

PostExilicProphets 21-07-22b

Let's resume our study now in the book of Zachariah, looking at these visions. We saw the first vision in great detail and looked at its correspondence to the eighth vision. And that's where we pick up now.

The eighth vision is in chapter six, verses one through eight. We are led there directly by the chiasitic structure and the similar elements. So if you look at Zachariah chapter six, Zachariah says, 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.

And any time in the future, when you see two of something, and unless there is some obvious other correspondence, this tends to suggest the peoples of God. So on the one hand, you have the nation of Israel. On the other, you have the body of Christ.

You have national Israel. You have the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. You have the church.

So unless there is something that leads elsewhere, this is a good thing to at least try out as a suggestion. So these two mountains and they are mountains of bronze. What is the thing about bronze? And once again, you can look at Revelation chapter one for the answer to this question.

In his vision of the Lord Jesus that John sees and interacts with in Revelation chapter one, what does it say about Jesus' feet? They are burnished bronze. Burnished bronze is a reflector. This is what they made mirrors out of in the ancient world was burnished bronze.

So if these things are coming between these two bronze mountains, these mountains would be glory reflectors, right? It is not that the role of national Israel and of the church, the body of Christ to not generate our own glory, but to reflect the glory of God, the Father, God, the Son, God, the Holy Spirit. Right. So just as an idea, I wouldn't die for that.

But that's my understanding of what these mountains are. There's a reason why they're bronze. And it's interesting when God is talking about the blessings and curses on Mount Ebal.

And when you get to the curses and he says, I will, I will, you know, turn one thing to iron and the other to bronze. Even judgment reflects the glory of God. Even judgment is a reflection of his glory.

Because it expresses and reveals his righteousness, his justice, his long suffering and his grace in withholding judgment and giving every opportunity to turn, change mind, repent. And when that judgment finally falls, it is eminently just. The judgment of God, even the great white throne judgment and casting creatures into the lake of fire is not a negative side of God.

It is a positive. It is a necessary and a glorious purging of evil out of the universe for the benefit of God's people. So bronze reflects the glory, but that glory is often fire.

And the fiery face of the Lord Jesus that you see in Revelation, chapter one, and you see this in a few other places. Bronze is a reflection of glory. But many times that glory is expressing itself in a cleansing fire, a purging judgment that removes wood, hay, stubble, that which is impermanent, that which cannot last in the eternal realms.

So I turned, raised my eyes and looked. This is a wonderful sequence of verbs. This is what we need to do, isn't it? We turn, we raise our eyes and look.

Calvin is notwithstanding, an angel doesn't come and grab Zacharias head and point his face in the direction and, you know, shove a honeycomb into his mouth or something. It is Zacharias choice to turn to raise his own eyes, as Abraham did when he saw the mountain of sacrifice bringing his son Isaac. And looked, turned, raised my eyes and looked.

And it's a reminder to us that our life of faith, our intake of the word of God isn't just a single decision. It is a series of decisions. We turn, we decide that receiving revelation from God is important.

Not everybody thinks it's important. We do. Why? Because we have turned, we have found the old path, the broad way and the wide gate just leads to destruction.

So we turn from that and we look for the narrow road and the straight gate that leads to life. And then we raise our eyes. We make more decisions to commit time.

There's other things we could be doing tonight. There are things we could be doing on Sunday morning. Other times when we get up in the morning and spend a few minutes in prayer late at night, before we retire, we spend a few moments in prayer.

Hopefully in the middle of the day, get a break for lunch, get a few minutes and just pause and reflect on the vector that we've established for that day. Maybe we need to turn in the middle of the day and do something different with the afternoon than what we did in the morning. Psalm 55, 17, evening and morning and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud and he shall hear my voice.

Prayer we've already seen from Paul talking in 1 Corinthians 15, 14 involves the understanding. We pray with our mind. We sing praises to God with our mind, with our understanding.

The like a river glorious that we just heard for our special music, like a river glorious is God's perfect peace. And those lyrics come to mind and it flows perfectly. It is exactly what we need when we need it.

And it requires thought. It requires a turning and a lifting of our eyes to concentrate on things like that. The blessing that comes to us through our special music, the blessing that comes to us through looking at the word of God, the blessing that comes to us through harking back and remembering what did we talk about last Sunday? What did we talk about on Thursday night? What is God revealing to me? We turn, we lift our eyes and we look, look and live.

Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness and as many all they had to do was roll over and just look. Didn't have to make a sacrifice. Didn't have to crawl and touch it.

All they had to do was look, look and live. Turn, lift your eyes and look. That's what Zachariah does here.

And he gets himself and us a tremendous benefit with this vision. So behold, four chariots coming from between two mountains, four chariots between two mountains. This reminds me of the interval between the end of the church age and the end of the age of Israel between two mountains.

Church age is over the age of Israel. It's final thousand years has not yet occurred. And between that you have these chariots coming.

Now we've still got colored horses. And by the way, there are very few passages in the Bible and scripture that give you the colors of horses. It's only here and in the revelation.

That's the only place you get colored horses. Fascinating. So you have it in Zachariah one, you have it in Zachariah six, you have it in a revelation chapter six.

I think it is where the seals begin to break and you've got those four horsemen and they're colored horses. You have it again when the Lord Jesus comes on a white horse in Revelation 19. And those who are following him follow on white horses.

Remember that? So that's it for colored horses in scripture. So it has significance. These chariots come between and the mountains are mountains of bronze.

The first chariot, red horses, very same color we had in chapter one. So what would they represent? In our understanding, and this is provisional, this is as much as I can figure out where we are right now. I think this is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To Old Testament eyes, it would have been the blood of sacrifice. We know more about that blood of sacrifice. They saw this throughout the age of sacrifice from the time of the patriarchs through the time of the tabernacle and then the temple.

And then the second temple, it was a place of sacrifice. And this blood was everywhere. Everything was sanctified.

There was nothing that was sanctified without blood. People were sprinkled. Priests were sprinkled.

The book was sprinkled. Everything was sprinkled with blood. So they're familiar with what this color represents.

And these horses in chapter one and chapter six are the color of drying blood. The second chariot has black horses. There were no black horses in chapter one.

Why is that? Not in the first vision. The third chariot has white horses. We did have a white horse in chapter one.

And the fourth chariot has dappled horses, strong steeds. And you see that long dash there. You can't believe the rustling and the head scratching that's gone on with that last word.

Is it a color? Does it apply to just the last horses? Does it apply to all four horses that are drawing chariots? And it makes a difference because they're going to be mentioned again further down in the vision. I will tell you now that I personally, with my vast knowledge of Hebrew, I will say this. I have studied a lot of Hebrew over the years.

And in my humble opinion, that long dash should not be there. These are two adjectives back to back. They both end in I am.

The first word means dappled. And the second word means strong. It doesn't mean steeds.

It means strong. My construction of this is strongly dappled. You can look at a fawn.

You can look at something that's got kind of gentle gradations of color. And you can say, well, that's spotted. There's other times when it is very profoundly leopard-like in the sense that you can very clearly distinguish the spots from the background.

In the first instance, when we had the dappled horses, it didn't say they were strongly dappled. And this suggests to me, it's the reason I suggest that there is sort of a process underway. Those horses kind of represent a transition from one to the other.

There's a graduation from the dark red or brownish red to the white. It's 256 shades of differentiation to get from one to the other. Here, these are clearly demarcated spots.

There is no doubt. This is not a process. This is some is one color and some is a radically different color.

This is like stripes on a zebra except they're spots, but they're very strongly demarcated, strongly dappled. No shades of gray, no shades of transition. It's either one or it's the other.

Now, in the first vision, which was the future hope, the horseman sitting on the horse representing, we think, the Lord Jesus Christ. And then that message is going out represented by that red horse who is looking. Remember, these are recon horses in the first vision.

So he's looking to see, is there a response to the message? Are there those who are hearing and responding? Someone like Nicodemus, someone like the disciples, someone like Joseph of Arimathea or the Syrophenician woman or the Roman centurion. Are there those who hear and respond? That second dappled horse is looking for those who have heard that message, seen that message, are responding to that message and are being transformed, are being changed from that which needs redemption, that which needs Ephesians 1.7, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. I

think our life in some ways is that process of 1 John 1.9, we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, right? And so we are learning to exploit our release from being imprisoned by sin, being bound by sin and living for righteousness, laying hold of righteousness by faith.

It's a process. We transition from one to the other, from those who need redemption to those who live as the redeemed. And then that white horse in the first vision is looking for those who have become mature.

The ones that the author of Hebrews, the Apostle Paul, in my view, was looking for when he said, at such a time as you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. You should be chewing meat, but I'm having to give you milk. You haven't arrived at a place of function where your days are largely occupied with laying hold of righteousness by faith, reflecting the glory of God off of those bronze mountains, whether you're Old Testament or new.

Are you living by faith? Hebrews 11, kind of faith, by faith, by faith, by faith. We walk by faith and not by sight and so on. Well, now, what's the difference in horses with riders who go out to observe and horses coming out from between these hills drawing chariots? What is a chariot a symbol of? What happens in a battle when the chariots come out? There's usually a crushing victory on the part of the one that has the chariots.

It doesn't say they come out and meet other chariots, does it? These horses come out and they are the only chariots. And they come out sent by God. Chariots represent overwhelming force in judgment.

There is going to be victory on the part of the chariot driving army and the hapless victims are going to be crushed under their wheels. So this is a show of force. The first horsemen were reconnaissance.

Now, what's the missing color in the first vision that we have here? Black, right? So there is no judgment issuing forth when the recon force looks out and they're not looking for the black. They're not looking for those who are hopelessly lost, who have no intention of ever responding. They're looking for the reception of the message of sacrifice on behalf of those who cannot pay their own price, of being transformed by that message and achieving the ability to lay hold of righteousness, right? They're not interested in gauging black or blackness.

Now, in the day of judgment, remember on the other side of the chiasm, this is the fulfillment side. This is not the looking forward in hope. This is the description of what is going to happen in fulfillment of that hope.

Now, there are four chariots, which speaks of universality. There are four directions of the compass. There are four horsemen, but these chariots don't go in four directions.

Very fascinating. With the first chariot are red horses. With the second chariot, black horses.

With the third chariot, white horses. And with the fourth chariot, dappled horses, strong steeds. The first horse that we see a man sitting on in chapter one is red.

The first of the horsemen behind him is red. The first chariot here is drawn by the red horse. The red is all important, most important.

It comes first. Now, we are told where the black horse drawn chariot, where the white horse drawn chariot, and where the dappled, strongly dappled, horse drawn chariot goes. We are not told anything further.

This red horse drawn chariot disappears. We see it. Nothing further is said throughout the rest of this vision.

It comes out. It comes out first and it drops out. There are people who say, well, there's a textual problem.

There's, you know, something was lost and somebody, you know, dropped a stitch here or something. Not at all. It is highly significant that no further issue is made of the red horse and its chariot.

Why? I ask myself, why? Look at what happens to the others. This is our, this is our evidence. This is our clue.

I answered and said to the angel in verse four of chapter six, what are these, my Lord? 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. They stand before the Lord of all the earth. Normally, that's where they are stationed.

That's where they rest. You get the idea that this could be up in something like that myrtle tree glade, but they have left that station and they had been detailed to earth not to do reconnaissance. Because they are chariots.

Chariots are designed for one purpose. They are the tanks of the ancient world. Their desired, their design is to exert overwhelming conquering force.

There's no standing up to a chariot. If you're mere infantry, these are heavenly chariots. Nobody on earth can stand against them.

So verse six, the one with the black horses, notice how he skipped right over the red horse. The one with the black horses. So notice that there, these are probably two horses on each chariot.

The one with the black horses plural is going to the north country. Going to the north country. We've seen a little bit about the north.

We'll talk more about it in a moment. The white horses with the second chariot are going after them. So picture this now.

These four chariots come out from between these bronze mountains. And as Zechariah says, what are these? The angel answers. Now, Zechariah doesn't say, and I beheld and lo, here's where they went.

He says, what are they? And he is told where they are going to go. They haven't gone there yet. Zechariah doesn't see this in the vision.

He's told where they are going to go. So they are still galloping along in this valley between the hills. Every single detail is important.

He doesn't see them turn. He doesn't see them go. He is told what they are going to do.

Even in this future millennial time, this particular action is yet future from this end of the visions millennial point of view. So when would these actions be fulfilled? Have to be after the millennium, i.e. final judgment, right? Final judgment. So the ones with the black horses going to the north countries, white is going after them.

And the dappled are going toward the south country. Some are going to the north and some are going to the south. Now, any number of ideas about what this all means, I'll tell you what I think.

It's, you know, when Paul says, this is not the Lord, just me. Well, here's what I would suggest. This is how it seems to me.

Black and white. What do we know about black and white? They are polar opposites. There's no mistaking one for the other.

God is light and in him is no darkness at all. God is white and in him is no blackness at all, right? It's a very clear, no mistaking, no shades of gray. It's either black or it's white.

Where is God said to dwell prophetically relative to the earth in scripture? He dwells in the sides of the north, right? So these chariots are taking judgment. What is white and what is black? Who's going to be delivered and who's going to be destroyed to the north? I would suggest what color is the final judgment throne? Why do they call it that? Why isn't it just the great throne? Why is it a great white throne? The final decision about those who enter into eternal life and those who are cast into the lake of fire is made at the great white throne. Black comes first.

White follows it. There is the removal of that which is evil and there is the future judgment and allocation of that which belongs to those who fall into the white category. Black first.

So this is not the millennium. You know, there's the thousand years. They rule and reign with Christ till the thousand years are complete.

Then I saw the great white throne, death and hell, the sea give up the dead that is in them. They're judged according to what is in the books. Then you have the new Jerusalem after.

In the sequence of closing chapters of Revelation, right? 20 through 22. Same thing here. Black chariot goes first.

The white follows it to the north. This tells me that there is the overwhelming final, irresistible judgment in the presence of God in the north. So we still got two chariots left, right? The red chariot is nowhere in view.

We're not told where it goes. Why? The timeless message of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ doesn't come into play here. It's not mentioned.

He doesn't go to the west. He doesn't go to the east. He doesn't need to go anywhere.

He leads the appearance of this red chariot, establishes what the issue of judgment is for the following three in the same way that the horsemen in the glade established the basis for reconnaissance of the following three. So in each case, you have red, dappled and white. And then here you also have black because the final judgment isn't accomplished until the great white throne.

The rest of the dead live not until the thousand years are complete. Then they come back. This is your black chariot, in my view.

So what do we do with this last chariot? The black are going to the north country. The white are going after them. The dappled are going toward the south country, the south country.

So, and again, we're dealing, in my view, with a timeless sort of declaration here. This is not necessarily chronological. This is symbolic.

This is metaphorical of judgment. There are some judgments that are certain they are going to take place. They're going to take place in the presence of God in the sides of the north.

And it is going to include everything that is dark. How thou art fallen from heaven, O shining one, son of darkness. And I will stand on that translation.

I just went through it again. This word for black is a cousin of the same word is used there, O Lucifer, son of, quote, the morning. You look up that word in Hebrew, just get a Strong's, look at it on Bible Hub or something.

Look up that word. Look up this word for a black horse. They're almost identical.

Son of darkness. Satan, the angels that followed him, all of those who have fallen for the lie and have chosen it. Men who love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil will all be judged in the north.

But these dappled horses are going to the south. What does this mean? Remember the setting for these visions? It's in the millennial kingdom. Some of these visions, and this is the final vision.

Some of these are certain. And at the end of the millennium, some of this is fixed. It's already going to happen.

Those lives are already over. Unbelievers have made their decision. Believers have made their decisions.

The faithful, the unfaithful, they've made their decision. The books will be opened. But during the millennium, there is a mix.

You start out with resurrected Old Testament saints. You start out with many, many children, children who play with snakes and lay down with the lions and the bears and the wolves and no harm comes to them. Playing near the snake den, there's no problem.

But they will grow up. There's 10 centuries for them to grow up and make a decision. And at the end of the millennial kingdom, it is going to be clear.

There's no parsing of, well, how faithful is faithful? How much faith is required? It's not nebulous. It's not a judgment call like those first dappled horses because faith is not an issue in the millennium. Faith is what you can't see.

Faith is what is unknown. Why are these horses strongly dappled? There's a clear delineation between the red and the white. There are those who need redemption and didn't claim it.

There are those who have claimed it and are made white in the blood of the land. And there's no intermediate. You've got sheep and you've got goats.

Sheep go into life. Goats go into eternal fire. It is the sheep and goats judgment.

And these in the south are not in heaven yet. They're not in the north, in the dwelling place of God. They're, you know, they're in Judah.

Judah is in the southern part of Israel. And this is where that judgment is going to take place. So this is the best sense I can make out of these horses.

And especially when we're aided greatly by the symmetry. So these, and notice it says the strong steeds went out. That's the dappled steeds.

We've already seen the white and the black go north. The only ones that are left are the strong, i.e. strongly dappled. They're strong because it's easy to discern who's who.

That they might walk to and throw throughout the earth, throughout the land. But the earth and the millennial kingdom is going to be clearly delineated into those who recognize and send their glory into the king in Israel, into the kingdom and those who don't. And remember the Gog and Magog rebellion at the end of the millennial kingdom, it will be clear.

There are those saints who are surrounded and there are those who surround the camp of the

saints. There's only two choices. You're dappled with one color or the other, no mixture.

And they are going to walk to and fro throughout the earth. This is a chariot of judgment. It is a judgment of life or it is a judgment of condemnation and destruction.

One or the other, no mixture. He that hath the son hath life. He that hath not the son of God hath not life.

The wrath of God abides on him. There is no, I sort of made it, I was saved by the skin of my teeth. This is not that judgment.

This is the final judgment, the end time judgment that leads into the eternal state and the kingdom of the father. So he said, go walk to and fro throughout the earth. So they walked to and fro throughout the earth.

Do you have the inkhorn angel's mark on your forehead or do you not? Are you saved or are you lost? There is no middle ground and there's no real transition or I wonder who knows if they are. There are those who embrace the lamb and there are those who chafe under the rule of that iron rod. He called me and spoke to me saying, see those who go toward the north country have given rest to my spirit in the north country.

What on earth does that signify? There are two occasions where you have my spirit, the Holy Spirit, the spirit of God giving a clear ministry of testimony. When is it? Be careful now. Another pop quiz question.

Where are the two clear universal ministries of God's spirit in human history? Everybody gets it without exception. When is that church age? Not before Holy Spirit was not yet given. Christ was not yet glorified.

Once Christ was glorified, you have Pentecost. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit is going to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment when he comes, which was future in John 14 when he was talking, right? The first universal convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit is the church age. When is the second universal convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit going to take place? I will pour out my spirit on how much flesh? All flesh.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy and dream dreams. Your old men will see visions, but the spirit is going to be poured out on all flesh. There will be a ubiquitous ministry of the spirit in the millennial kingdom.

Two mountains of bronze, two peoples of God. The final judgment for Israel may not take place until the close of the millennial kingdom. They're going to pass under the rod.

What's going to happen in terms of judgment for Israel is a little bit fuzzy. There is a judgment at the beginning, but there is also a judgment at the end. The sheep and goats judgment and those that are on the earth, whether it is the sanctified resurrected Israelites who serve as

witnesses for that thousand years and people who come to maturity and either come to faith or come to reject during the millennium are going to be judged at its end.

But at a minimum, the people of God are going to be filled with the spirit and are going to provide that universal witness and testimony in the millennial kingdom, just as spirit filled believers bear testimony and witness in this age, right? So there is universal conviction. Now, at the end of those periods of time, there is the great white throne judgment and the books will be open and people will be judged according to their works. One of those works being what was your response to the witness of the spirit, sin, righteousness and judgment.

You either do or you don't believe on Jesus Christ. You either recognize or don't recognize that the ruler of this world stands condemned, right? You read that in John 14. So the horses that go to the north, the black and white and finalize that judgment before the God of heaven.

The spirit of God now has rest. His work is done. What did God do after the six days of creation on the seventh day? He rested from his work.

What is the Holy Spirit going to do when this black and white judgment is executed in the north? Rest, his work in the church age is done. His work in the millennial kingdom is done. You've given my spirit rest.

There is no further convicting. There's no further challenging. There's no further sin, righteousness and judgment issue to be made and communicated.

It's done. The spirit can now rest. Interesting, no? Well, I was hoping to get to the second and seventh visions with the four horns, the four artisans and the woman in the basket.

Oh my goodness. It is so interesting just as these two have been. And we're working toward the middle.

I have not forgotten about the brand plucked from the fire. I've done a ton of work on that. That is very interesting as well.

We'll get to it. But this is our last trip through Zachariah. So we want to make it count, grab for the gusto as it were.

So with those thoughts, we'll conclude our study for this evening. I'll look for you next Thursday night where we'll pick up with our second and seventh visions and see how far we get. But we'll close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the wonderful manifold riches of your word, how fully and challengingly these things are presented and laid before us, knowing that the result should be our turning, our raising our eyes and looking to the Lord Jesus as the one who initiates and completes our faith. His example of faithfulness and obedience, of dedication to your plan and purpose, of looking to the joy that was set before him for endurance and the power to despise any shame

that comes in this life, any hardship, any persecution or suffering. Our momentary light affliction is working for us an eternal weight of glory.

We see it revealed in these wonderful visions that you gave to the prophet Zachariah so long ago, but they live and breathe fire in our souls. And we pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will use them to keep us hopeful, motivated, encouraged and encouragement to each other as we seek to fulfill the function of our spiritual gifts to be united in faith, hope, and love. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.