
OUTLINE

6

THE EIGHTH VISION

Perfection of the church, 6:1-8

6.1 The start of perfection: 6:1-5

The prophet lifted up his eyes again. We suppose it is still in the same night. He sees two high mountains of bronze. Between these two mountains is the exit of heaven, the palace of the living God. At the same moment that Zechariah is lifting his eyes, four chariots come out from between the two mountains.

It means that they are coming from the throne of the LORD God.

Two horses are in front of each chariot. The first chariot has red horses, the second black horses, the third has white horses and the fourth has dappled gray horses. They are going forth to the four winds of heaven after presenting themselves before the LORD of all the earth. Thus they have received their orders directly from God Himself.

It is not just a coincidence that those mountains were mountains of bronze.

One sometimes speaks about a heaven of bronze which points to the fact that heaven seems closed and even locked (cf. Deut. 28:23).

Here it is even more significant. It does not only concern the *curse* of God's covenant but also the *blessing* of God's covenant. Both His judgment *and* His grace are involved here. It appears that these horses and these chariots have the task to carry the Spirit of the LORD to the four corners of the earth. That can be derived from verse 8. But first we have to consider the starting point of the Holy Spirit. These horses and chariots which Zechariah saw coming down from heaven and from between the mountains have presented themselves before the LORD of all the earth. That reminds us of Chapter 4, the fifth night vision, which also showed something of the Holy Spirit. In that vision it was said that the two olive trees were the two anointed who stand by the LORD of all the earth. We saw that the two olive trees were the two office-bearers of God's church who were nourished by God Himself. They stood by the LORD of the whole earth. That means that they fulfill their office in the

presence of God Himself. The LORD has His church and His office-bearers very close to Himself.

We have to consider this when the work of the Holy Spirit is involved.

The LORD God knows exactly what is going on in the world. He is looking at everything that happens in the west and the east. He keeps up with everything and there is nothing that escapes His eye and His view.

Yet, of primary importance is the work that is done by the Holy Spirit. The first care of the LORD in His dominion of the world is His own people, His church, bought by the blood of Jesus Christ. The LORD God concentrates everything on earth on the church.

Thus the four chariots and the four horses are the instruments of God with a view to the mission of the Holy Spirit. They stand before the Lord of the whole earth and presently they go forth throughout the world. The Holy Spirit is going to work in the whole world. It also means that the Holy Spirit is going to work out the glory of the church. See also verse 15 in this respect, "And those who are far off shall come and help to build the temple of the LORD?" They will come from all sides!

6.2 The continuation of perfection: 6:6,7

The Holy Spirit is not only great in grace but also terrible in His judgment.

The journey of Zechariah 6 is going to start. Now the emphasis is put on the journey of the black horses which are going to the north, to the place of sin. The judgment dominates there. The white horses follow the black ones.

Also the south is involved for the dappled ones are going in the direction of the other anti-Christian country, namely, Egypt. They were impatient to start.

Then the LORD says, "Go, patrol the earth?"

So they patrolled the whole earth indeed. Then a gulf of misery covers the earth. The one woe is past and the second woe is soon to come. The red horses bring the judgments of the wars, the shedding of blood and the violence of nuclear wars. The white horses bring the victory carriage of the emperor of the world as a symbol of his dictatorship and absolutism. It is the great worldly, anti-Christian power which wants to conquer and annex one country after the other. The black horses are the symbol of hunger, death and destruction which lie in wait everywhere and which defeat thousands and thousands of men.

Finally, there are the dappled gray horses with all kinds of dangerous illnesses, pestilences and deadly diseases.

And so the judgments appear all over the earth. The Holy Spirit goes forth through the world in a great wrath.

If we compare these verses with the last book of the Bible, we discover a remarkable agreement. Four kinds of horses are also mentioned in Rev. 6.

In the first place, John saw a white horse. Its rider had a bow and a crown had been given to him. He went out conquering and to conquer. He was going out in order to conquer the world and to establish the dominion over the whole world. Then a second seal was opened. John saw another horse. It was bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth so that men would kill one another. He was also given a great sword. This meant war, violence and blood.

After that, John saw a black horse. Its rider had a balance in his hand. At the same time John heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures. This pointed to scarcity, distribution and also depression.

Finally, the pale horse follows with the name Death. Hades follows him. They were given the power over one fourth of the earth in order to kill with the sword, famine, pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth. That means deadly diseases all over the world.

There is a remarkable agreement between Zechariah 6 and Revelation 6, just as we saw a resemblance between Zechariah 1 and Revelation 6.

It is important to note, however, that chapter 5 of the Revelation to John precedes chapter 6. First we read about the Lamb who conquered. The Lamb who is living and who rules the whole history. Grace precedes judgment.

Yet both of them are worked by the same Spirit of God. It proceeds towards the situation of Revelation 22 where both faith and unbelief are growing in this world (cf. vs. 11). Indeed, the horrors are coming all over the world. That is the way in which the LORD will come. At the same time the LORD will also build His church. It means that precisely in times of judgment the church must understand her call for mission.

The dispensation of the Holy Spirit is wonderful and horrible at the same time. Through the climax of the antithesis we are going to the end of history.

The world of today does not take that into account. People are very busy trying to bring heaven to earth. They have only one slogan: "Never a world war again!"

The world of today commits injustice while trying to revenge injustice at the same time. From every side it works on the safety of life, i.e., from the beginning to the very end. Yet, we read in the last book of the Bible that they do not repent. They take life also from the beginning (abortion) and also at the end (euthanasia). They are murdering even more and more than before. Therefore, God has sent His chariots. He has let go of His horses. He says, "Go, patrol the earth!" He comes in order to judge the world.

6.3 The completion of perfection: 6:8

The Spirit is set at rest in the north. That is in the country where Wickedness has received her temple and her worshippers. It is the place where all the sins of the earth seem to have gathered together. There the Holy Spirit has come to His last goal, to His finish.

God's longsuffering and patience come to an end. The Holy Spirit goes to the north country, to Babylon, in order to proclaim His last act or final judgment. When the Holy Spirit has completed that, when He has executed the complete wrath of God's covenant, He also can say, "It is finished," just like Christ Jesus did in His work of redemption in the midst of history.

Christ said that on Golgotha and with these words He announced the new dispensation of the Holy Spirit at the same time.

The Holy Spirit will also say these same words at the end of history in Babylon, the great city with its mighty temple.

Then many people will cry, saying, "Alas, alas for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! In one hour she has been laid waste!" (cf. Rev. 18:10, 16). But at the same time there will be the summons, "Rejoice over her, O heaven, O saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!" (v. 20).

This is the end of the night visions of Zechariah, God's prophet.

The night passes. The red morning sky appears. Zechariah sees the red blaze of the heavens as a sign of the coming day. Shortly he will go to the temple to tell these night visions to the people who are gathered together.

Compare the last vision with the first one. In the first vision, horses were mentioned also who had to patrol the whole earth. In their report they had to conclude, "We have patrolled the earth and behold, all the earth remains at rest." Nothing happened that shocked the earth or that moved the world. There was no change in the world government, in its dictatorship. From the side of the angel of the LORD, moreover, the intercession was heard, "LORD, how long . . . ?"

Then God answered: Be quiet. I am about to shake the heavens and the earth. I will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem.

That is exactly what the LORD did according to these eight night visions. He gathered His church, He protected her, He granted her growth, justification, preservation, purification, sanctification and also perfection. In this last vision the finish will be reached. The Spirit of the LORD who moved heaven and earth came to rest in the north country. This is the final rest. The rest of Zechariah 1 was the rest before the storm. The rest of Zechariah 6 is the rest after the storm, namely, after the storm of God's judgment. When God's enemies are destroyed, the perfection is coming for the church of God. Thus, destruction of God's enemies means the complete deliverance for the people of God at the same time.

See again the last book of the Bible. A horse is mentioned again in Revelation 19. A white horse. He who sits upon it is called Faithful and True, and He judges and makes war in righteousness. His eyes are like a flame of fire and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name inscribed which no one knows but Himself. He is clad in a robe dipped in blood and the name by which He is called is the Word of God. Both on His robe and on His thigh He has a name inscribed, King of kings and Lord of lords (vv. 11-13).

By His Spirit He brings His church to victory. This is the Spirit that leads the church — throughout all sorrows and troubles — to the wedding of the Lamb, the Bridegroom of the church!

6.4 Some questions

1. *From which data in the Holy Scriptures can it be derived that the work of the Holy Spirit is the primary work in this world?*
2. *Is it right to limit the work of the Holy Spirit only to the work in the hearts of God's people?*
3. *Some commentaries speak only of an "outward agreement" between the horses of Zechariah 6 and Revelation 6.*
 - a. *Is that right?*
 - b. *Would that also have to do with the doctrine of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures?*
4. *Do the judgments of the LORD bypass the church so that only the world is involved in them?*
5. *How are both antimilitarism and disarmament to be considered in connection with the last night vision of Zechariah and also with the fulfilment of this prophecy in the last book of the Bible?*
6. *Is it right to say that in Reformed sermons too much attention is being paid to the church?*

6.5 Literature

See Outline 1 and 5.