

# Zechariah 6:1-8

## Introduction

Zechariah 6 brings us to the last of the visions the prophet received in 520 BC. The result of the whole series of visions is a message of encouragement, along with an exhortation to build the temple and spiritually renew the nation.

## Thesis

**Zechariah 6:1-8 shows God disturbing the ungodly peace of Israel's oppressors with his divine judgment on those nations.**

### 1. Four Chariots vv. 1-3

In the place of the four horses of the first vision, Zechariah now sees four chariots with horses of different colors going out from between two 'mountains of bronze,' which depict the gate of the Lord's heavenly abode.

The four horsemen of the first vision were the light cavalry signifying God's omniscience and sovereign omnipresence.

By contrast, the chariots are the heavy cavalry, like our modern-day tank units.

### 2. Divine Judgment vv. 4-8

These chariots, like the horsemen of chapter 1, are part of God's angelic host.

They signify God's initiative in the world in what we call God's providence.

The horsemen of chapter 1 showed God's omniscience and sovereign control of the world. Now these chariots go forth from God's throne as agents to achieve his will.

The chariots represent the four winds of heaven, which stresses the universality of their range and the agency of divine power at work in the world. (**Zech 6:4-5**).

The chariots then divide up and go in different directions; north and south.

The 'strong ones' (Zech 6:3) - that is the chariots of the Lord of hosts move out at the divine command and 'patrol the earth', asserting and imposing God's sovereign rule over the whole world.

This assertion of universal sovereignty has a particular focus, 'the land of the north,' Babylon. Any opposition is insignificant and ineffective. Victory is complete: God's 'Spirit' is 'given rest in the land of the north,' the former home of his enemies.

In the previous vision, idolatry was driven out of God's land to the land of Babel, (**Zech 5:5-11**). Will these idolaters possess Babylon forever, however, and be a threatening location from which to launch regular attacks on God's people?

No, God will ultimately send out his power to the uttermost corners of the earth, and his Spirit will reign throughout the world, even in the place where now the seat of idolatry is located.

### 3. Spiritual Realities

This vision provides a message of God's providential rule carried out by divine charioteers, with his judgment going forth on those who had abused his people. It shows that God will defend his people, judging those who oppress them and rising up with power to overthrow those who oppose him.

This is not merely a narrow or specific prophecy regarding Babylon and Egypt, but rather this vision shows what we may regard as a fixed principle, that God punishes those who afflict his people and judges the enemies of his church.

Christians believe that God is actively involved in the affairs of people and nations, and furthermore that his will overrules the will of men. Prophecies require God's providential working to bring all things together according to His will.

**This vision makes God's people then and now aware of certain spiritual realities:**

**First**, the relationship between God's people and the world.

The remnant community in the ruined city of Jerusalem were small in numbers, weak: militarily, economically, politically-and of absolutely no significance on the world stage of that day.

The same is true today. Christians are not that numerous, and when it comes to the things that make for worldly power we are woefully empty-handed.

Yet God bids his people to see a sight perceived only with the eyes of faith.

The chariots of God encircle our foes as God's protecting agents.

The church is weak and the world is strong, but God is mighty over all and he is not distant from our affairs.

Christians are not the judge of our unbelieving neighbors but it is helpful for us to know that God will judge them on our behalf. This enable us to love those who hate us, confidently leaving judgment to the Lord (**Rom 12:19-21**).

**Secondly**, we should consider God's people and history.

What did this vision say to Zechariah and to the Jews about the future, and hence about the meaning of their own lives? God's visions to Zechariah were intended to shape his view of life and history, and they should do the same for us.

The wicked may prosper for a while, but they will be cast down (**1 Cor. 7:31**).

Like faithful believers of all generations, we ought to fix our eyes and our hearts not on the splendor of this age, but on the city to come, the Jerusalem of God, "the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God" (**Heb. 11:10**).

Let us commit ourselves, our time, our talents, and our resources, to the service of Christ and to the city he is building, with the plumb line even now in his hand.

Let us look around at the world in which we live, not fearing because of God's presence to save, but seeing his chariots of fire and living for him through faith in Jesus Christ.