

# Zechariah 9:14-17

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*Zechariah tells the Judeans that the LORD will defend them, care for them, and restore their fortunes because they are precious to Him.*

Zechariah 9:11–13 spelled out the LORD’s plan to free Zion’s captives to fulfill His promise to her. He urged the Judeans to return home because He would restore twice as much their fortunes and ultimately use them to defeat “Greece.” The present passage elaborates on how God would grant victory to His people. After empowering them, *the LORD will appear over them* in the sky to encourage and defend them: *His arrow will go forth like lightning* (v 14).

The *arrow* was a weapon commonly used in Ancient Near Eastern warfare. Figuratively speaking, the *arrow* of Yahweh is His attack upon the enemy (Numbers 24:8; Deuteronomy 32:42). It would go forth like flashes of *lightning* (Psalm 77:17). *Lightning* is irresistible. There is no defense against it. Whatever it hits is destroyed. The point seems to be that when God acts, no one and no thing will stop Him.

This truth echoes the psalmist’s words when he described how the LORD delivered him from his foes: “He [the LORD] sent out His arrows, and scattered them; And lightning flashes in abundance, and routed them” (Psalm 18:14; Habakkuk 3:11). In Zechariah, we learn that once the divine *arrow* is ready for battle, *the Lord GOD will blow the trumpet* (v 14). This signals that God will choose the time. He will begin the battle according to His plan—neither before nor after.

The term translated as *trumpet* is “shofar” in Hebrew. It refers to a wind instrument made from a ram’s horn. The ancient Israelites would blow *trumpets* over burnt offerings and peace offerings to celebrate the New Moon feast (Numbers 10:10). Also, sentinels would blow them to signal impending danger, as when an enemy nation was approaching Israel (Numbers 10:9). In our passage, the sound of the *trumpet* would signal the battle and calamity *the Lord GOD* would send on the foreign nations (Greece, from verse 13). When God determines the time, then nothing and no one will stand in His way.

The term *Lord* is the Hebrew word “Adonai,” which means “master” or “ruler.” The Hebrew term for *GOD* is “Yahweh,” the covenant name of God. That name speaks of God’s character and His relationship with His covenant people (Exodus 3:14; 34:6). The prophet used these two terms to let his audience know that Yahweh, the covenant partner of Judah, was and is the master of the universe. He will choose the time and place of His actions, and His word will most certainly come to pass.

He alone has the complete authority over the world. He would *march in the storm winds of the south* (v 14).

The term *south* is the Hebrew word “Teman,” a geographical designation (Exodus 26:18). It was the principal city of Edom. The prophet Obadiah used *Teman* as a synonym for Edom (Obadiah 1:9). In the ancient world, storms coming from the Arabian desert (*south*) were the most violent (Job 37:9; Isaiah 21:1). Thus, the image that God would advance *in the storm winds of the south* suggest that He would destroy the enemy with an irresistible power. And while God’s people might need to show up on the battlefield, He would fight for them. Yes, *the LORD of hosts will defend them* (v 15).

The term translated as *hosts* is “Sabaoth” in Hebrew and means “armies.” It refers to the angelic armies of heaven, whose leader is *the LORD*. Since the term *host* qualifies God as a warrior, the phrase describes His power as He leads His army to defeat His adversaries (Amos 5:16, 9:5; Habakkuk 2:17). Here in Zechariah, it demonstrates God’s power as the supreme warrior who has complete control and authority over all human affairs. He will fight for Judah, and *they will devour and trample on the sling stones* (v 15).

The term *sling stone* describes a weapon of two long straps with a leather piece between them at the end to hold the stone. Since 4500 BC, shepherds and professional soldiers have used them extensively. The stones were of different size, sometimes as large as a baseball. David used a *sling* when he killed Goliath (1 Samuel 17:40, 49).

There are a number of translations of the phrase *will devour and trample on the sling stones* (v 15). All agree that it pictures victory for Israel. As this phrase is translated, it would seem that the enemy slingers shoot stones at the Judeans and their stones are simply swallowed up, having no deterrent effect (*devour*). Then, not having been slowed down, the Judean troops *trample on the sling stones* that were slung at them as they inevitably march toward their enemies to defeat and subjugate them. Jewish tradition holds that the slingers represent the Greek troops.

The picture is of a total victory. As a result, *they will drink and be boisterous as with wine* (v 15). That is, God’s people will be so glad that they will drink wine to celebrate their victory. They will be happy to the point of overflowing—*they will be filled like a sacrificial basin and drenched like the corners of the altar* (v 15). Each of these images picture “filled to overflowing.” In this case with happiness over their victory.

In the biblical world, people would sprinkle the horns of the *altar* with the blood or wine of sacrifices. At the national festivals this would presumably cause the *corners of the altar* to end up *drenched*, as the many pilgrims from all over Israel would come to the temple. They would fill bowls with the blood of the sacrifices. For example, when Moses affirmed God’s covenant with Israel:

“he sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD. Moses took half of the blood and put *it* in basins, and the *other* half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.”  
(Exodus 24:5–6)

If this were repeated over and over for the large populations of people attending the national festivals, the resulting picture would be one of overflowing abundance. In this case, the

abundance being pictured is the fulfillment of the people who are enjoying victory. It is like the celebrations of the teammates on a world championship team.

God would protect His covenant people and defeat all those who attack them. The people of God would be filled with joy. And *the LORD their God will save them in that day* (v 16).

The phrase *in that day* refers to a time when the LORD will punish the wicked, deliver the righteous, and restore His creation. The verb *save* always indicates “someone is being delivered from something by someone.” Here the context indicates that the Israelites are being delivered from their enemies by God. He will deliver them because they are *as the flock of His people*.

Just as shepherds rescue his flock from danger, the LORD will *save* His chosen people *for they are the stones of a crown, sparkling in His land* (v 16). This shows that God has special regard for Israel, just as one might take special delight in owning a sparkling jewel. Israel is like the *stones of a crown*. God takes special delight when they are *in His land*, referring to the Promised Land of Israel. Earlier in Chapter 9, Zechariah encouraged the remaining exiles to return to the Promised Land. But this appears to refer to a complete restoration of Israel—a total fulfillment of God’s covenant promises. It appears that God longs for this restoration as much as the people.

The term translated as *crown* is an emblem of royalty worn by a king (2 Samuel 1:10). Thus, the idea that the Judeans are *the stones of a crown* means that they are precious to the LORD. The book of Isaiah made a similar statement regarding Zion, “You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD and a royal diadem in the hand of your God” (Isaiah 62:3).

The prophet Zechariah reiterated the beauty of the Lord’s people in His land by describing how He views them, *For what comeliness and beauty will be theirs!* (v 17). Yes, the people of God will be attractive and lovely because God will fulfill His covenant promises, and Israel will be restored to the land. But He will also fully restore His creation (Revelation 21:1-4).

During that day, *grain will make the young men flourish, and new wine the virgins* (v 17). Prosperity will be restored to Israel.

The *young men* and *the virgins* depict a dynamic society where its citizens are strong and are in good physical health. The terms *grain* and *new wine* symbolize agricultural prosperity, a sign of God’s favor and blessing (Genesis 27:28; Deuteronomy 33:28; Joel 2:19; Haggai 1:11).

By using these words, the prophet made it clear that God would restore the fortunes of Judah. There will be prosperity in the form of bountiful crops to satisfy them. At that time, there will be no poor among them. Everyone will have in abundance because God will restore His creation.

### **Biblical Text**

**14 Then the LORD will appear over them,  
And His arrow will go forth like lightning;  
And the Lord GOD will blow the trumpet,  
And will march in the storm winds of the south.**

**15** The Lord of hosts will defend them.  
And they will devour and trample on the sling stones;  
And they will drink *and* be boisterous as with wine;  
And they will be filled like a *sacrificial* basin,  
*Drenched* like the corners of the altar.  
**16** And the Lord their God will save them in that day  
As the flock of His people;  
For *they are as* the stones of a crown,  
Sparkling in His land.  
**17** For what comeliness and beauty *will be* theirs!  
Grain will make the young men flourish, and new wine the virgins.