

Zechariah

Chapter 6

XI. Vision 8: The Four Chariots - Zechariah 6:1-8

6:1 And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains [were] mountains of brass. 6:2 In the first chariot [were] red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; 6:3 And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses. 6:4 Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What [are] these, my lord? 6:5 And the angel answered and said unto me, These [are] the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth. 6:6 The black horses which [are] therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them; and the grisled go forth toward the south country. 6:7 And the bay went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth. 6:8 Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, these that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country.

This is the eighth and final vision of Zechariah. In a sense, it is a culmination of the previous seven as it pictures God's judgment and universal rule during the Kingdom.

It is of interest to note that as each vision is presented to Zechariah, there is less and less detail and explanation. It is as though each of the later visions build on the interpretation and understanding of those previous.

As we have already seen in the sixth and seventh vision, God will ultimately judge the sinner and the apostate system of religion began at Babylon and ending with his Second Coming. This vision extends beyond the establishment of the Kingdom and pictures God's universal rule during the Kingdom. Unlike today, false religion and apostasy will not be permitted during the Kingdom reign of Christ. All sin will be dealt with immediately in judgment. That is one of the main reasons the Kingdom will be such a time of peace and blessing.

Zechariah 6:1-3

We are introduced to the vision in these three verses. The main elements of the vision are outlined as follows:

1. Four chariots.

The chariot, in the Old Testament, is a picture of war. We could liken it to our modern tank.

2. Two brass mountains.

In the Hebrew text, the two mountains have the definite article. As a result, we should read "the two mountains". This obviously means that Zechariah was fully aware of what two mountains these were. Unfortunately, we are not

in the same position. However, we can infer that they are the Mount of Olives, and the Mount of Zion. We will see why in a little bit.

Not only do we see two mountains, but they are mountains of brass. With a little bit of study, we find that brass is a picture of judgment. In Revelation 1:15 we see a picture of Christ in which he has feet "like unto fine brass". This refers to his judging eye as he moves throughout his churches. In Daniel 10:5-6, Daniel sees a Christophany in which Christ is seen with arms and feet like brass.

As a result, we infer that this vision is speaking about judgment, specifically, God's judgment.

3. The Horses

Each of the four chariots are pulled by horses with different colors. We are told that the first chariot was pulled by red horses, the second by black horses, the third by white horses, and the fourth by pale horses.

Although many would like to make a lot out of the colors of these horses, we should not attempt to be dogmatic about this. The reasons for this are as follows:

1. In Revelation 6, a white horse refers to victory, a red horse refers to war, a black horse refers to famine, and a pale horse refers to death. If we make those same identifications here, we have to read some meaning into the text that is not there. In other words, we have to eisegete the text instead of exegete it.
2. In the first vision of Zechariah, he saw red, bay, and white horses among the myrtle trees. Are we to assume that this refers to war, victory, and death? Probably not. The various colors are there to lend color to the vision and to show that God uses all agencies, war, famine, and death, to bring about his purposes.

The above two points only point out that it is better to see these four chariots and their respective horses as agents of God's judgment. God's judgment is executed upon man through the agencies of war, death, and famine. The main point is that God will judge.

Zechariah 6:4-8

We need to take these four verses in a chunk since they fit together.

We are given the identity of these chariots and riders in verse four and five. Zechariah, as is customary in these visions, asks the interpreter angel for an explanation of the vision. The interpreter angel tells Zechariah that the four chariots and riders are "the four spirits of the heavens which go forth from standing before the Lord of the whole earth".

At this point, we must be careful as to not attach too definite a meaning to the phrase "the four spirits". What we should see is that the interpreter angel is calling Zechariah's attention to the fact that God has his agents of judgment at his beckon call. When the time is right, they will be sent out to accomplish his

purposes. The phrase "stand before" is used to speak of their readiness. In other words, they are prepared and waiting for the Lord's command.

We are given the destination of the chariots in verses six and seven. The black and white horses are seen as going toward the north, and the grisled are seen as going to the south. It is important to note that all of Israel's enemies were seen as coming from the north or from the south. Babylon, Persia, and in the end times, Russia, are all seen as invading from the north. This is because the north is the only land invasion route passable by large armies. As far as the south goes, Egypt was always seen as being an ever-present threat, especially during the post-Solomon times when Assyria and Egypt were vying for domination of Palestine.

In verse seven, we are told that the bay horses were sent to walk to and fro throughout the earth. This indicates a continuous action over a period of time.

Lastly, God indicates that the horses that went towards the north have quieted his spirit. In other words, whatever purpose God had for them had been accomplished.

The interpretation of this vision is actually somewhat clear when compared with the rest of scripture, specifically those portions that deal with the judgment of God in the end times.

The fact that Zechariah uses the term "the two mountains" indicates that the identity of these mountains were known to Zechariah. Bible scholars agree that the most viable identification would be Mount Olives and Mount Zion. We know from Joel chapter two and Zechariah fourteen that when the Messiah comes he will gather all nations into the valley of Jehosaphat, or "Decision", for judgment. There is no valley of Jehosaphat in Jerusalem at this time, but we know from Zechariah fourteen that when Christ's foot hits the Mount of Olives, it will split in two and create a great valley. It is in this valley that all the nations are gathered for judgment. This judgment is described in detail in Matthew 25:31-46.

Angels are seen as the executors of God's judgment. In the Old Testament we find that God sent one angel to kill 186,000 Assyrians. On the night of the passover, anyone who did not put the blood on the doorposts lost their firstborn to the death-angel. In the Parable of the Dragnet in Matthew 13, angels are seen as the collectors of the unrighteous. The point is that these riders in the chariots, being angels, are God's executors of judgment. This fits in with the brass mountains, the context of this vision, and the context of the final three visions.

The fact that the black and white horses have quieted God's spirit in the north country are seen by many Bible commentators to refer in an immediate sense to Babylon, and in an ultimate sense to Israel's enemies in the future. This fits in with the point of the first vision in which we see Christ ready to defend his people in God's time.

Note further, that the fact of the bay horses going to and fro through the earth indicates their constant vigilance. We know that the Millennium will be a time of great blessing in which sin will be dealt with severely. This would seem to indicate that this vision is portraying a future time in which God will use his angels to assist him in executing judgment on sin wherever it may occur. This can only refer to the Millennium in an ultimate sense.

XII. A Picture of Millennial Blessing - Zechariah 6:9-15

6:9 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, **6:10** Take of [them of] the captivity, [even] of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah, which are come from Babylon, and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah; **6:11** Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set [them] upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest; **6:12** And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name [is] The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: **6:13** Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. **6:14** And the crowns shall be to Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of the LORD. **6:15** And they [that are] far off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD, and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. And [this] shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.

This account takes place the morning after Zechariah's eight visions. In this account we see God giving Zechariah and the people of Israel a picture of Millennial blessing. This will lend support and additional comfort to the messages of the eight visions.

Zechariah 6:9-10

Zechariah is told to go out and meet one of the caravans coming from Babylon and locate three men who were bringing a gift of gold and silver for the temple. These caravans were not uncommon. When the Jews were permitted to return to Jerusalem, they did not all leave at one time. Instead, an initial large group went back and then over a period of time, other much smaller groups would follow. In God's providence, a group was returning the very next day after Zechariah's vision in order to provide a picture of future blessing.

It is interesting to look at names in the Old Testament since names were used to indicate various things. For example, Ichabod, born on the day the ark was taken by the Philistines, means "the glory of the Lord has departed". The names given in the tenth verse of Zechariah 6 have rich meanings:

Heldai (Helem) -	The Lord's World
Tobijah -	God is Good
Jedaiah -	The Lord Knows
Josiah -	The Lord Supports

Zechariah 6:11

Zechariah was told to take the gold and silver that these four men were bringing as an offering to the temple, and to make a crown. Once made, this crown was to be placed on the head of the high priest Joshua as a symbol of the coronation of the Messiah.

Interestingly enough, Jewish legend has it that this crown was placed in a window high in Zerubbabel's temple for many years to remind the Jews of the promise of the Messiah. Unfortunately, when the Messiah came the first time, he was not recognized.

Zechariah 6:12-15

We see several predictions concerning the future Messiah in these four verses. As we have already noted, the crowning of Joshua is meant to picture the crowning of the future Messiah.

Verse twelve gives us the subject of this prophecy, the BRANCH. We have already noted in the fourth vision that this is a Messianic reference. (See Isaiah 53:1-2 as additional support) Note the following specific predictions regarding the Messiah:

1. He shall grow up out of his place - Zechariah 6:13

This so closely parallels Isaiah 53:2 that the identification of the BRANCH and the Messiah is obvious. Christ became a man, grew up as a man, and became the perfect example of what man should be.

2. He shall build the temple - Zechariah 6:12-13

It was a common belief among the Jews that one of the first things the Messiah would do when he came would be to destroy the temple and rebuild it. This is what piqued the interest of the disciples when Christ predicted the fact that "one stone would not be left upon another" in reference to the temple. Since they believed he was the Messiah, their immediate question was "when". Christ's answer was given in the Olivet discourse in Matthew 24-25.

In any case, Christ will build the true temple of God in the Millennium. See Ezekiel 40-48 for a description of this future temple.

3. He shall bear the glory - Zechariah 6:13

God, unlike man, has intrinsic glory. When Christ returns to rule as the Messiah, he is said to "sit upon the throne of his glory" (Matthew 25:31). In the New Jerusalem, there is no need for light because Christ is the light of it.

4. He shall sit and rule - Zechariah 6:13

This is the most wonderful promise of the Millennium. Christ himself will rule the earth in righteousness. There will finally be peace, because the Prince of Peace himself will be ruling in person. The Millennium will be a time of God-rule with no usurpers or revolutionaries allowed.

5. He shall be a priest - Zechariah 6:13

Throughout Jewish history, God always maintained a clear distinction between the offices of king and priest. King Uzziah, a righteous king, took it upon himself to offer a sacrifice to God. Because of that, he was struck down with leprosy. Christ, however, is of the priestly order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 7), and as such is both king and priest. The reference to "between them both" refers to the offices of king and priest.

6. They that are far off shall come - Zechariah 6:15

This is in reference to the fact that all nations will be made near to God because of Jesus Christ. This can be given a two-fold interpretation. One, Gentiles, who were far off, are made nigh because of the death of Christ (Ephesians 2:17). Secondly, we know that during the Millennium, nations will send delegations to Israel to worship in the temple at Jerusalem. Those who refuse to take part in this worship will be visited with plagues.

7. You will know that the Lord has sent me - Zechariah 6:15

The number one distinguishing mark of a true prophet is 100% accuracy. When Israel sees the things promised in this passage coming to pass, they will know that this message is true. God is a person of his word. If he promises something, he will be sure to perform it.

In summary, then, we see that the symbolic crowning of Joshua prefigures the future crowning of the Messiah. At that time, all of the prophecies regarding future blessing will be fulfilled and Israel will know that God is a keeper of his promises.