

## Message #3

## Zechariah 1:7-17

I don't know about you, but I have some odd dreams at times. Most of my dreams I cannot remember, but every now and then I remember one. A couple of weeks ago I dreamed I was riding in Maurice's class A bus and had to use the restroom. He said the restroom is out of order. So I woke up and used our restroom. You have to admit that is weird.

I don't ever recall having multiple dreams in one night that I could actually remember. But Zechariah sure did. He had eight dreams or visions in one night. In one night he received eight visions and not only did he remember them, he wrote them down so we could read them.

**(Vision #1)** - The vision of the man riding a red horse. **1:7-17**

**(Vision #2)** - The vision of the four horns and the craftsmen. **1:18-21**

**(Vision #3)** - The vision of the man with the measuring line. **2:1-13**

**(Vision #4)** - The vision of the cleansing and crowning of Joshua. **3:1-10**

**(Vision #5)** - The vision of the golden lampstand and the two olive trees. **4:1-14**

**(Vision #6)** - The vision of the flying scroll. **5:1-5**

**(Vision #7)** - The vision of the woman in the Ephah or basket. **5:5-11**

**(Vision #8)** - The vision of the four chariots. **6:1-8**

**These are unusual things period, but keep in mind that all these happened in one night.** In fact, according to **verse 7**, we actually know what night he had those visions. **The reason the date is given is to stress the importance of the data given.** Verse 7 says that the visions came on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the eleventh Jewish month in the second year of Darius' reign. The name of the month was Shebat, which is February and the year was 519 B.C..

**Now what this date means is that these visions occurred three months after Zechariah's first prophecy (Zech. 1:1); five months after the construction of the temple was resumed (Hag. 1:14-15; 2:15 and two months after Haggai's last prophecy concerning the destruction of the world (Hag. 2:21-23).**

Now these dreams and visions were not due to normal causes of dreams and visions. Our dreams are stories and images that our mind creates when we are in REM sleep (rapid eye movement). Our dreams are typically brought on by things we eat or drink or things we were thinking about and sometimes due to sleep deprivation.

Zechariah's visions were not like that at all. His visions and dreams were "the word of the LORD" (1:7). In other words, this was prophetic, inspired revelation that came directly from God.

What Zechariah is revealing is "the word of the LORD." When we read "the word of the LORD came to Zechariah," it is a way of saying Zechariah received a Divine Revelation from the LORD of Hosts who controls all things and everything.

These dreams and visions were inspired by God to the point they are in the Word of God. Now collectively the purpose of these visions is to describe the blessings that ultimately will come to Israel.

In fact, Charles Feinberg said, “All eight visions form a unit, and the first is the key to all of them.”

God will ultimately use His great sovereign power to bless Israel and bless His people. The visions of Zechariah give great hope to Israel.

**THE FIRST VISION OF THE MAN RIDING A RED HORSE IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SHOWING GOD’S PRESENT ANGER AGAINST THE NATIONS AND SHOWING GOD’S FUTURE BLESSINGS AND RESTORATION ON ISRAEL.**

In **verse 8**, when he says, “I saw at night,” this is what he literally saw. Now this is not actually a dream per-se, this is a series of visions that he actually saw. That is evident from the fact that he asks questions (**1:9**) and at times even presents interruptions. Zechariah wants to know what this all means.

Again we are reminded that Zechariah is a prophet. He was the son of Berechiah and his grandfather was Iddo. So Zechariah came from a priestly family. God’s Word will always be understood by priests.

There are no prophets today. The gift of prophecy is not operative today (I Corinthians 13:8). We have the inspired Scriptures and our job is to carefully and accurately understand all 66 books and not add anything to them or subtract anything from them (Rev. 22:18-19).

Now the first vision that Zechariah sees is comprised of six component parts:

**PART #1 – What Zechariah actually saw. 1:8**

The thing that Zechariah saw was a man riding on a red horse in some low place and behind him were three other horses, one was red, one was sorrel and one was white.

Now the man on the red horse is identified in **verses 11 and 12** as “the Angel of the LORD.” So this angel of the Lord is in man form.

Now for those of you who have been through Mr. Kelly’s doctrine class, you know that when you track this “angel of the LORD” through the Old Testament, it turns out He is God or a member of the Godhead. When you track that down you see that this is none other than Jesus Christ, appearing in the Old Testament prior to His incarnation. The angel of the LORD is not just an angel, it is an actually an appearance of one of the members of the Godhead, which is Jesus Christ.

This first chapter of Zechariah is one of those texts that proves that. In fact, **verse 20** says that it is the LORD speaking to Zechariah and we know from **verses 12-13** that this was the very Person speaking to Zechariah.

Now according to **verse 8**, this man who was riding on a red horse “was standing among the myrtle trees, which were in the ravine.”

Now the fact that He was standing may mean He had climbed down off the horse and was standing or it also may mean He was standing up in the saddle among some myrtle trees. Behind Him were horses of red, sorrel and white.

Now a myrtle tree is like an evergreen. They can reach up to 30 feet high. They grew around Jerusalem in low places. In fact, **verse 8** says He was in some ravine (literally a deep place), perhaps the Kidron Valley, which is east of Jerusalem.

There can be no question that the fact that the LORD is standing in a low place, indicates He is present with low people. He does some of His most powerful work with people who are in low places in life, in the low ravines.

Certainly this would have application to Israel. At the time of the vision, Israel was in a lowly and degraded position compared to the other nations of the world. In fact, she still is.

#### **PART #2 – How Zechariah responded. 1:9a**

Don't jump over this. Zechariah is not just interested in reading the Bible; he wants to know what it means. This is the way spiritual-minded people think. They want to know what everything means.

Now as Zechariah saw this vision, he was puzzled by it so he asked the angel who was talking to him to give him an explanation and interpretation. **There are two angels in this context. One is this interpreting angel and the other is the angel of the LORD, who is none other than Jesus Christ.**

Spiritually-minded people want to know God's Word. In fact, Paul said only spiritually-minded people can know God's Word (I Cor. 2:15-3:2). Even the writer of Hebrews said God must permit one to understand His Word and He will only permit spiritually-minded people to grow in His Word (Hebrews 5:11-6:3). Zechariah wanted to know God's Word.

#### **PART #3 – What the angel explained to Zechariah. 1:9b-11**

Now what is most interesting here is that when Zechariah asked the angel for an explanation, the angel said he would show Zechariah the interpretation (**v. 9**). However, it was the God/man who actually explained it (**v. 10**).

Only God can authorize a person to understand His Word. God knows the hearts and minds of all people and He makes the determination who grasps His Word and who doesn't.

The man said to Zechariah that these horses and their riders are sent by God to patrol the earth. They monitor everything that is happening. They are some Divine military patrol group that is authorized by God to travel through the earth.

Now when we track the colors of these patrol horse through the Bible, we know that it is perfectly legitimate to conclude that the color red symbolizes war and bloodshed that is due to the wrath of God (Isaiah 63:1-6; Rev. 6:2). In this very context, the angel of the LORD is riding a red horse. Now the "sorrel" horse, if compared to the "ashen" horse or "pale horse" of Revelation 6:8, is a death horse. So this color indicates that God controls all deaths that occur as He judges things on earth. The "white horse" clearly is a horse that speaks of conquering victory (Rev. 19:11ff.). **So the color order here is significant because before victory comes from God, there will be death and war as a judgment of God.**

**Even though man has little comprehension of this fact, there is no question that God is actively monitoring, overseeing and controlling all governing powers of the earth and specifically He is keeping track of everything as it relates to Israel.**

According to **verse 11**, the riders of the various horses reported to "the angel of the LORD" and said they had patrolled the heathens of the earth and they all seemed to be living in peace and quiet.

Now most who read that say, well that is really good news. Everybody in the world is living in peace and quiet. But the real question here is whether this is good news or bad news. This appears to be good news if you are the nations of the world; but what if you are Israel? Israel was not living in peace and quiet. She was being dominated by a foreign power.

**Since this vision occurs during the second year of Darius' reign, it is certainly not good news for Israel.** That is obvious from **verse 12**. Israel was being oppressed and dominated by the Persians. **Furthermore, none of these nations who were at peace were right with God.**

So the fact that they are peaceful and quiet, while God's people were suffering and hurting is not good news. They are about to experience the judgment and wrath of God.

There are many people who are living a relatively good and peaceful life who are not right with God. What they don't realize is God is monitoring everything and they are headed to wrath.

**PART #4 – What the angel of the LORD prayed. 1:12-13**

As Zechariah is observing this and listening to this, the angel of the LORD broke out in an intercessory prayer in behalf of Jerusalem and the cities of Judah. **He addressed "the LORD of hosts."** **So what we have here is God the Son addressing God the Father about the subject of Jerusalem and Judah.**

Now think about this for a moment. You have God the Son interceding to God the Father and this Godhead controls everything that happens on earth and He specifically prays about Israel. This is encouraging to think that God the Son would intercede for His struggling, hurting people. Paul says Jesus Christ does the same thing for us (Rom. 8:34). In fact, it even gets better than that. According to Paul, the Holy Spirit that lives in us and Jesus Christ who died for us both intercede for us when things are low (Rom. 8:27, 34).

As Stephen Millers said, even though 50,000 Jewish captives had returned to the land, the fact is the land was still in ruins, Jerusalem was not inhabited and the temple was not yet rebuilt (*Zechariah*, p. 143).

So the heathen nations around the world were experiencing peace and quiet and God's own people were being treated like dogs.

So the angel of the LORD says in **verse 12**, "How long" is this going to exist. How long would the Sovereign God permit His people to be the only ones not living in peace and quiet? It had already been 70 years since the Babylonian captivity.

Jeremiah predicted that the Babylonian captivity would last 70 years (Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10). This was the very same text Daniel read that stimulated him to do some mathematical calculation and pray and confess sin (Dan. 9:2).

Nebuchadnezzar first attacked Jerusalem in 605 B.C.. He took the Jews captive and the Jews returned to the land in 537-536 B.C., exactly 70 years later.

**PART #5** – God the Father responds to the prayer of God the Son. **1:13**

In **verse 13**, what we learn is that the LORD responded to the question with "gracious and comforting words."

**PART #6** – What the angel revealed to Zechariah. **1:14-17**

We do not want to overlook anything God revealed here because these are gracious and comforting words. Zechariah was to listen to these words and proclaim them:

**Message #1** - God is exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion. **1:14**

God loves Israel and He has an "uninterrupted jealousy" for Israel. Jerusalem is the capital city of Israel and Zion is the south eastern hill of Jerusalem. It is a sacred place where the Temple will stand and Israel will worship God.

**Message #2** - God is very angry at the nations who are at ease. **1:15**

When this all started, God was only a little angry; but as they turned against Israel, God's anger got hotter and hotter. This is what the nations of the world do not realize. Every Wednesday night for 17 years we pray in this church that the United States will always favor Israel. I am convinced this is one reason why the stock market is doing record level business right now. Our country has reaffirmed our love for Israel. Nations that do not love Israel, anger God.

**Message #3** - God says He will return to pour out His blessings on Jerusalem. **1:16**

God, Himself, will return to Israel. Jesus Christ will return to Israel. God will eventually return to Israel with His compassion and mercy and Almighty God would specifically oversee this rebuilding process of the Temple. Every inch of the land that belongs to Israel will one day be hers. That Temple that is described in Ezekiel will be built; you have God's Word on it.

**Message #4** - God says He will overflow Jerusalem and the cities with His blessings. **1:17**

God will use all of His sovereign power to prosper Israel. He will cause His blessings to overflow with prosperity.

This first vision is an exciting message of hope for God's people.

God still loves His people even when they are out of His will. If God's people will turn from their sin, they will experience the blessing of God.

We need to learn from past failures. There are times when we worry and fret and fail. We neglect to realize our God is alive and well. He does care about us and He will not fail us.

Now for those not right with God, the data in this text is scary. You may be in a situation right now where your life is sailing along and you are living in peace and quiet. That proves nothing. God is patrolling hearts and minds and He sees who believes in His Son and who doesn't and if you do not believe in Jesus Christ, your world will collapse and you will become the recipient of His wrath.

Turn to the Lord and believe on Him and be saved.