Prisoners of Hope

INTRODUCTION
The weekend of April 19 and 20 we will move this meeting to Sunday night. We’re going to do Friday and Saturday nights at IHOP-KC. We’re beginning something that we’ve been planning for about a year or two. It’s called “Encounter God weekends.” We typically have 100 to 200 visitors a week. They come from many places to visit. This way they can come on the weekends, and many of them do that anyway, although a lot of them do come during the week. We will have teaching, praying, refreshing and renewal for them. It will be a time for them to wait in the presence of the Lord and to encounter the Lord. We will have teaching on Friday and Saturday nights as well as on Sundays.

On the back of the newsletter that you have there it says that anyone can come to any meeting. Sunday night is the one that we’re really targeting, though. If you can only come to one, which is the case for most of you, then Sunday night is the one, because we will have a lot of room. The other nights we will only have a little, because there are only 250 seats and they go really quickly. Of course, anyone can come to any meeting if they want to hear the Word, worship, and pray for one another.

THERE IS A KING FROM THE LINE OF DAVID WHO WILL RULE ALL THE NATIONS
Zechariah 9-14 is comprised of two different prophetic messages. There are two oracles of the Lord. Zechariah 9, 10, and 11 are oracle one. Zechariah 12, 13, and 14, which we looked at ever so briefly last week, are oracle two. This week we will look at oracle 1, which is Zechariah 9-11, but we will focus our attention mostly on Zechariah 9. In order to understand these last chapters of Zechariah 9-14, you have to understand the basic premise at which the Old Testament prophets were aiming. It’s a time on the earth when the Messiah, Jesus, would literally come and establish His kingdom. It would be a worldwide kingdom from Israel, a theocracy, and the King would rule by the laws of God’s Word. He would rule the whole earth for 1,000 years from the city of Jerusalem.

I believe this is literal, and it’s important that we understand that it’s literal. There are many passages in the Word of God. I’m just making up a number, but it’s like fifty. I don’t mean it’s two or three, but it’s closer to fifty. Those passages don’t make sense if you don’t understand the clear vision of the Old Testament prophets. It’s that the Messiah from the line of David would come and set up a kingdom that would be worldwide. The nations of the earth would obey His leadership. In the Old Testament, there’s no hint as to how long it is. You know that it’s long because it says in Isaiah and in several other places that people who only live to be 100 years old will be said to have died in their youth. Longevity will be like in the days of Adam and Eve and Noah where they lived 400, 500, 600, and 700 years; that will be normal again.

But there’s no hint in the Old Testament as to how long this period of time on the earth would last. Revelation 20 in the New Testament says six different times that it’s a thousand years. What we’re aiming for and believing for is the literal, thousand-year reign of the God-Man, Jesus, who is the King from the line of David who will rule the nations. If you don’t believe that from the Scriptures, which is common today, then many of these passages don’t make sense. You’ll be in hopeless confusion trying to explain these passages away spiritually. I know a lot of people do that. They read these and say, “No, it’s spiritual. There’s symbolism.” You can do that to some of these passages. The detail, though, is so specific, so clear, and repeated so many times that it’s just an endless maze of conjecture to try and explain all of this away in some symbolic way.
THERE WILL BE A PARADISE ON THE EARTH FOR 1,000 YEARS

It’s important, then, to understand that Zechariah 9 is about a literal kingdom. All the prophets testified of it from the Old and New Testament, and we’re believing for it. We believe that the Lord Jesus is going to come in the sky in person. He’s going to set up His kingdom on the earth. It will go for a thousand years. After that, all kinds of things pick up to a whole new level. Everything that God ordained in the garden of Eden, before sin, is going to happen in this natural world. Everything that God ordained in the garden of Eden, all of the conditions before sin was established and ruined everything, will be reestablished. There will be a paradise on the earth for 1,000 years. That’s what Zechariah 9, 10, and 11 are about. That’s also what Zechariah 12, 13, and 14 are about. There are edifying ways to take some of it symbolically. We can take some of it and apply to us now. The reason that we can take it symbolically now is because God never changes. He’s the same God with the same personality and the same wisdom. Whatever He’s going to do then, He’ll have tokens of it now. Even though some of these promises are for just a short way down the road, after the appearing of the Lord in the sky at the second coming, some of these promises will only happen in fullness then. We can draw strength from those promises.

In the millennial kingdom, or the “kingdom age,” as it’s commonly called, or the messianic kingdom, because different people call it different things, the God who established it with power, wisdom, and love is the same God. We know that if He’ll do these things at that time, then it’s in His heart and personality to do things like this even in this age. Though we don’t believe they’ll come to the fullness in this age, Zechariah 9 has promises that are meaningful to us even before the appearing of the Lord. What we have to do is go back and forth between two levels of understanding.

The primary level is to understand God’s intention for the birthing and establishing of the kingdom age, or the messianic kingdom. At the same time, though, as we’re hoping for that, praying for that, and believing for that, we can draw strength from those promises even now, today, in April 2002. I will be talking about the fullness. Then I’ll take a little break for a second and say, “Yes, but now we can apply that in our lives right here in April at this time.” We will be going back and forth.

When you read the prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah and all of the Minor Prophets, and don’t understand that there’s a literal messianic kingdom that’s going to be established on the earth, then you’ll be in confusion continually on many passages of Scripture. They won’t make any sense. You’ll read it and ask, “What does this mean? How are we going to spiritualize that?” Take all the pressure off, because you don’t have to dance around it and figure out some symbolic way to get rid of it. It’s real and it’s for us to believe now. It’s really going to happen. It gives insight into the drama. The drama is out of this world. The drama that God is orchestrating at the end of the age is amazing. The beginnings of a lot of the things that will happen in the millennial kingdom or the kingdom age will happen even in this generation. I believe that this is the generation in which the Lord is coming. If that’s true, then He’ll appear in the sky. He’ll come to the earth and set up a kingdom. There will be an overlap of things in this age in our lives that will actually impact and have relevance in that time frame. That’s very dramatic and very powerful.

GOD WILL ANOINT THE PEOPLE TO BRING MILITARY DELIVERANCE

The theme of Zechariah 9 is in verse 13. God is going to raise up deliverers. This is actually, literally, going to happen. It’s not just figurative; it will happen. In Zechariah 9:13, He’s going to use Judah, which is the southern kingdom. He’s going to use Ephraim, which is the northern kingdom. Israel had a civil war in about 933 BC
between the north and the south. That civil war was never healed. The north is called Ephraim, or Israel, and the south is called Judah. God is going to take people from Judah and Ephraim; He’s going to anoint them to make war against this fierce warrior who is commonly known as the Antichrist or the man of sin or the man of lawlessness. It’s literal, though, because He’s really going to anoint them to bring military deliverance. That’s what He’s talking about.

**HE IS RAISING UP DELIVERERS FROM SIN AND OPPRESSION**

That’s actually the fullness of what’s going on here, but there’s a spiritual deliverance. If God is going to anoint men and women to do that in verse 13 when the Lord comes, right at the coming of the Lord, then we know that He wants His people to be deliverers. God is raising up deliverers right now, even before the Lord comes. We will bring deliverance from the enemy and sin through the preaching of the Word, the laying on of hands, the feeding of the poor, and the casting out of demons. We’re deliverers. That’s what God is doing: He’s raising up deliverers right now in this age. These military deliverers will be anointed here in verse 13. We can use this promise for ourselves now in a very meaningful and edifying way.

It only takes a moment for a king to be established. A king or a president can be voted in by an election. It takes a lifetime, though, to raise up and train a deliverer in the kingdom of God. You can be established to a political appointment in one moment, but God is raising up deliverers. That’s what’s going on in your lives right now. God is giving you a history of experiencing deliverance in your own life. He’s developing your private history in experiencing deliverance so that you can become a deliverer and bring the deliverance of Jesus to other people. Every single person in the kingdom of God is invited to be a deliverer. We can all bring the Word of God and bring them to salvation; we call that evangelism. We can lay hands on them; we call that healing. We can speak the Word to them. We can disciple and train them. We can feed them, and if they are poor we can meet their needs. That’s called “mercy deeds.” These are all forms of deliverance. God is calling every one of us to be deliverers. It takes a lifetime to equip a deliverer if we will enter into the fullness of what God has for us. That’s what God is doing in our lives.

**HE’S DELIVERING US FROM PRISON IN ORDER TO MAKE US DELIVERERS**

Zechariah 9:11-12 tells us what God is doing. He’s taking prisoners in verse 11. They’re called prisoners of hope in verse 12. He’s taking prisoners, who are men and women experiencing bondage. They’re in prison in one of many ways. At this time, though, they’re literal, political prisoners. There are political prisoners beyond that as well, but at least that’s included in this. They’re going to be literally liberated and set free. The Lord is then going to anoint them in a military way. They will bring deliverance to the nation of Israel under the anointing of Jesus. That’s really what’s going on here. God is taking prisoners who are men and women in this hour. Some are in a God-ordained prison like David, who was in the wilderness for some time. It was by the Lord’s hand that David was in the wilderness. Some of us are in a prison of our own making and some of us are in a prison that the Lord has made. One way or the other, the Lord is the Lord over the prison. He’s delivering us from prison in order to make us a deliverer to other people.

Probably most of the people in this room are in some situation that stings them. It’s some form of prison that you want set free from. The Lord says, “You’re a prisoner of hope.” He wants to free you from that prison in order to make you a deliverer who brings the anointing to others. That’s the spiritual application of this passage. But it’s really talking about literal events in a military and political way at the conclusion of this age and the establishing of the millennial kingdom. The Lord is the One who created this drama. Again, His wisdom never changes and His heart never changes. If He’ll deliver prisoners at that time to make them deliverers, then we
know that’s the business He’s in. He takes prisoners and makes them deliverers; He gives them a history of deliverance. The pinnacle of this passage is that prisoners of hope are turned into deliverers.

**A FIERCE WARRIOR COMES FROM THE NORTH, WITH DESTRUCTION IN HIS WAKE**

There are some other key things that we will look at in a moment. We’ll start in Zechariah 9:1. Again, it’s a prophetic word that’s describing literal events that are going to take place in a political and military way. In Zechariah 9:1-7, Zechariah is prophesying about a fierce warrior who will come traveling through the land. Verse 1 is in the north, in Syria; verse 2 is the Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon. He’s going to work his way down. Verse 5 describes the Philistine cities. A fierce warrior is being described. He’s coming in a rage. He’s a strong enemy. He’s coming in destruction and is wiping out all of the cities in his path. This is a terrifying picture for the people hearing this prophecy. They knew those northern cities were going to get wiped out, and then the middle cities would be wiped out as well.

It ends in verse 7 down in the southern cities. It’s a picture of a fierce warrior. It’s a very terrifying picture. Everyone is trembling because this fierce warrior is literally going to wreak havoc on all the cities. This picture of a fierce warrior was partially fulfilled in Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great ruled in about 330 BC. This prophecy was made in 520 BC. Some 200 years later, Alexander the Great partially fulfilled the picture of the fierce warrior. He literally did it in history, but he didn’t fulfill every detail. What’s very common in Old Testament prophecies is what’s called a “near-far prophecy.” First there’s a near fulfillment in some historic figure in the Old Testament. Then there’s a far fulfillment, either of the Antichrist, if it’s negative, or the Messiah, King Jesus, if it’s positive.

**THE COUNTERFEIT KING AND THE REAL KING WILL CONTENT FOR THE EARTH**

Many of these prophecies have a near fulfillment: they happened within 100 or 200 years of the prophet through some leader of that time. They were only down payments, though, of a big, global-picture fulfillment of the conflict between the false king of the earth, which is the Antichrist, and the true King of the earth, who is Jesus. The counterfeit king wants to keep the real King from ruling over the earth. Just before the true global reign begins under Jesus, there will be a false, counterfeit global reign under the leadership of the man of sin. This will affect our lives very powerfully. This isn’t just pie in the sky; it’s not like, “Well, if you like rapture movies, then you’re into that, but if you don’t, then you’re into the real stuff.” No. There are so many Bible verses that describe this with so much clarity. The Church today is sleeping. They’re fascinated with rapture movies, but they aren’t really studying their Bibles to prepare. Our families and our children will actually witness these events if it’s true that the Lord is coming in this generation, which I believe that He is. This is really important material from the Scriptures. It’s not just casual and fun reading when you don’t have something pressing. It’s really important, divine information that God gave in order to equip the Church to understand for its own sake. Also, it’s to equip the Church to be a voice of preparation to the nations of the earth so that they can understand; so that they can flee to the refuge of Jesus because they understand what’s happening.

So 200 years after Zechariah was the first fierce warrior, who was Alexander the Great. He started in the north and he went raging in destruction all the way down to the south, just as it says in verses 1-7. There are a few things that he didn’t fulfill, but I won’t go into it. That’s how it always is, though. The immediate or partial fulfillment always leaves a few unfulfilled details. The Antichrist is the true fierce warrior that the Holy Spirit was speaking about to Zechariah. Whether Zechariah understood all of that, no one knows for sure. It’s very clear from the Scriptures, though, that he’s the fierce warrior coming from the north. He’s going to enter into
the land of Israel and do all kinds of negative things. Zechariah 9:1-7 is really interesting, but we don’t have time to go through the details. Some 2,500 years after this prophecy was given, the Antichrist will come.

Here’s what the Lord says in verse 8. “I will camp around My house because of the army” (Zech. 9:8). It’s the army of Alexander the Great, or the army of the Antichrist. “I will camp around My house because of the army, because of him who passes by and him who returns. No more shall an oppressor pass through them, for now I have seen with My eyes” (ibid). In other words, “My eyes are set on Jerusalem.”

Here’s what the Lord is saying. It’s a terrifying destruction. It’s a military havoc that he’s wreaking in this part of the earth in the Middle East. The Lord says, “Here’s what I will do: I will camp around My house. I will release the anointing of the Holy Spirit in part and cause some deliverance to happen.” That actually took place. In verse 8 God is going to release divine protection. There will be an element of divine protection against the work of the Antichrist.

PREPARING IN THE WEST FOR THE TRAUMAS YET TO COME

We know that in the generation of the Lord’s return, in this hour of history, there’s going to be a tremendous amount of martyrdom. Martyrdom is real. Martyrdom is an issue that the Church worldwide is preparing for, because they are embracing it. The Western Church, though, never really thinks about it. They always think about the next ten, twenty, or thirty years. They say, “If we buy this house right and sell it, then we can get a nice one when we retire.” No one is thinking about embracing martyrdom with their grandchildren. Almost no one is thinking that in the western Church. They’re thinking, “If we could do this, then we could do that. Then we’ll be older, and that would be neat. If we do this, then that will happen.” All of that’s good, but it’s wise to begin to prepare in the West for what’s going to happen in the West. Many strange and unusual things are going to happen in the generation in which the Lord returns. If we’re in that generation, and I believe that we are, then we need to begin to get other pieces of information into our planning and expectations of the future. We need to have clarity for our children, grandchildren, and neighbors as some things are going to happen. Things could begin to pick up to a whole new level automatically. September 11 showed us that, and as tragic as that was, it was only a hint. Far more devastating things are going to happen. They will happen suddenly, without a day’s or a moment’s notice. As the world was gripped on September 11, it will be gripped many more times than this in far greater devastation. The earth will be watching the drama as the things unfold.

NOTHING ESCAPES THE TENDER NOTICE OF THE GREAT SHEPHERD

This is a very important thing here at the end of verse 8, this promise of divine protection. He says, “For now I have seen with My eyes.” That’s a very powerful sentence. The Lord says, “I’m not overlooking anything that’s happening.” As a matter of fact, this is the exact phrase that the Lord spoke to Moses in Exodus 3. Moses went out into the wilderness and saw the burning bush. The Lord said, “My eyes have seen the affliction of My people” (Ex. 3:7, paraphrased). It’s the exact same language. The Lord says, “What I saw when I spoke to Moses about the affliction of My people, I see it now. I’m not forgetting it. I know that Alexander is coming.” Zechariah told them 200 years ahead of time. “It’s not going to escape My notice. I know it. I’m watching it with tender care and a lot of passion.” He says, “I know that there will be all kinds of evil forces coming against the land of Israel and against the Church. My eye is upon you.” This is one of the great sentences that will become so meaningful as the pressures begin to increase. Nothing is escaping the tender care and notice of the great Shepherd. He’s watching it. He’s going to see to it that everything works together for the good of those who will give themselves wholly to God in that hour. He’ll see to it (Rom. 8:28). He says, “My eye is upon you.”
What happened in Egypt under Moses was very dramatic. He brought three million Jewish slaves through the wilderness with signs and wonders. What happened to three million slaves under Moses was a token; it was dress rehearsal for what’s going to happen at the end of the age under Jesus.

The drama of the book of Exodus is only the introduction to the drama of the end of the age. It’s very important to understand that. Things aren’t going to continue just as they are, and then all of a sudden everything is wonderful; the Lord just appears and we’re in heaven. We say, “Boy, that was a neat little transition. I got to skip that little deathbed scene. I skipped and just went up in the sky. Thing couldn’t be better!”

No, I think there will be all kinds of turbulence and disturbance as the Lord is preparing His Church to bring deliverance to them and then through them. He appears to rescue them. He will anoint His people with tremendous deliverance after that.

**JESUS WILL PERSONALLY COME TO DELIVER THE EARTH FROM OPPRESSION**

Let’s go to verse 9, which is the introduction of the King. It’s the true King who is the King of which the Antichrist is the counterfeit. The Antichrist is the counterfeit world leader, and verse 9 describes the true world Leader, who is obviously Jesus, the coming King. The Lord is going to do more than camp around His house in verse 8. He’s going to send a king in person to deliver His house. Verse 8 says, “I will watch you. I will camp around you.”

Someone says, “How? How involved are You going to be in camping around and watching us?”

In verse 9 the prophet Zechariah says, “Be as happy as you can imagine. Greatly rejoice! Shout! How involved is God going to be in the promise of verse 8 to camp around the house, to stop the oppressor and to watch with His eye? He’s actually going to come personally to you. He’s coming to you.”

He’s a very unusual king. He says, “The King that’s coming to you in verse 9 is going to deliver you from prison in verse 11 and make you a deliverer in verse 13.” That’s what he’s telling the nation of Israel. He says, “He’s coming to you first, though. He’s very unusual because He’s lowly. He’s riding on a donkey.” We know that this was fulfilled in part at the first coming of Jesus. Matthew quotes this in Matthew 21:5. The King came on a donkey. That did happen, but the coming of the King was only partially fulfilled when He came on a donkey. It will go even beyond that. He’s coming in another way, too. The Spirit of God as He was speaking to Zechariah was talking about both comings.

If you read in Zechariah 9, you only get the picture of the King at the second coming. As a matter of fact, imagine you had spoken to Zechariah and said, “You know what? He’s coming first on a donkey to die. Two thousand years will pass and then He will fulfill the rest of the chapter.”

Zechariah would have said, “Really? I don’t buy it. The whole chapter is about Him coming in the clouds in power.”

You say, “Yes, I know, but there’s a little, 2,000-year gulf between verses 9 and 10.” I don’t believe Zechariah would have believed you.
JESUS IS THE ONLY MAN WHO WON’T BE CORRUPTED BY TOTAL POWER

If you read Zechariah 9, it’s all about the second coming of the King. Many times the Lord is speaking on two different levels. He says, “The first time, He’ll come on a donkey. The second time, He’ll come in the sky.”

Here’s the important part, though. Whether He comes the first time or the second time or whether He remains in heaven, the most stunning part is verse 9. It says, “He’s lowly” (Zech. 9:9b, paraphrased). He’s not just lowly at the first coming; He’s lowly in heart. He said this in Matthew 11:29. He said, “I’m lowly. I’m gentle. I’m humble at heart” (Mt. 11:29, paraphrased).

Why is it important to know that He’s lowly? For many reasons. You’ve heard the sentence about how total power totally corrupts. He’s the only Man who won’t be corrupted by total power. In fact, His power will do the opposite: it will bring redemption to the whole earth.

We were singing the verses earlier from the book of Revelation, “Worthy is the Lamb to receive all power” (Rev. 5:12, paraphrased). It’s talking about this setting. This is a man from Nazareth. Of course, originally He’s the uncreated God in the fellowship of the Trinity. In the incarnation, though, He comes from Nazareth. He’s the one and only human in whom all the power can be entrusted to rule the entire universe. He will govern the whole earth and everything in the created order under the Father’s authority.

THE LOWLY KING WILL LEAD IN A WAY THAT PRODUCES A LOWLY KINGDOM

Let’s focus for a moment on the fact that He’s lowly. No king with power is lowly, but this King is. It’s not a temporary attribute. He’s lowly when He has all of the power in eternity. He’s lowly when He comes on the earth to die. He’s lowly when He comes in the clouds in glory. He’s lowly a billion years from now. He’s lowly. That’s what He’s like. By itself that’s worth a thousand worship services.

It’s so awesome that He’s lowly, and it’s so powerful, but let me lay that down. Here’s another point that I want to make. What He’s going to produce in you in His coming is lowliness. When He comes, it will be a surprise. If the King comes, He’s going to make us all rich and famous, right? The King says, “I’m coming, but I’m a lowly king. First in My coming, you will know what it means to be in prison. You will know what it means for Me to deliver you and produce lowliness in you.” The lowly King will lead in a way that produces a lowly kingdom.

THE GREATEST ENEMY OF THE HUMAN RACE IS PRIDE IN THE HUMAN HEART

We pray and fast for the power. The Lord says, “I will give you the power, but know this: I will give you My power to defeat the enemy. The greatest enemy in existence in the human race is pride in the human heart.”

The number one enemy, in and outside of the Church, in the kingdom of darkness, sin, sickness, and Satan; the number one enemy that opens the door is pride in the human heart. The lowly King says, “I will come in power, I promise you. Understand, though, when I manifest My power, that I will bring My people to lowliness as I make them deliverers. They are going to be lowly. They are going to be humble like Me.”

You say, “Lord, I want Your power.”

The Lord says, “Good; I want to give you My power. I want to give you My heart, though, in the context of My power, or My power will injure you and it will injure My people. I will make you lowly.”
That’s what all of these little surprise prison sentences are all about. I signed up just to be anointed and happy; I didn’t sign up for surprise prison sentences. I say, “What’s all this about? Lord, I’m different than all of those other men. Trust me, I’m not like them. I don’t need this heavy-duty training. Just give me the power and we will get on with it.”

This is the number one enemy that the power of God subdues, and it subdues devils, cancers, and unbelief through the apostolic preaching in power; it subdues all kinds of unrighteousness, but pride in the human spirit is more powerful and destructive than Alexander the Great was or the Antichrist is. Pride in the human spirit is what empowers them to wreak havoc all over the earth.

**HE LEADS THE HUMAN RACE WITH THE SYMPATHY OF ONE WHO SUFFERED**

We learn in Zechariah 13:7 that He’s not just lowly, but humble. He will be lowly in that His whole process of being established as King will involve suffering Himself. There are many places even in Zechariah where His suffering is clear. He says, “I will be a God who not only uses suffering to produce lowliness in you; I will suffer and lead you with sympathy.” Hebrews 4:15 says that He’s a sympathetic high priest. He’s a high priest who suffered and said with full meaning, “Ouch! That really hurt!” He really felt it. When He leads the nations, He leads with sympathy. When He sees your prison sentence and His eye is upon you in verse 8, then He knows what it means to hurt for real. He’s lowly. He’s going to produce lowliness as He releases the anointing on you.

That’s for us, but He’s going to do the same thing for the nation of Israel. His election of the nation of Israel means that they are going to go through incredible troubles. They’ve had so much trouble for nearly 4,000 years. The Lord says, “No, they are going to have even more trouble. I will produce lowliness.”

You say, “Lord, this is intense!”

He says, “I know about pain. I’ve suffered more pain than any human has ever suffered. I lead the human race with the sympathy of One who suffered. I’m lowly. I do have My eye on you. It’s not just that I notice everything; I feel everything that you’ve felt and I notice with care.” In verse 8 He says, “My eye is upon you with the care of a lowly king.” He has all of the credibility to organize the end-time drama with suffering in it because He has suffered more than any other human. He knows the reality of what Israel is going through and what the Church is going through. He knows what suffering produces, and He’s coming.

He’s also lowly in the sense that He takes the weak and the broken. 1 Corinthians 1:27 says that God chooses the weak and the poor of the earth. He’s lowly; He likes the lowly. He likes weak and broken people. He looks down and says, “I like Mike. I really like you, Mike. You’re weak and broken. You’re just a total mess. You’re the kind of man that I hang out with. I’m lowly and I like the lowly of the earth.”

I’m using the word *lowly* a little differently, although *lowly* means *humble*. I’m using it differently as meaning “weak and broken.” No one is outside of the grasp of God’s care. You’re not disqualified. I don’t care what you’ve done; you’re not disqualified if you’ll say yes. He likes the weak and the broken. He’s a lowly king.

There’s no king that has ever been like Him. There’s only One of whom we can say, “Worthy is the Man, the Lamb, to receive all of the power of God.” There’s only one Man who deserves to receive that.
THE LORD WILL BRING DELIVERANCE FOR THE NATION OF ISRAEL
He’s not only lowly, but in Zechariah 9:9 it says He’s going to bring salvation. Instead of the word salvation, put the word deliverance. He’s going to bring deliverance. Salvation and deliverance is the same thing. In this context it’s talking about deliverance from the Arab nations and the Antichrist’s assault to wipe them out. He’s talking about political and military deliverance alongside spiritual deliverance. He’s going to forgive them; He’s going to anoint them. He’s going to deliver them politically in the kingdom age. The deliverance here is talking about the whole picture. He’s coming with deliverance.

ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH WILL GATHER AGAINST ISRAEL
I said last week that I think it’s important for the United States to stand for Israel. It’s my opinion, and I’m not prophesying this because maybe the Lord has a little surprise that no one knows about; I hope that He does. I do believe, though, that America is going to join the bad guys. This is just an opinion, and I’m not saying that this is the Lord; I just know human nature. The Bible says that all the nations and all the major powers are going to gather against Israel (Zech. 12:1-3). America is eventually going come under the seduction of the pressure of finances related to oil. We will say, “You know, Israel, we’re sorry. You’re really little and the opportunities globally for the economics of oil are really big. We don’t mean this personally, but we’re now on the other team.”

Maybe that won’t happen. Maybe there will be something different. I don’t know, but it’s just my opinion. Again, I’m not prophesying it, but the Scriptures say that all of the nations will stand against Israel. America needs to stand with Israel. It’s not that Israel needs America; Israel needs the Messiah, Yeshua. He’s the only deliverer of Israel. America isn’t going to flex its muscles and bail God out of a jam. Here’s the Genesis 1 God who speaks and universes are created. Here’s the U.S. administration, standing toe-to-toe with God to save Israel. I don’t think so. The Lord says, “I can speak and galaxies are created. I appreciate that you guys have good buildings, a good infrastructure, and a good process, but I don’t really need you to deliver Israel from the nations.”

My prayer, my vote, and my everything is that we stay in line with the Lord’s heart for Israel. Personally, I don’t have a lot of conviction that we will stay steady under the seduction of oil and finances when the pressure picks up in the next few decades if the Lord tarries.

The Lord is coming and He’s coming with salvation. In Zechariah 9:10, here’s what He’s going to do. He’s going to cut war off. He’s going to “cut off the chariot” (Zech. 9:10). This isn’t figurative; it’s literal. It’s not like “The chariot, is that cancer? The horse, is that demons?” I’ve read a lot of books on it, and they spiritualize all of this. No, though, it’s really talking about military weapons. The nations are already surrounding Israel, but they are really going to come heavily against her. But the Lord will cut them off. At the end of the day they won’t defeat Israel. There will be a thousand-to-one odds, but the Lord will be there.

― “HIS DOMINION SHALL BE FROM SEA TO SEA”
In verse 10 He’s going to cut off war. This Man, this King, is going to speak peace. I could add the word all because it says it in a dozen other places. It says, “To all the nations of the earth He will speak peace. His dominion shall be from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth” (Zech. 9:10b, paraphrased). You’ll find this many times in the prophets: when it speaks of “the River,” it’s always the Euphrates. It says, “to the ends of the earth,” because the Euphrates River is the original and will eventually be the eastern boundary line of the promised land, because of this one Man who will speak peace to all the nations in the natural realm.
This isn’t just speaking of the resurrection; He’ll do it in real time and space on planet earth. It will be awesome. It says, “His dominion will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.”

I’ll give you a few passages here to develop. Zechariah is actually quoting Micah. I’ll give you three chapters in Micah that you can read on your own, and I’ll give you the fast version instead of all of the exact verses. You can read Micah 4, 5, and 7. They’re all about this Man having a literal kingdom with a worldwide dominion after He cuts off the bow and the military efforts surrounding Israel.

HE WILL SET THE PRISONERS FREE FROM THE WATERLESS PIT
Things are now really going to pick up. He’s speaking to the nations in verse 10. He’s speaking peace to all of the nations and His dominion is all over the earth. In verse 11 He’s going to focus in on ethnic Israel. He says, “As for you, I’m not talking to the whole globe right now. I’m talking to you in a really personal way.” He applies it to Israel instead of to the whole world. He says, “Because of the blood of your covenant”—and that’s just the Old Testament, because it’s now the blood of Jesus in the New Testament—“I will do something. As the King, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit” (Zech. 9:11).

In verse 12 He says, “Return to the stronghold, you prisoners of hope. Even today I declare that I will restore double to you” (Zech 9:12). In verse 13 He adds, “I will anoint you to bring deliverance” (v. 13, paraphrased). He’s now really focusing in here on the nation of Israel. He says, “Israel, you’ve blown it. You’ve been unfaithful to Me. But I’m a covenant God, and although you’ve been unfaithful, I’m still going to be faithful to you.”

This is about the character of God. He says, “I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.” I’m sure this is spiritual, because there are many types of prisoners in Israel, but it’s also literal and physical. He’s going to literally free the political prisoners. Isaiah 61 says that Jesus frees prisoners in many regards. Our number one freedom is obviously spiritual. Spiritual freedom is the greatest need that Israel has, but this is more than that; it’s political and spiritual.

The “waterless pit” is a very interesting phrase. It echoes the exact terminology of Joseph in Genesis 37:24. This is what happened. Joseph was going to be killed by his brothers. He was the little brother, and his big brothers were going to kill him. Reuben speaks up and says, “Hey, let’s put Joseph in a waterless pit” (Gen. 37:22, paraphrased). Normally when someone wanted to kill someone, he would put the person in a pit with water. This is the actual meaning of the waterless pit. It’s not some symbolic and strange idea; it means exactly what it says. Normally when someone wanted to kill someone, he would put the person in a pit of water so that they would drown. It was really simple. Reuben speaks up and says, “Hey, we don’t want to kill the little guy. He’s a little braggart, but I do like him. We should put him in a pit and leave him to God.”

Maybe there was a bit of a debate and someone said, “Well, let’s put him in a pit with water.”

Reuben said, “No, no, no!” The point of a waterless pit is that there’s new hope and a new day. There’s a chance of deliverance. There’s no hope with a pit filled with water. You would drown and that’s it.

HE WILL NOT THROW US IN THE PIT THAT HAS NO HOPE
Here’s what the Lord is saying. He says, “Even in My leadership, even though I’m leading the earth and leading the Body of Christ, I will lead you to peace and to blessing. I will cause you to be delivered. In My plan,
though, I do have a contingency for waterless pits. Even for those who are in covenant, I will allow them to be placed in a pit, but it’s not a pit that will kill them. It’s not a pit that has no hope.”

The Lord sees to it that it’s a waterless pit. He sees to it that it’s a pit that has a day of deliverance. There’s a new day to come. It’s very powerful. There’s a way of escape. There’s a day of escape. You can say “a way of escape” or “a day of escape.” There’s a day of deliverance. In the waterless pit it hurts, but the enemy doesn’t terminate you. You have another day. There’s a day of escape. There’s a way of deliverance in a waterless pit.

The Lords says, “In My leadership as King and in My plan to make you a deliverer, I do have pit stops. I do have prison sentences that I figure into the equation. Know this, though: when I allow you to be in a pit, there’s a day of deliverance that I’ve already planned. There’s a way of escape.” That’s very powerful. That’s why we’re called “prisoners of hope.” Prisoners in a pit with water have no hope. We’re prisoners of hope.

“RETURN TO THE STRONGHOLD, YOU PRISONERS OF HOPE”
In verse 12 He says, “Return to the stronghold” (Zech. 9:12). They’re prisoners in foreign countries and they’re undergoing prison sentences under these very hostile nations. The Lord says, “I will see to it that you don’t die. I will see to it that you return home to the stronghold.”

For the word stronghold, you can put the words “return home.” He says, “I will return you home.” The stronghold was to go back home where the covenant of God was. As we’re talking about this dynamic, in Joel 3 God says, “I’m the stronghold to which you will return” (Joel 3:16, paraphrased). The stronghold is either going back home to safety, which were the strongholds of Israel, or it’s God Himself. It depends on the way you prefer to read it. He says, “Go return to the place of safety.” The stronghold in Israel was Jerusalem. It was to return home to the promises, and to safety, or return home to God Himself, if you want to think of God as the stronghold, which is a very biblical concept. The Lord says, “I will see to it that you’ll make it through the pit. I want you to return home to safety, to the stronghold. I’ve called you a prisoner, but more than that, I’ve called you a prisoner of hope.”

Beloved, if all you are is a prisoner, then you’re in trouble. You’re in big trouble. If you’re a prisoner of hope, though, then you have a reason to live. If you have no hope, not only do you have no reason to live, but you have no way to live. When the devil comes and destroys hope in the prison sentence, then you lose your will to live. There are many people in the Body of Christ today who are giving up on pressing into God. It’s not because they’re prisoners, but it’s that they are prisoners. They do the math and have no hope in their prison sentence. When you have no hope, then you have no will to persevere. You have no will to press. You just yield, give in, and become destroyed. The Lord says, “You’re a prisoner, but I prophetically call you something different. I’m the God of hope.”

In Romans 15:13 He calls Himself the God of hope. He says, “When I have you in a prison sentence, even if it’s a prison of your own making, if you’ll call on Me, then the prisoner will become a prisoner of hope. Why? Because I will deliver them in My timing.”

Beloved, this is awesome. It’s not just that God allows the prison sentences like the one that David was in, which was in the wilderness. If I do something and get into my own prison, the Lord says, “I didn’t want you in that prison, but I still title you something other than prisoner. I call you ‘a prisoner of hope.’ If you’ll call unto Me, then I will cause a day of deliverance. I will give you a new beginning. I will give you a new day.”
That’s exactly what He’s doing to the nation of Israel. The nation of Israel has worshiped false gods, disobeyed God, and turned their backs on God for generation after generation. They’re prisoners. The whole nation has been prisoners for 2,000 to 3,000 years. God says, “You’re more than prisoners; you’re prisoners of hope. I’m giving you a reason to believe. I’m giving you a resolve and a will, because the God of hope titles you prophetically a prisoner of hope.”

Beloved, being a prisoner of hope is a lot different than being a prisoner. This is the Lord speaking: “Today in your prison I declare that you’re a prisoner of hope. You’re not a prisoner without hope; you’re in a waterless pit. You’re not in a pit that you’ll drown in; you’re in a temporary pit. It hurts, but I will deliver you. I declare it to you even today,” says the Lord to the nation of Israel.

**SHE WILL RECEIVE A DOUBLE BLESSING FOR ALL HER SINS**

The nation of Israel is being surrounded, and it’s trouble. It will get way worse than it is today. They’ll be in a pit. They’ll say, “There’s no hope; we’re drowning.”

The Lord says, “It’s a waterless pit. You’ll survive. You’ll live through this. There will be a new day for you politically.” That day will be established at the coming of the Lord. The Lord says, “As a matter of fact, not only am I going to forget all of your sin and push delete on all the reasons that you deserve to be in that prison; I will give you double for all of the trouble. I will pay you well for the hassle. I will pay you double.” In other words, at the end of the story you’ll say with your own lips, “It was worth it.” That’s what it means.

The Lord says, “I will pay you double.” Zechariah is actually quoting Isaiah 61:7. They deserved the pit, but He said, “That’s OK. I will pay you double” (Isa. 61:7, paraphrased).

When it’s all over you’ll say in your heart, “Oh, I hated the prison sentence, but I didn’t drown. I did have hope, which was the word of the Lord, like Joseph, and I’m delivered. Now that it’s history, I got paid double for all of the hassle. It was actually worth it now that it’s over.”

**HE’S COMING AS A LOWLY KING TO PRODUCE LOWLINESS IN US**

In verse 13 the Lord says, “In that overflow and in that reality I will anoint you to become a deliverer” (Zech. 9:13, paraphrased). Verse 13 is describing Greece, and of course that’s Alexander the Great. It got worse than that, because the Lord says, “You will defeat Greece. It’s not just that you will defeat the enemy from verse 1-7. It’s worse than that.” Antiochus Epiphanes was the Syrian ruler under Greek authority. Some of you know who Antiochus Epiphanes was; he was the most horrible man. He was the Adolf Hitler of the early days, in about 165 BC. He was the most wicked, terrible man, a man who wanted to exterminate the Jewish race. That’s the one the Lord is talking about. He says, “You’ll go to that man and you’ll defeat all that he stands for. I will pay you double and you will defeat all of the enemies that put you in prison.”

The Lord is on this plan to rule with lowliness. He’s a lowly King and He sees the value of it. He looks at me and says, “I will use My power and I’m coming. I’m coming! I’m the King and I’m coming to you, Mike. I’m coming, but I’m coming as a lowly King to produce lowliness in you.”
He says in verse 13, “I will make you a deliverer.” In verse 14 He says, “You will defeat all of the enemies that defeated you. You will know a little, though, about deliverance from the pit, because you will feel the pain of it at different times. You won’t be without hope, though, and I’ll pay you double” (Zech. 9:14, paraphrased).

In conclusion, in Revelation 19, at the very last day, all of us are there, all of the redeemed. Jews and Gentiles throughout all the ages are there. We’re looking at His judgments. We’re looking at His leadership. In Revelation 19 we’re all saying, “Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Jesus, You were good. You were righteous. It was brilliant leadership. We got paid more than double. It was worth it and we’re glad. It was good! It was good! It was good that we did this thing with all of our hearts.”

Amen. Let’s stand.

MINISTRY TIME
Next week we will take it from there. We will start in Zechariah 9. The rest of Zechariah 9 is really awesome. It’s all about the second coming and the beautiful God in verse 17. It’s about how beautiful God is, and is really a stunning chapter.

Let’s just wait for a moment here. There are prisoners of hope all over this room. Beloved, you don’t have to be a prisoner, period. You can be a prisoner with hope. You’ll be paid double for the hassle. You’ll get a history as a deliverer and you’ll become a deliverer. This whole thing is being walked out in the history of Israel. It’s prisoners of hope.

Those of you who feel like you’re in prison, I want to invite you to come and stand before the Lord. You say, “This is a heavy prison sentence that I’m in right now. I need hope awakened in me in a new way.” I want to invite you to come and stand. It’s prisoners of hope. The Lord wants to renew your hope. He wants to restore your hope. He will pay you double; I promise you that. He’ll make you a deliverer of others when He delivers you.

Tell the Lord in your own words, “I refuse to be just a prisoner. I refuse to ignore the hope of Your promises to me. I’m a prisoner of hope. I’m not an ordinary prisoner; I’m under Your leadership, Jesus. I’m a prisoner of hope. I believe in Your goodness. I believe in Your plans for me.”

Lord, I ask You to pull the arrows of accusation and hopelessness. I break the spirit of despair over them right now. I speak against the spirit of despair for those in prison.

Beloved, the Lord has plans for you. He has plans for you. He has plans for good.

I’m going to invite some of you to come up and pray for them. We want to ask for the spirit of despair to be lifted. We want to ask for the Word of the Lord to come to them in a fresh way. We want to ask for deliverance from prison.