Zechariah 6:1-8

**Digging Deeper in the Word**

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***Zechariah 6:1–8***Again I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, four chariots came out from between two mountains. And the mountains were mountains of bronze. The first chariot had red horses, the second black horses, the third white horses, and the fourth chariot dappled horses—all of them strong. Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?” And the angel answered and said to me, “These are going out to the four winds of heaven, after presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth. The chariot with the black horses goes toward the north country, the white ones go after them, and the dappled ones go toward the south country.” When the strong horses came out, they were impatient to go and patrol the earth. And he said, “Go, patrol the earth.” So they patrolled the earth. Then he cried to me, “Behold, those who go toward the north country have set my Spirit at rest in the north country.”

1. The first section of Chapter 6 presents the EIGHTH vision of Zechariah: “The Four Chariots”. Review again the main points of the previous visions:  
   a) Introduction, Zech 1:1-6  
   b) First Vision, “Man & horses in the myrtle trees”: Zech 1:7-17   
   c) Second Vision, “Four horns and craftsmen”: Zech 1:18-21 .   
   d) Third Vision & Oracle, “ Man with measuring line”: Zech 2  
   e) Fourth Vision, “Satan accuses the High Priest”: Zech 3   
   f) Fifth Vision, “Golden Lampstand & Olive Trees”: Zech 4  
   g) Sixth Vision, “Flying Scroll”: Zech 5:1-4  
   h) Seventh Vision, “Woman in Basket”: Zech 5:5-11

a) Introduction, Zech 1:1-6  
Repent! Don’t be like your ancestors! Return to me and I will return to you.

b) First Vision, “Man & horses in the myrtle trees”: Zech 1:7-17   
Be encouraged – YHWH will rebuild His city and His land, and with dwell with His people again, bringing prosperity to them.

c) Second Vision, “Four horns and craftsmen”: Zech 1:18-21 .   
YHWH knows His people have been suffering under the hands of others nations, and is going to punish those nations. The abuses will be paid for. Take heart, be encouraged, for I am your God.

d) Third Vision & Oracle, “ Man with measuring line”: Zech 2  
YHWH will be rebuild the city like never before. It will be filled with people so walls cannot contain it. It will be prosperous and powerful… they will plunder the nations that have plundered them. And they will have the protection and presence of YHWH. Judgment day is coming!

e) Fourth Vision, “Satan accuses the High Priest”: Zech 3  
Yeshua (Joshua the high priest) is a sign of Yeshua the Messiah to come; “my servant the Branch”. Satan accuses Yeshua before God as unclean and unfit for duties as High Priest; but then he is made clean and pure. Likewise, the sins of the nation will be removed in a single day.

f) Fifth Vision “Golden Lampstand & Olive Trees” This vision promises that the Zerubbabel will see the temple reconstruction completed. Therefore the people should follow his leadership. He will lead them successfully. Furthermore, he and Yeshua are anointed ones of YHWH, standing beside Him as chosen ones for this task.

g) Sixth Vision, “The Flying Scroll”: It is a wake up call to know that judgment and destruction will come upon all those who refuse to align their lives with His Word. It would encourage them to want to be on the right side of this coming judgement.

h) Seventh Vision, “Woman in a Basket”: The woman is “Wickedness”, representing all the sins of the world, and is being returned, captive, to Babylon. God will rid the entire earth of sin and all influence of the evil one.

1. This is the final vision in a series of eight visions that Zechariah documents in the first have of the book. What commonalities can be found in comparing this final vision to Zechariah’s first vision (the man and horses in the myrtle trees)?
2. each have 4 groups of colored horses, including red and white
3. in both the horses (or chariots) are messengers of YHWH
4. in both the messengers are sent to “patrol the earth
5. “the angel who spoke” to Zechariah helps present / interpret both visions
6. both visions take place in a valley (assuming between 2 mountains in a valley)
7. both visions indicate YHWH’s authority over all the earth
8. There are four chariots. Where was the symbolic number of “four” used in other visions? What does “four” symbolize?

In the second vision of “Four Horns and Four Craftsmen”. The number “four” symbolized the 4 directions of the earth… meaning “everywhere” or “all-encompassing”, thus affecting all the earth.

Also in the third vision of the man with a measuring line:

***Zechariah 2:6***Up! Up! Flee from the land of the north, declares YHWH. For I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heavens, declares YHWH.

YHWH has scattered his people all over the earth, “as the four winds of the heavens.”

1. The chariots present themselves to “the Lord of all the earth”. What is “the Lord” in Hebrew, and what does it actually mean?

Lord = Hebrew **‘adon** “master”

Most often we find the form **‘adonai** “my master”

This is not to be confused with the personal name of YHWH, unfortunately often translated by the English title “the LORD” and designated by all capitals.

1. Why do you think the chariots present themselves to YHWH? What do the chariots represent?

They seem to stand before Him to receive their orders. They are being sent out at His command, as his messengers (angels), to carry out his judgement.

1. The chariots came from between two mountains. What might the two mountains represent?

This is all conjecture, but some possible choices are:

1. From the presence of YHWH, as symbolized by the two pillars beside the entrance to the holy place of the temple.
2. From Jerusalem, the place representing the presence of YHWH, as symbolized by the Mt of Olives and Mt Zion.
3. Perhaps the 2 mountains are the same as the 2 olive trees with the 2 golden pipes that represent the 2 anointed ones. We know from Rev 11 that after the 2 anointed ones, judgement comes upon the earth; the seventh trumpet is sounded after the passing of the 2 anointed ones.
4. It could be the Mt of Olives that was split in two in Zech 14:4-5, before YHWH comes to reclaim his land and his people.

***Zechariah 14:4–5***On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then YHWH my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

1. The two mountains were made of bronze. What might the bronze symbolize? Note also 1 Kings 7:15-22 as well as 2 Kings 25:13-17.
2. Possibly strength, since it was used for weapons. But iron was stronger.
3. Possibly the shining light, since it may represent the presence of YHWH. But gold would have been shinier.
4. 1 Kings 7:15-22 and 2 Kings 25:13-17 show that the two huge columns at the entrance to the Holy Place of the temple were made of bronze, so that would lend support to this being a picture of the messengers/chariots coming from the very presence of YHWH.

***1 Kings 7:15–22***He cast **two pillars of bronze**. Eighteen cubits was the height of one pillar, and a line of twelve cubits measured its circumference. It was hollow, and its thickness was four fingers. The second pillar was the same. He also made two capitals of cast bronze to set on the tops of the pillars. The height of the one capital was five cubits, and the height of the other capital was five cubits. There were lattices of checker work with wreaths of chain work for the capitals on the tops of the pillars, a lattice for the one capital and a lattice for the other capital. Likewise he made pomegranates in two rows around the one latticework to cover the capital that was on the top of the pillar, and he did the same with the other capital. Now the capitals that were on the tops of the pillars in the vestibule were of lily-work, four cubits. The capitals were on the two pillars and also above the rounded projection which was beside the latticework. There were two hundred pomegranates in two rows all around, and so with the other capital. He set up the pillars at the vestibule of the temple. He set up the pillar on the south and called its name **Jachin**, and he set up the pillar on the north and called its name **Boaz**. And on the tops of the pillars was lily-work. Thus the work of the pillars was finished.

***2 Kings 25:13–17***And the pillars of bronze that were in the house of YHWH, and the stands and the bronze sea that were in the house of YHWH, the Chaldeans broke in pieces and carried the bronze to Babylon. And they took away the pots and the shovels and the snuffers and the dishes for incense and all the vessels of bronze used in the temple service, the fire pans also and the bowls. What was of gold the captain of the guard took away as gold, and what was of silver, as silver. As for the two pillars, the one sea, and the stands that Solomon had made for the house of YHWH, the bronze of all these vessels was beyond weight. The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and on it was a capital of bronze. The height of the capital was three cubits. A latticework and pomegranates, all of bronze, were all around the capital. And the second pillar had the same, with the latticework.

1. What about the colors of the horses? Note that they are different than in the first vision.

Red, white, **black**, & **dappled** horses each pull a chariot.

First vision, man sits on a red horse – with red, white, and **sorrel** (brownish) horses behind.

Maybe it is not the colors that are symbolic, but the fact that there are different colors that is significant. Perhaps the different-color horses symbolize different judgements that come upon the people of the earth.

1. Compare to the four horses of Rev 6:1-7, when the first four seals are opened.

***Revelation 6:1–8***Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a **white horse**! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out **conquering,** and to conquer. When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!” And out came another **horse, bright red**. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should **slay one another,** and he was given a great sword. When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a **black horse**! And its rider had a **pair of scales** in his hand. And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!” When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come!” And I looked, and behold, a **pale horse**! And its rider’s **name was Death**, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.

Here the colors clearly have symbolic meaning. The horses and riders are sent out to bring judgement to the earth.

Note that in Rev 6 the fourth color is “pale”. In Zech 6, the fourth color is “dappled / gray”. In Zech 1 we had “sorrel” which seems to be a shade of brown.

1. Some horses go to the north, and others to the south. Why? Why do you think that east and west were not mentioned?

It could be that all the enemies of Israel were reached from either the north (via Mesopotamia) or the south (Egypt). To the west was the Sea and the east was the desert. Even though many enemies were more to the northeast (Persia, Assyria, Babylon), Scripture generally talks about these countries as coming from the north, probably because that is their path of entry into the land of Israel.

1. It is interesting that the red horses are not mentioned as going out in any direction. Any thoughts on why that may be? Compare to vision one where the man was sitting on a horse and it was presumably the other three groups of horses that were sent out to patrol the earth. What color horse was the man sitting on in vision one?

The man was also on a red horse, which is interesting but I have no idea if that is significant. Perhaps as in the first vision only three groups patrolled the earth, and the fourth was their leader. I don’t know.

1. In Zech 6:8, who do you think is speaking to Zechariah, and why?

***Zechariah 6:8***Then he cried to me, “Behold, those who go toward the north country have set my Spirit at rest in the north country.”

It could either be the “then angel who talked” to Zechariah (Zech 6:4) or it could be “the Lord of all the earth” (YHWH), which is the prior person mentioned. It seems the best choice is YHWH since the verse speaks of “my spirit” being at rest in the north country, and that seems most likely to refer to the Spirit of YHWH.

1. In Zech 6:5 the ESV translated “These are going out to the four winds of the heaven”. However a more literal translation is “These going out [are] four spirits / winds of heaven.”. The Hebrew word **ruach** can mean either “spirit” or “wind”. Note also that “heaven” is often used as a circumlocution (when one term is used in place of another) for “God / YHWH”. If you were translating this verse, would you translate **ruach** as spirit or winds, and why?

I seems like “These are going out to the four spirits of God” may be a better translation, meaning the fourfold spirit, or the spirit that exists in all places of the earth (in the 4 corners of the earth). This would to fit with Zech 6:8 which also uses the same word **ruach,** saying that those chariots going to the north have set “**my spirit**” at rest.

It could also be “winds” since the judgement of YHWH can sweep the entire earth like winds in the sky that blow in all directions. In support of this, consider the wording of Ps 104:3-4:

***Psalm 104:3–4***He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind; **he makes his messengers winds**, his ministers a flaming fire.

1. The horses were strong and impatient to go patrol the earth. What does this imply?

God’s messengers of justice are strong. They want justice and are anxious for the power and authority of YHWH to be recognized by all. Judgement will be strong and swift.

1. In Zech 6:8, why do you think the Text states only that his Spirit is set to rest in the north? Why is the south not mentioned?

Perhaps because at this time Egypt was not the main threat to them. They were slaves to Persia, who come from the north. So the immediate emphasis was on the northern front. This is not to say that the day of judgement would not bring rest to the Spirit of YHWH over **all** the earth, but rather to emphasize that their current task masters in particular would be brought to justice.

1. What is the overall meaning of this vision?

The day of judgement is coming. It will be strong and swift, and will reach over the entire earth. In particular, the persecutors to the north will be overcome and there will be rest for Spirit of God.

1. Has the prophesy of this last vision been fulfilled already? If not when will it be fulfilled?

It’s total fulfillment will be in the final day of Judgement, as we read about in other end-time prophesies of the Hebrew Scriptures and well as in Revelation. One could argue that some of this was in fact partially fulfilled already, in that Persia was conquered by the Greeks, and then during the time of the Maccabees all the enemies of the north were subdued and there was in fact a brief period of rest for Israel.

1. Think again about the similarities of the first and the last visions, in which horses / messengers were sent out to patrol all the earth. The first vision states that the patrol comes back with the report, “All the earth remains at rest”. But was it really at rest? And now the last vision ends with the result off the patrol having set YHWH’s Spirit at rest. So what do we see about the world situation, in looking at all these visions as a whole, from start to finish?

At the beginning the world claimed to be at rest, but it is a false rest. It is more of a complacency, a peaceful coexistence with evil. YHWH was angry at a world that ignored His commands and disregarded Him as well as His chosen people. Through this series of eight visions we learn what YHWH is going to do about this situation. He will bring judgement upon all that persecute his people, and all that ignore his Word. He will restore Israel, make them abundantly prosperous, and dwell with them again. And in the end, there will be true rest. Rest for the world and rest for his Spirit.

It seems like these eight visions tell a story that is more or less in chronological order:

a) Introduction,   
 **Repent! Turn back to me and I will turn back to you!**  
b) First Vision, “Man & horses in the myrtle trees”   
 **The world is complacent, causing YHWH to be angry.**  
 **YHWH will rebuild the land and bring prosperity to His people**.  
c) Second Vision, “Four horns and craftsmen”   
 **YHWH will punish the nations who have mistreated Israel**  
d) Third Vision & Oracle, “ Man with measuring line”  
 **Israel will flourish with people and produce, and YHWH will protect them.  
 They will plunder the other nations.**  
e) Fourth Vision, “Satan accuses the High Priest”   
 **Yeshua the High Priest is chosen by YHWH, and made clean by YHWH   
 even though he was unclean from the culture he lived in**.  
f) Fifth Vision, “Golden Lampstand & Olive Trees”  
 **Zerubbabel the Branch will rebuild temple.  
 Both Zerubbabel and Yeshua are anointed ones of YHWH,  
 leading the people together as High Priest and King**g) Sixth Vision, “Flying Scroll”  
 **All who don’t obey the Word of YHWH will be punished.**  
h) Seventh Vision, “Woman in Basket”  
 **All wickedness and sin will be removed from the earth,  
 taken back to Babylond (=the lake of fire)**h) Eighth Vision, “Four Chariots on Patrol”  
 **True peace will exist, and the Spirit of YHWH will be at rest.**

1. How would this vision have been received by the people of Zechariah’s time? How would it have encouraged them to respond?

Knowing that God will avenge their persecutors would be a comfort. He will fight for His people, keeping His part of the covenant promises. His people, therefore, should make sure they also uphold their part of the covenant promises. Repent…turn back to God and He will turn back to you!

1. How does this prophetic vision apply to us today?

It should also mean the very same to us. We should be encouraged to know that God will fight for His people, and will correct the wrongs done against them. But His people are defined as those who are part of the covenant… those who are committed to living by the commands of the covenant.