Hope has a Name: Zechariah 6:1-8

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Preacher: Scott Liddell

[0:00] Amen. You may be seated. Before we get into the sermon today, I just wanted to share with you, I love seeing, I don't know about you, the number of families with young children on stage.

That's such a good thing. The Lord has been kind to us in adding not only newer families to the church, but also younger families to the church.
And those families are also having children, which is a good thing. Children are a blessing from the Lord. And so as a result, this summer, I just want to make you aware that we are going to be adding another room to our children's ministry, just remodeling it and getting it ready for to add another children's room to our children's discipleship.
And I'm so grateful for Emily and Hannah for their labor in providing safe and great places and for you as the body of Christ to help come alongside of these parents and discipling their children.
And so I'm grateful for the existing, those who serve in our children's ministry or children's discipleship. And just to let you know that come this fall, we will need even more individuals to serve in our children.
[1:11] And I think, why would we want to do that? Because our task as a church, we are created and we are in the Lord's plan for the church is to make disciples.

And it begins in the home and also here at the church. And so we are, we exist as disciples of Christ to make disciples. And so I'm grateful to have the opportunity to come alongside of families along with you.
So just so you know, a little warning, if, if Emily or Hannah contacts you and says, hey, we need someone to help serve our children. Would you do that? Your answer is going to be a resounding yes.
And so, anyway, I'm so grateful. Concerning the message today, I think all of us deep down, we long for justice.
We want evil to be answered. We want wrongs to be made right. If you find your way to the New Testament, the first book of the New Testament is Matthew.
[2:21] And you turn left into the Old Testament, a couple of books, you will come to the book of Zechariah. Zechariah is about these, these pillars here. And, and the two things on the pillars represent the two advents of Christ.

So Christ came the first time to be born of a virgin, to live a sinless life, and ultimately to die on the cross and be raised from the grave. And so this is to represent Christ's first coming.
The second coming of Christ will, will be when he comes with his angelic hosts and he'll be riding a white horse.
So this is the best I can do to represent his two advents. Zechariah, though, lives about 500 years prior to Christ. And he, and he has in one night eight visions.
And we are going to be looking at the eighth and final vision. And if you're concerned about how long we're going to be in Zechariah, we will pick up the pace now. And so we will be doing about a chapter a week from here on out.
[3:25] But we're in his last vision. This last vision, the first five visions in Zechariah are relatively hopeful for the children of Israel. Israel has been taken into captivity.

They have now been released from captivity. They've spent 70 years there. They are now in their homeland. However, in Jerusalem where they are, there are no walls surrounding Jerusalem.
The temple has not been rebuilt. And they are very exposed. And they kind of serve as a vassal state to Persia. But they've been allowed to return. In this last, the last, so the first five visions are pretty hopeful.

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There's a coming king. There's a restoration of Israel. The last three visions, though, are visions of judgment. And so we're going to be looking at the last vision, and it is the vision of judgment.
And so if you have God's word with you, would you please open to Zechariah chapter 6. We are going to see the last vision that this prophet Zechariah has of his evening.
[4:33] All these visions happened in one night. And we read in Zechariah chapter 6, verses 1 through 8, we read this. And he said to the angel who talked to me, What are these, my lord?

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. And the chariots with the black horses go to the north country, while the white horses after them.
And the dappled horses go toward the south country. When the strong horses came out, they were impatient to go and patrol the earth. And he said, Go patrol the earth.
And they went and patrolled the earth. And he cried to me, and then he cried to me, Behold, those who go toward the north country have set my spirit at rest in the north country.
Isn't that clear? Isn't that clear? And so there's a, perhaps this is something of which Zechariah saw in that last vision.
[6:06] Two bronze mountains, and out of those bronze mountains are coming chariots pulled by horses. And each of the horses, there's red, black, white, and a dappled horse, kind of maybe perhaps like an Appaloosa horse, a spotted horse.

And so this is what perhaps Zechariah sees. So I want to kind of try to break this down for us to say, what is it that the Lord is saying to Zechariah through this vision?
First of all, I want us to understand the bronze mountains. What does bronze represent in the Old Testament? I would say there's two primarily things that the bronze represents.
First, it's a symbolic of a righteous divine judgment. You may remember the children of Israel back in Moses' day. Moses leads the people of Israel through the Red Sea from Egypt.
God saves them. They get into the wilderness, and God brings them to the cusp of the promised land that God is leading them toward.
[7:18] And indeed, God says, this is the promised land that I've given to you. And so Israel sends in 12 spies. 12 spies, one representative person from each of the 12 spies.

And they are to then go and check out the land that God had given them. While in the land of Israel that God had promised them, they saw great walled cities, and they saw giants in the land.
And so that intimidated the people, and they began to lose their faith, the trust in the Lord that this is indeed the land that God gave them. And so they came back with an ill report and said, no, I don't think they took a vote.
Ten of the representatives of the tribes of Israel said, no, we should not go in. Two, Joshua and Caleb said, yes, we should go in. But they lost the majority vote, and as a result, as a consequence of their disobedience, Israel began to wander in the wilderness for 40 years.
During that 40 years time of wandering, the people of Israel began to question Moses' leadership, and that if he's really the God's man.
[8:30] And so they began to question, and they began to be difficult to Moses. And as a result, the Lord sent snakes to bite the people of Israel.

And one of the ways, and so the people came to Moses and said, help us, we're dying of snake bites. And so Moses goes to the Lord, and the Lord says, okay, create a bronze snake and put it on a staff, and anyone who looks at that bronze snake will be spared of their life.
If anyone who has been bitten, they will not die. And so Moses does that very thing. He creates a long staff with a bronze snake on it, and anyone who looks upon that bronze snake, they don't die from that snake bite.
So notice, bronze is related to God's preservation through his divine righteous judgment. The snakes were sent as to his divine righteous judgment, and you could be saved by looking at this bronze serpent.
Second way to illustrate this. When you were to go to the temple, or you were to go to the tabernacle, then the temple replaced the tabernacle. The largest piece of furniture that you would have seen once you entered the tabernacle or entered the temple, the thing that was in the outer court was this brazen altar, it was called.
[9:53] It was an altar that was built of acacia wood, but it was overlaid with bronze. Again. And what happened there? The people of Israel would be making sacrifices for their sins, and they

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would put the animal on that altar, and to, on behalf of the guilt of the people, that's what would have happened on that brazen altar.

And so here, what again I want you to see is that God's righteous divine judgment is related to this covering of bronze, or this alloy made of copper and tin.
The other thing that bronze represents is it's a symbol of strength. To illustrate this, we come to King Nebuchadnezzar in history, in history, and Nebuchadnezzar one night has a dream, and in his dream he sees a statue, and that statue is made of different elements, and the statue has this head of gold.
The chest and the arms are silver. The lower torso and thighs are bronze. The legs are of iron, and the feet are of iron, and a mixture of iron and clay.
So what is bronze? Well, this is a magnificent statue with great strength. Gold, silver, bronze, iron. And they were to represent different nations that were in history.
[11:28] So Babylon and Medo-Persia, the Greek Empire, the Macedonian Greek Empire with Alexander the Great is the bronze. And we know how powerful Alexander the Great was.

And so this statue with these different elements were to represent the strength of these nations that were to come in the future. All that to communicate, bronze is a symbol of also strength in the Old Testament.
So you have these chariots, these horses that are coming forth from these two bronze mountains in Zechariah's vision. And so what in my mind I have is this strong, righteous, divine judgment is where these horses are coming from, pulling these chariots.
Chariots. Now we'll get to the chariots. Chariots. Chariots were the greatest form of military strength of its day when Zechariah was riding. It's a symbol of swiftness and strength, of power.
And so we know that kings kind of, you knew how strong your empire was by how many chariots you had. And so we're recorded in 1 Kings that Solomon had 1,400 chariots.
[12:43] And so it's recorded that his wealth and his military strength was demonstrated by how many chariots he possessed in his army. And yet, we know that we're not supposed to put our trust in chariots, regardless of military strength.

And so we have this beautiful psalm in Psalm 20 that says, some trust in chariots, some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.
And I'll conclude with that verse at the end of the message. So we have these two mountains, God's righteous judgment and strength.
Out of that is coming these chariots, these symbols of swiftness and strength, pulled by various horses. And the horses are different colors. And so, Zechariah is a little puzzled, and he doesn't know what he's observing.
And so he asks the question. Zechariah in the vision has this attending angel, and so he turns and asks the angel, what am I observing? So we can look in verse 4 and 5, and Zechariah says, then I said and I answered to the angel who talked with me, what are these, my Lord?
[13:58] Meaning, what are these chariots pulled by horses with various colors? And verse 5, the angel answered Zechariah and said to him, these are going out to the four winds of heaven and presenting themselves before the Lord of all of the earth.

And so I want us to look at that word wind in verse 5. Wind is also could be spirit or angel. So, what you have in verse 5 is the answer.
Zechariah is saying, what am I observing? And the response to that is, well, these are, if you will, the angels who after presenting themselves to the Lord have been now sent to execute this judgment.
So what are these chariots and these horses representing? Well, they're representing angels who had just presented themselves to the Lord and now they have permission to go give, execute judgment.
That is what you're having happen. So then, the next question to answer is, well then, what is the nature of these horses that are being sent out?
[15:13] We're told in verses 7 and 8, kind of in verse 7 we're told the temperament, or not temperament, that's the wrong word, the posture of these angels represented in these horses and chariots being sent.

And so in verse 7 it says, when the strong horses, and again, these are representative angels, the angel that is speaking to Zechariah already told them, these are angels, if you will.

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So these strong horses came out and they were impatient to go and patrol the earth. So notice, there is this eagerness of these angels to go out and represent the Lord executing His judgment over the earth.
There is this eagerness to do that. They have grown tired. Can you imagine yourself, if you will, being an angel of Almighty God and all of this wickedness has been happening on the face of this earth and these injustices have not been answered and wickedness is seeming to reign over the earth and it is a front to the Lord God whom you serve.
And you're wanting, Lord, can we just go now to put down this wickedness? Can we be your agents to stop this? Can we go now? Give us the word.
[16:43] And they are to go and patrol the earth and the Lord said, patrol the earth and they went and patrolled the earth, verse 7 says. So then we come to these colored horses and again, so now, but again, remember the chariots and the horses, they represent angels but these angels have perhaps different tasks or things they could utilize in their resources to execute God's judgment upon wickedness.

So, this is when some people, okay, we're back here with Zechariah, 500 years before Christ. Some people think and theologians and they may be right, say, hey, these colored horses sure look like a time when other horses are mentioned in the Bible right before the coming of the Lord on his white horse and it's called in a period of time of the tribulation.
So, now I'm going to turn to the book of Revelation and look at some similar colored horses to get maybe a feel for what kind of tools these angels are going to use to execute judgment or it could very be Zechariah is looking into the future and foretelling of a time when indeed these foretelling of a time when the similar judgment will happen.
so, I'm primarily doing this to look at the colors of the horses to kind of consider what are the weapons or the tools at the resources of these angels to execute judgment on the earth to punish sin and wickedness.
[18:35] Before we get there, we're going to be looking at Revelation chapter 6. Before we get there, we get to chapter 5. In chapter 5, you have a scene in heaven. You have a scene in heaven and in chapter 5, there is there is a scroll and the problem with the scroll is there's seven seals on the scroll and there is this search in heaven who is worthy to open the scroll and it's like a dollop of this throughout history for many years, centuries, many centuries, there was a dollop of wax that would be put on a scroll, it could have been a box, something that was not supposed to be opened and a king's seal, if you will, was put on that dollop of wax and then only the king or his representative should be able to open this scroll and you knew or whatever it was that the king's seal was on and you knew if that seal was broken prior to the one who received it, somebody's already looked at it and so it was a way to ensure nobody has seen this but it's just for your eyes only and so if you will, you're in this heavenly scene in the book of Revelation and there is a scroll with seven seals and nobody could be found to open the scroll until we read in the book of Revelation chapter 5 it says they found him and it just happens to be Jesus Christ the son of God and it says you are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals because you were slain with your blood and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe, language, people, the nations, you Lord are worthy to open the seal because you're the only one that has paid the price for sin and you purchased for God all of these people from every tribe and then it says worthy is the lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise and that is chapter 5 so finally the one in heaven has been found to break the seals to open the scroll and what is the scroll?

the scroll represents the judgment of God and so who is worthy to finally unveil and relinquish and have authority to execute this judgment of God that the scroll has written on it?
The son of God has the authority to do that and so what you have in chapter 6 is the first we're only going to read the first four seals that are broken and if you will instead of seven seals being like right across here and finally you can open it what you have is an unveiling slowly of a scroll so you can read the first one so the first seal oh now we can see this much of judgment then the second seal is open then we can see this much of judgment then the next seal is open then you can see this much of judgment of God then the next seal is open and this just happens to be Ephesians 2.10 in Chinese but so this is not the scroll this is for illustration purposes so this is not the scale this is just for illustration okay so you have the first seal opened in Revelation chapter 6 verse 1 now I reached no I'm sorry now I watched when the lamb he's the one who's worthy to open the scroll so then I

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watched when the lamb opened one of the seven seals so there's the first one and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice of thunder come and I and I looked and behold a white horse and its rider had a bow and a crown had given to him and he came out conquering and to conquer so what is the first judgment that was written on the scroll when the first seal was opened we can see this far now we see the first judgment and what is it the releasing of a man who sits on a white horse and you would think
Scott we know about this white horse no you don't this is a different white horse not this one okay so this one is written and I believe it to be the antichrist he sure looks like the lord he sure rides the similar horse he sure looks he's going out to conquer this seems like the lord but if you read revelation it is not the lord he is not going out he is the antichrist is used by the lord to execute judgment and this man goes out and he's conquering so he is a false imitator he is a messianic imposter he mimics Christ and he deceives the world that's the first judgment second what is this and notice so then you have the white horse so I'm thinking about Zechariah we'll come back to that so white horse so what does the white horse perhaps have so now okay let's go back to Zechariah Zechariah he sees this vision of these horses and there's a white horse so what does perhaps the white horse represent for Zechariah what does this angel that's what the horse and the chariot represent what does this angel have and his tools or his resources to do to execute judgment he has the ability to conquer the second seal okay
I know I'm flopping back and forth Zechariah and tribulation time now there's the second seal that is broken and now we look in verse 3 of Revelation chapter 6 verse 3 when he opened the second seal I heard a 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 so this rider on the second horse and the second horse was red and now notice what is what is the rider have permission to do to take peace from the earth symbolizing war and bloodshed so that people will slay one another I had the opportunity several years ago to visit Rwanda a few times to do ministry with a ministry partner there in Rwanda and many of them were recounting the 1994 genocide when in a period of 90 days 800,000 to a million people were killed in 90 days three months a million people and the Hutus and the Tutsi people of Rwanda what was very difficult many of the people my friends who were sharing stories with me said what was very difficult about that period of time was you had a neighbor
[26:16] Hutu and Tutsi neighbor two different tribes but they knew one another they gardened with one another they had farms next to each other they were next door neighbors if you will and what was very hard is it seemed like overnight because of the communication over the radios of how much the Hutus should hate the Tutsis overnight the people kind of changed and there was some animosity that existed under the current in society as well at the time and it didn't take much but what was really hard for the people is it seemed like overnight just neighbors just killed neighbors it was very tragic and that is what it may be like when this red rider riding the red horse arrives in the tribulation is neighbors just turning to neighbors and just killing each other there's no peace on earth and that the rider on the red horse in the tribulation has the right to execute that form of judgment so then I think about the angel back in

Zechariah's time he sees this red horse pulled by this chariot out of these two bronze mountains what is what is that red what is that angel represent perhaps the ability the tool in his toolbox is war and bloodshed that the Lord will empower him and give him to execute judgment on this earth then we come in the book of revelation to verse five and we we see another colored horse with another rider when he opened the third seal he heard from the third living creature saying 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 the three quarts of barley for a denarius and do not harm the oil and the wine
I'm not going to get into the denarius and the food thing all what it's going to be communicating is this food is going to be scarce and work will be very hard you'll have to work very hard to get a denarius and the amount of food and resources that you can buy with that is very scarce so the idea behind this black horse is that there will be death by probably the way of famine you're going to have to work very hard for a very few amount of the food is scarce work is hard and so this rider on the black horse in the tribulation period of time death and famine will be common and then we come to another colored horse in the book of revelation and I look beyond a pale horse now here is where the book of revelation and Zechariah's vision differ in revelation you have a pale horse

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Zechariah's vision is a spotted horse a dappled horse perhaps like an appaloosa horse but in but in revelation what we're about to read is a pale horse and I know there's a difference here a pale horse and its rider name was death and Hades followed him and they were given authority over a fourth of the earth to kill with a sword and famine with pestilence and wild beasts so here on this last horse this pale horse in the book of revelation you have perhaps pestilence and plagues you say Scott so let me quickly answer a question I know that is on everyone's mind what does this have to do with mother's day nothing what what I want us to see in the tribulation remember there's seven seals and we've only broken four and it says just by those four events those four horses with four riders that are given this kind of authority a fourth of the earth's population is killed this is at the time of tribulation is a fitting name for this period of time what I want to see though why read revelation about colored horses over here because you said
Scott these are angels representing angels yes I believe these are angels given authority and perhaps these are the kinds of tools these angels are given representing these colors that these horses have and so they have perhaps the authority the tools remember what's what's at the heart of these angels that have presented themselves before the Lord and they've now been given permission to go throughout the end of the earth they're they're eager what are they eager to do to punish sin to to finally execute judgment on sin to put down wickedness they're eager to do that and perhaps they have the same tools that those riders on those colored similar horses in Revelation have bloodshed war death famine pestilence plagues perhaps they have those kinds of authority and will use those kinds of tools to execute the judgment that's my point so then you say well Scott let's try to bring this message to what what would have been the effect for the people of [32:16] Israel in Zechariah's time 500 years before Christ let's remember where they are what they're experiencing they've been in captivity for 70 years they finally have been released to return to Jerusalem there's no walls around Jerusalem there's no temple yet they've been sent back to rebuild the temple they're very exposed it's this little crumbled city of Jerusalem that they've returned to they're very vulnerable how would this vision have encouraged you well consider Israel has suffered greatly and God makes it clear to Habakkuk and the other prophets that Assyria and Babylon are merely agents to punish God's people for their repeated disobedience you were taken into captivity because of your disobedience

Israel but in this vision notice we had two horses go to the north who's in the north Babylon you had a horse go down to the south who was in the south where Israel was Egypt was in the south who were the two nations that were punishing Israel from the north into the south Babylon and Egypt reigned hurt Israel deeply so this is a vision so I'm getting at the point of what effect would this have had for Zechariah and the people perhaps it was this God will judge the nations now who maybe went too far in their violence against you he is God of the whole earth no one gets away with anything so this vision would have had an effect on Zechariah to remain faithful to the Lord finish the temple he is a righteous judge and he will bring every nation and every person into account if a wicked person has wronged you do not seek your own vengeance that is rightly and fittingly belong vengeance rightly belongs to the Lord he will repay evil people may prosper on this earth but when it comes to death and judgment that is the
Lord's all rebellion against God will be judged no one will get away with anything not your neighbor not your boss not your enemy not your children not your family not your spouse not even you so this vision would have been a vision that would have been both sobering and it would have been comforting God will execute his justice on wrongdoing period and you can take heart in that and you say okay Scott if this does not apply to anything with regard to Mother's Day then how does this apply for us today I'm glad you asked and let me be clear some theologians say this judgment is executed in relative time to Israel back then on Babylon and
Egypt for perhaps going too far in their persecution of Israel so some theologians look back and say that's what that's talking about other theologians say Scott yes that may be true but in addition to it may be a foretelling of a time with these other colored horses in the tribulation that we talked about as well there's differing opinions regardless what does this mean for us today I will say this that God's judging sin and sinful people can bring you comfort if and only if your sins have been atoned for if you have never trusted Christ for his forgiveness you will face the judgment of God upon sin and it should scare you it should be a fearful thing but if you have fled to the cross and you have trusted in the shed blood of

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Jesus for the forgiveness of sin oh great comfort you can take it should give us comfort knowing that God is a righteous judge against all sin and against all wickedness we do not need to seek our own vengeance for those who have harmed us and so I have a few application points for those of us in Christ number one you can rest in God's sovereign control you can trust the Lord in troubled times this vision gives us encouragement these are post exilic Jews that have come out of exile and they are continuing to rebuild the temple despite intense opposition and we can trust God in God's active behind the scenes work to punish evil and execute justice the chariots emerge between the bronze mountains and God's plans cannot be thwarted by human obstacles also note that [37:57] God is not apathetic toward injustice there is an eagerness in heaven to execute justice remember those angels can we go now there is an eagerness in heaven to execute judgment upon sin yet we have a God who is not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance and so perhaps he waits a little while longer and God thirdly God's divine justice is certain vengeance is God's the text shows us that God's spirit is at rest only after the chariots have executed judgment in the north country which is probably Babylon this teaches us that ultimately justice belongs to God to settle all accounts rather than on human vigilance there should be no human vigilantism God has the final word on evil all four chariots symbolize

God's swift execution of judgment on sin and wickedness and can provide us comfort from evil that comfort in that evil will not prevail you can rest in God's final justice against evil and then lastly you can have peace amidst conflict Nehemiah would be years in coming before he would rebuild the wall when Zechariah prophesied dwelling in an unwilled city a temple that had not yet been built you're very vulnerable and so but you can have peace this was to bring comfort and peace to Zechariah so I'm going to conclude with a verse some trust in chariots and some trust in horses but we trust in the name of the Lord our God in Psalm 20 verse 7 our confidence in God is not baseless our confidence in God is not blind optimism our confidence in God is not an emotional wishful or irrational faith it is grounded in the objectivity and the reality that God is and what he has done will be revealed and what he has done in history past through his son
Jesus Christ is true to forgive sin God's character is perfectly trustworthy and faithful throughout history God cannot lie he is perfect in all of his ways and our Lord is the same yesterday today and forever more and every alternative foundation of trust will ultimately fail chariots will fail horses will fail wealth will fail governments fail human wisdom!
human wisdom errors human health declines death comes for us all but Christ is our sure foundation and he never fails and so I'm going to conclude with Psalm 20 verse 7 again to encourage us some trust in chariots and some trust in horses but we trust in the name of the Lord our God amen let's pray father father you are good and I pray that our trust would be in you you are our source you are in you we are secure lord thank you that because of your son Jesus Christ that we have sin that is forgiven you have taken the wrath of God on our behalf the wrath of God against sin on our behalf for all who have trusted in you you have given us your righteousness and so lord I thank you that we can under the shelter of your name take refuge lord I thank you also that you will judge sin ultimately thank you that it will not run rampant over the whole earth forever that there will be an end you will come on your right horse white horse and ushering in an era of righteousness thank you lord I thank you that there will be a new heaven and a new earth where sin will not even exist only your holiness and all your perfections of who you are will be evident then and we long for that day so lord thank you but I pray that we would be take comfort and perhaps whatever troubles us today lord you are good we love you lord and may we be faithful to you this week amen

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