

Zechariah's Eighth Vision

Zechariah 6

Zechariah 6:1-8 - *"Then I turned and raised my eyes and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of bronze. ² With the first chariot were red horses, with the second chariot black horses, ³ with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot dappled horses—strong steeds. ⁴ Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?"*

⁵ And the angel answered and said to me, "These are four spirits of heaven, who go out from their station before the Lord of all the earth. ⁶ The one with the black horses is going to the north country, the white are going after them, and the dappled are going toward the south country." ⁷ Then the strong steeds went out, eager to go, that they might walk to and fro throughout the earth. And He said, "Go, walk to and fro throughout the earth." So they walked to and fro throughout the earth. ⁸ And He called to me, and spoke to me, saying, "See, those who go toward the north country have given rest to My Spirit in the north country."

Background Notes

There are eight prophetic visions in Zechariah 1-6. God gave all eight visions to Zechariah on the same night – so I guess Zechariah didn't get much sleep that night! However, he did get a lot of encouraging information and insight about God's program for Israel's future. Israel could look forward to a very bright future!

All eight prophetic visions were very encouraging for Israel - and they are encouraging for us as well. In fact, the whole book of Zechariah is wonderfully encouraging for all believers. The prophecies of Zechariah tell us of the first coming of Christ and the second coming as well, when all evil will be judged and Christ will reign supreme.

Zechariah's visions are in the literary genre of apocalyptic literature - visions of the future. Apocalyptic literature is highly symbolic in nature - but it's not *entirely* symbolic. Thus, some difficulties arise in interpreting apocalyptic literature. How do we distinguish between the symbolic and literal in apocalyptic visions?

For example, in this eighth vision there are horses and chariots, and two mountains of bronze. We know the horses and chariots are symbolic, because verse 5 says that they are four spirits of heaven who go out from their station before the Lord of all the earth. What about the two mountains of bronze? We believe the bronze is symbolic of judgment. In other places in the Bible, bronze is clearly symbolic of judgment. For example, in Revelation 1 John received a vision of the Lord judging the works of the seven churches, and in that vision the Lord's feet were described as being of bronze. But are the two mountains literal - or symbolic? Zechariah 14 says that when the Lord returns, He will literally return to the Mount of Olives. That's the mountain from which the Lord Jesus ascended into Heaven.

About the return of the Lord, Zechariah 14:4 says: *“And in that day, His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.”*

When the Lord returns, the literal Mount of Olives will split into two mountains, with a valley in between. That valley may be the Valley of Jehoshaphat, where Joel 3 says that the Lord will judge the nations. The Lord judging the nations is certainly the overall meaning of this vision. So maybe the two mountains in Zechariah 6 are to be taken in a literal way. The bronze would be symbolic of judgment, but the mountains themselves would be literal. On the other hand, maybe the two mountains are entirely symbolic – symbolic of complete and total judgment.

In any case, in apocalyptic literature, it’s not always easy to distinguish between what is symbolic and what is literal. So, it is not always easy to interpret the details of biblical visions that deal with events that have not yet taken place - that are still in the future. Thus, we rely on the rest of Scripture to guide us in the interpretation of apocalyptic visions.

Doctrinal Points

1. God will judge all of Israel’s enemies.

In Zechariah’s first vision, horses and riders were standing, under the direction of the Lord, and all the earth was at rest. The meaning was that, at the present time, Israel is under Gentile domination. But the Lord is in control, so the earth is at rest.

Now, in the eighth prophetic vision, the Lord Himself was seen at rest. Verse 8: *“And He called to me, and spoke to me, saying, “See, those who go toward the north country have given rest to My Spirit in the north country.”* God was at rest because the nations had been judged. The horses and war chariots had done their work of judgment.

The four spirits of heaven, represented by the horses and chariots (v5), were probably four holy angels of divine judgment. They went before the Lord of all the earth. We believe this judgment of the nations will take place when the Lord comes back to set up His kingdom and rule over this earth, at the end of the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16). This judgment is called the Judgment of the Sheep and the Goats, according to Matthew 25. This is the same judgment of the nations that is prophesied in Joel 3 (mentioned in our Background Notes).

The fact that the horses and chariots go north and south from Israel shows that the focus of the judgment will be the wrongful treatment of the Israel by foreign nations. This is also taught in Joel 3. So - God will judge all of Israel’s enemies.

2. The Lord Jesus will be both King and Priest.

Zechariah 6:9-15 - *“Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: ¹⁰“Receive the gift from the captives—from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have come from Babylon—and go the same day and enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah. ¹¹ Take the silver and gold, make an elaborate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. ¹² Then speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, saying:*

“Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the Lord;

¹³ Yes, He shall build the temple of the Lord. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne. So He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”

¹⁴ “Now the elaborate crown shall be for a memorial in the temple of the Lord for Helem Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah. ¹⁵ Even those from afar shall come and build the temple of the Lord. Then you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. And this shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God.”

The account of the eight visions given to Zechariah on the same night was complete, and in verses 9-15 we have a real-life event. A delegation had come to Jerusalem from the exiles who were still living in Babylon. They brought a gift of silver and gold, probably to help Zerubbabel, the governor, with the rebuilding of the Temple. But the Lord instructed Zechariah to take the silver and gold, and make from it a glorious crown. Then he was to place the crown on the head of Joshua the high priest. After this the crown was to be put into the Temple and kept as a memorial of this event (v14).

What was unusual - and certainly unexpected to those who were observing - was that the crown was placed on Joshua the high priest's head - not on Zerubbabel's head! Zerubbabel was not a king, but he had royal blood, and he was in the royal line. However, the crown was to be placed on the head of Joshua, the high priest! Why? Because this event anticipated and foreshadowed the coming of *“the Man whose name is the Branch”* (v12). *“The Branch”* was the title of the coming Messiah, as we saw in Zechariah 3.

The Branch was to be both a Priest and a King (v13). Psalm 110 also prophesied the uniting in the Messiah of the offices of king and high priest. There we read that the Messiah would be *“a priest after the order of Melchizedek.”* He would be both King and Priest, as we read in Hebrews 7, where Psalm 110 is quoted.

The Lord Jesus is now our High Priest and our King. However, this symbolic event of Zechariah's time looked far forward, beyond the Church Age in which we live, to the future time when the Lord will return and will literally reign as King over this earth for 1000 years. That will be the great millennial kingdom of Christ on this earth. The Lord Jesus will be both King and Priest.

Practical Application

Do you know your biblical Temples?

The Messiah, the Branch, shall build the Temple of the Lord (v12-13), and people will come from afar to help build this Temple (v15). Which Temple of the Lord is mentioned In Zechariah 6:13-15?

I can think of seven Temples of the Lord that are mentioned in the Bible. Do you know your biblical Temples?

Two spiritual "Temples of the Holy Spirit" are mentioned in Scripture:

- 1 - The believer's body (1 Corinthians 6)
- 2 - The Church, the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 3).

Five literal "Temples of the Lord" are mentioned in Scripture:

- 1 - Solomon's Temple, the Temple that was destroyed by the Babylonians.
- 2 - Zerubbabel's Temple, that was being rebuilt in Zechariah.
- 3 - Herod's Temple, the Temple at the time of our Lord. This was a major expansion of Zerubbabel's Temple, but it was really a third literal Temple.
- 4 - The Tribulation Temple. The Lord Jesus said that this is where the idolatrous image will be set up as predicted by Daniel the prophet.
- 5 - The Millennial Temple, prophesied by Ezekiel in Ezekiel 40-48.

So how many biblical Temples are there? There actually are seven!

Which Temple is in view in Zechariah 6:13-15? In the context, this Temple is **not the Church** (as some attempt to teach). We believe the Temple mentioned in Zechariah 6 is the Millennial Temple that will be built after the Lord returns. The Lord Himself will direct the building of this Temple, as we see in verses 12-13. Believing Jews and Gentiles from around the world will come and participate in the building!

Do you know your biblical Temples?