

Week Seven: The Eighth Night Vision

The Vision of the Four Chariots and the Four Winds (6:1-8)

Thought Progression: This is the final vision of Zechariah, concluding with a final oracle which explains the last vision. Just as we saw in the first vision, this vision too represents a divine council scene. There are a number of similarities between the first and the last vision: 1. Horses appear in both visions; 2. The myrtle trees correspond to the mountains; 3. the riders first present themselves to the Messenger as they begin their work; 4. Zechariah calls the Messenger “my Lord” in both; 5. The horses in both patrol the earth; 6. They patrol all the earth on the Lord’s behalf. The purpose is more than patrol. These are the armies of the Lord and their task is to carry out his vengeance and gain his victory. While the exiles have no king and are subject to the Persians, the Lord’s rule of all the earth provides the authority to legitimize the temple renewal. In this way the temple is seen as a symbol of the Lord’s universal rule and control. Zechariah describes the vision (6:1-4), the Messenger explains the vision (6:5,6), and the vision continues and concludes (6:7,8).

Zechariah 6:1-8 *I looked up again—and there before me were four chariots coming out from between two mountains—mountains of bronze!² The first chariot had red horses, the second black,³ the third white, and the fourth dappled—all of them powerful.⁴ I asked the angel who was speaking to me, “What are these, my lord?”⁵ The angel answered me, “These are the four spirits of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world.⁶ The one with the black horses is going toward the north country, the one with the white horses toward the west, and the one with the dappled horses toward the south.”⁷ When the powerful horses went out, they were straining to go throughout the earth. And he said, “Go throughout the earth!” So they went throughout the earth.⁸ Then he called to me, “Look, those going toward the north country have given my Spirit rest in the land of the north.”*

6:1-4 *I looked up again—and there before me were four chariots coming out from between two mountains—mountains of bronze! The first chariot had red horses, the second black,³ the third white, and the fourth dappled—all of them powerful.⁴ I asked the angel who was speaking to me, “What are these, my lord?”*

1. How do the two “mountains of bronze” call the Jews to remember the Temple of Solomon before it was destroyed? (see 1 Kings 7:15-22) - The Lord is on the move here. From the gates of heaven symbolized by the two bronze mountains (here remember the two temple pillars of bronze, Jachin and Boaz), the Lord sends out the chariots of power and strength. From his rebuilt temple the Lord will now exert control over all the kingdoms of the world.

6:5-7 *The angel answered me, “These are the four spirits of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world. The one with the black horses is going toward*

the north country, the one with the white horses toward the west, and the one with the dappled horses toward the south. When the powerful horses went out, they were straining to go throughout the earth. And he said, "Go throughout the earth!" So they went throughout the earth."

2. Who sends the horses into the world? ... The four horses are the four winds of heaven serving the Lord's army. This is another way to describe the four chariots, since they are swift like the wind. The "spirits" here come from a word with many shades of meaning.
3. List the enemy countries that were located in the three directions mentioned and state how this was a message of comfort to the Jews as they carried on the work of rebuilding the temple! .. the black horse travels to the north along the fertile crescent to Babylon. This was the nation that inflicted great pain on the Jews and now this nation will face God's wrath. At the same time the dappled horse heads south to deal with Egypt, the nation that once enslaved the Jews, then failed to support the Jews as promised, then killed the Jewish king Josiah and put his son on the throne of Israel. With the horses of God riding to defeat the enemies, the exiles could complete the rebuilding of the temple secure in the knowledge that the favor and protection of the returned Lord was theirs. In the context of the political weakness of the exiles, announcing the sovereignty and dominion of the Lord seemed foolishness, yet it was the reality unseen by the human eye.

6:8 *Then he called to me, "Look, those going toward the north country have given my Spirit rest in the land of the north."*

4. Compare the message of "peace in the world" which the horses delivered to God in the first vision with the message of "peace in the north country" announced by the Messenger in this vision. What is the difference in the message of 'peace'? ... Remember the news of "peace" throughout the world in 1:15 triggered the Lord's anger. Now in this final vision, the "north country" is at "rest." Explain what has happened in world events at that time that now makes this "rest" in the "north country" a message of good news to the exiled Jews. -- Now we see God's spirit at rest. Darius has handed out the punishment of the Lord against Babylon and reversed its cruel policies. During the early reign of Darius the Babylonians led several revolts and Darius defeated them with harsh punishment. This "peace" foreshadowed the peace Jesus would one day bring.

The Fifth Oracle: Zech. 6:9-15 The Crowning

Thought Progression: In this final oracle, Zechariah adds the final good news anticipated by the exiles. The King is coming. The victory described in 6:1-8 leads to a coronation ceremony. The Lord commands Zechariah to make two crowns, a non-royal crown for the high priest Joshua, and one for the Davidic king to come, the Branch. This second crown is to be kept in the

completed temple and to serve as a reminder to the faithful that the King is coming. This oracle points to the future fulfillment of the kingdom. The eight visions of Zechariah have filled the people with hope, revealing the peace, justice, righteousness, cleansing and victory that the returning Lord will bring them. However even with these words of hope and encouragement, the reality for them was the Davidic monarchy had not been reborn. The restored kingdom was little more than a distant dream. This last oracle addressed that worrying truth by revealing how God would one day restore this kingdom. – A group of returning exiles comes from Babylon carrying with them gold and silver. Zechariah takes this material to the home of Josiah. The Lord orders two crowns to be made, and the second one placed in the temple to await the coming of the Promised King, the Branch.

Zechariah 6:9-15 ⁹ *The word of the LORD came to me:* ¹⁰ *“Take silver and gold from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon. Go the same day to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. ¹¹ Take the silver and gold and make a crown, and set it on the head of the high priest, Joshua son of Jehozadak. ¹² Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD. ¹³ It is he who will build the temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.’ ¹⁴ The crown will be given to Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah and Hen son of Zephaniah as a memorial in the temple of the LORD. ¹⁵ Those who are far away will come and help to build the temple of the LORD, and you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you. This will happen if you diligently obey the LORD your God.”*

6:9-11 *The word of the LORD came to me:* ¹⁰ *“Take silver and gold from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon. Go the same day to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. Take the silver and gold and make a crown, and set it on the head of the high priest, Joshua son of Jehozadak.*

5. New exiles arrive from Babylon. What do they bring with them and what does the messenger command Zechariah to do? -- The temple’s refounding prompted a generous offering of silver and gold from the returning exiles. It could be that the first crown was made from the silver and placed on the high priest’s head and the second crown was made gold and placed in the temple to await the coming king.

6:11

6. Note that the word for “crown” in this verse is plural in form. Zechariah envisions two crowns. While the first crown is for the high priest Joshua, for whom is the second crown intended?

6:12,13 *Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD. ¹³ It is he who will build the temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule*

on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.'

7. As the Lord continues to explain the vision and its meaning, he turns Zechariah's attention to the future. The Lord tells Zechariah about someone coming in the future, someone called "the Branch." List the five characteristics the Lord mentions as he describes the Branch and what he will accomplish. --- Pointing to the coming Christ, Zechariah uses the imagery of a Branch which was first used in the writings of Jeremiah and Isaiah. Zechariah identifies seven characteristics of this coming Branch: 1. A man; 2. He will build an eschatological temple; 3. Rule upon his throne; 4. Be a priest; 5. Unify Israel's royal and priestly offices.
8. What are the "two" offices that this Branch will unite?
9. Based on these characteristics, who is the Branch and what is the temple he will one day build? (1 Pet.2:5; Eph.2:21) -- While Zerubbabel plays a role in leading the exiles to rebuild the temple, when the Branch comes, he will erect a new eternal temple, the church of God (see 1 Pet.2:5; Eph.2:21). This Branch will unite the priesthood and the royal throne, occupying both offices for eternity.

6:14 The crown will be given to Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah and Hen son of Zephaniah as a memorial in the temple of the LORD.

10. Until that Branch comes, what do the exiles do with the second crown that is made? --
The second crown of gold will serve as a memorial anticipating the arrival of the Branch.

6:15 Those who are far away will come and help to build the temple of the LORD, and you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you. This will happen if you diligently obey the LORD your God."

11. As the oracle comes to a close, it draws a picture which represents two time periods. What will the exiles see happening as they continue to rebuild the temple and what will it prove about the Night Visions Zechariah had? --
Bringing the oracle to a close, Zechariah shifts the focus from the future kingdom and the ruling Branch to the imminent future for the work of the temple at hand. Zechariah sees exiles returning in greater numbers from Babylon to assist with the temple rebuilding. As this prophecy becomes reality before the eyes of the exiles, it will confirm the truth of

Zechariah's visions. All this will be true if the people "listen" to the voice of God and live within the covenant that God establish and never revoked with his people.

12. While picturing events in the days of Zechariah, how do the words of 6:15 also picture the work of the New Testament believers as they await the Lord's return?