

The Four Horsemen

Zechariah's Seventh Night Vision

- ¹ Again I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, four chariots came out from between two mountains. And the mountains were mountains of bronze.
- ² The first chariot had red horses, the second black horses,
- ³ the third white horses, and the fourth chariot dappled horses--all of them strong.
- ⁴ Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?"
- ⁵ 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.
- ⁶ 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."
- ⁷ 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.
- ⁸ Then he cried to me, "Behold, those who go toward the north country have set my Spirit at rest in the north country."

Zechariah 6:1-8

Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

THE FOUR HORSEMEN. Pop culture is filled with the imagery. **Notre Dame football** had them (Harry Stuhldreher, Don Miller, Jim Crowley, Elmer Layden). **The Supreme Court** had them (Pierce Butler, James McReynolds, George Sutherland, Willis Van Devanter). **World Championship Wrestling** had them (Ric Flair, Arn and Ole Anderson, Tully Blanchard). **Atheism** had them (Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, Daniel Dennett). **Hollywood** has many movies depicting or discussing them (*The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, *Pale Rider*, *Tombstone*, *The Crow*, *Horsemen*, *X-Men: Apocalypse*, etc.). You find them in **music** (Metallica's "The Four Horsemen;" Judas Priest's "The Four Horsemen;" The Clash's "Four Horsemen;" Muse's "Black Holes and Revelations;" Johnny Cash' "The Man Comes Around;" etc.). There are **role playing games** (*Deadlands*), and dozens of **video games** about them (*Afterlife*, *Apocalypse*, *Call of Duty*, *City of Heroes*, *The Darkness*, etc.). Television and books have an uncounted number of shows and chapters about them.¹ Why there is even a spoof called on *My Little*

¹ See "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse in popular culture," *Wikipedia*, last accessed 8-12-2015.

Ponies called “Apocalypse Ponies,” on Youtube. It stars a happy little suburban white family along with Pestilence Pony (Yellow), Venom Pony (Purple), War Pony (Red), and Death Pony (Black).

The imagery, of course, comes from the Bible. Revelation 6 tells us,

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.

(Rev 6:1-8)

White, red, black, and pale. The colors match their purpose. The white horse conquers. The red horse brings bloodshed. The black horse brings famine. The pale horse brings death.

There are many interpretations of these horses and when their fulfillment takes place. Some want to assign historical personages to them. **Historicists** read Revelation as being a giant prophecy that goes sequentially from the first century to the Second Coming of Christ. Some of these see the horsemen as referring to roughly the first three centuries of Church history. **Partial Preterists** are those who read most of Revelation as referring to the time before the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. Thus, they see the horsemen as referring to the series of events that

lead to that most violent and world-changing event. **Futurists** read Revelation as referring almost entirely to our own future. Thus, many will talk about these as coming woes during the Great Tribulation. **Spiritualists** (a term I don't particularly like because they do believe in "literal" fulfillments) are those who read Revelation as a series of cycles that repeat themselves. These cycles go from the First to the Second Comings of Christ. They generally see the horsemen as woes that afflict the church throughout this inter-advental time, and do not cease until Christ returns in glory.²

All of these views are within the pale of orthodoxy accepted by almost all segments of the church. What they all have in common is that **Christ is sovereign** over the disasters that afflict the children of mankind. But what many people do not realize is that John's imagery is rooted in the Old Testament, specifically in the first and last visions of Zechariah. The purpose of these visions is very similar to those of John's, though their content differs somewhat from that of Revelation.

² A good summary can be found in *Revelation Four Views: A Parallel Commentary*, ed. **Steve Greg** (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997): 102-117.

Seven Night Visions

In Zechariah's **first vision** we read, "I saw in the night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse! He was standing among the myrtle trees in the glen, and behind him were red, sorrel, and white horses" (**Zech 1:8**). That's **three** colors. However, the LXX has the Red Rider followed by **four** different colored horses, and they are almost exactly the same as those in Revelation (Red, grey/pale, piebald, white).³ This is not accidental. Nor is it accidental that Zechariah's last night vision has horsemen either.

In order to get to this (which is our text today), I want to **recap the night visions** in a way that might help you remember them, and in a way that will show you why it is important to keep the first and last visions in mind at the same time. As we have seen, Zechariah has seven night visions. These visions are related to one another chiastically in an A, B, C, D, C¹, B¹, A¹ format. This makes the fourth vision the central vision of the book, and therefore, the focus.

³ "The colors of the horses in both Zechariah and Revelation are almost all identical (see Charles 1920: 1:168–69)." **G. K. Beale** and D. A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 1103.

That vision took place in the **Most Holy Place** of heaven in the divine council where we saw Joshua the high priest clothed in new garments in a scene that pictures for us the gospel of Jesus Christ and the doctrine of justification. This vision was a picture of the future that we cling to with all our might as Christians, even as those in the OT who lived by faith also did.

On either side, in visions 3 and 5, the scene moves geographically outward to **Zion and the Temple mount**. This is because at this time, the returned exiles were in the middle of re-starting the abandoned building project of their new temple. In those visions, God promises that he will be in the midst of Jerusalem and the Church (the lampstand) by his Spirit and Son, even though life may be difficult. Both visions contain the same basic idea.

On either side of these visions, visions 2 and 6, we move out geographically again to the **land of Israel**. These visions are both about judgment. In both, God is going to scatter the people of Israel, moving them out of the land into a place of captivity. These both look backward to the captivity they just came out of, and forward to the

dispersion of Israel among the nations when this second temple is destroyed in 70 A.D.

Finally, on either side of these visions, visions 1 and 7, we move all the way out geographically so that our setting is now **the entire world**. In the first vision, you have the Red Rider standing in the land of Babylon (represented as “the deep”), in the midst of his people. There, you find other riders, supernatural riders, on various colors of horses. Their task is to “**patrol the earth**” (**1:10**) under the command of the Angel of the LORD—Christ himself—who rides the great red horse. What they find is that the earth is “**at rest**” (*shaqat*; **11**).

But what does it mean that they are at rest? Well, this wasn't a good rest. It wasn't a Sabbath rest. God was exceedingly angry with the nations that “**are at ease**” (**15**). Their ease was spiritual complacency. It was a refusal to run after the LORD, to seek and find him, though he was near to everyone (**Acts 17:26-27**). In fact, it was even worse than what they did not do.

God was angry because their rest and ease caused them to **further the disaster** against his people (**Zech 1:15**). God sent Babylon to be the instrument of his anger against his

people, but they sinned in their execution of that judgment. Thus, even though the first vision was telling them that God would be with them, their cry still went up “**how long**” (12), as outwardly, they were wasting away under oppression and the lack of signs that God really was with them. Vision 7 returns us to theme of God’s anger against the nations. How long? How is a Christian to understand the present evil world with its hatred of the church and God’s sovereignty in the midst of it—his Red Rider in the midst of the myrtle trees by the Deep?

Four Chariots

Zechariah again lifts up his eyes “**and saw, and behold, four chariots**” (Zech 6:1). This is how the final vision begins. He sees **Chariots**. These are not ordinary chariots. They are **heavenly chariots**. God has many, many of them. In a Psalm that is closely related to our vision, the singer cries out, “**The chariots of God are twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands; the Lord is among them**” (Ps 68:17). You may remember that Elijah was caught up to heaven alive in one. “**And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven**”

(2Ki 2:11). These *Chariots of Fire* became the title of the Best Picture of 1981 in a movie about running fast and resting in the Lord.

In the next verse, we read that these chariots have **four colors** of horses: Red, black, white, and dappled (spotted/patched). Suddenly, with a slightly different image, we are right back to the first vision and then to Revelation. The colors are basically the same in all three passages. So why chariots rather than just horses? I think that the chariots impress upon us in a more vivid way the mission those riding them are on.

In **vs. 7** it says, “**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.**” You can see here that the mission is world-wide in scope. The chariots are patrolling everywhere. The eyes of the LORD are everywhere (**Prov 15:3**). He knows all things. Nothing escapes his sight. He is absolutely sovereign over his world. It is vital to see, however, that this is the identical mission to the riders of the first chapter. “**So the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered, 'These are they**

whom the LORD has sent to patrol the earth” (Zech 1:10).⁴

With Revelation informing us, we know that this mission is **not a mission of peace**. These angels are not just watching. The chariots are sent out to make war on mankind through pestilence and stirring up war among one another, and natural disasters, and death. Of course, chariots more than just riders on horseback give us this impression of war, as chariots were the chief “tanks” of war in the ancient world. To defeat a chariot was to inspire songs. Moses sings, “**Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea, and his chosen officers were sunk in the Red Sea**” (Ex 15:4). Hence, the idea that these chariots are “**strong**” (Zech 6:3, 7).

Just here, a couple of things should be said. Often times you will hear Christians making claims that such and such a disaster happened because such and such a place was sinning wickedly against God. Some said that **Hurricane Katrina** was God’s bowling ball that hit a strike against the wicked people of New Orleans, for example. Clearly, the

⁴ In both cases, the word is *halak*. This word is used often in the OT, and is usually translated as “walk.” However, it also has the overtones of eschatological judgment. It is no ordinary stroll or prance. These two verses are the only time the ESV renders the English word “patrol.”

California drought is right now happening because they are worse sinners than everyone else, and so forth.

Someone in the NT asked Jesus about this very thing. A certain tower had fallen and a bunch of people were killed. They had been thinking these very thoughts, so Jesus said, “Those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?” (Luke 13:4). His point was personal. “Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (5); maybe not in a falling tower, but certainly at the end of their lives, when they are judged for their own sins. This is one of the main reasons God sends such chariots and horsemen—to get people to reflect upon how they have sinned against God. And not just reflect, but repent and turn back to him.

Yet, of course, most people won’t do that at all. In fact, they just get angry at a being whom many of them don’t even believe exists. Or, perhaps they just don’t think anything about it at all. It was just a fluke accident. Everyone knows that weather and war are caused only by random impersonal forces and Republican War Hawks. Yet, this is the other purpose. God is sovereign over all the

affairs of this world. He sends out the chariots. He sends out the colored horses. He goes to war against us! To not acknowledge this is the height of blindness and the epitome of arrogance. It is one of the reasons God sends them as judgments. If God is over the affairs of this world, then he is in sovereign control of all that takes place. Nothing goes on without his knowledge or his permission or his kingly command. Those who know Christ are at peace with him will only find this to be comforting news, because they also know that he has provided a way for his enemies to be reconciled to him through the death of his Son.

Bronze Mountains

Let's return to the first verse. These horses “**came out from between two mountains. And the mountains were mountains of bronze**” (**Zech 6:1**). The imagery here is fascinating and rich. This is the only time “**mountains of bronze**” appears in the Bible. But there are plenty of mountains with cosmic significance and plenty of bronze to keep us thinking for a while about what this means.

Back to Psalm 68 the verse says, “**The chariots of God are twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands; *the Lord is among them; Sinai is now in the sanctuary***” (**Ps 68:17**). What

is Sinai? It is a mountain. The chariots of God comes from the mountain. Deuteronomy helps us understand this a little better. “The LORD came from Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us; he shone forth from Mount Paran; he came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand” (Deut 33:2). The Dead Sea Scrolls version of this verse adds that “at his right hand was a fiery law for them.”

Of course, we know that Sinai was the mountain where the covenant was given. But what are angels doing here? They are delivering it. Stephen says, “You who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it” (Acts 7:53). Paul says, “Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary” (Gal 3:19). Hebrews says, “For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution” (Heb 2:2).

Now, the mountain is where God resides, and has since the beginning. It is also the place where the divine council meets, and that is why these angelic beings come from

there to give the law—not just to Israel, but all mankind knows the law through **nature**, through **conscience**, and through **angelic mediators**, however that works. Everyone knows right from wrong.

But the imagery goes beyond knowing law in Zechariah's vision, though it also presupposes that. The imagery of two bronze mountains focuses our eyes upon heaven and its God. How? The symbolism of heaven was put into the tabernacle and temple—the very thing Israel is rebuilding. Kline writes, “[The] gate of heaven symbolism found in the holy of holies was repeated in the entrance into the temple with its two bronze pillars (1 Kgs 7:13–22).”⁵ Yes, they were pillars, but the pillars in the ancient mind were closely identified with mountains, as they were thought to be the pillars that held the sky above the earth.⁶

⁵ **Meredith Kline**, *Glory in Our Midst*, 2-4.

⁶ **Going Deeper: Homer** writes, “The daughter of the wizard Atlas, who knows the depths of every sea, and himself upholds the tall pillars which keep earth and sky asunder” (*Odyssey* 1.52). Atlas, of course, refers to geography. Later it is written, “When Perseus’ words failed to persuade him to allow him to pass, he was compelled to show him the Gorgon’s face and turned him to stone; and the mountain was called Atlas after him. So the commentary on *Lykophron*.” (*Polyidus*, *Fragment 837*). The Atlas mountains are in Morocco and Algeria (northwest Africa). Not coincidentally, when you understand the twelve signs of the zodiac correspond to different places on earth, the sign in the sky that stands directly over these mountains is the Gemini, represented as two pillars: ♊. David Flynn has a fascinating discussion of this in this lecture, “AOD 2003 - David Flynn - Mars/Earth Connection:

Hence, they are gateways to heaven, as one scholar puts it, “Just as the pillars mark the entry to Yahweh’s earthly dwelling, so the mountains mark the entry to Yahweh’s heavenly dwelling.”⁷

Curiously, at the place called Shechem, where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob sojourned, there are two twin mountains overseeing the village:



These are called **Ebal** and **Gerizim**. When Israel entered the Promised Land, they were to erect an altar on Mt. Ebal, and then half the tribes would go up on Gerizim and yell the **blessings** of the covenant to the other half of the tribes

Cydonia, Genesis 3,” *Youtube*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ophC-_WZq8k, last accessed 8-15-2015.

⁷ **B. G. Curtis**, *Up the Steep and Stony Road: The Book of Zechariah in Social Location Trajectory Analysis* (Academia Biblica 25; Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2006), 143.

who went on top of Ebal and yell the **curses** (see **Deut 27:11-13**; **Josh 8:30-35**). Meanwhile, the ark of the covenant was to be positioned between the two mountains, symbolizing God's presence in their midst as they ratified the covenant. The picture is very similar to Zechariah 6:1. Again, we have law and mountains involved. But now there are two of them, just as we see in Zechariah's vision. Kline calls their altar a virtual **victory stele** representing the military battles they had just won to get into Canaan. A victory stele was a monument in stone or wood that symbolized things like military or cultural achievements such as the imposed law-code of Hammurabi. God didn't allow such things, but instead used bare altars as memorials.



Victory stele of Naram Sin
2254–2218 BCE



Replica of Stele of Hammurabi
(note the mountain motif in both)

So what does the “bronze” signify? It signifies **heaven**, **heavenly creatures**, and specifically **the glory of God**. The word for bronze is *nechosheth* (*nchshth*). It is related to the word for “shining”—*nachash* (*nchsh*), which is the name for the Shining One of Genesis 3, and the supernatural seraphim serpents that bit the Israelites in the wilderness (**Num 21:7**).

Ezekiel has this fabulous vision of God in his first chapter. He sees the living creatures and their “**legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf's foot. And they sparkled like burnished bronze**” (**Ezek 1:7**). This is the idea of glory and of fire. “**As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches moving to and fro among the living creatures. And the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning**” (**Ezek 1:13**).

Later, Ezekiel sees a human-like person shining on a throne. This same person is described by Daniel, “**His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam**

of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude” (**Dan 10:6**). He is also described in Revelation, “His feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters” (**Rev 1:15**). This is none other than the **glorified Jesus Christ**. Think about the idea of pillars again, and legs of bronze, bronze pillars, and bronze mountains would all have similar ideas in the ancient mind.

So the picture here, then, is actually very similar to that of the first vision. In that vision, the Angel of the LORD—Yahweh, God himself, Jesus Christ—is standing in the midst of the myrtle trees by the Deep. But curiously, in the LXX he does not stand among the myrtles, but rather “**between the mountains**” (**Zech 1:10**; also 8, 11 LXA). In the seventh vision, God is once more represented, this time as the king of the mountains, in the midst of the people as he was at Ebal and Gerizim. He is enthroned on the mountain, and out from his midst he sends the chariots. It is a glorious picture of divine sovereignty in the midst of his people. But we once more want to consider the chariots.

Four Winds of Heaven

Let's return now again to the chariots. We know that they are going throughout the world, but the text says more. After asking the angel speaking to him what these chariots are (**Zech 6:4**), the angel/Angel answers, “**These are going out to the four winds of heaven, after presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth**” (**5**). Again, the LORD of all the earth brings our focus back on God who resides in the midst of the mountains of bronze from which the chariots arise. And the LORD of the whole earth, not just Israel, is reinforced by the idea of them going out to the four winds of heaven. The phrase is like “**the four corners of the earth.**” It is everywhere.

The next verse gives some directions in keeping with this idea, yet not all four cardinal points. It says the black chariot goes toward the **north**. If black is the color of either death or judgment, and if the colors here represent things like they do in Revelation, then clearly judgment is about to fall on the north. But where is the north? We saw the “north” back in the third vision, where it represented **Babylon**, the nation of captivity, which is also mentioned again in the sixth vision. In fact, the sixth vision set the

stage for this seventh vision, by having all of the disobedient covenant people of God be sent back away to Babylon into captivity. Now, judgment is falling upon all the disobedient people of the world.

Curiously, the white horse follows it (**Zech 6:6**). In Revelation, white represented military victory, conquest. So the idea is that after the war has ended, God is conquering his enemies. No mention is made here of the red horses, but the dappled ones go toward the south country, perhaps to the land of Egypt or Edom, more of Israel's enemies.

North to south are the two directions mentioned, and if you look at the geography of Israel, you might understand why. To the west is a huge ocean called the Mediterranean Sea. Nothing out there to visit. To the east is pretty much desert for a thousand miles. So the image is striking in that it appears that as the chariots go out, they are clearing God's Promised Land as they go.

Armageddon

So when does all of this happen? That is sort of the million dollar question of this passage? If you didn't think this was all interest so far, just wait. In Isaiah, Babylon's

king sets his heart above the “mount of assembly” in the “far reaches of the north” (Isa 14:13). This is the famous passage that seems to have Lucifer behind it, but nevertheless, on the human level it refers to Babylon. “North” is the word Tsaphon, and here it refers to Mt. Zaphon, the great mountain of Syria where El and the council resided in Canaanite thinking. It was their Mt. Zion or Sinai. It was north of Israel.

But while the mountain imagery is the same, it is the phrase “mount of assembly” that is most important. This is the phrase *har-moed*, and it refers to the divine council, the mount (*har*) of assembly (*moed*). And yet, it is from this phrase that John’s “Armageddon” derives.⁸ The verse reads, “And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon” (Rev 16:16). How do you get “Armageddon” out of “*har-moed*”?

When John—and he does this a lot (John 5:2; 19:13, 19:17; 20:16; Rev 9:11)—says “in Hebrew it says,” he is giving what they call a **Hebraisti**. He usually gives a clue in the verse as to the play on words he is doing. Here, that clue is “assembly”: *and they assembled...* This is exactly what

moed means. If you are transliterating into Greek, thereby creating the Hebrasti, you drop the “h” off, giving you “ar” instead of “har” (the NAS actually retains the “h”). “Moed” is actually spelled מועד (*mo’d*). In “Armageddon,” the mu (μ) and mem (מ) correspond, the delta (δ) and dalet (ד) correspond, and the gamma (γ) is used in place of the ayin (ע), which is a silent letter in Hebrew. Suddenly, you get ar-meged.⁹ It doesn’t take a rocket scientists to see then that Armageddon is here in Isaiah 14:13, and that Babylon in the North is its focus.

H (ה)	A (א)	R (ר)	M (מ)	O (ו)	E (ע)	D (ד)	
	A (Α)	R (ρ)	M (μ)	A (α)	G (γ)	E (ε)	D (δ) O (ώ) N (ν)

I bring this up because it is one of several things we could talk about that would help us see that Zechariah’s final vision concerns things of the end. We will return to this theme a couple more times in Zechariah, since the two burdens actually parallel the seven visions in remarkable ways. We will learn about that in future weeks. But given

⁹ See Meredith Kline, *God, Heaven, and Har Magedon* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 51-52.

that parallelism, we could use other parts of Zechariah to see that this vision concerns things of the end.

We could also go to Daniel and his “king of the north” (Dan 11:13, 15). Remember, the chariots are going to the north. This king parallel’s Paul’s “man of sin” (2 Thess 2:4) and the little beast horn of Daniel 7. In other words, Antichrist language. We could also go to Ezekiel’s famous Gog and Magog prophecy (Ezek 38-39), which also takes place in the north, and also has a mountain revolt.¹⁰ The point is, all of these talk about the same time frame: The End.

But just here, I want to mention something important. Because this isn’t just about The End. While I believe in a future man of sin, a singular antichrist figure, John tells us that today there are many antichrists (1 Jn 2:18). His focus is on now, not later. Similarly, Greg Beale in his commentary on Revelation 6 points out right at the beginning:

In 6:1–8 he explains that this reign extends even over the situations of suffering in which many Christians find themselves ... Rev. 6:1–8 is intended to show that Christ

¹⁰ See Kline, Glory, 211-214.

rules over such an apparently chaotic world and that suffering does not occur indiscriminately or by chance. This section reveals, in fact, that destructive events are brought about by Christ for both redemptive and judicial purposes.¹¹

Yet also,

Christ begins to unseal the scroll, and scenes of devastating judgment (including the famous “four horsemen of the apocalypse”) begin to unfold on earth. These climax with a depiction of the day of God’s wrath, as the heavens are opened and the hills and islands are “removed from their places” (for the predominantly symbolic nature of the seal visions, see Beale 1999a: 50–55).¹²

The point is, that while it appears from many passages in the Bible that futurists are right in the fact that there will be a kind of climaxing antagonistic warfare against God’s

¹¹ G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 370.

¹² G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 1102–1103.

people at the very end of time, when an Antichrist figures arises and leads the final battle against the church, the visions of the prophets are also here to give present comfort to his people in the midst of their own tribulations that they suffer here and now. That means, in their own way, the other views of Revelation are also right. I do not see this as an either/or.

While God may have left the nation of Israel for 70 years, he returned to them in his comforting, gospel presence through the Angel of the LORD and the rebuilding of the temple. He has come today in the person of Jesus Christ, who sent his Spirit into the world to build his New Covenant temple. The Jews rebelled as a whole against their Messiah, and were scattered again in the destruction of their second temple in 70 AD. But God is still in the midst of all those who trust in Christ by faith alone. He is sovereign over all the affairs of earth, and nothing and no one can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The last verse of Zechariah builds on all of this as the visions reach their crescendo. “Then he cried to me, ‘Behold, those who go toward the north country have set

my Spirit at rest in the north country” (Zech 6:8). This verse returns us to the “rest” of the first vision, while one last time calling us to think of the wicked nations represented by Babylon. We again remember that the nations were at “rest” *in their complacency*.

Now, someone else is at “rest.” This someone is God himself. As he took his throne at creation after easily dispatching the chaos and void that the Spirit hovered over, turning it into a beautiful house, and finally overlooking it and saying, “It is very good” and took his rest, so now, as the chariots of wrath go out into all the world carrying out his judgment upon people who are punished for their sins, his Spirit is at rest.

Why? Not because God loves war and death and bring misery and ruin to his image bearers, but because God is totally sovereign, and his justice is fully satisfied. Why else? Because Christ has come into the midst of his people and has paid for their sins. His Spirit has come into their midst in great glory and now stays with them to protect them and bring them to heaven. Why else? Because Christ will return in glory on a White Horse to claim the final victory of sin, death, and the devil. Such is the glory of the God of

the Bronze mountains, whose law shines forth from sea to sea, and whose powers extend to the four winds of the earth. **Such is the glory of Yahweh in our midst.**

So end the night visions of Zechariah. “**How long**” has been answered. Make sure you are on his side before the Great Day of vengeance of our God is finally and swiftly carried out. Look to him by faith in things that are coming and things that are unseen.