

Zechariah 6,7

3-13-03

“Chariots & Crowns; Fasting & Feasting!”

1. **Intro:**

- 1.1. **Read before prayer:** Nicholas Van Hoffman - "The Mush God has been known to appear to millionaires on golf courses. He appears to politicians at ribbon-cutting ceremonies and to clergymen speaking the invocation on national TV at either Democratic or Republican conventions. The Mush God's presence is felt during Brotherhood Week and when Rotarians come together. He is the lifeless deity President Carter was referring to when suggesting peace might come to the Middle East because the Egyptian president and Israeli prime minister both worshipped the Great Mushy One.

"The Mush God has no theology to speak of, being a Cream of Wheat divinity. The Mush God has no particular credo, no tenets of faith, nothing that would make it difficult for believer and non-believer alike to lower one's head when the temporary chairman tells us the Reverend, Rabbi, Father, Mufti, or So-and-So will lead us in an innocuous, harmless prayer, for this god of public occasions is not a jealous god. You can even invoke him to start a hooker convention and he/she or it won't be offended.

"God of the Rotary, God of the Optimists' Club, Protector of the Buddy System, the Mush God is the Lord of secular ritual, of the necessary but hypocritical forms and formalities that hush the divisive and the derisive. The Mush God is a serviceable god whose laws are not chiseled on tablets but written on sand, open to amendment, qualification, and era-sure. This is a god that will compromise with you, make allowances and declare all wars holy, all peaces hallowed."

- 1.2. This will be the last of his **8 visions**(ch.6) - Then ch.7 goes into **4 revelations**, or 4 prophetic messages.

2. **CHARIOTS & CROWNS! (Ch.6)**

- 2.1. **SPIRIT IS AT REST!** {4 Chariots} **Vision #8** (1-8)
- 2.2. **What he saw!** (1-3)
- 2.3. This reminds us of vision #1(1:1-11) w/the horses.
- 2.3.1. There “the nations” were at rest(w/the worlds *pseudo-peace*).
- 2.3.2. Here God’s Spirit is at rest.
- 2.3.3. **Q:** Where else do we find horses used symbolically in scripture?
- 2.4. Many interpreters place the scene of this vision in the **Kidron Valley**.
- 2.4.1. The **2 mountains** being Zion & Olivet.
- 2.4.2. **Bronze** is frequently figurative for judgment.
- 2.4.2.1. **The altar** for sacrifice in the Tabernacle & Temple was made of bronze. And that’s where sin was judged when sacrifices were burned.

2.4.2.2. **The serpent** that Moses put up on the pole was made of bronze.

2.4.2.3. When **our Lord** appeared to John in Rev.1:15 His feet were compared to bronze.

2.4.2.4. Thus, judgment will fall on the Gentile nations during the Tribulation.

2.5. What it was! (4-8)

2.6. The horses fan out into different directions.

2.6.1. **Black**(north); **White**(either north, or west/NIV); **dappled**(south).

2.6.2. East would be into the Mediterranean. The **Red** horse?

2.6.3. **Show Painted clay figurines** of horsemen. Found in Phoenician tombs at Achzib, Israel, and dating to the 5th-6th century B.C.

2.6.4. So here they are **accomplishing God's purposes** rather than **reporting on conditions** in the Gentile world.

2.7. These are "4 spirits"(5) or 4 angels.

2.7.1. Chariots suggests battle, & implies judgment.

2.7.2. "The **chariots** of God are twenty thousand, Even thousands of thousands." Ps.68:17

2.7.3. Is.66:15 "For behold, the LORD will come with fire And with His **chariots**, like a whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire."

2.8. What he meant!

2.8.1. **In the north country** – possibly...since the Jews were mostly invaded from the north, God was keeping those nations at rest so the remnant could finish the temple.

2.8.1.1. Also the implication was that if the **North** could be conquered, so too could all the other foreign nations.

2.8.2. This again reminds us that the passage of **human history** is not a **random process**, but moves somehow towards the fulfillment of **God's purpose in the world**. [Just like watching Fox News or CNN today!]

2.9. **THE PRIEST/KING IS CROWNED!** (9-15)

2.10. **What he received!** (9,10)

2.11. (10) 3 Jews from Babylon –

2.11.1. All 3 bearing gifts – like the **wise men** who brought gifts from afar.

- 2.12. **What he was to do!** (11-13)
- 2.13. (11) **Elaborate crown** – KJV says “crowns”.
- 2.13.1. “A composite crowns of circlets.”
- 2.13.2. It reminds us of the hymn “**Crown Him with Many Crowns.**”
- 2.13.3. **A crowned priest?** – Unheard of!
- 2.13.3.1. No Jewish **Priest** had ever reigned as king, no **King** was permitted to serve as a priest.
- 2.13.3.2. **Q:** What king tried? (**Uzziah** 2 chron.26:16-21)
- 2.14. (12,13) “**Behold the man**” – Reminds us of **Pilates** comment to Jesus in Jn.19:5.
- 2.15. **Branch** – An important Messianic title, signifying our Lord’s coming from the stock of David.
- 2.16. **A priest on his throne** –
- 2.16.1. In the kingdom, there will be perfect **peace & justice** because all **civil & religious authority** will be harmonized in one person, Messiah, the King & Priest.
- 2.17. **What it meant!** (14,15)
- 2.18. (14) Joshua’s **crown** is replaced with his priestly **miter**.
- 2.19. **Hen**(nickname for Josiah) = “gracious one”.
- 2.20. All of this was a **symbolic scene of coronation**, of the coming Messiah, the King-priest.
- 2.20.1. In **3:8** it said that Joshua was “*symbolic of things to come*”(NIV).
- 2.20.2. **1st** it was impossible & illegal to do this.
- 2.20.3. **2nd** we know it was symbolic because of where the crown went after the ceremony(**in the Temple for a memorial**).
- 2.20.4. So this goes way beyond the “current crownee” to the greater Joshua.

3. FATING & FEASTING! (Ch.7)

- 3.1. **TRADITION, TRADITION!** (1-7)
- 3.2. **Q:** As times change, should traditions? (When should they, when shouldn’t they, who gets to change them?)
- 3.2.1. These questions **challenge** churches today even **divide** them!
- 3.2.2. Zechariah uses this opportunity to **teach** the people about **true spiritual worship**, & then he turned their eyes away from the past to the promises of the **future**.

- 3.3. (1) 2 year had passed since the last vision. Two years before the Temple was completed.
- 3.4. (2,3) A delegation from Bethel was sent with a question.
- 3.4.1. **The question:** Was it proper to continue a fast marking the destruction of the temple as our fathers have for the last 70 years...with this new one being built?
- 3.4.2. He doesn't answer them **directly**(yet/he will in ch.8:19), instead helps them to think through the answer by asking them **3 questions**.
- 3.4.2.1. It was necessary **1st** to deal with the **heart attitudes** of the people.
- 3.4.2.2. Our relationship w/the Lord isn't so much a matter of traditions & rules as it is **faith, love, & a desire to please Him**.
- 3.4.2.3. **Immature people** require religious regulations to tell them what to do, & these help them to measure their "spiritual life".
- 3.5. (5) **Question #1 - Did you really fast for me?** – Are you genuinely sorry that the temple, the symbol of God's presence, was destroyed, or are you sad, "things just simply aren't what they used to be?"
- 3.5.1. They had 4 traditional days of fasting: 4th month(Babylonian siege); 5th month(Temple Burned); 7th month(Gedaliah's murder); 10th month(Jerusalem siege begun).
- 3.5.2. **Show** Papyrus Fragments:
- 3.5.3. Zechariah 7:4-5 - The **papyrus fragments of Dead Sea Scroll 7Q5** (i.e. **Cave 7 at Qumran**), dating to the **1st century A.D.** and containing what some scholars believe to be Mark 6:52-53, although it is **more likely to be Zech. 7:4-5**.
- 3.6. (6) **Question #2 – Do you not eat & drink to yourself?** – This question points to the **opposite** of fasting...Feasting!
- 3.7. (7) **Question #3 – Should you not have obeyed?** –
- 3.8. Each of God's answer probes beyond the question of **ceremonial protocol** to the deeper issue of **devotion to Him**.
- 3.8.1. They did what we often do...they settled for something **self-imposed** rather than something **scripturally imposed!**
- 3.8.2. The only **fast** (& it was just implied) was on the day of Atonement (Lev.16:29).
- 3.8.2.1. **Q:** But if one was good, isn't 4 better?

- 3.8.3. His point was “what was the point in lamenting a ruined temple, unless one also remembered **why** it was ruined!!!”
- 3.8.3.1. And to piggy-back on that, “what was the point in **restoring** a temple unless one remembered **what it was** that led to its destruction in the 1st place!!!”
- 3.8.3.2. **Q:** What is the point of **remembering an event** today that you don’t **remember what it was for**?
- 3.8.3.2.1. **Q:** Isn’t **Labor Day** a day to catch upon labor around the house?
- 3.8.3.2.2. **Q:** Isn’t **Boxing Day** a day to commemorate Boxing?
- 3.8.3.3. **Q:** Can our younger generation define each of our holidays? Or are they just “days off school”.
- 3.8.4. One argued that “if a guy dates a girl for 2 hours(& *if God is more important to him*), then he ought to spend more than 2 hours w/God or consider himself backslidden.”¹
- 3.8.4.1. The problem with many such *ever-so-spiritual-sounding statements* is that they are of **human manufacturing** rather than **heaven’s manufacturing**.
- 3.8.5. Hymns only in church, psalms only in the church, no musical instruments in the church, ok 1 instrument but it has to be an organ.
- 3.8.6. Let’s hold to the old **Youth for Christ** slogan, “**Geared to the times, but anchored to the Rock**”.
- 3.9. **Lastly regarding tradition:** Jerislav Pelikan aptly contrasted tradition & traditionalism: “*Tradition is the living faith of the dead, Traditionalism is the dead faith of the living!*”
- 3.9.1. My favorites of all favorites is when the scribes and Pharisees asked, “**Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?** For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.” He answered and said to them, “**Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?**”
- 3.10. Lord, help us not to have a **religion of habit** but a **religion of the heart!** Lord, turn some of our **religious fasts** into **righteous feasts!**

¹ Leonard Ravenhill; Revival Praying; pg.71 (quoted in Jim Townsends book Minor Prophets)

- 3.11. **OBEDIENCE NOT SACRIFICE!** (8-14)
- 3.12. As far back as Samuel God told the people he wanted their **obedience** & not their **sacrifices!**
- 3.12.1. David said it, “For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering.” (Ps.51:16)
- 3.12.2. Isaiah says it clearest, “Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.” Is.1:14-17
- 3.12.3. *It is always easier to maintain tradition than to really meet w/God & have a heart experience of worship!*
- 3.12.3.1. Unfortunately I know this as well as the prodigal’s older brother! “Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time;” [Lk.15:29] {Like the obedient **dog in the circus**, jumping through all he hoops...but never knowing why!}
- 3.12.4. If we **fast** we must do it to glorify God, If we **feast** we must do honor Him!
- 3.12.5. God does answer this in 8:19. One day **all 4 fasts** will be turned into **feasts!** (in the Kingdom Age)
- 3.13. Here’s a positive example of true religion!
- 3.13.1. F.B.Meyer said, “I have found that the Old Hebrew prophets would say for me all that I wanted to say on **social economics.**”
- 3.14. (11) Plato said, “We can easily forgive a child who is **afraid of the dark:** the real tragedy of life is when men are **afraid of the light.**”
- 3.15. (13) **I would not listen** – The people had diligently refused to hear the word of God through his servants, so they had found God equally deaf!
- 3.16. **END:** The Winter 1991 issue of the University of Pacific Review offers a chilling description of the 1986 **Chernobyl nuclear disaster:**

There were **two electrical engineers** in the control room that night, and the best thing that could be said for what they were doing is they were "playing around" with the machine. They were performing what the Soviets later described as an unauthorized experiment. They were trying to see how long a turbine would "free wheel" when they took the power off it. Now, taking the power off that kind of a nuclear reactor is a difficult, dangerous thing to do, because these reactors are very unstable in their lower ranges. In order to get the reactor down to that kind of power, where they could perform the test they were interested in performing, they had to **override manually six separate computer-driven alarm systems**. One by one the computers would come up and say, "**Stop! Dangerous! Go no further!**" And one by one, rather than shutting off the experiment, they **shut off the alarms and kept going**.

You know the results: nuclear fallout that was recorded all around the world, from the largest industrial accident ever to occur in the world. **The instructions and warnings in Scripture are just as clear.** We ignore them at our own peril, and tragically, at the peril of innocent others.