



## The vision of the chariots and horses Zech 6.1-8

- This passage gives us an insight into the deep metaphysical aspects of life, like no other earthly discipline can.
- You will search in vain to discover by science, or philosophy such deep matters as God reveals to us here.
- Mankind cries out to God "Why does this happen, why that?!" And shakes his fist, because of things, the purpose of which, God has already revealed, if only men cared to look at such teaching as we have here.
- Why do bad things happen?
- Are the events of our lives just luck or chance?
- Is there meaning and purpose to life?
- Is 'the universe' trying to tell me something?
- The world has no answer for you.  
But the Bible does.

:-So let's look at a few passages to prepare us for our main passage.

- With regards to bad events Luke 13.1-5

*"There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that*



*these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."*

- Here we see that God uses such tragic events as warnings to all men- for all have sinned.

God's sword may fall at any time, and the angel that wields it says "times up!"

- Speaking of angels, we'll look at Job 1.6-7

*"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."*

- The fallen angel is allowed to afflict Job, and has power to do so, by using dark events and 'evil' times.
- Lastly let's look at an earlier vision here in Zechariah 1.8,11,15.
- The context is when the jews had been allowed back to Jerusalem and were awaiting the future Messiah's coming.

*"8 I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white... 11 And they answered the angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest..."*

*15 And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease (in sin): for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction."*

- These are the angels who walk through the earth and carry out the events of life.
- These events are pictured as different coloured horses that ride out through the different lands.

- RED HORSES

We keep our interpretation simple and obvious:

A symbol of War, blood, justice and fiery judgements.

- WHITE HORSES

Obviously, good events. Peaceful things.

- SPECKLED HORSES

Mixed events. Some good, some bad.

- Here we find God is displeased because He finds the heathen are at ease in sin.
- A man (pre incarnate Christ) rides out on the red horse as a Judge to make war with sin. To conquer sin and Satan.
- He wants to win the people back, but he finds they are at ease.  
They live in generally peaceful times, only some mixed events- God's gentle warnings don't seem to move them.



- These horses are the overarching events of life. We call them 'providences' - the outworking of God's decrees (all He wills to come to pass).

-There is no such thing as 'Luck' or 'Chance' taught in the Bible.

-God first Decrees, and then works that decree by acts of providential events. Right down to the minutest things.

- So now (having established that) we come to our passage.

*Zech 6.1 "And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass."*

- He lifted up his eyes- We need to look away from the earth up to the spiritual, in order to see such things.
- Two mountains- We can now see what these mountains of brass are.
  - These are those decrees of God (whatever God determines to come to pass)
  - They are mountains- immovable, unchanging.
  - They are made of brass- solid and fixed.
- The chariots that come out from between them- must therefore be God's providences carried out by God's ministering spirits- the angels.



- Here's an old engraving of our very passage by Gustave Doré.

- But this picture is wrong.

- Look at verse 2

*"In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses;"*

- This is strange. The Bible is always precise with its language.

- Why then are the horses IN the chariots, not pulling them as you'd expect?

- Well, from the symbols this is what we should expect.

- Elsewhere in the Bible (Ezekiel), providences are pictured as great rolling 'wheels'. These are the rolling wheels of time.



-So the chariots are providence itself.  
and therefore WITHIN providence are its events (the horses).

- Providence therefore drives the events, not the other way round, so the horses have to be IN the chariots of providence.

Providence contains the events, whether good or bad.

- "But Sir", you might say, "where does that leave Man's free will?"
- Well, we already know that man's will is only free to act within his nature (and that is sinful).

-But he is still free in a measure and works within providence-

-Just like a fish freely swimming in a river, but driven by its currents.

-Or like the free flow of paint moved by the hand of a skilled artist.

- THE FOUR CHARIOTS

-1st the Red horses- There is war in the spiritual realm against sin and Satan.

The red horses come first because Judgements and death came from the beginning, after the Fall in Eden.

Christ rides forth to make war with sin.

- 2nd the black horses- Now we see dark events, evil times.

These can be judgements, but God also uses these for good, to warn, to convict men of sin and to cause them to repent, like the tower of Siloam.

-The storm comes before the calm, the cross before the crown.

- 3rd the white horses- The good events, blessings, especially Gospel blessings of grace, mercy and conversion.

- 4th the grisled and bay horses- grisled are the patchy events, mixed blessings. The bay are a strong, dark red, brown colour, and, as in Job, they walk 'to and fro'.

*4. "Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord?"*

- What are they?

-They are from the first thing you did this morning,

the small fact you dropped your toothbrush, to that 'chance' event that changed your life greatly.

-What you were going to do or think (angels can't read your mind, but they can influence it).

-A child runs into the road, a man sees and falls off a ladder. A meeting is missed because a man is driving the car that hit the child who ran into the road. The man who fell, then meets his future wife in hospital. All the intricate events of life are interwoven into each other in unimaginable complexity.

But it's not complex to God.

-The advert that caused you to sin. The boy who never grew up. The teenager who found the Lord because he stumbled upon a verse of hope, then grew up to point many to God.



-The complex web of tangled threads.

- Is it all ordered?

Yes, this is the providence of God.

- This being the case, how foolish it is to think we can ignore God, or try to live away from Him.

The very fact you find yourself here today is a providence of God.

*5. "And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth."*

- The four spirits- In the new testament it is said *"And then he shall send his angels and shall gather together his elect from the four winds"*

Satan is called "the prince of the power of the air".

- This speaks of the angelic realm which works 'behind' our physical world, and influences it.

- Four- is like north, south, east and west.

*6. "The black horses which are therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them; and the grisled go forth toward the south country"*

- The black horses are followed by the white in one direction (north). The mixed, or grisled, horses go in the opposite direction (south).

- The black horses are judgements against the wicked, bad events.

-But they are also warnings for those who turn to God.

-Dark events, troubling convictions, that can lead a man to repentance.

-They are really a kindness of God to stop us doing more harm to ourselves.

- Have you known such things?

- We can think of obvious large 'black horses' of floods and earthquakes, fires and storms, war, accidents.

- Even heartaches, sorrows, illness, violence, tragedies and such like.

- They can give us a warning and show us how we really stand before God.

- Are they riding through your life even now?

- But then the white horses follow them.

If you heed the warning then what follows is the blessing of God.

Good events follow.

Answers to prayer.

Conversion, righteousness, forgiveness, grace, peace and joy.

- In the opposite direction is the godless life, a mere mix of ups and downs. Ease one minute, trouble the next.

- But if you turn to God, after you see your sin (maybe by the dark warnings of God)



then you'll see your salvation  
(in the bright righteousness of Christ and His atonement for your sins).  
-You have to go through the darkness to get to the light.

*7. "And the bay went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth."*

- This 'bay' colour is from a negative root word meaning dark red brown.

-They seem to want to go their own way but have to ask God permission.

- God gives a rough answer "Get you hence".

-They want to be allowed to do their own thing.  
A bit like the legion of demons who went into the pigs.  
-They seek to go "to and fro", just like Satan had been doing before he spoke with God in Job.

- These are the workings of the 'prince of the power of the air', his demons.
- There are more influences upon you than you may think.

-There is a war for your soul!  
-Satan is allowed to tempt you into bad situations, bad places and ease.  
-Bad places- to make you sin.  
-Ease- so you'll not be minded to repent.  
(If you're not concerned about your soul then it's likely this is an influence upon you).

- They walk to and fro throughout the world.
- Don't we see their influence in the halls of politics, in the classroom, in false religions and lies, in unclean things and sexual sin, in violent entertainments, and violence in the street.
- They can walk near us, throughout our lives, setting traps, man-traps!
- They find us easy prey.

"Why not do that" "look at this" "come here, go there" "do this, do that"

- We can be easily tempted and manipulated like a puppet on a string!

*8. "Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, these that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country."*

- But, up north, in the 'land of grace' there is salvation to be had through a divine substitute - Christ the Saviour.

-This quiets God's spirit. He is pleased, His will is done.  
-There has been a work of justice done, warnings, convictions, and grace.  
The black, then the white horses.

*"all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Rom 8.28*

- Mankind is turned from ease and peace in his sin, to being troubled, and to repent, then saved. God's spirit is quieted.



Things are as they should be  
Justice is done.  
An atonement is made

- So, may you learn to read the events of life and to find God.
- Don't 'shake your fist at God' when troubles come, but learn to humble yourself and hear His voice.
- Seek that 'north country' where there may be a troubled conscience,  
But it will be followed by the peace of pardon and forgiveness.