

Session 7 The Four Chariots and Our Messiah (Zech. 6:1-15)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Zechariah was commissioned to proclaim the message of God’s zeal for Jerusalem (1:14) and the sure destruction of her enemies (1:15, 21). All eight visions show different aspects of His zeal. In the eighth vision, the Lord zealously removes all the oppression of the Gentile nations.

¹⁴***“Proclaim... ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “I am zealous for Jerusalem...with great zeal.””***
(Zech. 1:14)

- B. These eight visions give us insight into God’s ways. We not only see where He is leading history, but we see what He does to bring His people to victory. He is kind enough to intervene in dramatic, powerful, and wise ways, and is merciful enough to restore and use the disqualified. He removes all the obstacles so that His people can succeed and participate with Him.
- C. The first three visions (Zech. 1-2) have a millennial promise of prosperity and blessing for Israel. The fourth and fifth visions (Zech. 3-4) speak of Israel’s leadership being cleansed and anointed. The sixth and seventh visions (Zech. 5) pertain to the judgment and cleansing of national Israel. The eighth vision shows the Lord’s triumph over all nations in preparation for the Millennium.
- D. In the eighth vision, Zechariah saw the Lord remove all His enemies worldwide (6:1-8). He sees the final breakthrough of the kingdom at the end of the age (10:3-9; 12:3-9; 14:2-5, 12-16). This vision gives us insight into the activity occurring in the angelic realm when war breaks out on the earth (Dan. 10:13, 20-21; Rev. 12:7-9).
- E. The eighth vision develops the Lord’s promise in the second vision (1:18-21) to judge the Gentile world powers, when He vowed to terrify and cast down the nations who scattered Israel. Israel is indestructible because of God’s covenant with her. He has promised to make a full end of all nations where He scattered Israel, but He will not make a full end of Israel (Jer. 30:11).
- ¹¹***“Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice...”*** (Jer. 30:11)
- F. The first and last visions are like bookends of the eight-vision revelation received in one night. Important parts of the eighth vision link to the first vision (1:7-17). Both visions describe different colored horses going through the earth. There are four horses in the first vision and four chariots pulled by horses in the eighth vision. The theme of rest is in both visions (1:11; 6:8).
1. In the first vision (1:7-17) Zechariah saw angelic riders on horses, with the Angel of the Lord (on a red horse) leading them. They were sent out to patrol the earth.

2. Here in Zechariah's eighth and final vision, he sees the angelic horsemen of the first vision being replaced by angelic war chariots being sent out to execute God's judgment on the nations. The eighth vision is a much greater show of force than the first vision.

II. EIGHTH VISION: THE FOUR CHARIOTS (6:1-8)

- A. **Summary:** Zechariah saw four mighty chariots coming out from between two bronze mountains. The chariots were drawn by teams of horses that were red, black, white and dappled. They went forth to execute God's judgment on the nations to prepare the way for Jesus' millennial reign.

⁹*And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—"The LORD is one."* (Zech. 14:9)

¹⁰*He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be...to the ends of the earth.* (Zech. 9:10)

¹¹*Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people.* (Zech. 2:11)

- B. The vision has three parts: the symbolism related to the four war chariots (6:1-3), the explanation of the symbolism of the chariots (6:4-5), and the mission of the chariots (6:6-8).
- C. Zechariah saw four mighty war chariots coming from heaven to participate in the breakthrough of God's kingdom on the earth. The theme of this vision is developed further in Zechariah 9-14.
- D. We conclude that these four chariots speak of angelic principalities of great stature because they go out from their special station (6:5b) in God's presence to execute God's end-time judgments from the bronze mountains (6:1b), in war chariots that are pulled by a team of powerful steeds (6:3c, 7) to accomplish a global purpose (6:5d). This vision shows just one aspect of Jesus' heavenly arsenal when He goes to war against wicked nations in the end times (Rev. 19:11-21).

¹¹*...and in righteousness He judges and makes war.* (Rev. 19:11)

- E. Zechariah saw four mighty war chariots coming out from between two bronze mountains (6:1).
¹*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.* (Zech. 6:1-3)*

1. **Four:** The number four is the number of the earth, or that which is worldwide. It speaks of the four corners of the earth being affected by these judgments (1:11; 6:5).
2. **Four chariots:** These chariots were commissioned to overthrow Gentile world powers. Chariots suggest a military context, as the Lord declares war on His enemies.

3. **Mountains of bronze:** These symbolize God’s judgment against sin (Rev. 1:15; 2:18).
4. **Four strong horses:** Each chariot is drawn by a team of strong horses (6:3, 7). Elijah and Elisha saw horses with heavenly chariots (2 Kgs. 2:11; 6:17). Jesus returns on a horse.
5. **Four colors:** The colors of the horses probably spoke of their mission. The interpreting angel does not tell Zechariah the meaning of their colors. However, in Revelation 6, the meaning of the colors is given. The four sets of horses in Zechariah 1:8-11 and 6:1-8 seem connected to the four horses with similar colors in Revelation 6:1-8.

²With the first chariot were red horses, with the second chariot black horses, ³with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot dappled horses—strong steeds. (Zech. 6:2-3)

6. **Red horses:** The red horse speaks of bloodshed in war. John saw the rider on a red horse being given a sword to strike the earth with war (Rev. 6:4). Zechariah saw a Man riding a red horse to judge the nations that oppressed Israel (1:21). Isaiah described the Messiah coming to Israel in red garments because it was the day of vengeance (Isa. 63:1-6).
7. **Black horses:** The black horse speaks of mourning caused by famine in Revelation 6:5.
8. **White horses:** The white horse speaks of the victory of conquest in Revelation 6:2.
9. **Dappled horses:** This color is translated by some as speckled (or spotted color horse). This may be similar to the sorrel colored horses (1:8), which are speckled or of a mixed color. The combination of colors signifies a mission combining judgment and mercy.

F. The interpretation of the four chariots as four angels (6:4-5).

⁴Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?”

⁵And 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.” (Zech. 6:4-5)

1. **What are these:** Zechariah asked for understanding of the four chariots (6:1-3)
2. **Four spirits:** The angel answered that the four chariots are four spirits or angels who have a special station (place of authority) before the Lord. These angels are angels of judgment. The words *the four spirits* can be translated as "the four winds" of heaven. The four Gentile world powers, whose successive reign makes up *the times of Gentiles*, were stirred by the four winds of heaven to arise (Dan. 7:2-3). Here, the four winds of heaven are sent forth to destroy the same four Gentile empires (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome) that scattered Israel, as seen in Zechariah’s second vision (1:19).
3. **Lord of all the earth:** This implies that these angels are involved in a global purpose.

4. **Who go out:** These four spirits, or angelic warriors, are aggressive in their task, being commissioned to “go out” to the nations. Behind the destruction of world empires are invisible angelic war chariots sent out by the Lord.

G. The divine assignments given to each team of horses and their chariots (6:6-8).

“The one [chariot] 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.”*** (Zech. 6:6-8)

1. **Strong steeds:** Each team of horses is strong and mighty for battle (6:3c, 7).
2. **Eager:** The horses are described as eager to accomplish their divine mission.
3. **Walk to and fro throughout the earth:** This phrase is repeated three times to emphasize the global scope of God’s purpose and their commission in executing His judgment (6:7).
4. **He said “Go”:** The Lord of all the earth (6:5; 4:11), or Jesus, as captain of the armies of heaven (Josh. 5:13-15), gave the word to release the horses, who were eager to go (6:7). The Lord told the angelic warriors in the chariots who were “stationed” before Him (6:5) to go forth to confront the hostile Gentile world powers. Jesus has actively directed His heavenly armies throughout history and will continue to do so in His end-time plans.
¹³Joshua...said to Him, “Are You for us or for our adversaries?” ¹⁴He said, “No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.” (Josh. 5:13-14)
5. **Black horses going north:** This may speak of the Greeks destroying the Persian army in 330 BC as tools of God’s judgment. Persia was spoken of as a northern army, and it was the empire that was oppressing Israel when Zechariah received these visions. Zechariah said that the chariot with the black horses “*is*” going north, indicating a current activity.
6. **White horses go after them:** Later the white horses follow the black ones. White is the color of the horses that bring victory and purity to the nations. This may speak of God’s triumph in destroying the Greeks, or it may refer to a long delay until the white horses are involved in destroying the Antichrist’s northern armies (Rev. 19:11, 14).
⁴And the armies in heaven...followed Him [Jesus] on white horses. (Rev. 19:11-14)
7. **Dappled horses go toward the south:** The dappled, or spotted, horses go south in the direction of Egypt and the surrounding region to destroy Gentile resistance to the Lord.

8. **Red horses:** There is no mention of the red horses being commissioned to go forth, possibly because they had already fulfilled their purpose by participating in the overthrow of Babylon about twenty years before Zechariah had this vision (1:8).
9. **Rest to My Spirit:** The chariots (black, white, and red) which release God’s judgments in “toward the north country” will cause God’s anger and judgments to “rest.” Throughout history, the Spirit is pictured as continually striving with the nations (Gen. 6:3). His striving with and judging the nations will one day be finished. God seeks a resting place on earth where His judgments rest and His will is done on earth like it is in heaven.
10. The Spirit will rest when His judgments on the north are completed (6:8). It is from the north that the Antichrist’s empire will rise up to attack Israel (Ezek. 38:14-16; 39:1-8)
- 15“You will come from your place out of the far north...a great company and a mighty army. 16You will come up against My people Israel...in the latter days...”***
(Ezek. 38:15-16)
- 2“I will...bringing you up from the far north, and bring you against the mountains of Israel...4You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops...”***
(Ezek. 39:2-4)
11. **Israel’s northern enemy:** Israel will be delivered from a northern enemy in the end times (Jer. 16:15; 23:8; 31:8; Ezek. 38:6, 15; 39:2; Joel 2:20). The Babylonian army coming against Israel from the north in 586 BC was a terrible hour for Israel, but it was also a prophetic picture of the Antichrist’s army coming against Israel from the north. Many scriptures prophesying an **army from the north** attacking Israel have a dual fulfillment—initially by Assyria, Babylon, or Persia, and then by the Antichrist in the end times. **Jeremiah prophesied of a mighty Babylonian army coming from the north to judge Israel** (Jer. 1:13-15; 3:12, 18; 4:6; 6:1, 22; 10:22; 13:20; 15:12; 25:9). **Jeremiah warned the Egyptians that they would be attacked from the north** (Jer. 46:6,10, 20, 24) and that **Babylon would be destroyed from the north by the Medo-Persian army** (Jer. 50:3, 9, 41). For more on the northern army see the following verses (Isa. 14:31; 41:25; Jer. 46:6, 10, 20, 24; 47:2; 50:3, 9, 26, 41, 46; 51:27, 48; Joel 2:20; Zeph. 2:13).
12. **See, those who go toward the north:** Zechariah was exhorted to “see” the truths represented by the chariots going to the north. We must also “see” the coming judgments and understand them and the great victory that results from them.
- H. The eighth vision ends the night of visions with a note of triumph as the Spirit is seen resting from His work of judgment. This means that all the nations’ resistance to God’s kingdom being established on earth has been removed.
- I. The four chariots completed their task of going throughout the earth to prepare it for God’s dominion through the Messiah, called the Branch (6:12-13).

- J. In the final oracle of Zechariah 1-6, we see what follows after all the evil governments and world powers are confronted and removed. The crowning of Joshua is symbolic of the crowning of Jesus as the King of kings and the Great High Priest, when Jews and Gentiles will dwell together under His glorious leadership (6:15).

III. CROWNING OF JOSHUA: THE COMING MESSIAH (6:9-15)

- A. After the eight night visions, the Lord told Zechariah to crown Joshua the high priest with a crown made of silver and gold (6:11) to symbolize the coming of the Messiah as King-Priest.
- B. The section has two parts: the symbolic crowning of Joshua (6:9-11), and a messianic prophecy of Jesus as the Branch (6:12-15)
- C. The symbolic crowning of Joshua the high priest (6:9-11)

9Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: ¹⁰“Receive the gift from the captive—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. ¹¹Take the silver and gold, make an elaborate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. (Zech. 6:9-11)

1. ***Receive the gift:*** Zechariah was told to take the offering of silver and gold (6:11) that three Jewish exiles (previous captives) had brought from Babylon to financially help Zerubbabel’s work on the temple. Zerubbabel completed the temple about three years later in March 516 BC (Ezra 6:15).
2. ***Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah:*** These were Jewish men who lived in Babylon and had just arrived on a visit to Jerusalem.
3. ***Make an elaborate crown:*** Zechariah was told to take the offering of silver and gold from the visitors from Babylon and make a crown, and then set it on Joshua’s head.
 - a. This was symbolic of the Lord’s promise to send the Messiah to Israel.
 - b. Joshua’s crowning prefigures the “Messiah-Branch” who will usher in the millennial kingdom. The crown was twice referred to as an “elaborate” crown (6:11, 14).
4. ***Go to the house of Josiah:*** Zechariah was to go, the same day, to Josiah’s house with the silver and gold.
 - a. God had urgency about Zechariah going on that same day, February 15, 519 BC).
 - b. The three men from Babylon may have arrived that very morning, following Zechariah’s long night of visions.

D. After Zechariah placed the crown on Joshua, he was then told to give him a message about Jesus' future messianic role to build the temple and then rule from it.

E. A messianic prophecy of Jesus as the Branch (6:12-15). The final oracle in the eight visions is here in Zechariah 6:12-15. All the other oracles had an interpreting angel to help Zechariah.

¹²Then 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; ¹³yes, 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.’” (Zech. 6:12-13)

1. ***Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH:*** Jesus the Branch—is the King (Jer. 23:5-6), a servant (Zech. 3:8), a Man (Zech. 6:12), and He is the Lord (Isa. 4:2). This parallels the fourfold picture of Jesus in the four Gospels.
 - a. These words were spoken to Joshua, but he understood that they applied to someone far greater than he. He had been told earlier that he was a prophetic “sign” (3:8) of the Branch. He understood that the crowning was symbolic of Another who is the King.
 - b. The prophecy promises four things: first, that Jesus shall be a priest on a throne; second, that He shall build the temple; third, that He shall bear the glory and rule on His throne; fourth, that Gentiles who are far off shall help build the temple.
 - c. By God’s solemn command, the high priest had to descend from the tribe of Levi, specifically the family line of Aaron. Kings had to come from the tribe of Judah, specifically the family line of David. Thus, it was impossible for a priest to be a king.
2. ***From His place He shall branch out:*** Jesus the Branch shall branch out progressively. Isaiah spoke of Jesus increasing in ordering and establishing the kingdom of God forever.
⁷Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end...to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. (Isa. 9:7)
3. ***He shall build the temple of the LORD:*** Zechariah, for emphasis, says “Yes, He shall build the temple” (6:13). Jesus first built a spiritual temple (Jn. 2:29; Eph. 2:22) in this age; He will build a physical temple in Jerusalem in the age to come.
4. ***He shall rule on His throne:*** Solomon publicly referred to the prophecy that David gave about one of his sons building the temple and ruling on it (2 Sam. 7:12-13. 2 Chr. 6:16).
¹²I will set up your seed after you...¹³He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever”. (2 Sam. 7:12-13)

6I heard Him speaking to me from the temple...⁷He said to me, “Son of man, this is the place of My throne...where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever.” (Ezek. 43:6-7)

5. **He shall be a priest on His throne**: The crowning points to Jesus as the King-Priest. In His person, He joins the two great mediatorial offices of priest and king. Scripture speaks of a ruling in a temple four times (Zech. 6; Ezek. 43; 2 Sam. 7; Ps. 132). The placing of a crown on Joshua pictured the joining of the offices of Priest and King in Jesus.
 6. **The counsel of peace**: This refers to the office of Messiah as Priest-King. Jesus joined forever the highest offices of high priest and king. A Levitical priest could never take the role of a son of David in becoming a king, and vice versa.
- F. Zechariah was commissioned to proclaim the message of God’s zeal for Jerusalem (1:14, 16). The Lord is zealous to build His temple in Jerusalem and to live there forever (1:16; 2:5, 10).
¹⁴“Proclaim, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “I am zealous for Jerusalem... ¹⁶I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy; My house [the temple] shall be built in it.” (Zech. 1:14, 16)
- G. The crown was to be put in the temple to remind the men of Babylon about the Messiah (6:14).
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. ¹⁵Even those who are far away 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.” (Zech. 6:14-15)
1. **A memorial**: The crown was put in the temple as a memorial for the men who gave the offerings to build the temple. The memorial was a pledge that the Messiah would come. Once placed in the temple, the crown took on great significance as a “memorial.” The crown is a reminder to others of the giving of those who had contributed silver and gold to build the temple.
 2. **Those from afar will build the temple**: When Jesus comes to earth to rule, then Jews and Gentiles from afar will help build the temple (2:11; 8:22; Isa. 56:6-7; 60:4-17). These words also apply to Jews in the Diaspora who will live in the far lands at the time of Jesus’ return. Peter and Paul may have referenced this passage (Acts 2:39; Eph. 2:13). Jesus and the people on the millennial earth will build the millennial temple together.
 3. **Obedience**: All these things will come to pass as God’s people diligently obey Him.
 4. **You shall know that the Lord sent Me**: When this all came to pass, Israel would know that the Lord had spoken through Zechariah

5. ***Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen:*** There are minor differences in the names here as compared to verse 10. Heldai is the same as Helem; Hen is not a name but means the “kindness” of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah (6:10).