



**BETHEL**  
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## **MINISTRY OF THE WORD**

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### **Glory Yet to Come**

Zechariah 6:1-15

In Isaiah 45 we read the words of the prophet, "Truly, Thou art a God who hides Himself..." (Isaiah 45:15)!

Isn't that true? "Now we see in a mirror dimly," says Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:12. As such, it is easy to fall into discouragement and hopelessness when we see evil on the rise, truth compromised, and our efforts producing little if no benefit!

That is where God's people were when the Visions of Zechariah 1-6 were given. Yet

God's people needed to know that what they saw and experienced was the complete opposite of what in fact was true! Iain Duguid wrote of this entire section these thoughts:

Things are not always what they appear to be on the surface. In L. Frank Baum's novel, *The Wizard of Oz*, the wizard manifests himself in terrifying splendour before Dorothy and her three friends in the city of Oz. To behold him is a fear-inducing sight, for he appears in the shape of an enormous head that speaks and breathes smoke. Yet at the end of the story, Dorothy's dog Toto knocks over a screen and unveils a rather less fearsome reality. The wizard turns out to be a second-rate fairground illusionist, who has been hiding his own weakness behind a dramatic persona. The superficial show conceals a deeper emptiness. ¶ What we see in the visions of Zechariah 1–6 is a similar removal of the screen. Once again, the ultimate realities are revealed not to be what appears on the surface. In this case, it is the surface that is peaceful and calm, even banal, the apparent triumph of the forces of evil over the people of God. In Zechariah's day, history appeared to be following a smooth course towards the triumph of the wicked. The visions of Zechariah unveiled a deeper reality, however- a reality far more fearsome than even the pretence of the Wizard of Oz. God Almighty is neither dead nor sleeping, nor is he a second-rate illusionist. On the contrary, he sees all, controls all and is in the process of bringing about all of his perfect plans for his people. (Duguid, 2010, p. 75)

In light of this, the call of God in these visions is for Zechariah and the people of God to live by faith and not by sight! Recall the definition of faith given to us in Hebrews:

Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

In other words, faith is the ability:

- To see beyond the visible to the invisible...
- To take hold of the promises of God for the future and trust them in the present when you see few of them being fulfilled...
- To see beyond what man is doing to what God is doing!

In fact, this was the defining quality of the patriarchs.

Hebrews 11:13b, they all died "...without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance..."

Each of these men and women viewed their world in light of the Kingdom of God! And that was the call God placed upon Zechariah and His people with each these visions!

Zechariah lived "in a day of small things" (Zechariah 4:10). We've seen throughout this

study that Zechariah was living in a time of opposition, of great weakness, of few resources, of spiritual indifference, and much discouragement. His countrymen were saying that the temple Zechariah was calling them to rebuild was a small, insignificant thing! It wasn't worth the effort for it could never be like it once was!

But with these visions Zechariah and the people of God get a glimpse of what God is doing "behind the curtain" such that they might set the small, difficult, tedious, and the discouraging within the larger context of what God is doing and going to do!

Now if there was any vision that Zechariah could have received to encourage this, it was the vision before us. It calls us to live today for the day when Jesus will be glorified throughout the earth! It begins with a description of the glory that is yet to come.

### The Conquest/Vanquishing of Evil, Zechariah 6:1-8

Zechariah 6:1-6, "Now I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming forth from between the two mountains; and the mountains *were* bronze mountains. With the first chariot *were* red horses, with the second chariot black horses, with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot strong dappled horses. Then I spoke and said to the angel who was speaking with me, 'What are these, my lord?' And the angel answered and said to me, 'These are the four spirits of heaven, going forth after standing before the Lord of all the earth, with one of which the black horses are going forth to the north country; and the white ones go forth after them, while the dappled ones go forth to the south country.'

Recall that this section of Zechariah (1:7-6:15) came to the prophet in a single night! Furthermore, the visions are arranged chiastically with the center Visions #4 & 5 detailing the radical grace of God and the true nature of kingdom success. Well, the first (1:7-17) and last vision (6:1-15) correspond to each other, yet with notable differences:

- The first vision was given in the context of gloom where God's Kingdom seemed to be in shambles and the nations all "at rest and peace" with their wickedness. The Vision before us ends with God being "at rest" and the nations being in shambles.
- The first vision began with four angels reporting in a dark valley, hidden from the sight of man. This last vision has four spirits (representing God Almighty) riding out in Chariots of Triumph to conquer the world's kingdoms.
- The first vision was given at night; the vision before us was notably given at dawn<sup>1,2</sup>- with the clear implication that though our day may be dark, nevertheless we are at the dawn of God's Redemptive Program!<sup>3</sup>

Let me draw your attention to three statements in the text:

Zechariah 6:1, “Now I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming forth from between the two mountains; and the mountains *were* bronze mountains.”

The image here is of the temple porch which according to 1 Kings 7:14 had “two bronze mountains”- massive bronze pillars fifty feet high — placed on either side of the Temple entrance. It was from between these two pillars that the “four spirits of heaven” went forth to conquer! Speaking of which:

Zechariah 6:4-5a, “Then I spoke and said to the angel who was speaking with me, ‘What are these, my lord?’ And the angel answered and said to me, ‘These are the four spirits of heaven...’”

We are familiar with the word used to identify these “spirits”- רוח (*ruach*)- which as we saw last time references (1) the omnipotent power of God (cf. Genesis 2:7; Job 26:13; Exodus 15:8-10) as well as (2) the Spirit of God (Isaiah 40:13; Numbers 11:17, 25). There is little question here that we are NOT talking about angels, BUT a pictorial representation of God’s omnipresence throughout the earth!<sup>4</sup>

Zechariah 6:6-7, “With one of which the black horses are going forth to the north country; and the white ones go forth after them, while the dappled ones go forth to the south country.”

Because of the first vision which included four angels coming from the four ends of the earth, many commentators want to read into this verse the four directions of the compass which involves changing the text amongst other things.<sup>5 6</sup> That being said, the focus of the conquest of this vision does involve the whole earth (v. 7).<sup>7</sup> Yet the emphasis is on one particular Kingdom, one particular conquest.<sup>8</sup>

Zechariah 6:7-8, “‘When the strong ones went out, they were eager to go to patrol the earth [they were chomping at their bits, their hooves were pawing the ground].’ And He said, ‘Go, patrol the earth.’ [which is exactly what the four angelic horsemen had been doing prior to the first vision, 1:10, 11] So they patrolled the earth. [yet their ‘patrol’ involved more than simply taking notes... it included Conquest, for notice...] 8 Then He cried out to me and spoke to me saying, ‘See, those who are going to the land of the north have appeased My wrath<sup>9</sup> in the land of the north.’”

With this verse, all eyes are focused on the Kingdom of the North, which was Babylon.<sup>10,11</sup> Recall, from the return on, Babylon became synonymous with the fallen world in which we live- for God had confined “wickedness” there (Zechariah 5:5-11)! And it is that which is the focus of this vision, the destruction of Babylon the Great (cf. Revelation 17:5)! Comprised of all evil and wicked angels, men, and nations who have set themselves against God!

This is the focus of this final vision —the coming destruction of this present age! And what a glorious consolation! Recall:

- Wickedness was the reason Israel went into exile.
- It was wickedness that held God’s people captive in Babylon for seventy years.
- And though God had taken His people out of wickedness/Babylon AND removed “wickedness”/Babylon from His people through the cross, nevertheless we are continually attacked and molested by it as we endeavor to serve the Lord!
- In the end, God is going to destroy Satan, his demons, and sin- WICKEDNESS! — with the result that God now and once again would be “appeased” (v. 8) or “at rest”! This is an important statement
  - After God created the world, what do we read? God rested (Genesis 2:2)!
  - But then, once sin entered the world, what do we read? God now “strives with man” (Genesis 6:3)!
  - What ultimately is going to occur at the end of this world? After the world of fallen man is destroyed, God once again will be at peace and we with Him!!!

Zechariah 6:8, “Then He cried out to me and spoke to me saying, ‘See, those who are going to the land of the north have appeased My wrath in the land of the north.’”

And so, we are reading here of the glory of God’s conquest toward which everything in this world — every providence, every trial, every tear cried, every insignificant act of obedience and service in the Lord- is heading!<sup>12</sup> Ian Duguid wrote this:

...chariots were the ancient equivalent of tanks, the key symbol of military power. What is more, these chariots are pulled by no ordinary horses- all of them were ‘strong’- and there are ‘four’ of them, the number of completeness. The symbolism is potent. The data gathering is complete and the signal has been given from the divine high command: ‘Let’s roll!’ The heavenly army is on the move; the might of this world’s empires is about to be overtaken by the omnipotent power of the Lord of hosts. (Duguid, 2010, p. 122)

Against the backdrop of the trials and difficulties of God’s people at this time, what a glorious truth to behold!

- Wickedness has NOT won!
- The evil nations at peace with their sin and rebellion are soon to be at war... with God! And God is going to win!

How is God going to bring this about?

## The Crowning of God's Victor, Zechariah 6:9-11.

Zechariah 6:9-10, "The word of the Lord also came to me saying, 'Take *an offering* from the exiles, from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah; and you go the same day and enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah,<sup>13</sup> where they have arrived from Babylon.'

This is the language of conquest! When God's people left Egypt, what do we read? God told Moses this at his commissioning:

Exodus 3:20-22, "So I will stretch out My hand, and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go. And I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be that when you go, you will not go empty-handed. But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you will plunder the Egyptians."

In other words, God's people did NOT sneak out of Egypt under the cover of darkness, RATHER they left as victors, having "plundered" the nation of its "silver and gold"!

That is what is behind the language here. The focus is on four obviously wealthy Jews whose families entered Babylon in rags (they all did), BUT left having plundered the Babylonians of its riches!<sup>14</sup> And what were they to do with this plunder?

Zechariah 6:11, "And take silver and gold, make an *ornate* crown,<sup>15</sup> and set *it* on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest."

It was God's plan to crown "Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest" — whom we have seen was/is a type of Christ who is a priest and king! That is the focus of this verse (cf. Isaiah 60:11; Revelation 21:26).

Yet the crowning of the Messiah would NOT literally be a crown of gold or silver, BUT — in the words of Sinclair Ferguson — the crowning is of the nations who would come and trust in Him. That will be His splendor, His glory, as well as the emblem of His kingship! Paul tells us that the day is going to come when God will be worshipped:

Philippians 2:10b-11, "...every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

So how would God conquer this world? How would God destroy Babylon with its wickedness? Through the ministration of a Priest/King...

Hebrews 2:14-15, "Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death [1] He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and [2] might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."

It is as Paul cited from the Old Testament:

Ephesians 4:8, "Therefore it says, 'When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men.'"

We see it in the next two verses which describe the consummation of God's plan.

### The Consummation of God's Plan, Zechariah 6:12-13.

Zechariah 6:12, "Then say to him [Joshua], 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, "Behold, a man [literally, 'behold, the man'- the very words Pilate used when he introduced Christ to the people!] whose name is Branch [with this we think of the joint prophecies of Isaiah 11 and Jeremiah 33 which foretold of the coming of the Messiah who would bear the title of 'Branch'!], for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the Lord."

Again, God's people lived in "a day of small things" (Zechariah 4:10) in which their meager efforts seemed as nothing when it came to the rebuilding of the temple. Yet get this; through their meager efforts God would build His Kingdom which involved the building of another "Temple" which Paul identified as the church (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17)!

Zechariah 6:13, "Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the Lord, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. [Christ was, is, and evermore shall be Head of the church] Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices."

It is tempting to think that the point of this verse is that the Messiah, being both a King and a Priest, would unite these Old Testament offices such that there would be peace between them. While that is true in a limited sense, that is NOT the complete picture here. The language of "peace between the two offices" also encompass a peace between these divine offices and man! J. M. Boice put it this way:

What is the result of his atonement and rule? The text describes it as "harmony" or peace. Harmony between whom? Not between the two offices; that relationship has been harmonious from the beginning. Not between God the Father and his servant the Son; that too has existed from eternity. The peace is between the holy God and sinners, between God and ourselves. (Boice, 2006, p. 515)

As darkness turned to dawn that night so long ago, Zechariah received this eighth vision which spoke of the dawn of Christ's Messianic Kingdom in which God once and for all would be "at rest", "at peace" with His sinning people! This brings us to the confirmation of God's promise.

### The Confirmation of God's Promise, Zechariah 6:14.

Zechariah 6:14, "Now the crown will become a reminder in the temple of the Lord to [for] Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah."

Though the names are different from what we see in v. 9, they refer to the same people.<sup>16</sup> That being said, this is an incredibly important verse!

The "crown" referenced here would NOT be worn by Joshua so that all might be reminded of God's peaceful intentions. RATHER, it would be placed inside the temple where no one would behold it except the high priest when he entered yearly into the Holy of Holies! Yet its presence in the temple was intended to be a reminder NOT "to" these four men, BUT "for" these four men (and so, all God's people)!

What's going on here? How could placing the crown in the temple out of sight be an encouragement to any? This is something we don't want to miss! Every sign/seal/sacrament ordained by God and given to man first and foremost is a sign/seal intended to remind God of His Covenant promises! Signs and seals most certainly involve much more than this, BUT they are nothing less than this! Think of the rainbow. It was given first and foremost as a sign to God:

Genesis 9:16, "When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."

And so, it was during the Exodus with the blood on the doorposts:

Exodus 12:13b, "...and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt."

Exodus 28:29, "And Aaron shall carry the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment over his heart when he enters the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually."

So, does God need a sign to remind Him of His promises? Absolutely not! BUT we do! If only God's word were enough for us, yet how long after reading a promise of God do we forget? Accordingly, as a compensation on account of our weakness, God takes pictures of His redeeming grace and does NOT give them exclusively to us as a reminder, BUT tells us that the sign first and foremost is a reminder to Him!<sup>17</sup>



And so, it was with “this crown.” It was placed in the Temple to remind God’s people that God’s purposes and plans will never be forgotten by the Lord! And so, it is with the “peace” which Christ imparts as our Royal Priest!

- Because He is our Priest, we can never be condemned!
- Because he is our King, we can never be lost!

How ought this to impact you and me? That brings us to a final statement which involves all in Christ the consequent hope and calling.

### The Consequent Hope and Calling, Zechariah 6:15

Zechariah 6:15, “‘And those who are far off<sup>18</sup> will come and build the temple of the Lord.’ Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. And it will take place, if you completely obey the Lord your God.”

This passage has two relevant statements for us.

- On account of the peace that Christ has granted through His cross, we are called to co-labor with God in the building of His temple/church!
- On account of the will of the Lord, God has ordained to take the small, insignificant labors of His people and use them to bring about His eternal purpose- a purpose which here God says, “will [NOT] take place, if you will [NOT] completely obey the Lord your God.”

So, we are back at where I started this morning. The work of building God’s Temple — whether that be in Zechariah’s day or our own — is daunting and the fruit most often will seem meager — a day of small things! But it behooves us to see beyond the visible to the invisible, beyond the human to the Divine, and so view the small, difficult, tedious, and the discouraging within the context of what God is doing! That is the call of faith! In the words of F. W. Faber:

“Workmen of God O lose not heart but learn what God is like.  
And in the darkest battlefield thou shalt know where to strike.  
Thrice blessed is he to whom is given the instinct that can tell,  
That God is on the field when He is most invisible.”

### References

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## End Note(s)

<sup>1</sup> "Indeed, whereas the first vision is set in the night, when all around is dark, this one has the appearance of day, or at least of sunrise." (Duguid, 2010, p. 122)

<sup>2</sup> "Many scholars believe that the first vision occurs at dusk and the eighth vision appears to Zechariah at dawn on the same evening." (Klein, 2007, p. 183)

<sup>3</sup> "An attractive suggestion made by several Continental scholars [E.g., H. Frey, *BAT*, pp. 52, 91; F. Horst, *HAT*, pp. 218, 236; G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, II, p. 287] is that the first of the visions takes place in the evening, whereas the last comes at sunrise. A new era is dawning for Judah and the world, for God's purposes as set out in the visions are about to be fulfilled." (Baldwin, 1972, p. 138)

<sup>4</sup> "...the Hebrew word for 'wind' (rûah) is the same as that for 'Spirit' (see 6:8), so these winds also represent the agency of divine power at work in the world." (Duguid, 2010, p. 123)

<sup>5</sup> "We would expect the four different coloured pairs of horses to go to the four points of the compass, especially since they have just been identified with the four winds of heaven.

Commentators therefore routinely emend the text to match their expectations. However, the text as it stands mentions only two directions: the 'black' and the 'white' horses go to 'the land of the north', while the 'speckled' horses go 'to the land of the south'." (Duguid, 2010, p. 123)

<sup>6</sup> "Baldwin reconstructs the text so that chariots proceed in all four directions, a conclusion without substantiation from manuscript evidence. Nonetheless, she offers a helpful summary of the passage's main emphasis: 'So far as the prophet's message is concerned the only group of importance is that which goes to the north (north and east, understood), where the struggle for world domination had for centuries been concentrated. Egypt was still an important power, hence the mention of the south also, but to the west there was nothing of importance going on to warrant special mention. From a stylistic point of view the prophet gains by leaving the other two directions vague. It is enough to know that the Lord is triumphant over the dominant world powers. The lesser are included with the greater.'" (Klein, 2007, p. 191)

<sup>7</sup> "The Hebrew phrase the NIV renders as "go/went throughout the earth" occurs three times in v. 7. The repetition underscores the emphatic character of the expression. Moreover, the phrase echoes the language found in 1:10, signifying patrolling the earth in a military sense." (Klein, 2007, p. 192)

<sup>8</sup> "The prime target is 'the land of the north'- i.e. Babylon- which is the objective assigned to two of the four chariots. If there is any opposition to the divine invasion force in its assault on Babylon, it is not worth mentioning." (Duguid, 2010, p. 124)

<sup>9</sup> "...the angel reveals his identity, for he speaks as the Lord of the whole earth (cf. 4:14)." (Baldwin, 1972, p. 140)

<sup>10</sup> "The major roads head north and south from Judah, since to the west is the Mediterranean Sea and to the east is the desert. Judah's main enemies always came from the north (Babylon, Assyria, Persia) or the south (Egypt), and any military operation beginning in Judah would necessarily proceed outwards on these two fronts." (Duguid, 2010, p. 123)

<sup>11</sup> "As v. 8 continues, the angel proclaimed victory and rest in the "north country." Although Babylon did not lie to the north of Israel geographically, the desert terrain to the immediate east and northeast of Israel required Mesopotamian foes to enter Israel from the north. So the north represents Babylon, the seat of all political unrest and evil in the minds of the Israelite community." (Klein, 2007, p. 192)

<sup>12</sup> "Thus, the Lord's military might depicts the more profound theological message that God reigns with sovereignty over his entire creation. No empire or geographic expanse can hinder the Lord's rule. Moreover, the four chariots further emphasize the Lord's total dominion over the four corners of the earth. God's word (5:1-4) and his authority extend everywhere. Thus,

the theological significance of the Lord's chariots emerging from between the bronze mountains expresses the absolute sovereignty God holds over his entire creation." (Klein, 2007, p. 185)

<sup>13</sup> "From the position of the verb have arrived at the end of the sentence in Hebrew, the inference is that all four men had come together." (Baldwin, 1972, p. 141)

<sup>14</sup> "Such a composite crown is unusual, to say the least, but it reflects the expectation of Haggai 2:8 that both of these precious metals would come to the temple from afar and fill it with glory. This connection highlights an important aspect of the coronation, yet one which is often overlooked. It is not just a matter of who is crowned, but who provides the resources for the sign act, namely a series of designated individuals among the exiles. Identifying these exiles as the ones who provide the resources for this symbolic filling of the temple with glory is not mere fund-raising rhetoric but an important theological statement in its own right. Those 'who have returned from Babylon' are at the centre of God's plan for the future (see also 6:15)." (Duguid, 2010, p. 125)

<sup>15</sup> "Zechariah is to ask explicitly for a share of the silver and gold sent from Babylon by them. Make a crown (Hebrews 'crowns', *ătārôt*). There are three possible explanations of the plural, and they are not mutually exclusive. (a) Eastern crowns were circlets, which could be worn singly or fitted together to make a composite crown (cf. Revelation 19:12, and the hymn 'Crown him with many crowns'). The mention of two different metals indicates that there were at least two circlets. (b) In the absence of a superlative form, Hebrew used the plural as one way of denoting excellence (cf. Elohim 'God', a plural form followed by a verb in the singular). In verse 14 the word 'crowns' is followed by a singular verb. (c) There is an *ôt* ending distinct from the plural (cf. *hokmôt*, 'wisdom', in Prov. 1:20; 9:1; 14:1). F. D. Kidner cites evidence that it is either a Phoenician form of the singular or a Hebrew plural. 'If it is the latter, it is to express intensity and fullness; and like the plural Elohim (God), it uses a singular verb (cf. 9:1).' E. Lipinski thinks that the *ôt* is archaic, and that it gives an 'antique', 'sacred', 'mythical' flavour. The crown belongs to this sacred realm. It was to be as magnificent as possible. Though the Greek and Latin versions had the plural, the Syriac translated with the singular noun, so conveying that there was one crown. In verse 14 the Greek used the singular." (Baldwin, 1972, pp. 141-142)

<sup>16</sup> "*Helem*, not *Heldai*, is the form of the first in the Hebrew. Among the early versions Syriac harmonized with the names in verse 10 and preferred *Heldai*, a rationalization which has been followed by RSV, JB, NEB. The unexpected change of name is likely to have been original. It may be that *Heldai*, 'mole' preferred to use his more dignified name *Helem*, 'strength' for official purposes, or the names may have been interchangeable (cf. *Heled* in 1 Chr. 11:30, spelt *Heleb* in 2 Sam. 23:29 and *Heldai* in 1 Chr. 27:15). The Hebrew *Hên* (see AV, RV) instead of *Joshua* is more difficult, but the clue may lie in its meaning 'grace', seen in connection with 'Joshua', 'saviour'." (Baldwin, 1972, p. 146)

<sup>17</sup> "The purpose of a memorial (*zikkārôn*) is to keep the matter constantly before the Lord, rather than the people, which is why it is located in the temple (cf. Exod. 30:11-16; Numbers 10:9-10)." (Duguid, 2010, p. 127)

<sup>18</sup> "The building of Zerubbabel's temple can hardly have been meant because it was already well on the way to completion, and those 'far off' are not necessarily confined to Jews of the dispersion (cf. 2:11; 8:22). The 'Book of Visions' looked farther afield than the rebuilding in Jerusalem, and embraced all nations. Like many other prophetic passages it was concerned with the focal point of all history, the coming of the Davidic king, who would transform the concepts of temple and of leadership." (Baldwin, 1972, p. 146)