

Title: **Mountains of Brass**
Text: Zechariah
Subject: *God's Purpose and His Providence*
Date: Sunday Morning — February 26, 2006
Tape # Zechariah #27
Reading: *Zechariah 6:1-15*

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.
2. In the first chariot *were* red horses; and in the second chariot black horses;
3. And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses.
4. Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What *are* these, my lord?
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. 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.
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.
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.
9. And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
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;
11. Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set *them* upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest;
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:
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.
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.
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.

INTRODUCTION

When trouble comes, where do you look for comfort? When everything seems uncertain, what keeps you going? When there are no billboards advertising what you can expect around the next curve, where do you turn? What do you trust? When everything seems confusing, where do you turn to find stability? A careful look at Zechariah 6:1-8 will be helpful, if God the Holy Spirit will be pleased to show us what he revealed to his prophet Zechariah in his 8th vision. Remember what the prophet has seen in his previous visions.

- **1:7-11** — He saw a Man riding a red horse, standing in a grove of myrtle trees. The grove of myrtle trees represent God's Church. It is found in a piece of bottom land, surrounded by oppressing mountains. But all is well, because that Man riding the red horse is our Lord Jesus Christ. He is always standing in our midst, riding forth conquering and to conquer.
- **1:18-22** — Zechariah saw four horns and four carpenters. The four horns represented the powers of the world (political and ecclesiastical) constantly opposing God's people. But all is well, because the four carpenters are gospel preachers by whom the horns are frayed.
- **2:1-5** — The prophet saw Christ as a man with measuring line in his hand, who measures and determines the dimensions of his holy city, Jerusalem (the Church), proclaiming that she shall be complete, fully inhabited by a great multitude. In a word, all is well! Christ shall build his house. Then he heard the Lord God declare, "*I will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her*" (v. 5). — And the Lord Jesus declared in verse 8, — "*For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.*"
- **3:1-15** — The Lord showed Zechariah a vivid picture of the redemption and grace that is ours in and by Christ in the cleansing of Joshua the high priest, with the Foundation Stone (Christ) laid before him. All is well. God is saving his own.
- **4:1-14** — Zechariah saw the Church of God portrayed as a candlestick, constantly supplied with the oil of grace by God the Holy Spirit, who is constantly given to us by Christ our Savior. All is well. God's grace is unceasing.
- **5:1-4** — Zechariah's 6th vision was a huge roll, flying over the earth, pronouncing God's curse upon guilty sinners scattered over all the earth. But all is well, because the curse and the judgment following it is according to the justice and righteousness of God.
- **5:5-11** — In his 7th vision God showed Zechariah a woman sitting in a basket, representing the wickedness of the whole world (false religion), and telling us that the wickedness is always under our Savior's absolute control and shall be brought to everlasting destruction at God's appointed time. All is well, for even the wrath of man is under the dominion of our great King.

Proposition: Remember, throughout these visions, our Lord's purpose is to assure us that all is well, no matter how bad things may appear. Now, we come to Zechariah's 8th vision 6:1-8).

When everything appears to be out of control, when our hearts are heavy, when our soul's are distressed, when our mind's are confused, our Lord here tells us to fall back to the comfortable, stabilizing mountains of brass.

(Zechariah 6:1-8) “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. (2) In the first chariot *were* red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; (3) And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses. (4) Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What *are* these, my lord? (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) 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. (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. (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.”

(v. 1) — “*And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked,*” — The prophet was continually anxious to learn the things of God. May God give us such anxiety. Let us never imagine that we know all things perfectly. May God the Holy Spirit constantly cause our hearts to soar to heaven, that we might know more of Christ, by the revelation of his grace! Zechariah said, “*I turned,*” as if to tell us that Christ is to be seen everywhere. First he saw him on one side, then another. — Read on..

FOUR CHARIOTS

“*And, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass.*” — ^[1]We do not have to guess what these chariots and the horses pulling them represent. The Scriptures tell us plainly. These four chariots are the angels of God, God’s warriors, by whom he executes his wise decrees. (2 Kings 2:11; 6:17; Hab. 3:8; Ps. 68:17).

(2 Kings 2:11) “And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”

(2 Kings 6:17) “And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”

(Habakkuk 3:8) “Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? *was* thine anger against the rivers? *was* thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses *and* thy chariots of salvation?”

(Psalms 68:17) “The chariots of God *are* twenty thousand, *even* thousands of angels: the Lord *is* among them, *as in* Sinai, in the holy *place.*”

The angels of God are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to and for God’s elect, those who shall be heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14). Habakkuk said, “*Thou didst ride upon thine horses and*

thy chariots of salvation.” Readily and speedily, with joy and delight, they serve Christ and his people, day and night, throughout the earth.

While we must never fail to recognize and give thanks to our God for those mighty angels he created to be our constant protectors, I am certain (as I have often shown you) that the angels of God most commonly refer to **Gospel preachers**. Gospel preachers are men who have their commission from Christ. They are sent forth into all the world by him, carrying his name and his Gospel to the four corners of the world. By the labors of such faithful men, the Lord Jesus gathers his elect out of the nations, giving them life and faith by his almighty Spirit through the preaching of the gospel (Rom. 10:17; 1 Pet. 1:23-25). Like chariots of war, they go forth, being set for the defense of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God our Savior. Fighting the good fight of faith, they are always made triumphant by Christ and are more than conquerors through him.

It is by the angels of God (both those heavenly creatures that encamped around Elisha and his servant and those men who are God’s appointed messengers to his people) that our great God and Savior constantly ministers to, directs, and protects his elect in this world, accomplishing his sovereign, eternal purpose, which he purposed in himself.

MOUNTAINS OF BRASS

The chariots came out from between two mountains of brass. There are two of them. They are described as “*mountains of brass.*” And the work of these chariots, the angels of God, runs in a valley between the two mountains. What are these mountains? What are these things intended of God to represent? What does he teach us by them?

Mountains represent that which is immense, high, solid, and immoveable. Brass represents that which is hard and enduring. I cannot imagine these mountains representing anything except the purpose of God and the providence of God. The valley between them represents all the ages of time in this world of woe.

GOD’S PURPOSE

On one side Zechariah saw a mountain of brass representing God’s sovereign, eternal purpose of grace in predestination (Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:3-12).

(Romans 8:28-30) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

(Ephesians 1:3-12) “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: (4) According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (5) Having predestinated us unto the adoption of

children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (6) To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. (7) In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; (8) Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; (9) Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: (10) That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him: (11) In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: (12) That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.”

The decrees and purposes of God, like a “*mountain*,” are ancient, more ancient than the everlasting hills. They are both high and deep. That is to say, they are dark, obscure, and hidden, until they are performed. And they are firm, solid, and immovable, lasting and durable, like “*brass*.”

- That simply means God’s purpose, his decree, can never to be broken, revoked, or made null and void. It stands upon his unalterable will, upon the basis of his infallible wisdom, and is supported by uncontrollable power.
- God’s sovereign purpose of grace in predestination can never be disannulled, or set aside men on earth and devils in hell combined.

GOD’S PROVIDENCE

Surrounded by the wickedness and the curse of the earth, enduring with his brethren the trials and troubles of God’s saints in this world, facing all those who constantly make war with the saints, Zechariah saw on one side the brass mountain of God’s sure and steadfast purpose. On the other side he beheld another mountain of brass that looked in every way exactly like the other. This other mountain of brass represents the providence of God. It is an exact copy of the purpose of God. It is according to God’s fixed and immutable decree that all things come to pass in time (Rom. 8:28; Eph. 1:11).

(Romans 8:28) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.”

(Ephesians 1:11) “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”

It is as though the Lord God had said to his prophet and to us his people, “There is no cause for alarm or fear. Everything you have seen and experienced, everything you are experiencing, and everything you shall experience, the good and the bad, is exactly according to my eternal purpose of grace toward you. ‘*It shall be well with the righteous!*’” **These mountains of brass are our security and comfort** (Isa. 40:10, 21-23, 26-29; 45:11-13, 17, 19; 46:8-10; Ps. 36:6-10).

(Isaiah 40:10) “Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong *hand*, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward *is* with him, and his work before him.”

(Isaiah 40:21-23) “Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? (22) *It is* he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof *are* as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: (23) That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.”

(Isaiah 40:26-29) “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these *things*, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that *he is* strong in power; not one faileth. (27) Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God? (28) Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding. (29) He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength.”

(Isaiah 45:11-13) “Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. (12) I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, *even* my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. (13) I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.”

(Isaiah 45:17) “*But* Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.”

(Isaiah 45:19) “I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.”

(Isaiah 46:8-10) “Remember this, and show yourselves men: bring *it* again to mind, O ye transgressors. (9) Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; *I am* God, and *there is* none like me, (10) Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.”

(Psalms 36:5-10) “Thy mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens; *and* thy faithfulness *reacheth* unto the clouds. (6) Thy righteousness *is* like the great mountains; thy judgments *are* a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast. (7) How excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. (8) They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. (9) For with thee *is* the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light. (10) O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.”

God's purpose is immutable. His decree is unalterable. His providence is sure. We are assured of this sweet, soul-comforting, God honoring fact by many things revealed in Scripture.

1. **Predestination is the unchangeable decree of the unchangeable God.** What God desires and he does. No creature can prevent or even hinder the desire or the doing (Num. 23:19; Job 23:13; Ps. 33:11; Pro. 19:21; Mal. 3:6; James 1:17).

(Numbers 23:19) “*God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*”

(Job 23:13) “*But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.*”

(Proverbs 19:21) “*There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.*”

(Malachi 3:6) “*For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*”

(James 1:17) “*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*”

2. **God's decree of election stands upon the unchangeable Foundation laid in Zion before the world began, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Rock of ages.** — “*Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever*” (Heb 13:8).

God has blessed us in him, and we shall be blessed. He has chosen us in him; pardoned us in him; sealed us in him; built us up and completed us in him, — “*According to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*” (2Ti 1:9), — “*in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins*” (Eph 1:7), — “*in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed*” (Eph 1:13), — “*rooted and built up in him*” (Col 2:7). And we are “*complete in him*” (Col 2:10). Indeed, Christ himself “*verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world*” (1 Pet. 1:20). If the Foundation is sure, the building is sure.

3. **God's purpose is sure and unchangeable, because it is a written in heaven, above the reach of angry men and enraged devils.** — “*The Lord knoweth them that are his*” (2 Tim. 2:19).

There, in heaven, before the world was made, our names were inscribed by the pen of sovereign grace in the Lamb's book of life. That book is a vast registry of God's elect. Their number can never be increased nor diminished. — Our Savior says, “*Rejoice because your names are in heaven*” (Luke 10:20), in that book from which they can never be blotted out or erased. — “*I know,*” wrote Solomon, “*that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it*” (Ecc. 3:14).

All the events of time come forth from between those mountains of brass, the unalterable purpose and providence of God. If so much as one purpose should fail to be accomplished, all might fail. If even one soul could be blotted out of this book of life, all might be blotted out of it. Take away the absolute certainty of God's providence mirroring and fulfilling his purpose, and faith in God is an absolute impossibility. The Word of God, and its countless promises could not be trusted. It would become as useless as wastepaper!

4. But, blessed be his name, that cannot be, because **God's purpose and his providence are one unbreakable chain of grace, mountains of brass!**

The two are bound together, as links in a great chain. Break one link, and the whole chain becomes useless. God's providence, by which all things work together for good to them that love God, is but the outworking of his purpose, according to which we are called. According to that purpose, all whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life were predestinated. All who were predestinated are justified. All who are justified are called. And all who are called shall be glorified (Rom. 8:30). Therefore the purpose of God according to election must stand (Rom. 9:11). God does not decree the end without the means, nor the means without the end. Both are fixed together in his eternal purpose. In predestination, the means of our salvation was no less absolutely decreed than salvation itself. — "*As many as were ordained to eternal life believed*" (Acts 13:48). If that were not the case, the foundation could not stand sure. If God did not absolutely decree to give and bestow faith and perseverance to his elect, no one would ever be enter into heaven's everlasting glory. But our God declared from eternity, "*I will be your God, and ye shall be my people,*" that is to say, "I will make you be my people" (Ps. 65:4; 110:3).

FOUR HORSES

Pulling the four chariots Zechariah saw four horses (vv. 2-3).

(vv. 2-3) "*In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses.*"

Again, we are not left to guess what these horses represent. The Lord, the Angel who showed his servant this vision, told him plainly what the horses represent (vv. 4-7).

(vv. 4-6) "*Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord? 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. 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. 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.*"

Zechariah asked, "*What are these, my lord? 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.*" — The four chariots are the angels of God, by which he accomplishes his purpose. But the chariots

do not accomplish anything. Chariots might be pretty and impressive to look at, but they are utterly useless until horses are harnessed in them. So it is with the angels of God and the preachers of the gospel. The power, the horses, by which the chariots of God are pulled through the valley of time, accomplishing his purpose, are “*the four spirits of heaven.*” They represent God the Holy Spirit, here called “*four spirits,*” because he performs God’s purpose everywhere, all the time, throughout all the earth, North, South, East, and West (Isa. 43:5-7).

(Isaiah 43:5-7) “Fear not: for I *am* with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; (6) I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; (7) *Even* every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.”

By the power of God the Holy Spirit, his angels are made instruments of judgment upon the reprobate, binding up the tares for the burning. And by the power of the Spirit they are made instruments of mercy, gathering his wheat into his garner.

- Sometimes God sends his angels as red horses, proclaiming grace and salvation by the blood of Christ.
- Sometimes he sends them as black horses of judgment.
- Sometimes he sends them as speckled horses, “*grisled and bay,*” executing both judgment and mercy.
- But, he always sends them forth as white horses of triumph (2 Cor. 2:14-16; Isa. 66:20).

(2 Corinthians 2:14-16) “Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. (15) For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: (16) To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?”

(Isaiah 66:20) “And they shall bring all your brethren *for* an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.”

CHRIST’S SATISFACTION

Now, look at verse 8. Here our great Savior, the Angel who spoke to Zechariah declares that when all the purpose of God has been accomplished by the providence of God, “*he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.*”

(v. 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.”

He shall be quieted in his spirit forever, completely content, thoroughly satisfied and glorified, when he has, at last, made the restitution of all things, and reconciled all things to God. — “*And his rest shall be glorious*” (Isa. 11:10; Zeph. 3:17).

(Zephaniah 3:17) “The LORD thy God in the midst of thee *is* mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.”

Amen.