



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Jewish People, Jesus Christ, and World History

Zechariah 6:1-8

"The Four Chariots"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] ... from the great prophecy of Zechariah, one of the minor prophets, but one with surely a major message, and one in which there is a magnificent unfolding of the Lord Jesus Christ, in both his first coming and particular in his Second Advent. And again tonight, we ask that Thou wilt be with us, and guide us as we seek to understand one of the visions, the last of the visions that the prophet had, which contain so much symbolism and yet at the same time important revelation. Make us, Lord, students of the word. Give us diligence in our studies, and give us illumination that we may profit from the things that we read. And Father, may we experience Thy blessing tonight as we study together. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] We're turning to Zechariah chapter 6, and we're looking at verse 1 through verse 9, and as you can see after we read these eight verses, the subject is "The Four Chariots," which the prophet saw in his last of these eight night visions. So, let's begin tonight by reading through these eight verses. And Zechariah begins the 6th chapter by saying, "And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains

of brass. This is not an easy thing to figure out. I guess the point of a figurehead is to do that, [laughter] but anyway, it's difficult to figure out the exact meaning of this. It may be helpful to remember that in the temple there was brass right at the entrance into the temple area. And it's possible that what Zechariah is seeing is something is built upon the background of the temple area, which was the physical representation of the presence of God. And so, the two mountains may well be a reference to the brass of the temple area designed to represent the presence of the Lord. Furthermore, if you remember, there were two mountains in Jerusalem. And so, Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives may be referred to here also. So, putting it all together it appears that what he is thinking about is a symbolic picture of Jerusalem as the place where the Lord has put his name. And from which the Lord will execute the judgment of the Second Advent. We know, of course the Scriptures teach that, and so this may be designed to represent that.

"In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grizzled and bay horses." Some translate this as dappled horses, some even as roan and the reason for this is that the expression grizzled and bay is capable of more than one interpretation. We'll call it simply grizzled and bay, but recognize that dappled is probably the sense of it.

"Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord? And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the LORD of all the earth. The black horses which are therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them; and the grizzled go forth toward the south country. And the bay went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth. Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, these that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country."

Now, that's a very interesting vision, and of course at first glance there doesn't seem to be a whole lot to it. So we are hard put to it to find out the significance of these eight verses. So, the four chariots, one of the things that we learn from Christianity is that Christianity is superior to the religions of the world by virtue of the fact that in Christianity alone is there a revelation of divine grace. That's one of the most remarkable things really. You cannot find a single world religion that is, outside of Christianity, a religion of grace. We often say, all of the religions of the earth tell us what we ought to do in order to be saved, in Christianity alone we are pointed to the fact that Christ has done something, and that salvation is by grace. So, that's the distinguishing feature of Christianity from all other religions. It's remarkable, you might expect that others would seek to copy that, but they cannot really copy it. And so, the thing that distinguished Christianity is its revelation of divine grace, or God doing something for us.

Graham McNamee who lived many years ago and some of you who are as old as I am may remember that when you were young you listened to Graham McNamee over the radio. And he had a famous story that he liked concerning a discussion between a priest and a minister. And these two preachers were the best of friends, notwithstanding the fact that they had serious religious differences. And one evening they were chatting together at a party to which they had both been invited, and in the course of conversation they had been talking about how, in spite of the fact that one was a Roman Catholic and the other was a Protestant, they were still long and dear friends. And someone had said something about the fact that did not they have many long arguments concerning religious points. And the priest acknowledged that that was true. But he said, "That's only as it should be. After all, we both teach the same lessons, and as a matter of fact, we both preach the same gospel. You," pointing to the man, "You in your way, and I in his." [Laughter] Well, it illustrates the fact that in the final analysis there is just one way, and that one way is a revelation of divine grace.

Now, on British theologian has said that it is "the belief that God cares that marks Christianity off from all other religions." And he says, "In all other religions, the religions are occupied with making God care by what we do. But in Christianity we are told of a God who does care." I think one of the finest passages in all of the Bible is the passage in Isaiah chapter 46. I love to read this passage, because it's so true to life. And Isaiah in this particularly passage, perhaps you'll remember it when you are reading in Isaiah, engages in some of the most pointed satirical language found in all of the Bible. Listen to what he says in Isaiah chapter 46, in verse 3 and 4. "Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." And then in verse 5,

"To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like? They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship. They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble. Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors. Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand (and I love this text, you know, this is one of the great Calvinistic texts, one of the great phrases of the Bible, one of the great clauses.), and I will do all my pleasure."

You see, there are so many people who think that God is frustrated, that he wants to do this and that for men, but he's unable to do it because he's given men freedom to

resist him. No, he is a God who does all of his good pleasure. He is sovereign. But the point that I want to make is this, what Isaiah is doing is he's speaking ironically of the idols. And he describes how the children of Israel are involved in the idolatry of the heathen about them, and they're making gods. They take gold and they take silver, and they make these lavish idols, which are so heavy that they have to be carried to a particular place and set in place like a piece of furniture. So their god is like a piece of furniture. Their god is not a god who carries them, they carry their god. And then in other places Isaiah will make reference to the fact that when they go into captivity, and he's speaking for God, they'll be carrying all their gods with them. They have to labor under the burden of carrying their gods. So you can see these individuals who are weighted down with these heavy gods that they have spent so much money on, and so much time upon, but he says, I'm a god who carries you. Now, why would anyone want a god who you have to carry about? And set him on a pedestal like a piece of furniture, who cannot talk, who cannot do anything, who cannot even carry himself. How would anyone want a god like that, when there is a God who is the God of Israel who carries us, and carries us from the beginning?

Did you notice how Isaiah put it there in verse 3, "Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.." Why anyone would want a god that you have to carry around, when you have a God who can carry you from the time that you are born to the time that you die, who will carry us. There is no reasonable answer to that. So, he offers himself as a God who carries our burdens.

One of the outstanding historians was a man by the name of Froude, some of you may remember J.A. Froude, and Mr. Froude made a statement one time about this, I think I have it here somewhere, in which he was speaking to Thomas Carlyle who had been an

old friend of his, and he said later, "I once said to Mr. Carlyle not long before his death, that I could only believe in a God which did something." And then Thomas Carlyle said with a cry of pain, which I shall never forget, "He does nothing." But this is a God who does something. So, this is the God found in Christianity. But there is another fact about the God of Christianity that distinguishes him from the gods of the heathen, and that is the fact that he is a God of judgment. He is a God who is revealed as a gracious God, but he is a God who is revealed as a God of judgment, both individual judgment and national judgment.

We all know the text in Hebrews 9:27, "It is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment." And there is a judgment coming, and there is a judgment for individuals, and there is a judgment for the nation, that is the nation Israel, and there is a judgment for the nations, or the Gentiles. Now, I know that the creeds generally speak of one final judgment. The thirty-nine articles speak of one final judgment, the Westminster confession of faith speaks of one final judgment. The Apostles' Creed speaks of one final judgment. The Apostles' Creed says, "From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead." But there is indication from the word of God that there is really more than one judgment. And there is a judgment for the nation Israel, that is the apostate element in the nation, and there is a judgment for the nations, and there is a judgment for individuals as well. So that distinguished Christianity, too. It is a religion of grace, but it also is a religion of judgment.

Now, Zechariah's eighth vision is a vision that concerns past Gentile judgment and future Gentile judgment in the day of the Lord just prior to the Second Advent. By the way, when one looks out over human history, one can see all of this in operation. There's a marvelous book written by Butterfield, one of the British historians, in which he traces the work of God in human judgment. Of course, he finally concludes that we cannot prove that this is God acting in human history, but all of the indications are to that effect. And it is a meticulous treatment of the subject, and very beautifully written. Just

recently we've seen one of the simple illustrations that may be an indication of this. Perhaps you've been following in the paper the fact that David Jenkins, who was a British theologian, taught religion at the University of Leeds, has just been consecrated as Bishop of Durham in Yorkminster that is the Cathedral of York. And the thing has stirred up the people in Britain more than anything since John Robinson wrote his book *Honest to God*. The newspapers have been full of objections and discussions, because David Jenkins has been on some British BBC programs denying certain aspects of the faith. He denied the virgin birth, said that he didn't think that that took place. He also denied the resurrection, the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And in fact, he represents what is by far the majority view of the ministers of the Church of England.

One of the ministers was not happy about it. The Church of England, they do have some very godly men, and he has obtained quite a few signatures, well up into the thousands, of objections to the consecration of David Jenkins as the Bishop of Durham. What was striking about this was that only July the 6th he was consecrated as the Bishop of Durham in the Cathedral of York, about sixty miles south of Durham, and then three nights later, the Cathedral was struck by lightening. And in the *Wall Street Journal* today there is an American account of what is happening. And the first paragraph reads like this, "According to official meteorological reports, a cloud formation moved across this ancient city at 1:56 AM on July 9, that's three days afterwards. It hovered over the Yorkminster for fifteen minutes, and unleashed a bolt of lightening on the cathedral. The force forth of the blast splintered the cathedral's 13<sup>th</sup> Century oak beams, and sent the roof of the south transept collapsing in flames to the flagstone below. Then the cloud formation headed east over the North Sea." Well, many people in Britain have been saying that this was just simply the judgment of God upon the church for consecrating this flagrant unbeliever. Well, it's an interesting article, and I suggest if you can, get the *Wall Street Journal* or a copy of it, and read it. What's interesting about it is the last paragraph,

because obviously one cannot prove one way or another. So, we have individuals saying it is an act of God, and other saying no it's not an act of God. There's nothing to it.

And this is the last two short paragraphs, "As for the Yorkminster blaze, the North Yorkshire fire brigade which put it out won't comment on its source, other than to say it was apparently caused by lightening. But a spokesman savors recounting a number of unexplained phenomena. The cathedral's roof was fully wired with lightening rods, which for some reason didn't work that night. Then there were six smoke detectors in the ceiling, tested just a month before, none for some reason set off an alarm. Nor was there any thunder despite several sightings of the lightening flash. And then the spokesman for the fire brigade, who is probably no great theologian, says, 'If you look at any insurance claim,' the fire brigade spokesman concludes, damage from lightening is always considered an act of God." [Laughter] So, of course, we won't know until we get to heaven, but there is a lot of biblical evidence for the fact that God does judge in our human experiences, and in fact when you study human history, I think you'll be like Professor Butterfield. As you see the way he has moved in history, and even in the 20th century. From the Hohenzollern on through the Russian czars, and on into the things that have happened on into the present time, it's not too difficult to make a very good case for the active hand of God in the judgments that have taken place in this century, much less the centuries past.

So, Christianity then is a religion of grace, it's a religion of judgment. What we have here is the judgment side of things. And we are going to see, it may startle you, but we are going to see the time when democracy also will come under the judgment of God, as well. And it will come under the judgment of God in the future. When? Of course, I don't know. And so far as I know, no one else knows. But it too will come under the judgment of God, because it seems to be a system of flattering human nature, erected into policy by which rulers manage to keep themselves in office by doing as many things as



they possibly can at the expense of what may be right or wrong. That of course is my interpretation of things.

I remember Winston Churchill who said that "of all the forms of government, democracy was the worst, except for those other forms." [Laughter] So, in other words, all of them are bad, and while we may want to argue that democracy is the best of the bad, it too is bad, and it will come under the judgment of God. Because in the final analysis what we shall see is a theocracy, a true theocracy in which God himself reigns upon this earth. And then we shall have government as government as should be.

But now, let's look for a few moments at the visions. I think we can handle it rather quickly, because we don't have a whole lot of explanatory comment. The prophet turns. He lifts up his eye. He looks, and he sees four chariots coming out between the two mountains. The chariots are probably war chariots. In fact, one of the commentators said, "Chariots were storm troops in ancient warfare." So what we are supposed to think when we see these chariots coming out is something representative of divine judgment, because the chariots were the storm troops of ancient warfare. So four chariots are seen coming out between the two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of brass. Two mountains, perhaps Mount Zion and Mount Olive, with the valley of Jehoshaphat lying between them. Jerusalem, of course, is the home, the ideal home of the Lord God as he says in the Old Testament. He has put his name there. So, Jerusalem is the place from which he shall rule and reign. In the Old Testament, the temple was there. That was where true worship was carried out, and so we find probably, representative of that here, the fact that he will execute his final judgment from Jerusalem. There are many passages in the Bible that teach that our Lord will come, he will stand upon the Mount of Olives, and he will execute final judgment from that place.

Now, reference is made here to mountains that were mountains of brass. Now, if you'll read through the Bible I think you will come to the conclusion that brass is often used as symbolic of judgment. Think, for example, of the brazen altar in the tabernacle,

where the animals were slain in order that which pictured divine redemption might be represented. Or think, for example, of the serpent in the wilderness. When the children of Israel were going through the wilderness, and they began to murmur against the Lord, and because of their murmuring he sent serpents in among them, and they were bitten and finally Moses appealed to the Lord for help, and the Lord told Moses, "Make a serpent of brass, and set it upon a pole. And if a person is bitten by a serpent, and he looks at the serpent of brass, then he will receive healing." The serpent of brass, as a matter of fact the term for brass is the term Nechosheth in Hebrew. The term for serpent is Nachash. They are very closely related. In fact, the term brass, Nechosheth, suggests serpent. In fact, we could say that brass is serpentish material, because there is a close connection between Nachash and Nechosheth. So the brass itself suggests the serpent. And the serpent, of course, suggests the Garden of Eden where sin began. Now, all of my comments may not be absolutely true, but I am sure that if you study the scriptures you will come to the conclusion that brass is symbolic of judgment. And so here, the mountains were mountains of brass. I suggest to you that that is a representation of judgment.

Now, let's look at what is said with reference to these chariots. In the first chariot, were red horses. And in the second chariot, black horses, and in the third chariot white horses, and in the fourth chariot, grizzled and bay horses, or dappled horses. Well, the red horses probably are symbolically and suggestive of war and blood shed. Just like in Revelation chapter 6, in verse 4. We have that kind of symbolism. The black horses, perhaps, are symbolic of famine and death, where crops and people are hurt; the white horses, perhaps symbolic of victory and triumph; and finally, the grizzled and bay horses. The Hebrew term for grizzled is a word that means dappled or spotted. The word bay is a term that means strong, and they are put together, and so evidently we have horses that are something like dappled horses. Now, the grizzled here is not the same as the word that we use when we say, "grizzly bear," or when we say concerning an old man, such as

I am, a grizzled old man. That word is a word associated with that which is gray. That is what is suggested by this. The term also is a term that suggests fear as well. But this is probably a reference to spotted or strong, and so grizzled is a reference to plagues and diseases, probably.

Now, I'm sure when you read through this, you probably feel exactly like Zechariah did. What does all of this mean? Now, in order to understand what is meant, I must stop for a moment and give you a bit of review of the overall prophetic picture of things. Remember Daniels's great second chapter in which he records Nebuchadnezzar's vision of that giant figure? Do you remember that? We referred to it in one of the earlier studies in Zechariah, and pointed out that that magnificent image which Nebuchadnezzar saw, which Daniel was able to interpret for him, was an image that was designed to represent the times of the Gentiles.

And remember, the times of the Gentiles, is a term that refers to that period of time during which Jerusalem is under the authority of Gentile rulers. We are living in the times of the Gentiles. Jerusalem and specifically the temple area is not yet in the hands of Israel. They are afraid to do anything about the temple area. And the temple, which they would love to rebuild, is not rebuilt at the present time for the simple reason that the Arabs are in such control, and Israel can do nothing about it. Jesus said Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. Those times began with the captivity, when Israel went into captivity, into the Babylonian captivity. They will conclude, so Daniel points out, with the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus. In the 7th chapter of the Book of Daniel, the same ground is undertaken, but instead of a giant image with four different kinds of metals representing the four great world empires. Daniel sees a vision in which he sees four great wile beasts. Remember the lion and the bear and the he goat, and the ram and the he goat, and then that last animal that was so awful that he could not really describe it.

So, what we have in the times of the Gentiles is a period of time from the time of the Babylonian international rule to the time of the Second Advent of Christ. Four great world empires will have authority over the earth, the Babylonian kingdom, the Medo-Persian kingdom, the Grecian kingdom, and the Roman Empire. And since the Roman Empire was not part of the vision that begins about here, and goes to the feet, it's obvious that it was designed to represent the longest period of time in this lengthy period now of twenty-five hundred years plus; 606 BC, 1984, you can it's almost twenty-six hundred years. We don't know when this is going to end, but four great world empires, and we are living in the latter days of the Roman Empire; our institutions, our peoples, the western empire particularly are Roman. So, we're still under the influence of the Roman Empire.

We looked in the 1st chapter and we saw again a reflection of that. Now, these four chariots probably, now notice I say probably, because I don't want to be absolutely dogmatic on this point, but I don't know of any better interpretation. If you can show me a better one, I'll pay attention to it; probably these chariots are designed by Zechariah to represent divine judgment upon these four different empires. That is the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and then the final great Roman Empire, which will have two forms, its form at the time of our Lord and the apostles, and the final form, which shall exist over the face of the earth when Jesus returns a second time.

Now, these particular chariots are not designed to represent the kingdoms, though there are four groups of them, red horses, black horses, white horses, grizzles and bay horses; but are designed to represent those instruments of divine judgment by which God judges these four great empires. Now, the prophet asks the question in verse 4, which of course we would ask, if we had seen this vision we would turn to the angel who was the interpreter, and we would say, "What are these, my lord?" And that is precisely what he does. Of course, Zechariah had an advantage that you and I don't have. It would be nice to have an angel handy wouldn't it? If we were reading the Bible, and we came to

something difficult, we'd say, "What does that mean?" And then we would get an inspired interpretation. You'd like to have that wouldn't you?

I wouldn't. You know why? Because we have someone to be our interpreter, we have the Holy Spirit, he's been promised to us as our interpreter, don't you remember? Jesus said, "I'll give you another Comforter. I'll pray the Father, and he'll give you another Comforter, and when he comes he'll guide you in all truth." So, you have the Holy Spirit, so you see really if you had the angel standing by, you wouldn't probably pay him very much attention after you had first gotten acquainted with him. But at any rate, Zechariah, he thought this angel might give him some help so he said, "What are these, my lord?" And the interpreting angel answers and said, "These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the LORD of all the earth." In other words, these four chariots are not designed to represent kingdoms. They are designed to represent spirits that go forth from the Lord of all the earth, and evidently they are to go forth from him to execute judgment upon the kingdom on the earth.

And then he goes on to describe them. He says first, "The black horses which are therein go forth into the north country." Now, what does that mean? One might ask the question, why didn't he say anything about the red horses? Did you notice that? That would be another question that I would ask. I would say, "Hold on a minute. What about the red?" Well, I can only suggest this to you. You see, Zechariah was living in the time of the Persian Empire wasn't he? Cyrus was his king, and so the Babylonian kingdom had already had judgment executed upon it. That's probably the reason, probably. But no reference is made to the red horses, because the judgment is already taken place upon the Babylonian kingdom. The black horses, he said, which are therein, "go forth into the north country," and that of course, would be a reference to the Medo-Persian Empire. "And the white go forth after them." That would be the Grecian Empire, for remember the Grecian Empire is to the north of Israel also. Both of these kingdoms would be to the north of Israel. So, he would be saying that the black horses are sent out

in order to be responsible for the demise of the Medo-Persian Empire. The white horses are sent out in order that the Grecian Empire might also go into demise. Then in the 6th verse he says, "The black horses which are therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them; and the grizzled go forth toward the south country." Now, the south country is a reference to Egypt, obviously, and it may be of interest to you to know that Rome first met Israel in Egypt, and also met the declining Macedonian power there as well. So, the Roman Empire, and its judgment is referred to in this way.

And finally, in verse 7 he says, " And the bay went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth." This evidently is a reference to the final stage of the fourth kingdom, the world wide empire. And a strong force is needed to overthrow it, because it's the greatest of all of the empires. So, he speaks about the fact that the bay go forth throughout the earth, for this is a world-wide empire, this last empire, in a sense in which the others were not. And finally, in verse 8, "And then cried he," you know, you don't usually think of an angel crying out, but this is more than an angel, as we see. Did you notice that in reading? Look, "Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, these that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country." So the person who is speaking is the person whose spirit is quieted, that is the one who executes the judgment. So, the person speaking is referred to as the angel who is standing by his side, but what we learn that the person who is speaking is really ultimately our Lord Jesus Christ himself. And so he says, "These have quieted my spirit in the north country." And what he means by that is simply that ultimately divine judgment shall take place over the kingdoms of the earth, and our Lord shall establish his own kingdom over the earth.

Now, he doesn't say that last thing in this chapter. But he's already said that in the visions that have proceeded in chapter 2 and chapter 3 and it's not necessary to repeat it. Well, let me sum up then the night visions. The eight night visions have portrayed Israel's

future from the day of Cyrus to the day of the greater than Cyrus. And while it is done in symbolic form, he has essentially said very much the same thing that Daniel did in apocalyptic form in his magnificent prophecy. The political changes that take place on the earth, someone has said, "are shadows made by the heavenly Son on earth's sun dial." So, when we read our newspapers and we think about the flow of human history, what we are really doing is seeing the earthly effect of what God has been doing all along, throughout the ages of human history. Isn't that a marvelous insight into the reading of the newspaper and the living of our lives, to realize that what is happening down here on the earth is really the reflection and the issue of what God has determined to do and is doing in heaven itself.

One last thing, grace and judgment, of course, are the two sides of the divine face. We must not reject the one, the grace of God, or we shall be forced to accept the other. There is a marvelous story I would like to close with. It's a true story, and really it's very much like what must be taking place in Britain today. One of the greatest of the British bishops was Bishop John Taylor Smith. He was former Chaplain General of the British army, and he was living in Britain in the time of the D.L. Moody Centenary Meetings, and Dr. Ironside said that it was his privilege to hear Bishop John Taylor Smith. When I first became a Christian, he was a well known person to whom preachers often referred, because in the First World War, he was the one who examined the chaplains who ministered to the British army. And he was very careful to see that they were truly Christian men. And he used to have a question the he would ask all of the men who wanted to serve as chaplain in the British army in the Firth World War. He would say, "You have three minutes, now tell me what you would tell a dying man." And he judges his capacity to be a chaplain by the way that he answered that question. And if he did not give the gospel, Bishop John Taylor Smith would not allow him to be appointed to chaplain the British army. And no doubt, many people found the Lord as a result of this man.

Well, on one occasion he was preaching in a large cathedral, and in order to drive home the point, "Ye must be born again," for that was his text, he said that the rector of the cathedral was sitting to his left, and he said as he came to the subject of "Ye must be born again," he turned to the rector and he said, "You know, you might be a clergyman just like the rector, and you still might not be a Christian if you have never been born again." And there was an arch deacon standing there who was something like an administrative assistant, a clergy administrative assistant of the rector, and he turned to the arch deacon who was also sitting on the left, and he said, "You might even be an arch deacon, and if you have not been born again, you're lost." And he preached like that, and then it wasn't long after that that he received a note, and the note was like this, it was just a few days later.

And he said, "My dear Bishop you have found me out. I have been a clergyman for over thirty years, but I had never known anything of the joy that Christians speak of. I never could understand it. My life has been hard, legal service." Isn't that interesting? Remember what I began with, a God that you have to carry, instead of a God who carries you? He says, "My life has been hard, legal service. I didn't know what was the matter with me, but when you pointed directly to me and said, 'You might even be an arch deacon and not be born again,' I realized in a moment what the trouble was. I had never known anything of the new birth." And he appealed to Bishop Taylor Smith to give him an interview, and he did spare the time. And he said, "The next day we got together over the word of God and after some hours we were both on our knees. The arch deacon taking his place before God as a poor lost sinner, and telling the Lord Jesus he would trust him as his Savior. And from that time on everything has been different." Well, I think that's exactly what Bishop David Jenkins evidently has never experienced either. And maybe a message about "Ye must be born again," might be just the thing he would need as well.



Well, this is a rather difficult section from Zechariah, but I think this is probably what the prophet has in mind. He wants to remind his readers that there is a flow of history, and there are world empires that will rise and fall and it is God who determines the world empires which will rise. It is he who determines that which will fall. And it is he who ultimately will determine that there will come a kingdom of God upon the earth. And the Lord Jesus Christ, in his Second Advent, will establish that kingdom and it will fill the whole of the earth. We look forward to that day. And those who have been born again are those who have the capacity for enjoyment. If you are here tonight and you have never really been born again. The message that Taylor Smith gave to the arch deacon and to the rector is the message for and for me as well. Let's close in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] We are thankful to Thee Lord, for these marvelous visions that the prophet had and we thank Thee for the way in which they stir us to remember that our time here upon this earth is important. We know that Thou art in control of the affairs of this earth. That sovereign providence determines ultimately all of the things that happen. Enable us, Lord, to be faithful, to be responsive to the word of God, to be faithful witnesses to our Lord and to the teaching of the Scriptures in the day in which we live. We commit ourselves to Thee for that purpose. For Jesus' sake. Amen.