

Hope has a Name: Zechariah 1:7-17

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[0:00] So, we are back. We took a little break, a little pause, catch the breath a little bit as we launch into this study on Zechariah. We are, therefore, in the minor prophets. There are twelve of them. We learned from two weeks ago when we introduced the book that they're minor not because of importance, like the five major prophets, but they're really called minor because, generally speaking, they're smaller books.

The context of Zechariah, if you want the full history, I would really encourage you to go back and listen to the sermon on chapter 1, verses 1 through 6, and you'll get a fuller Old Testament backdrop narrative there.

But where we find ourselves today, we are observing this remnant of Jews, probably 40,000 to 50,000 of them, returning from their Babylonian captivity.

And we learned from our introduction that this captivity, the deliverance really came through this Persian king, an individual by the name of Cyrus.

And he had power to liberate the Jews after conquering Babylon in 539 B.C. What is remarkable is this liberation was prophesied in the Bible, like 200 years before the event, and in fact, in Isaiah 45.1, Cyrus is named, and he's called God's anointed, and he's going to subdue nations, and he's going to loose the belt of kings.

[1:43] And he did that when he conquered the Babylonian king, Nabodonius, I believe, is his name. And that's remarkable, church.

The prophetic words in this book should be a little unnerving. We're not dealing with just a book that is just history, reliable in that regard, but it's actually God's very word to us.

And so Cyrus liberated the Jews. They were there in captivity in Babylon, 800 miles east of Jerusalem, and they were there for 70 years.

Why? They were there because God's people stopped listening to God's, to God, to his voice.

And we really see in the exile, really, God's severe mercy towards them. Maybe some of you have experienced some of those moments in life, the discipline of the Lord.

[2:45] It's always meant to draw us back, to cause us to walk again in holiness. And it's interesting because God even told Judah, the southern kingdom at the time, that this judgment was coming.

If they would but turn from their rebellion, Jeremiah the prophet said it this way in Jeremiah 25, 11, this whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon 70 years.

And Jeremiah brought that word within 20 years of the exile. So God predicted this. Friends, every time you come to God's word, you should be sort of like swept back a little bit with just how sovereign God is in history.

And so they were delivered from this exile. They have returned. They're returning. And God made a promise to them.

And that's the promise we considered with our introduction. Because it says in Zechariah 1, 3, Sounds very New Testament, doesn't it?

[4:06] James 4, 8, draw near to me. And I'll reciprocate. And so that's really the context of this entire book. We're going to see fulfillment in near-time blessings.

And ultimately, we're going to see this fulfilled, the Lord's return in the actual return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ at the second coming.

The return of the rightful king, King Jesus. And he will return. And all the blessings that we consider in Zechariah, we will see set up in this millennial kingdom that he will rule in for a thousand years, ushering in then the eternal state.

Now, this book, structurally, it's broken into halves. The first eight chapters contain eight visions. The second half, chapters 9 to 14, are all about Jesus, both his first advent and his second advent. For the original audience, they only knew all of this was future to them. For us, some of it has occurred in Christ's first advent. Some of this has yet to occur.

[5:16] And so this morning, we come to the visions, these eight visions. And we'll start, we'll be looking at the first one this morning. And just, I've got them there on your notes so you can see where they show up in order.

And just interesting, if you want to do a little dot to dot, you can. There's a chiastic structure to these visions. Vision one relates to eight.

You can draw kind of a connection down there. Vision two to seven. Vision three down to six. And then four and five. That's sort of the crescendo, if you will, of these visions.

And Hebrew is like that. I think Bible Projects put out a really nice little 10-minute cartoon. It's worth watching. I don't want to say cartoon. It's animated.

It's not a cartoon. But they do a great job sort of linking these visions together. And I think it'll give you a really good sort of overview and understanding of how these fit.

[6:15] Now, that's how it's done in Hebrew. I'm not Hebrew. We're going to take them in a linear fashion as they're recorded here.

One of my least favorite sort of narrative devices is like backstory, backstory. Oh, this is how it ends. Backstory. It just, I just, I'm simple. We're just going to go through it straight through like it is recorded for us.

So today, we are going to consider this first vision. The horsemen among the myrtle trees. You guys ready? Let's do it. All right.

Verse 7. Zechariah writes, On the 24th day of the 11th month, which is in the month of Shabbat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Edo, saying, and I'll just sneak in, I saw it in the night.

We're not going to get to verse 8 yet, but it's there. Okay? Now, recall we learned what Zechariah's name means. Zechariah. Yahweh remembers.

[7:28] Berechiah. Yahweh blesses. And then Edo, timely. And so if you put those together, you have this promise from the Lord. The Lord remembers and blesses in his time.

Man, could there be any more timely fitting promise for this remnant? Come back from exile for 70 years. Where is God?

Where has he been? Has he forgotten us? And then to see these names, the Lord remembers and blesses in his time. And I love that.

And essentially, Zechariah is telling God's people, God's still for you. Some of you need to hear that this morning. God's still for you. You maybe came in feeling, I'm heavy of heart.

I haven't seen him. I can't feel him. Where? Take heart. God remembers. And he blesses in his time. And maybe you're here thinking he's forgotten.

[8:31] Then this book is for you. Zechariah is for you. We also learn in this first verse, verse 7, the timing of these visions.

It says it's in the 24th day of the 11th month in the second year reign of Darius. Now, this is actually three months after the initial section in Zechariah.

So we move forward a little bit. Verses 1 through 6, three months ago. Now, okay, three months later. And it says here it's in the 11th month. This is now five months after the Jews have begun rebuilding the temple.

Okay? We talked about before. They've been there now about 20 years. They've been back in Jerusalem. They've been making their homes look good. They haven't focused on building a home for their God.

But now they're busy. And we know that it's five months after the beginning of this temple being rebuilt. Because it says in Haggai, although Dr. V did instruct me, it is actually Haggai.

[9:42] Okay? Okay? Don't, don't Haggai me today. It's Haggai. All right? He's very kind with me. Just know that.

Okay? But in Haggai 1, 14 and 15, it says, And they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God, on the 24th day of the month, in the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

So they began, they're building, it's in the sixth month, and now we have it here. It says it's in the 11th month. That's how we come to this conclusion. Oh, they've been now at work for five months on this project.

And as they're working, as they're drawing back near to the Lord, right? God gives Zachariah a full night of dreams. You thought Scrooge had it bad with three ghosts that came in one evening? Zachariah gets eight visions. And I wonder, and I actually looked it up because I was curious, you know, was Dickens, was he inspired when he wrote Christmas Carol? Did he read Zachariah?

[10:44] And I was like hoping the answer was going to be like, yes! And then I was going to be like, check this out. But there's no connection. All right. And now that we're kind of in the section and we're going to be looking at this vision, it explains, I think, why a lot of folks don't read the prophetic books.

A lot of folks avoid them. A lot of preachers avoid preaching the Old Testament prophets because of that reason. It's actually hard.

It's actually a bit of work. And we actually learn that from something that God tells Moses. Moses, some would consider, actually the first prophet in Scripture.

And I know some of you are like, that's not true, Jay, because actually Abraham is called a prophet in Genesis 20 verse 7. I know. All right.

And then others of you are like, but Jay, didn't you know that Enoch, like in Jude 1.14, it says he prophesied and he was before Abraham? I know. Okay. I just want you to know Moses was one of the first.

[11:53] He was on the metal stand. Maybe he's like the bronze prophet. Okay. But he's up there. And the Lord has a word for him.

There is a situation that occurs. There's a little bit of a sibling rivalry. If you have siblings, you know what I'm talking about here. Moses, his brother, Aaron, his sister, Miriam, both of them, by the way, are older.

Maybe you didn't know that. We know Aaron's older because in Exodus 7.7, it says that he's 83.

Aaron and Moses is only the young age of 80. And then we know, of course, Miriam was also older because she was there in Exodus 2 observing Moses as he was in a basket on the Nile.

Okay. So Moses is the baby brother. Maybe there's something there. But it's interesting because in Numbers 12, the siblings, they're speaking against Moses.

They're not pleased with his choice of a wife. This cushy woman. What are you doing? She's an out-of-towner. And essentially, they come to him and say, hey, has the Lord only speaking through Moses? Has he only spoken through Moses?

[13:02] And then the Lord has a word. How would you like that? God showing up, sisters, brothers, not getting along. And then God shows up to speak to the, you know, the offended party.

And this is what we learn in Numbers 12, verses 5 through 8. And it says, And the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent and called Aaron and Miriam.

Woo-hoo! You do not want to be them. Hey, I got, like, gold stars to pass out. No! They've been grumbling against Moses. God chose.

They came forward. Verse 8, or verse 6. And he said, hear my words. If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make myself known to him in a vision. I speak with him in a dream.

Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth clearly and not in riddles. So God spoke to Moses clearly like a friend.

[14:09] One of the first prophets we have in all of Scripture. And yet, what we learn here from God is that all the other Old Testament prophets that follow, they don't get, like, word for word right there.

What do they get? They get visions. They get dreams. And they get riddles. Okay? All to say we have our work cut out for us this morning as we come to a prophet not like Moses.

Zechariah got visions. And so let's examine this first one together. Verse 8. 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. First thing I want us to just recognize here, some would say, oh, eight dreams.

These are not actually dreams. They come in the night. But I would say they're visions because Zechariah is able to engage with them. Okay? And so this is a scene.

[15:22] And I actually think we have artistic rendering for us. This is not completely biblically accurate. But maybe get your imaginations going a little bit.

What do we observe in this vision? Well, we're told here there is a man riding on a red horse. Check. Okay? Behind him there are red sorrel and white horses.

This is probably not biblically accurate because we learn later in this text, verse 11, that there are actually riders that are on those other horses.

Now, these colors, red, this is not like Clifford the Big Red Dog read.

This is reddish brown. Some of you horse people, you know this is the bay horse. Right, hon? Bay horse. I think my wife's excited.

[16:25] I'm preaching a sermon with horses. So there's also sorrel, which is brown or speckled. Maybe this is an Appaloosa horse. And then we've got white horses.

And so you're like, Jay, what do the colors mean? And I'm going to tell you guys, I don't know. I have no clue what the colors mean.

I mean, is red for war? Is it for authority? Possibly. Appaloosa, speckled, like, you know, mercy judgment. I mean, maybe.

But I would be conjecturing. Because Scripture doesn't actually tell us. We don't actually know. But what we can extract from this image, as we consider it, is that the man on the red horse, he appears to be the leader.

Now, the leader, and it says the other riders, they are standing among the myrtle trees in the glen.

[17:30] Myrtle trees. From the Hebrew, Hadassah. Esther's Hebrew name, Hadassah, means myrtle. The myrtle tree was an evergreen.

It was actually more like a shrub, not growing taller than eight feet. Its branches were used to build booths during the Feast of Tabernacles. We read that in Nehemiah 8.15. It's really a humble tree, though.

It is not like a stately cedar. It's not like a large oak. And it appears here to represent the nation. Bible scholars agree. It represents the nation of Israel. It is small. It is insignificant compared to the kingdoms presently of Persia and then of Rome.

And it's very descriptive of God's ancient chosen people. In fact, we learn in Deuteronomy 7.7, it was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, speaking of Israel, for you were the fewest of all people, just like the myrtle tree.

[18:42] And yet, the promise made to Israel was that they would be, what? A blessing to the nations.

And we learn that from the Abrahamic Covenant. If you're a Bible student, Genesis 12. Make you a great nation and you will be a blessing to the nations in that the Messiah will come through you. You'll be a blessing. And I love that the myrtle tree, though very small, it actually possessed flowers and berries that when crushed left off a fragrant aroma.

And is there anything sweeter in life than the immeasurable grace of God that actually came through the Jews? Now, the location we learn of this vision, these riders, they are where?

They are in the glen. You guys been in a glen lately? Maybe. Possibly referring to the Kidron Valley, just east of Jerusalem.

[19:48] But a glen, it's down, it's protected, it's off the beaten path. It's this image of protection, of safety. And what are they doing there? What is this group of riders, this rider on the red horse and the others, what are they doing down here?

Well, that's a great question. And in fact, that's what Zechariah asks. Let's see what they're doing. Let's go to verse 9. Then I said, Zechariah, what are these?

He's asking the same question we're asking this morning. Great. What am I looking at? What does this mean? What are these, my Lord? The angel who talked with me said to me, I will show you what they are.

So the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered, These are they whom the Lord has sent to patrol the earth. And they answered the angel of the Lord who was standing among them, probably astride on his horse, standing among the myrtle trees, and said, We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth remains at rest.

Zechariah is now asking, Great. Cool. Cool. I mean, I think it was probably like if God, you know, gave a little, you know, trailer for a movie coming out.

[21:20] I know you guys are thinking, Man, Dune 3, right? Some of you guys watched that this weekend because you're into that. You're like, Man, that's nothing. That's nothing. I mean, this is a trailer, all right?

And Zechariah, I think his curiosity is piqued. Like, what am I observing? And so we have this interpreting angel that responds.

It's not the rider on the red horse responding. And this angel says, I will show you what they are. And now it's the main rider speaking.

And he says, These are they whom the Lord has sent to patrol the earth. Oh, this is so great. I've been waiting for like a military, like, example for our military church.

We got all these pilots and seer specialists and all. So this is for you, okay? This is God's recon team, right? They went to patrol the earth.

[22:17] These are operators on special assignment. Now, we know in the U.S. military there are elite spec op teams, tier one teams.

Third most lethal is Air Force, the 2-4. Number two on the list is Navy SEAL Team 6. You guys can debate this afterwards. And then atop of them is Delta, okay?

That's as elite as you get. Friends, this is a recon team that stands above them all. That's like Playland at McDonald's. Like, this team, yeah, I get it.

They don't make halo jumps. They're not equipped with NVGs. But, yeah, they ride horses. That's all they need. They don't need special equipment.

They are enough in their own right. It's interesting that there's a recon team that God utilizes. And I just want to say very candidly, God doesn't need them.

[23:21] He doesn't need them to patrol the earth. He's omniscient. Matthew 10, 30.

He knows the hairs on our heads. He doesn't need this. I believe that he utilizes this sort of program, this sort of team as a way to accommodate to us.

He does this for us. And I think he gives it to us so that we would adorn the walls of our imaginations with images like we're given this morning.

God's aware. God's present. God's present. He's roaming the earth. This is what is true of our God. He's with us. He knows. He cares. More than we could even imagine, friends. And I don't honestly know what you came in here with in your heart where you're struggling.

[24:32] But I think this is an image. This is a beautiful piece of artwork you can hang in that memory palace of God's care. That he has this elite special operations team.

And he's so very aware of everything happening at every moment. Now notice, friend, who the main writer is. He is the leader of this recon team.

And it says, we're told actually who he is because verse 11 says this. And they answered, the angel of the Lord. It's the angel of the Lord.

Well, who's the angel of the Lord? It's kind of this enigmatic figure that shows up throughout the Old Testament. It's interesting. The Bible is not explicit with his identity.

But we have very strong clues as we study God's word. And from the sound of things, he is very different from those within the angelic realm. How do we know?

[25:40] Because he has authority they don't have. And we see him pop up throughout the Old Testament. Let me give you an example.

We see him in an exchange with Hagar. Hagar is Sarah's servant. Sarah is Abraham's wife. Sarah gave Hagar to her husband to bear a son.

It's a very convoluted, heartbreaking story actually. But the Lord is kind to Hagar. And in Genesis 16, it says this, beginning in verse 7.

The angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness. The spring on the way to Shur. And he said, Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going? And she said, I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai. Verse 9. And the angel of the Lord said to her, return to your mistress and submit to her. The angel of the Lord also said to her, I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude.

[26:46] There's some promises made to Hagar here. And then we learn of Hagar's response in verse 13, Genesis 16, 13. So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her.

You are a God of seeing. For she said, truly, here I have seen him who looks after me. There's something very different about the angel of the Lord.

Because this individual says, I will multiply your offspring. I have ability to create. And then Hagar responds, you are a God of seeing.

She's not talking to an angel here. You want another one? Oh, this one's good. And this one I had to share because it aligns with Zachariah's vision of the riders. Joshua 5.

Another appearance. Verse 13. When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked. And behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, are you for us or for our adversaries?

[27:48] Oh, be for us. Be for us. Right? Verse 14. And he said, no, but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, hey, do angels receive worship?

No, they don't. They don't. He worshiped him. What does my Lord say to his servant? And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, take off your sandals from your feet for the place where you're standing is holy.

And Joshua did so. Very similar to that exchange in Exodus 3, 5 with Abraham. Folks, this is like, this is the angel of the Lord.

It's called the commander of the armies of the Lord. It's the same individual. And then, by the way, this same angel of the Lord, when we get to vision 4 in our study of Zechariah, he actually has capacity to forgive sin because it says in Zechariah 3, 4, And the angel said to those who were standing before him, remove the filthy garments from him.

And to him he said, behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments. Do angels forgive sin, church? Say no.

[29:07] No. Okay? Angels don't take iniquity away from us. Who does? Jesus. Jesus takes iniquity from us.

Friends, these are Old Testament appearances of Jesus. Theologians call this Christophanies. We also have Theophanies, maybe the burning bush, right? God, but these are Christophanies. Guys, do you realize that Stan Lee, like, ripped off the Old Testament and all his little cameos in his Marvel films?

Like, the creator of all these characters shows up? Because I think he just, he loves them so much. Well, I think that's why Jesus showed up. He just, he loves this planet. And it's like, okay, he's, you know, he's ready.

I gotta show up. I gotta show up. I just, I love that. By the way, after the incarnation, there are no more angel of the Lord appearances.

[30:10] I just love that God couldn't wait for the incarnation to make his appearance as the second person of the Godhead. He loves this sin-marred, broken planet more than any of us.

And I believe this is just, I tend to believe this is a subtle way he whispers to us, right? I'm involved. I am so involved.

I'm so present. Way more than you understand. Now, so Jesus is in this picture. I love that. He's a rider on the red horse.

What did this team determine? They were out looking. They're there. Kind of protecting God's people. The myrtle tree. Israel.

Well, what do they determine? This is what they determined from their recon mission. Verse 11. We have patrolled the earth. And behold, all the earth remains at rest.

[31:10] Is this a good thing? I mean, it sounds good. We want world peace. Like, the world's at rest. I mean, it sounds good at first blush.

But let's consider the rest of the exchange. Pick it up at verse 12. The angel of the Lord said, O Lord of hosts, how long will you have no mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, against which you have been angry these 70 years?

And the Lord answered, gracious and comforting words to the angel who talked with me. So the angel who talked with me said to me, cry out, thus says the Lord of hosts, I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion.

And I am exceedingly angry with the nations that are at ease. For while I was angry, but a little, they furthered the disaster. What do we learn about the rest of the nations surrounding God's chosen people?

Well, it says here in verse 15, God's angry because they're at ease. This rest, this is not good rest.

[32:18] This is ease in their evil. This is the days of Noah. Friends, these are our days. And we learn that God used the nations to discipline his ancient people in order to call them to repentance.

The problem is God used them. They got a big head and they went too far. Verse 15 says, for while I was angry, but a little, they furthered the disaster. And we see that.

If you read the Old Testament, Babylon, they were used. Take Israel into exile. But then Isaiah 47, 6 says, I was angry with my people. I profaned my heritage.

I gave them into your hands. You showed them no mercy. On the aged, you made your yoke exceedingly heavy. You went too far, Babylon.

God exiled Judah for 70 years. But Babylon got proud. So what did God do? He raised up Persia to destroy them. Persia is now proud, along with the nations surrounding this fledgling remnant.

[33:32] Just returned, rebuilding the city, now the temple. And God is saying, hey, I see you. I see you. And what's happening with the nations, I'm not pleased.

You know, what's remarkable as we read this, friends, we're getting a front row seat to, to like the Godhead dialoguing. I don't know if you noticed that. Maybe some of you already did.

The angel of the Lord, Jesus said to the Lord of hosts, to the Father. They're interacting. How long? How long will you have no mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, against which you have been angry these 70 years?

And it says, and the Lord, the Father, answered gracious and comforting words. Well, what are the comforting words?

Look at verse 16 and 17. Here they are. Therefore, thus says the Lord, I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy. My house shall be built in it, declares the Lord of hosts.

[34:38] And the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem. Cry out again, thus says the Lord of hosts. My cities shall again overflow with prosperity.

And the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem. Jerusalem. This is so good. My temple will be rebuilt.

I have not forsaken you. My presence will return. Jerusalem will be rebuilt. The measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem.

Wealth will return to the nation. My city shall again overflow with prosperity. These are good words. We have a future. It's not over.

We've not been abandoned, even though we thought we were. Here's the thing I want us to note, though. Only a partial fulfillment of this occurred four years after this vision.

[35:44] Four years after this vision, we learn from Ezra 5, 15, and the house was finished, the temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

As we're reading this, it's the second year of the reign of Darius. Now it's the sixth year. Four years ahead. Temple's complete. But it's only a partial fulfillment. Because, friends, ultimately this is looking forward to the second advent.

To the return of Christ. And to the blessing, this overpouring of wealth and comfort, riches, and peace. That's going to happen in the millennial kingdom.

Because here's the thing. God's glory, call it the Shekinah glory in the temple. We have nowhere in Scripture that tells us it returned in Zechariah's day.

It's not mentioned. They built the temple. There's no record of God's glory returning to the Holy of Holies. We actually read in Ezekiel, and there's a section in there.

[36:56] You can look at it in your own leisure. But Ezekiel chapter 8 through 11, when Babylon conquers Jerusalem, sends them into exile, what happens?

God's Spirit leaves the temple. In Ezekiel, I'll just reference here, but Ezekiel 9, verse 3, it says, God's glory leaves in stages from the temple to the threshold.

And then, in Ezekiel 10, verse 18, it says, Then from the threshold to the east gate. And then, finally, in Ezekiel 11, verse 23, I'll read it. And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain that is on the east side of the city.

So God's presence, it left the temple. Now, we know God's presence is in us today, those in Christ, yes? But for God's ancient people, it was there in the temple.

And it left. And now, God's people, they're rebuilding it. Like, God, return, return, return. Friends, He's going to return. But the promise is yet future.

[38:03] In fact, the King will return. And as we have already, like, read from Zechariah 14, 4, two weeks ago, it says the King is going to stand on the Mount of Olives.

Friends, He's going to come back, and He's going to walk through that eastern gate, back into the temple. And God's glory is going to return in full measure. And I think it's so rich that in, I think, 1540 A.D., that eastern gate was sealed.

It's like behind 16 feet of cement. It's been that way for 500 years. Suleiman the Magnificent, this Ottoman ruler, thinking, I'm going to prevent the Jewish Messiah from entering.

16 feet of cement isn't going to stop the king. And we actually get a picture of what's yet future in Ezekiel 43, 2. And it says, And behold, the glory of the Lord of Israel was coming from the east.

And the sound of His coming was like the sound of many waters. And the earth shone with His glory. Friends, that's future history. He already came.

[39:13] First advent. The second advent is assured. And it says in Ezekiel 43, 4, Friends, our king's going to return.

He's going to return. Friends, I think there should be great comfort in this passage. Man, good days are ahead. Jesus wins.

We're on His side. We belong to Him if we've trusted in Christ for our salvation, for the remission of our sin. Lord, be my Savior, forgive me. Let me turn from that and turn towards You.

Simple faith. But I think there's comfort not only for the future, but I think there's comfort additionally for today.

Because if you're here and you're feeling oppressed, you're feeling discouraged, you're feeling forgotten by your king, you have this wonderful picture of the king amongst the myrtle trees with his riders.

[40:21] He is so close. Friends, don't walk in fear. And I think this is very akin, this image that Zechariah gets, to the little, like, peek into reality, into the supernatural that we see from 2 Kings 6, where the armies of Syria were advancing on Israel, and the king of Syria wanted to silence God's prophet Elisha, who was staying at Dotham, 12 miles north of Samaria.

And Elisha, his servants, freaking out. These armies, they've surrounded us. We're done. We're dead. Man, it's over. And then in 2 Kings 6, 17, Then Elisha prayed and said, Oh, Lord, please open the eyes that he may see.

And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire. Like, the Lord is so close to you, friends.

He is so present. He knows. He has not abandoned. He's not forsaken you. And you're like, Jay, that's the Old Testament. It's not the same day. Yes, it is. Because Jesus promised the Great Commission.

Hey, Matthew 28, I'm with you always to the end of the age. I'm with you. I'm the rider on the red horse. I am with you. And maybe you've just forgotten that today, friends.

[41:45] Maybe you knew that once when you trusted in Christ as a kid, and it was so simple, and all of the difficulties of life hadn't hit yet. Go back to that place and believe. Because it's true.

I'll just end with the picture, since we're just doing all sorts of pictures this morning, but I love it. And you know I love it, because I have to quote from him, or it's not a sermon.

And this is what Lewis writes from Prince Caspian. It says, At the moment, Lucy felt that there was someone standing beside her.

And she turned her head, and she saw in the moonlight there was a huge lion. And he was so happy. She was so happy. She did not want to speak.

She knew it was Aslan. She felt a foreign breath on her hand, and a soft tongue touching her fingers. Is that so good? Amen?

[42:51] Lord, thank you for this picture. Thank you that you brought this to Zachariah. Lord, thank you that you have made the same promise to us, that you are present with us.

You are the baddest dude in the neighborhood, Jesus. Scott likes to say, you're not in the box, you're out of the box. Everything else is in the box.

You created it all. And so let us take comfort in that. This morning, this day, let us walk with the knowledge that your breath, it's like on our heads.

Just that close. You are that close to us. Let's walk in joy today. Lord, if there's folks here today walking in fear, would you deliver them from that?

Would you just destroy that? And might we each walk in faith, knowing that you're present, that you're good, you're sovereign. You're going to return, but you're here today to help us. And whatever ways we need that, would you provide?

[43:52] And might we rest in the comfort in the fact that our King is already present. We love you, Jesus. We love you, King Jesus. Amen.