¹³⁴ but there are still commentators who suggest the reading “him.”¹³⁵ The second reason is that commentators often feel uncomfortable, since it is God speaking, to say that God himself was pierced. However, the ancient reading supports the “normal” reading which is why this thesis prefers it as well. The underlying understanding of “look on me” is that the Judahites should turn their gaze towards him in faith (Num 21:9).

“While not explicit, the implication is that those who have pierced this figure have offended Yahweh, and that they are deserving of his judgment.”¹³⁶ But who is the one that they have pierced? Meyers and Meyers state that this question is “surely one of the major interpretative cruxes in Second Zechariah, if not all of prophecy.”¹³⁷ They also establish that the root קט means “to stab, pierce, wound” with a thrusting weapon (e.g. Lam. 4:9; Isa 13:15; 1 Sam 31:4).¹³⁸ They point out that the one who was pierced did not necessarily die (e.g. Jer 37:10) even though it might be expected. Since the people are mourning and wailing we should expect that the person in view died. The Septuagint on the other hand translates קט as $\text{ἀνθ' ὃν κατωρχήσαντο}$, “against whom they mocked.” This translation does not bear any foundation in the Old Testament. קט always has a literal sense of piercing (Zech 13:3; 2 Kgs 23:29). The mourning and weeping as for an only son is not an unusual comparison in the Old

¹³⁴ Klein, *Zechariah*, 365.

¹³⁵ Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 336.

¹³⁶ Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, 263.

¹³⁷ Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 337.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 338.

Testament (Jer 6:26; Amos 8:10). The loss of the first-born was especially grievous.¹³⁹

Who then is the one who has been pierced? The text itself gives the first indication. Yahweh said that “they will mourn for me and they will look upon him.” It seems to be the case that the person in view is one with Yahweh, yet a different person, requiring the differentiation between first and 3rd person singular.¹⁴⁰

Some commentators argue that it was not the messiah in view. Mitchell for example proposes: “The Messiah, whose advent, all will agree, was still future when these words were written, but someone who had at the time already suffered martyrdom.”¹⁴¹ Another commentator suggests that in biblical thinking the king on earth was to be seen as the representative of Yahweh and in piercing the king, they pierced Yahweh.¹⁴² Interestingly, another messianic passage of the Old Testament indicates that the messiah will be pierced, even though other vocabulary is used: “But he was pierced (לְחַלֵּץ) for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isa 53:5).¹⁴³ Then why it is not mentioned that the one they pierced is from the “house of

¹³⁹ See Boda, *Zechariah*, 716.

¹⁴⁰ This is one of the very rare OT trinitarian Texts (other e.g. Gen 1:26; Gen 19:24; Isa 45:23-24; Zech 2:12-13, 3:2; 10:12). But even though there are other proposals of commentators, to say that the king was the representator of Yahweh, the interpretation that Yahweh himself is in view still makes the most sense. Baron states about this text: “Just as the word ‘they shall *look unto me*’, set forth the essential oneness of the Pierced One with Jehovah, so does the sudden transition in the same verse from the first person to the third, and the word, ‘they shall mourn for *Him*’ teach us that, as to His person, He is yet distinct from God.” (Baron, *The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah*, 447–448.)

¹⁴¹ Hinckley G. Mitchell, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and Jonah: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 330.

¹⁴² Frederick F. Bruce, *New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1969), 112.

¹⁴³ Another text could be mentioned here but is not. Gen 3:15 is the first text that points forward to the messiah. It is also the first text to indicate that the messiah will in fact suffer. However, the focus was on the piercing and not on the wounding, therefore this text is not mentioned here.

David”, as the messiah was predicted to be? “The absence of an explicit reference to the Davidic king can be explained if, in the bringing of this salvation, the king was pierced and killed by his own countrymen, even members of his own house.”¹⁴⁴ Boda on the other hand argues, that it cannot be the messiah from Isaiah 53 in view here, since the death of the servant in Isaiah leads to salvation, while the death of the pierced one in Zechariah 12 leads to mourning.¹⁴⁵ However, he forgot to keep Zechariah 13:1 in mind. In that verse the spring that will be opened and clean sin is mentioned. We should keep in mind that Zechariah focuses on the house of David. The connection of the pierced one to Yahweh suggests that the pierced one is in fact the future Davidic King, that was expected through prophecy.¹⁴⁶ The question that remains and that must be answered in the following chapters is: Why was the messiah pierced?

Zechariah 12:11-14

Verse 11 now continues the theme of sorrow. The mourning is compared to the mourning at “Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.” Unfortunately, it is not so easy to identify this place. The first proposal is to see Hadadrimmon as a single person. If done so, the biblical text would read something like “mourning for Hadadrimmon.” In 1 Kings 22:34, Hadad Rimmon is seen responsible for the death of Ahab.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, 264.

¹⁴⁵ Boda, *Zechariah*, 716.

¹⁴⁶ Iain M. Duguid, “Messianic Themes in Zechariah 9-14,” in *The Lord’s Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts* (Carlisle, UK: Grand Rapids, MI: Paternoster Press; Baker Books, 1995), 276.

¹⁴⁷ Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 193.

But apart from that, we have no record of a person with this name. However, this explanation does not make very much sense, because another person would be introduced by the biblical text that of whom we find no further reference.

The second proposal is to see Hadad Rimmon as a reference to a Canaanite religious festival that mourned the ritual death of their god.¹⁴⁸ Hadad is the storm god in Ugaritic Texts and Ramimu (or Adad) could be related to the Assyrian storm god.¹⁴⁹ However, this proposal does not make much sense, since prophets always rebuked paganism. Why then should Zechariah adopt an image of pagan gods to refer to the messiah and Yahweh?

A third proposal says that Hadad Rimmon is the name of a place, since “in the plain of Megiddo” strongly suggests so. The prophet could refer to a place where the death of King Josiah took place, who was killed at Megiddo while trying to defeat Pharaoh Neco (2 Kgs 23:29; 2 Chr 35:25).¹⁵⁰ This is still not unquestionably sure, since there is no record of a place with exactly this name. It seems, though, that the third opportunity makes the most sense, especially with the mourning of the people at King Josiah’s death in mind (2 Chr 35:25).

The fact that Zechariah repeats the theme of the mourning represents its totality. But who is “the house of Nathan” and “the house of Levi” and “the family of Shimeites” mentioned in Verse 12 and 13? There are three different approaches in interpreting these households and names. The first approach suggests that David and

¹⁴⁸ Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 343–344.

¹⁴⁹ Wolfram von Soden and Bruno Meissner, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch: Unter Benutzung des lexikalischen Nachlasses von Bruno Meissner (1868-1947)*. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965), 950.

¹⁵⁰ Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 226.

Levi represent the royal and priestly line while Nathan (2 Sam 5:14 suggest that David had a son named Nathan) and Shimei (according to Exod 6:17 Levi had a grandson named Shimei) are members of these lines.¹⁵¹ The reference to the wives and the rest of the household suggest, that everyone will feel the impact of the death of the pierced one.¹⁵² “In other words, the actions of leaders impact everyone else.”¹⁵³ However, one problem with this possibility is that Shimei and Nathan are rather unknown and it could have been better to use Aaron and Solomon as more popular and well-known examples.

The second approach is to identify Nathan, Levi and Shimei as people in the court of David. Nathan would be the prophet, Levi the priest and Shimei a sage.¹⁵⁴ However, Levi did not live during the times of David and there is no knowledge of a Shimei who has served David. Rather, we have a Shimei who worked in Solomon’s times (1 Kgs 4:18).

The third approach is a new one and not so widely held. Ulrich suggests, that Zechariah 12:10-14 recalls Solomon’s accession (1 Kgs 1 and 2). “Zechariah considered this first transfer of power from one Davidic king to another a grievous event that set the tone for leadership in Israel.”¹⁵⁵ Even though this new approach has its appeal,

¹⁵¹ Discussion in Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 346–348.

¹⁵² John L Mackay, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: God’s Restored People* (Fearn, Rosshire: Christian Focus, 2003), 239.

¹⁵³ Dean R. Ulrich, “Two Offices, Four Officer, Or One Sordid Event in Zechariah 12:10-14?,” no. 72, *Westminster Theological Journal* (2010): 252.

¹⁵⁴ Katrina J. A. Larkin, *The Eschatology of Second Zechariah: A Study of the Formation of a Mantological Wisdom Anthology*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 6 (Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1994), 165–166.

¹⁵⁵ Ulrich, “Two Offices, Four Officer” 264.

the argumentation is not consistent. He tries to highlight that Solomon was more a human than Yahweh's choice. However, this position does not make much sense, since it is obvious that God supports Solomon (1 Kgs 3:1-15).

“Why Zechariah chooses these obscure names [Nathan and Shimei] is uncertain, but David/Nathan, Levi/Shimei seem to form pairs of royal and priestly families.”¹⁵⁶ Despite each stance's strengths and flaws, the main thought behind all the approaches is that the original leadership failed and consequently, everyone must suffer.

Conclusion 4: The Messiah in Zechariah 12

As expressed throughout Zechariah 9-14, war again plays an important role. But now, the focus shifts and Zechariah 12 ends on a rather depressing note. The nation is wailing, the leadership has failed. They pierced Yahweh himself, the one who has brought them the spirit of grace. “What seems to be the bleakest moment, even the rejection of the good shepherd in ch. 11 and the piercing of Yahweh in ch. 12, becomes the turning point in God's relation with his people.”¹⁵⁷

Again, Zechariah depicts the messiah as being someone who is Yahweh, yet different. However, as the people rejected the good leader in Zechariah 11, they also rejected Yahweh. In Zechariah 11 the messiah was sold for a “marvelous” price, in this chapter the messiah is not sold, but pierced.

Zechariah 13

If Zechariah would have ended in chapter 12, it would have been quite depressing. Yahweh was pierced, the nation is wailing and desperate. Zechariah does

¹⁵⁶ Leander E. Keck and C. Ollenburger, eds., “The Book of Zechariah,” in *Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature; Daniel; Additions to Daniel; Hosea; Joel; Amos; Obadiah; Jonah; Micah; Nahum; Habakkuk; Zephaniah; Haggai; Zechariah; Malachi*, Nachdr., The New Interpreter's Bible (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2000), 829.

¹⁵⁷ Ulrich, “Two Offices, Four Officer,” 263.

not paint a pretty, hopeful picture. Zechariah 13 carries on right where Zechariah 12 ended. Zechariah 13 “contains the final “shepherd” reference in Zechariah and brings together the various strands concerning leadership that have been woven through the book of Zechariah to this point.”¹⁵⁸

Zechariah 13:1-6

The depiction of mourning in Zech 12:10-14 is followed by a revelation that there is hope for the cleansing of sins. The phrases “on that day” connects these two chapters with each other and ties especially verse 1 to chapter 12. The image that is used to describe the cleansing of sin is a very unusual one. It is said that Yahweh will open a fountain (מְקוֹר). The first time God opened a fountain to cleanse from sin was with the flood in Gen 7:11. A fountain suggests that there is abundant supply of water (e.g. Ps 36:9 [10]; Jer 2:13). Water and the cleansing through water have a significant meaning in the sanctuary service (Num 31:23). In Ezekiel, there is the idea of life-giving water (Ezek 47:1-12).

It is not reported who opened the fountain, but it seems that the Lord is the one who did so. Klein states: “Unlike many Old Testament passages, the Lord decreed no punishment to accompany cleansing for sin. From the cleansing fountain flowed only grace, mercy, and forgiveness.”¹⁵⁹ However, Klein overlooks that cleansing from sin is indeed accompanied by punishment for sin, even though the punishment is not reserved for Judah but on the one who was pierced (Zech 12:10). However, the Hebrew

¹⁵⁸ Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, 271.

¹⁵⁹ Klein, *Zechariah*, 374.

construction of “will be” and the niph'al of “opened” suggests not only that the Lord is the one to open the spring, but that the fountain will remain open.¹⁶⁰

“Sin” and the “impurity” are closely related, but still different concepts of the priestly system of the Old Testament. “Sin” is a more general term for wrongdoing, whilst “impurity” relates to uncleanness, for example, when a woman has her menstrual bleeding (Lev 12:2, 5; 15:19; Ezek 18:6; 22:10), or when someone touches a corpse (Num 19:9, 20, 21). It can also relate to general defilement (Lev 20:21; 2 Chr 29:5).

Verses 2-6 show how Yahweh will deal with the ones responsible for rebellion in the community. Yahweh will deal severely with idols, false prophets and a general unclean spirit.

Zechariah 13:7

The verses 7 to 9 of Zechariah 13 share a lot of similarities together with Zechariah 11. Both use shepherd imagery, depict a sword that is striking against a shepherd, smelting imagery as well as covenantal language.¹⁶¹

The Hebrew Text According to Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia

חָרַב עֹרֵי עַל-רַעֵי וְעַל-גְּבַר עַמִּיתִי נָאִם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הֵן אֶת-הַרְעָה וְתַפּוּצִין.
הַצֹּאן וְהַשְּׂבִתִי יָדַי עַל-הַצֹּעְרִים

Notes on the Text

¹⁶⁰ David J. Clark and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi*, United Bible Societies Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 2002), 326.

¹⁶¹ Mason, “The Use of Earlier Biblical Material in Zechariah 9-14,” 129–130.

עֲמִיתִי: “my associate.” Only found here and in the priestly passages in Pentateuch (Lev 18:20, 19:11, 15, 17). Often translated as “neighbor” or “another”. Implies companionship and association.¹⁶²

הִנֵּנִי: “strike.” Some LXX manuscripts read πατάξω (I will strike). This follows Mattt 26:31.

English Translation

Sword awake, against my shepherd and against the man, my associate, says Yahweh of Hosts. Strike the shepherd and let the sheep be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones.

The Struck Shepherd

This section begins with a word to the sword. The sword is an image for death and judgment (Isa 34:5.6; Ezek 5:1). In prophetic literature we can find two other references where it is spoken to a sword (Jer 47:6; Ezek 21:16[11]). Here, the sword is used as an offensive weapon. Even though it is not indicated that the shepherd dies, it seems to be inevitable.

Even though the theme of the shepherd did not occur elsewhere in chapter 12 and 13, the indication of leadership has always been made, so that it is not surprisingly that Zechariah again refers to a shepherd. Furthermore, he now links the preceding passages with the chapters 9-11. The shepherd who will be struck by the sword is one who has close companionship with the Lord. He is the associate of the Lord. The term עֲמִיתִי “stresses community or close association with someone.”¹⁶³ עֲמִיתִי is the

¹⁶² C.f. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, eds., *Micah - Malachi*, World Biblical Commentary (Waco: Word Books Publisher, 1984), 282.

¹⁶³ Klein, *Zechariah*, 386.

man who is friendly to someone and it is the basis of fellowship.¹⁶⁴ The term that is used for “man” (אִישׁ) can also indicate that it is someone who is in a special and close relationship with God.¹⁶⁵ Baldwin suggests that the shepherd is the Lord’s equal.¹⁶⁶ The statement of Baldwin makes sense, since the shepherd is one who is close, yet distinct, to Yahweh but with divine attributes, since he is closer to Yahweh than anyone else. This is supported by the fact that the struck shepherd of Zech 13:7 seems to be the same as the pierced one in Zechariah 12:10. Both are closely associated to Yahweh (the shepherd in 13 is the close companion and in 12 the pierced one is associated with Yahweh himself), both of the figures serve God faithfully and the death of both results into mourning.

But who is the shepherd that will be struck by the sword? There have been different approaches to identify the shepherd. Either he could be the high priest,¹⁶⁷ Cyrus,¹⁶⁸ one of the prophets to be struck in 13:2-6¹⁶⁹ or the worthless shepherd in Zech 11:17.¹⁷⁰ None of these interpretations fit well. The shepherd is said to be a close companion to the Lord, someone who is in “an intimate connection to God.”¹⁷¹ If we

¹⁶⁴ Köhler et al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 845.

¹⁶⁵ Hans Kosmala, “The Term Geber in the Old Testament and in the Scrolls,” in *Congress Volume Rome 1968*, ed. W. Zimmerli (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 162.

¹⁶⁶ Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 198.

¹⁶⁷ Otto Plöger, *Theocracy and Eschatology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968), 88.

¹⁶⁸ Sweeney, “Zechariah,” 695–697.

¹⁶⁹ Edgar W. Conrad, *Zechariah, Readings, a New Biblical Commentary* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 188–189.

¹⁷⁰ Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, 136.

¹⁷¹ Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 387.

connect the different themes and texts from Zechariah with each other, it becomes obvious that the motif is always the same, that the shepherd in Zech 13:7 is “the same as the one being pierced in 12:10 and as being rejected in chapter 11.”¹⁷² But how can it be, that if the shepherd in 13:7 is the messiah, Yahweh himself, how can Yahweh awake the sword against himself or his “equal?” Baldwin suggests that Zechariah had Isaiah 53 in mind.¹⁷³ Isaiah 53:10 says: “Yet it was the LORD’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.” It seems that the shepherd is not only the same as the pierced one in 12:10, but also the same as the servant in Isaiah 53.¹⁷⁴ Justification and cleansing of sin is always accompanied with death and suffering (Rom 6:3; Lev 4).

The sheep had deserved the blow, but the shepherd bares his own bosom to the sword, and is wounded for the sins of his people, and bears those sins in his own body on the tree. The vicarious nature of the atonement is therefore distinctly involved in this passage.¹⁷⁵

No wonder, that the shepherd must suffer to provide salvation. The sword is to awake against the shepherd so that the sheep may scatter. The verb פָּרַץ (scatter) is often associated with exile and judgment (e.g. Neh 1:8; Jer 9:16; Ezek 34:5). 1 Kings 22:17 uses “scattered” to refer to the state that Israel will become without a king. The

¹⁷² Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 226.

¹⁷³ Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 198.

¹⁷⁴ McComiskey, *The Minor Prophets*, 1223. However, there are some scholars, who suggest otherwise. Merrill states that it is “wide of the mark” (Merrill, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 321–322.) to claim, that the shepherd in Zech 13:7 and the servant of Isaiah 53 are the same. However, they share a lot of similarities. Both suffer, because God wants them to, both experience death even though they did not deserve death, and mourning and sorrow is the reaction of the people who did wrong to them. And, ultimately, both have to suffer, to effect justification and forgiveness of sin.

¹⁷⁵ Thomas Verner Moore, *A Commentary on Zechariah* (London: Banner of Truth, 1958), 213.

scattering of the sheep is now the fulfillment of the curses for covenantal disobedience (Deut 28:64; 29:24-25). “Israel will face scattering because of her rejection of the Lord’s shepherd.”¹⁷⁶

The next thing, that Yahweh wants to do is to turn his hand against the little ones. The little ones are the “afflicted of the flock” (Zech 11:7, 11) or the remnant (Zech 13:8-9, e.g. Isa 6:13; 66:22-24). “To turn my hand against” occurs three other times in prophetic literature (Isa 1:24-26; Ezek 38:12; Amos 1:8) and means to destroy in judgment. But, however, Isaiah 1 uses the phrases not in a negative sense, but in a positive, to highlight that “it is a judgment that will purify God’s people.”¹⁷⁷

Zechariah 13:8-9

In these verses it is depicted that Israel will be refined. There seems to be a new covenant established, because they will be his people and he will be their God. “The last four lines of the verse have an appropriate chiasmic structure – *they, I, I, they* – reflecting that there are two sides to any relationship, even when it is between God and man.”¹⁷⁸ Even though the judgment which will strike the good shepherd is proclaimed in verse 7, God now gives a perspective for the future. There is more to look forward to. There will be remnant people who he will refine and gather, and with whom he will establish a new covenant.

Conclusion 5: The Messiah in Zechariah 13

Even though war is not as prominent a theme in Zechariah 13 as it has been in the previous chapters, the setting is still the judgment that is to come. However, there

¹⁷⁶ Klein, *Zechariah*, 388.

¹⁷⁷ Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, 277.

¹⁷⁸ Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 198. Emphasis hers.

is also hope for the sins of the nation. There are some commentators who suggest that Zechariah 13 still has not found its ultimate fulfillment since Israel “as a whole is not in the proper covenantal relationship with God described in v.9.”¹⁷⁹ However, this view might change with the right understanding of the role of Israel.¹⁸⁰ “In short, chaps. 13 and 14 presuppose that Yahweh is alive. Death cannot maintain its grip on the pierced Yahweh.”¹⁸¹ Unger calls this prophecy “an unmistakable Old Testament reference to the deity of the Coming One, the Lord’s Shepherd.”¹⁸²

In Zechariah 12, the messiah is depicted as being pierced by Israel. This could have happened accidentally, but Zechariah 13 suggests otherwise. The messiah was struck down because God wanted him to be struck down. God is asking the sword to awake against his shepherd. It was part of God’s plan that he might be struck. Through the striking of the shepherd, there is hope for the nations because sins are forgiven.

Zechariah 14

Even though there is no obvious prediction of the messiah in Zechariah 14, it provides us with elementary information about the understanding of Zechariah and the messianic prophecies. Chapter 14 continues many of the previous themes of Zechariah. For example, the battle against the nation (14:1-2, 12 cf. 9:4-7, 13; 10:5; 12:2-9), God fighting for his people (14:3-5, 12; 10:6; 12:7), God gathering his people

¹⁷⁹ Kenneth L. Barker, “Zechariah,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 821.

¹⁸⁰ For an exhaustive discussion about the role of Israel please see: Kim Papaioannou, *Israel, Covenant, Law: A Third Perspective on Paul* (Wipf and Stock, 2017). Shortly summarized: Israel is still existent. You have never been saved because of the nation you were born into, but rather because of the God you worshipped. This concept was already evident in Old Testament times and is still until today. Main prooftext: Romans 11:17-24.

¹⁸¹ Ulrich, “Two Offices, Four Officer,” 264.

¹⁸² Unger, *Zechariah*, 231.

(14:5, 11, 16-22; cf. 9:11-12; 10:8-11, 12:6), blessing them (14:8, 14, 20-21, cf. 9:17) and protecting Jerusalem (14:11; cf. 9:8, 15; 12:3, 8).

Verse 9 is the summary of this chapter. It connects the previous and following verses with each other and highlights that the one who defeats the enemies is also the one who will reign over the nation. Verse 9 also recalls the “Shema Israel” where it is said that, “the Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deut 6:4).

In chapter 14 Yahweh is described as a sovereign king. He is called king (v. 16), and it is said, that he will be “king over all the earth” (v. 9). Four more times he is called “the Lord of hosts” (v. 16, 17, 21), he will defeat the nations (v. 3), he works judgment over his enemies (v. 13, 19), he saves his people (vv. 4-5), he protects them (vv. 10-11), he controls the weather (v. 17) and the cosmos (vv. 7-8). Another important theme of chapter 14 is that Yahweh returns to Jerusalem (14:4, 9; 16-17). In the book of Zechariah, the coming of Yahweh is usually placed alongside the coming of the Davidic king (e.g. 3:8, 6:12, 9:9). That is why a few commentators suggest that the coming of Yahweh outshines the coming of the Davidic king.¹⁸³ However, the focus and theme of chapter 14 suggests otherwise. Meyers and Meyers state: “Certainly the eschatological vision of chap. 14 focuses on Yahweh’s universal sovereignty not on that of a restored Davidite. But the difference between the two chapters [chaps. 9, 14] may be one of emphasis rather than contradiction.”¹⁸⁴ The focus on Yahweh alone in chapter 14 is not contradictory to chapter 9. As it was already established, the messiah is someone who the Lord calls “me.”

¹⁸³ See e.g.: Adrian M. Leske, “Context and Meaning Zechariah 9:9,” 677; Wolter H. Rose, “Zechariah and the Ambiguity of Kingship in Postexilic Israel,” in *Let Us Go up to Zion*, ed. Iain Provan and Mark Boda (Brill, 2012), 229.

¹⁸⁴ Meyers and Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14*, 221.

The messiah in the previous chapters was depicted very differently than in chapter 14. Beforehand, he was the rejected leader, the sold one, the pierced and struck down one. Now he is depicted as the true king. Compared to the other descriptions of the messiah it seems that again his coming might be in view, but a different one. In chapter 14 is no mentioning of the bad leaders and how God provides a solution for them. Rather, the end of chapter 13 is continued. The Lord will battle all enemies of Israel (v. 3) and when he defeats them, he will establish his kingdom and will bring with him all the holy ones (v. 5).

This is a totally different description than what was described in the previous chapters. It seems to be the case, that another event is in view here.

Conclusion 6: The Messiah in Zechariah 14

The messiah in chapter 14 is not a defeated one, he is not struck down, not sold or pierced. Rather, he comes and fights all the nations to establish his kingdom. The description of Zechariah 14:3-8 recalls the day of the Lord (e.g. Isa 2:12; Amos 5:18-20; Joel 2:1-11.32). The day of the Lord is an eschatological day, where the messiah returns to the earth to claim his territory. Here, the messiah is depicted as a glorious king who will defeat all oppressors and will reign the earth. The messiah comes to take his rightful place.

Summary and Comparison of Zechariah 9-14

In observing the different chapters of Zechariah 9-14, it becomes obvious that it “seriously tempers the idyllic portrait offered in Haggai and Zech 1:7-6:15.”¹⁸⁵ The

¹⁸⁵ Mark J. Boda, “Figuring the Future: The Prophets and Messiah,” in *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2007), 65.

themes of the different chapters are war and judgment. Zechariah combines these motifs to bring hope to the people. Zechariah predicts that God is going to be the one to head off for war (Zech 4), he is the one to equip his people (Zech 10:5), and he is the one to carry home the victory (Zech 14).

“About the announced king from Zechariah 9:9-10 it is said that he will come in the time of war.”¹⁸⁶ But even though we have the theme of war in Zechariah 9, the king that is about to come is humble and totally reliant on God. In Zechariah 10 we have the continuation of Zechariah 9, where God will awaken everything that he needs to save Israel and to restore the land. Zechariah 9:16 says that the Lord will save his people like a flock in one day. In the unfolding chapters, but especially in chapters 12 and 13, he unfolds the method of how he wants to accomplish this.¹⁸⁷

Zechariah 11, however, shows us a different aspect. The leadership failed, and God is about to pronounce judgment upon Israel. But he will send the shepherd, someone who leads the people exactly as they should be led. Unfortunately, the shepherd will be rejected.

Zechariah 12 continues where Zechariah 11 ended. What about the future of Judah? Is there any hope left, or did God finally reject his nation? Zechariah 12 shows that God did not reject them. Rather he sent someone who is God, yet distinctively separate. Still, the people rejected Yahweh and pierced him which resulted in mourning when they realized what they had done. But, Zechariah does not end at this depressing point, rather he predicts in Zechariah 13 that there will be cleansing from sin, that there is hope left. Zechariah 13 recapitulates again what happened to the pierced one in Zechariah 12. God is awakening the sword against his shepherd and he will be

¹⁸⁶ Handaric, “Zechariah 9,9-10 in the OT and Early Judaism,” 13.

¹⁸⁷ Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, 278.

struck. After that God will turn his hand against the little ones. Even though the context is judgment, it rather is a “positive judgment” that is intended to bring the nation back to him, rather than cutting them off. This view is supported by Zechariah 14 in which God will gain the final victory and the land will be reestablished and Yahweh will be the sovereign ruler.

The motif in the different chapters repeats itself. War and judgment are the focus. But other than that, one main similarity is that all the messianic prophecies find an application in the New Testament. Zechariah 9:9 is quoted in Matthew 21:5 and John 12:15. Here, Jesus is entering Jerusalem riding on a donkey. Moore states: “That this passage applies to Christ is beyond all refutation.”¹⁸⁸

However, Zechariah 10 is not exactly quoted in the New Testament. It should be noted, though, that there are some echoes of Zechariah 10:4 in the New Testament, such as Jesus being called the cornerstone (1 Pet 2:4-9). Furthermore, the theme of Zechariah 10 is the restoration of the land: “The restoration of the nation of Israel, north and south, is something envisaged in Acts as being fulfilled by Jesus.”¹⁸⁹ Acts 1:8 shows that at first the gospel will be proclaimed to Israel before it goes to all of the nations. Hence, Israel will be re-established before the gospel goes to the nations.¹⁹⁰ This motif of reunification is also present in James 1:1 where the letter is addressed to “the twelve tribes scattered among the nations.”

Zechariah 11:12.13 is quoted in Matthew 27:9-10, where Judas is betraying Jesus for the marvelous price of 30 pieces of silver.

¹⁸⁸ Moore, *A Commentary on Zechariah*, 145.

¹⁸⁹ Petterson, *Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi*, 238.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 238–239.

Zechariah 12:10 is quoted in John 19:37. Here, Jesus is crucified, and John re-cites Zechariah where it is said that the messiah will be pierced. Petterson suggests that he was pierced in the battle of the first 9 verses.¹⁹¹ The battle in which Christ was involved was a spiritual one. He was attacked from several sites: There was Satan who tried to make him fall (Matt 4) and there were the Pharisees and Saducees, who tried everything in their power to kill him (Matt 12:14; John 11:45-47). At the end, they won, and Christ was crucified. This recalls what Zechariah depicted in chapter 12, that they will mourn for him whom they have pierced (Zech 9:10).

Zechariah 13:7 is quoted in Matthew 26:31 and Mark 14:27. Matthew and Mark apply the verse of Zechariah on the apostles who have been scattered after Jesus has been struck. However, that is not the only parallel found in the New Testament. Jesus calls himself the “good shepherd” (John 10:10, 14). He also says, that the people are sheep who need a shepherd (Mark 6:34) and Jesus promised that he would lay down his life for the sheep (John 10:15). R. T. France concludes that Zechariah 13:7 influenced Jesus’ understanding of the shepherd role more than any other Old Testament text.¹⁹² Interestingly, we can also connect the closeness of the stricken shepherd to the messiah. Jesus himself says that he and the father “are one” (John 10:30) and that “anyone who has seen me has seen the father” (John 14:9). Jesus is the good shepherd, the one, that will be struck with the sword by Yahweh, and he is the close associate from God. The one who is closer to God than anyone else, who is indeed God himself.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 262.

¹⁹² Klein, *Zechariah*, 390.

We see the ultimate fulfillment of the messianic prophecies is Christ. Christ is the good shepherd, he is the Davidic king, the one to establish the kingship as God had intended it to be. He is the perfect king, because he is Yahweh himself.

CHAPTER 4

JEWISH EXPECTATION

After the Fall, God promised that there would come someone who will “bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel” (Gen 3:15). “To Adam was given an assurance of the coming of the Redeemer.”¹ Since then, the messiah was expected and longed for. But whom did Jews expect as messiah? What did they wanted him to be?

If we take a closer look at the Hebrew word for “messiah” (מָשִׁיחַ) we will soon realize that none of the messianic prophecies (except one in Dan 9:25) refer to a “messiah.” The word “messiah” actually means “the anointed one” and either refers to the anointed kings (e.g. 1 Sam 26:9; 2 Sam 1:16; 19:22) or to the anointed priest (e.g. Lev 4:3; 6:22). It even refers to a pagan king (Cyrus: Isa 45:1). That is the main reason, why Rabbi Bar Rav Nathan said that the Jews did not anticipate a messiah during most of the time of the Old Testament, since there was a messiah – an anointed one – and that was the descendant from the house of David. The Israelites only longed for a messiah when they were oppressed by other nations.² This view seems to be coherent with the Old Testament.³ Why else would God speak about sending nations to judge

¹ Ellen Gould Harmon White, *The Acts of the Apostles in the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ* (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1911), 222.

² Bar Rav Nathan, “Der Messias – seine Kennzeichen,” <http://www.hagalil.com/judentum/rabbi/090318.htm>, accessed 05.09.2018.

³ However, there seem to be exceptions. In Gen 4:1, Eve already longed for the messiah even though they have not been oppressed by anyone. It could be, similarly to how Christians understand and interpret the bible in retrospect, that also the Jews do interpret and understand things in retrospect.

Israel (e.g. Deut 28:36-37, Zeph 1:4)? It was the only time, when Israel really had the desire to turn back to God. However, the ritual services of the Jews were not installed without reason, rather they were to point forward to the one who will come and forgive the sins – once and for all. In Eden, God himself was the first one to bring a sacrifice (Gen 3:21) and he taught Adam and Eve about the sacrifices – how else would Cain and Abel have known? The forgiving and covering of sin were always accompanied by a sacrifice. God promised in Eden that there will be a redeemer who would, once and for all, crush the head of the serpent. But to really make atonement for sin and to bring man back into close companionship with God, another sacrifice was needed. That is where all the sacrifices of the Old Testament pointed to. “The Lord Jesus was the foundation of the whole Jewish economy. Its imposing services were of divine appointment. They were designed to teach the people that at the time appointed one would come to whom those ceremonies pointed.”⁴ But the Jews had lost sight of it. They exalted into the forms and ceremonies and lost sight of what really matters.

At the time of Jesus’ first advent, the hand of the oppressors was heavy on the people. Again, they expected a messiah. They expected someone to free them from the bond of the Roman oppressor. Jewish history shows a significant pattern. Whenever there was the chance to revolt against their Roman oppressor, there was someone who claimed to be the messiah.⁵ And rabbis even accepted those “messiahs” as messiahs. If we think back to the Old Testament, God always promised to bring back the

However, it is obvious that at some point in history this statement actually became reality. Granted, there have always been a few people who not only desired freedom from their oppressors but also their sins, but they seem to be the minority. Rather, the common desire seems to be to long for a messiah to free them from their worldly oppressors.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lesson* (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1900), 34.

⁵ There was for example Judas, son of Hezekiah (4 AD) who started a revolt against the successor of Herod the Great, Herod Archelaus (see: Flavius Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.56). Or for example

people from the exile and to free them from their oppressor if they turn back to him (Jer 15:19, Am 9:14).

However, Smith notes that Jewish commentators had difficulties reconciling the prophecies of the messiah as a conqueror with the suffering messiah. There were the options of two messiahs – one that is the conqueror and would be messiah ben David, and the other who would be the suffering messiah called messiah ben Joseph.⁶ It seems to be the case that in retrospect Jews tried to find an explanation for the texts that point to a suffering messiah. One of these explanations were these two messiahs, one who will suffer and one who will reign. In trying to find explanations for the suffering messiah, they were making especially the prophecy in Zech 9:9, conditional: “If Israel were righteous, Messiah would come on the clouds as in Daniel 7; if they were not righteous he would come lowly, riding on a donkey.”⁷ But this thinking of two messiahs only appeared after Jesus was crucified. Jews at the time of Jesus did not quite comprehend the fact that there will be a suffering messiah. They refused such thinking (1 Cor 1:23). “In the light of all our present knowledge, the suffering and dying Messiah was not yet a familiar traditional figure in the Judaism of the first

Simon bar Kochba (132-135, or Simon ben Kosiba) who is called “messiah” by several Rabbis (Lamentations Rabbah 2.2 §4). He as well started a revolt against the Romans, but contrary to Judas he was successful. At least for some time. He later died through the hands of his associates.

⁶ For an in-depth information and study see: Thomas Griebel, *Der sterbende Messias Ben Joseph und der leidende Messias Ben David in der rabbinischen Literatur* (GRIN Verlag, München, 2007).

⁷ Smith, *The Promised Messiah*, 426.

century AD.”⁸ We see that, “early Jewish ideas about ‘Messiah’ underwent significant development until the end of the first century CE.”⁹

But what did the Jews at Jesus’ time expect? “An eschatological ruler, chosen by God to act decisively against the wicked on behalf of the righteous of God’s people Israel.”¹⁰ They did not await a messiah who was there to suffer, and to forgive their sins, rather they anticipated a messiah who would free them from their oppressors and who will bring peace to all the nations.

Hence, we should not be surprised that so called “messiahs” who were accepted by the rabbis participated in revolts against the oppressors.

⁸ Martin Hengel, *The Atonement: The Origins of the Doctrine in the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007).

⁹ Loren T. Stuckenbruck, “Messianic Ideas in the Apocalyptic and Related Literature of Early Judaism,” in *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments*, ed. Mark J. Boda (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2007), 91.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 112.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

After studying the topic of Zechariah and the expectations of the Jews, the question considered in this thesis should be reformulated. It is wrong to ask: “Why did the Jews not recognize their messiah?” the proper question would be: “How could it be that the Jews anticipated such a different messiah than the one that came?”

Even though the broader theme and background of the messianic verses in Zechariah deal with judgment and war, the main actor to carry out the judgment is never the promised one, it is always the Lord himself. Rather, Zechariah criticizes the leadership of Israel and predicts that there will be coming someone who will not lead the sheep astray. But since the nation will not accept this leader, they indeed will be scattered. Even though the Lord promised to restore the land, his main goal in Zechariah 9-14 is to restore the leadership and thereby restore the nation.

If we now turn to the expectation of the Jews, the separation of the two messiah's makes the most sense. It even seems that instead of two different functions, Jesus as the messiah has three different roles: the perfect sacrifice, priest and king. At his first advent he was the one to suffer, when he went to heaven he became priest and when he returns to earth, he will be the righteous king and his kingdom will be from one end of the world to the other.

When only reading the messianic prophecies in Zechariah it is understandable, to a certain degree, how and why the Jews anticipated a warrior that will free them from their oppressors. However, since the messianic prophecies in Zechariah are not

the only passages that pointed to the coming of the messiah (they also had their sacrificial system and further messianic prophecies) it is hard to understand why they awaited a different messiah than the one that came. “Christ gave the Jewish people abundant evidence that He was the Messiah; but His teaching called for a decided change in their lives.”¹ What the Jews did not understand is that Zechariah depicts a messiah that is going to open a fountain to cleanse sin and impurity. The first thing that had to be accomplished was the restoration of the nation and afterwards the restoration of the land. However, the restoration of the nation did not mean to establish them as the world-leading nation, rather this restoration related to their spiritual welfare.

However, we should not be too fast in judging the Jews. They clung to their traditions, false expectations, and hopes and in doing so, they missed out on the best thing that could have ever happened to them. When they will look onto the one that they have pierced, the mourning will be great.

The messiah that Zechariah prophesied already came. The fountain to cleanse us from sin and impurity was opened and is still open. The messiah started to build his kingdom of peace. Soon he will return to not only restore the nation but to gather the remnant and to restore the land as well. Zechariah 14 will soon be a reality: “And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one (Zech 14:9).

¹ White, *Christ's Object Lesson*, 105.

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