**Victory Over Sin**

**Zechariah 5-6 (ESV)**

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We’re standing because we’re going to read the Word together. It is our habit to stand during the reading of the Word. We’re in a study of Zechariah. The study is entitled *Return to Hope*. There are present labors, present conflicts, present oppositions, but always, there is hope that is out in front of us. This prophecy that God gives to Zechariah really focuses our hearts upon the hope that we have in Christ and the Messiah. Today, it is kind of a sobering message because it’s a message related to sin and judgment that follows sin. We have a big God, a God who provides in the Gospel, a space for us to fear Him and to love Him. Those aren’t in contradiction. They go right along side by side. We fear God. We tremble before Him and we love Him. He is a God who is way above us and beyond us and He is a God who is near. Both of those aspects of God cause worship to rise from His people. So this is a message that is kind of sober about the magnitude of God’s righteousness. So I’m going to read the first four verses of chapter 5 and then I’m going to read the last eight or nine verses of chapter 6. There are three visions that we’re going to look at today.

Zechariah has an evening where God gives him eight specific visions that he would know what God would have for the people now in the present, but also in the future, regarding His blessing and His plan. We’ve covered the first five visions, and now we’re on these last three today. Then there is a summary that we’re going to read together at the end of chapter 6 that talks about a Messiah, a Branch that is going to branch out and build the ultimate temple in, I believe, the millennial kingdom. So let’s read about the first vision that we’re going to look at today. It’s vision number 5, of a flying scroll.

***1*** *Again I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, a flying scroll!* ***2*** *And he said to me, “What do you see?” I answered, “I see a flying scroll. Its length is twenty cubits, and its width ten cubits.”* ***3*** *Then he said to me, “This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole land. For everyone who steals shall be cleaned out according to what is on one side, and everyone who swears falsely shall be cleaned out according to what is on the other side.* ***4*** *I will send it out, declares the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter the house of the thief, and the house of him who swears falsely by my name. And it shall remain in his house and consume it, both timber and stones.”*

Then there is this seventh vision that we’ll cover today. It’s a vision of a basket and a woman inside the basket. Then there are these two women, and they’re not ordinary women. They have wings and they grab hold of this heavy basket and they take it way up in the sky and take it all the way to Shinar, which is Babylon. Then the final vision is these four chariots. Chariots are always a symbol of war. We see that God makes war upon the nations who resist Him. Then there is this sort of summary statement behind all of these eight visions. Look at verse 9 of chapter 6.

***9*** *And the word of the LORD came to me:* ***10*** *“Take from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon, and go the same day to the house of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah.* ***11*** *Take from them silver and gold, and make a crown, and set it on the head of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest.* ***12*** *And say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD.* ***13*** *It is he who shall build the temple of the LORD and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne. And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”’* ***14*** *And the crown shall be in the temple of the LORD as a reminder to Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah.*

***15*** *“And those who are far off shall come and help to build the temple of the LORD. And you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. And this shall come to pass, if you will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.”*

What a promise!

President Calvin Coolidge was not known for his talkativeness. He was called “Silent Cal” because he just was a man of very few words. There’s a story, it may be apocryphal. I’m not sure. But one Sunday, as was his habit, he went to church. But, this time, his wife was not feeling well, so she didn’t go with him. So after coming home from church, his wife was wanting to know what happened at church. She said, “What did the pastor preach about?” He looked at her and he said, “Sin.” She was expecting some elaboration about that and he wasn’t giving it. So she finally asked him the question, “What did he say about sin?” His answer was, “He was against it.” (Laughter!)

Well, good for President Coolidge’s pastor for saying that God is actually against sin. Many today are unwilling to say that much. Many who would identify as Christians do affirm that God is against sin, yet many make these broad qualifications. Usually these are qualifications related to certain habits of their own life. For instance, ask the homosexual who claims to be a follower of Jesus whether God is against sin, and that person will say, “Yes, God is against sin.” But ask that person if God is against homosexuality and often in defiance, he will say, “No!” Or ask the young engaged couple who claim to be followers of Jesuswhether God is against sin, and they will say, “Yes! We believe that.” But ask them if God is against sexual relations prior to marriage and they will say, “Well, we think He makes allowances.”

Ask the person who claims to follow Jesus but has intentionally separated themselves from their own local church assembling together,if God is against sin. They would say, “Yes. I can name a lot of sins I know that God is against.” But ask them if forsaking the weekly assembly of their own church family, if God views that with displeasure. There is a caveat to that. There are some medical reasons, but in this case, there is not a medical reason. Ask them that and they’ll say, “Well, my circumstances are such that I find myself receiving so much more benefit at home.” Ask the person who claims to follow Jesus, but has held onto a grudge for years. Someone has hurt them and they’re angry. Ask them if God is against sin. “Yes, God is against sin.” But ask them if God condemns their refusal to forgive, to release, to be whole with that person who wronged them. They’ll say, “No, I think God understands why I’m so angry.”

So here is the question that we have to ask. Is God against sin? Is He against every sin? Is He against sin in its every form, every expression? Is He against those sins that we consider little sins, as well as the big sins? Is He against sins that society hugs and rejoices over as well as sins that society still disdains? We open up our Bibles to Zechariah 5-6 and one important part of this message that we find here in these chapters is that God indeed is against sin. He’s against it in a way that is terrifying, in a way that is consistent, in a way that is whole, in a way that is certain. The main idea we’re going to trace is the hope of the Messiah in relationship to sin, in putting an end to sin and ruling in righteousness.

The first vision we’re going to look at is the sixth in this series that Zechariah is given. It’s a fantastic vision!

**Vision #6 The Flying Scroll: God relentlessly judges sin.**

That’s to say, there is not a time when there is so much sin for such a long duration that God says, “I’m just tired of chasing down sin and bringing judgment upon it. I’m just going to let some of it go for a little bit.” No, God is relentless. He is tireless in judging sin. There is not a time when He begins to wane in the energy that He has directed toward the judgment of sin.

***1*** *Again I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, a flying scroll!*

That’s amazing, isn’t it? He had never seen a flying scroll before. The interpretive angel said

***2*** *And he said to me, “What do you see?” I answered, “I see a flying scroll. Its length is twenty cubits, and its width ten cubits.”*

So the first deal about this is it’s a flying scroll. A big part of that is to recognize that when God speaks truth about His righteousness, He does so in a way that’s not private. He does so in a way that captures our attention. We almost have to try not to see it.

A couple months ago, our family gathered together at my sister’s house for a meal. We were on the outdoor deck and all of a sudden, there was a multi-colored balloon that passed over the house. I think it was one of the little ones first that looked up and pretty soon, guess what all of us were doing? We stopped eating and looked up because it’s unusual. It’s something that captures your attention. It’s right in the sky. That’s the idea.

This flying scroll is up in the sky, where it’s hard not to pay attention to it. When you see a flying scroll, you look up.

This is a big, big scroll. It’s not a little tiny bird of a scroll. It’s 30 feet wide and 15 feet high. So think about this for a moment. The scroll is unfurled. It’s not flying as a rolled up scroll. 30 feet is about from this pulpit to the edge of the screens on either side of the

stage. That’s 30 feet. That’s how big this scroll is. It’s how wide it is. 15 feet is about halfway up from the floor to the ceiling. That’s 15 feet. This is huge!

The symbol here is first that God reveals His righteousness. He reveals His truth in a way that it is hard to miss it. He reveals it in a way that is public. It’s open for everyone to read it and understand it. This is a really important truth for us to embrace because what God is saying in reference to His righteousness is there is not a person who has access to His Bible, and that’s every one of us here. If you don’t have a Bible, take one home. You have access to it. There is not one person who has access to God’s Word that will say on the Day of Judgment, “I didn’t know that.” God put it on a flying scroll, on this huge parchment for everyone to see what His righteousness is. I know we often don’t see it because we don’t want to or because our culture pulls our eyes down and says, “No, don’t believe that. That’s not true.” But we look up and there is His righteousness on full display all through His Word. Then notice what it says.

***3*** *Then he said to me, “This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole land.*

So this is the curse of God. Then he mentions two specific sins.

*For everyone who steals shall be cleaned out according to what is on one side,*

So there is first a reference to the eighth commandment, and then also

*and everyone who swears falsely shall be cleaned out according to what is on the other side.*

Later we’re going to read it’s everyone who swears falsely by my name. I think it’s a reference to the third commandment of not taking the Lord God’s name in vain. So there are two commands that are singled out. One side references stealing and the other side is in reference to cursing. And he says everyone. So again, this is a relentless nature. There are not exceptions where He says, “Well, this guy did some really good things, so if he steals, I’m not going to allow this curse to fall on him.” No, everyone who engages in these sins, and I believe these sins are really symbols of the whole of the law. I believe they are sins in reference to God, the first five commandments, and sins in reference to our fellow man, the next five. These two are kind of the middle commandments of the two sets of five, the third and the eighth. He’s really saying to look at the whole of the law. It’s all printed for you. It’s there. Everyone who disobeys God’s law, this curse comes upon them. He even uses this terminology: “shall be cleaned out.”

When you read that, what do you think? The thief, the person who engages in thievery will be cleaned out. The one who swears by God’s name falsely, they take a vow in the name of the Lord and they break it, they will be cleaned out. What does that mean? Well, right away I think most of us would say we don’t know exactly what it means, but it doesn’t mean something good to be cleaned out, to be a person who is cleaned out. Now, if it said “be cleaned up,” that’s great! We want to be cleaned up. But do you want to be cleaned out?

A few years ago, Kimberly and I moved from one house that we lived in for many, many years, into a new house. As we were moving, we discovered mold in the basement. Everything that the mold touches, what do we have to do? You couldn’t just say, “Let’s put some soap on it and let’s try and preserve this.” No, it had to be cleaned out. It’s gone. It’s pitched. That’s what he is saying about these folks. He’s saying there is a curse upon them in which God cleans them out, out of His presence, out of His blessing. He cleans them out. It’s a sobering thing.

The idea that God places a curse of judgment upon lawbreakers is not new to this people. Almost 900 years before Zechariah lives, God brings His people out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. Prior to entering the Promised Land, He restates His law that was given to them forty years earlier at the beginning of their exodus out of Egypt. He restates it. That is Deuteronomy. Then in Deuteronomy He has them recite some blessings and cursings that come as a result of obedience and disobedience. So for instance,

**Deuteronomy 28:1** “And if you faithfully obey the voice of the LORD your God…the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.

That’s a promise that hasn’t been fulfilled, not in its entirety and that is what Zechariah is pointing to.

**Deuteronomy 28:2** And all these blessings shall come upon you…if you obey the voice of the LORD your God.

**Deuteronomy 28:15** “But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD your God…then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.

The language of blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience is familiar. So this flying scroll is a message that they would say, “Yes, we’ve heard this before.” Why would God give a message and repeat it? It’s because we’re slow to hear, especially messages related to God’s righteousness and related to His judgment. As they’re about to rebuild the temple and start afresh in the land, He wants to say that truth over again. He says, “You’re starting well, but there is always a temptation, always a proneness to wander. Remember that you just got out of exile in Babylon because of your refusal to acknowledge this simple principle. You cannot defy my righteousness. You cannot fly in the face of my commands and expect there not to be my curse upon you, my judgment come upon you, my hand of extreme discipline to come upon you.” He wants them to see that once again.

So this flying scroll is a warning. It’s a warning to those who disobey God’s law. Who is that? Who disobeys God’s law? Well, it’s every one of us. We’re going to get to the hope of that in a moment, but we ought to first allow the soberness of that to settle in. Have I ever disobeyed the first tablet, where I have not loved the Lord my God with all my heart and all my soul and all my strength? Has that ever happened in my life? There is a curse that follows everyone who disobeys any part of that. Have I ever disobeyed the second tablet, where I love my neighbor as much as I love myself? Because there is a sobering message here that we want to grab onto. If we don’t grab onto the sobriety of the message, we won’t grab onto the hope of the Messiah that is to come.

***4*** *I will send it out, declares the LORD of hosts,*

“It” is this curse.

*and it shall enter the house of the thief,*

It’s going to be personal. It’s going to be specific. It’s going to be individual, the judgment of God. Every person is going to stand before God.

*and the house of him who swears falsely by my name.*

Again, that’s why I think it’s that third commandment. Thou shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, in an empty way, a careless way. The curse

*And it shall remain in his house and consume it, both timber and stones.”*

Utter devastation is what is being described. Again, God relentlessly judges sin. I know that life doesn’t always appear to reflect that truth. I know that there are people who we all know who fly in the face of God’s commands and it seems like there are pretty good things happening in their life. They’re wealthy. They seem to be healthy and live long. They seem to be enjoying a lot of stuff related to the here and now. So what is this? I know that at times, it may not appear that God judges sin. Let us keep in mind that God is slow to anger. God is patient. All through God’s Word, He doesn’t say that He judges sin immediately. He just says He judges sin relentlessly. Do you catch the difference? He often gives illustrations of the slowness, of the patience of the delay. He always has a purpose for His delay. He’s sovereign over the timing. What the flying scroll consistently says and what we find in all of Scripture consistently being told to us is that God is a God who judges certainly, absolutely, infinitely and finally. God never allows the guilty to go unpunished.

**Numbers 14:18 NIV** ‘The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished;

There is not one time where a person is guilty of breaking any of the law of God, where that sin remains unpunished. It’s not like, “Oh, that one slipped through. I didn’t see that.” Or, “That was pretty small in comparison to what others are doing, so I’m not going to attend to it.” God never allows the guilty to go unpunished. Wherever there is a sin, it will be judged. Again, there is a sobering nature to that truth that is necessary for our souls to have a right fear of God. I think of Isaiah, who saw the Lord in all of His holiness. He cries out “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God. Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips.” That’s the response that this message invites for our hearts to have. It’s a response of humility before the Lord, repentance before the Lord, and then ultimately faith in the Messiah who God offers to be a sin-bearer for us.

So here’s the deception. The deception is about sin and that’s why we need this message so often. It’s because we’re so easily deceived. God is constantly telling us to not be deceived about sin. Here is one of the deceptions. If I am doing God’s work, God is going to overlook a little sin. “So if I’m doing some good things for God, I’m involved in church and I’m singing some songs. I’m praying some prayers and I’m being a nice person to others, God is going to overlook my sin because it’s kind of small.”

The other deception is if I have a special relationship with God. Again, the people here in Zechariah’s day are very prone to this deception because they are reengaged with the work of God in rebuilding the temple. “Maybe because now we’re doing the hard stuff and doing the work of the Lord, maybe these little sins won’t be such a big deal to God.” God says, no. The flying scroll tells us that’s not true. “We have a special relationship with God. We went into exile, but God delivered us because we’re His people and He has given us these promises about a future. So maybe God won’t take our sin like He would the nation of Babylon’s sin.” God says no, that’s not true, either.

God’s vision of the flying scroll reminds us to keep our lives pure. Sin will destroy our soul in a way that nothing else can. Sin will rob us of God’s blessing. Sin will invite God’s judgment and curse upon our lives. Our work for the Lord or our worship of the Lord does not give us a sin pass. God will not treat our sin differently because we are one of the “good guys.” We are, aren’t we? We’re one of the good guys in this world. God won’t treat our sin differently because we’re one of the good guys.

Along with this, I think it’s really important to think of a perspective about life because the world constantly teaches us that sin pays blessings and obedience to God doesn’t pay blessing. In fact, they have a whole system to even try to make that come true. It’s easy to start believing that lie. There is only one thing that can rob you of God’s eternal blessing. There’s only one thing in this world. Do you know what that is? You probably do by now because of the flying scroll. It’s your sin. The only thing that can rob any of God’s blessing from my life is my own sin. Other people can’t do that. Other people’s sin can hurt me and hurt me kind of in a hard way. They could do things physically. They could do things emotionally to me. They could do things relationally and it can hurt. So I’m not minimizing how painful other people’s sin can be. But what I am saying is that in comparison to the pain that anyone else’s sin can bring to my life, it is absolutely nothing, it is miniscule compared to the pain that I can bring upon my own life through sin.

The list is long of people who believe that their own sin is not a big deal. I think we all get tempted to move in that direction. That’s why we need to see the flying scroll. Here’s what the big flying scroll does. It gets our attention. We see on both sides it’s all about the righteousness of God. Do I love God? Do I love people the way God tells me to love them? It’s a message to us. There is a curse if I don’t. It screams at us, “Your sin is your biggest problem!” Period!

Friends, let’s stop thinking that our biggest troubles are sourced in someone else’s sin. That’s the message of the world, for sure. It doubles down on it in so many ways and so many places. “The reason why your life is not happy is because someone else did you something wrong.” Again, I’m not trying to minimize how other people can bring some pain in our life. Don’t get me wrong about that. But let’s consider this.

If someonegossips about you and causes a whole bunch of people to think that you are this wicked, no-good person, do you know that if you’re walking in obedience to God, you still have God’s eternal blessing upon your life? Nothing changes about that. Nothing! If someone defrauds you of your retirement account, everything you were counting on in order to live in the years to come, do you know that if you’re walking in obedience to God, you are still walking in the eternal blessing of God? It’s an eternal blessing that will come to fruition. If a co-worker convinces your boss that you’re a terrible employee and ultimately even gets you fired, do you know that if you’re walking in obedience to God, you have God’s eternal blessing? You’ve not lost that. That person hasn’t touched that even the smallest little iota.

But if in the midst of these trials of other people’s sins coming against us we respond to those trials with sin, we either respond in fighting evil with evil or we respond by saying, “I need some of the hurt from that place to be medicated, to be pacified and this sin is an avenue that I don’t feel such pain when I think about that wrong.” Then beloved, it is that thing that can bring eternal misery upon our life. Here’s what the psalmist says.

**Psalm 118:6** The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?

Jesus would say

**Matthew 10:28** And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

That’s God alone! Here’s what the writer of Hebrews says.

**Hebrews 13:5** Keep your life free from love of money,

You could fill in the blank with some other sins. Keep your life free from sin.

**Hebrews 13:5** and be content with what you have,

Walk in obedience to God.

**Hebrews 13:5** for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Another person’s sin can’t rob you of God’s presence and His blessing.

**Hebrews 13:6** So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”

Here is the big problem as we think about the flying scroll. We are not righteous. We have broken the law. We are under the curse of God. That’s why this gospel just blows up in our face. Once we understand the depth of our trouble as we face the infinitely holy God, the gospel is like this huge light of hope. God actually made a way when there was no way to avoid this curse. This curse is absolutely going to fall upon me. God chastens my sin relentlessly. But God in love sent His Son, Jesus, to die in my place and to take the punishment of my sin upon Himself. He removes my sins as far as the east is from the west so that my sin is punished in Christ and Christ’s righteousness then through faith and my connection to Him, is applied to me. So when I stand before God now and when I stand before God in the future, God looks at me and He doesn’t see my sin that needs to be cursed, that must be punished, because that’s already been cursed when Jesus endured the curse. What He sees is the infinite righteousness of Christ. It’s a righteousness that’s not mine. It’s alien to me, but it’s a righteousness that comes to me through faith and not through the law. That’s the reason why we sing, “Free, we’re free! Forever we’re free. Come join the song of the redeemed.” We sing it with such gusto and such joy. The call of God upon our life is to repent of our sin. In other words, know that sin only invites God’s curse. Repent of that! Turn from it and place your faith in Jesus Christ.

**Vision #7 The Woman in a Basket: God will put an end to sin.**

This is a fascinating vision!

***5*** *Then the angel who talked with me came forward and said to me, “Lift your eyes and see what this is that is going out.”* ***6*** *And I said, “What is it?” He said, “This is the basket that is going out.” And he said, “This is their iniquity in all the land.”*

So there is a big basket, big enough we’re going to find out, to hold a woman in it. He says this basket represents iniquity. It’s the iniquity of people. There is this heavy lead lid and they lift the lid off and they peer down inside and we find

***7*** *And behold, the leaden cover was lifted, and there was a woman sitting in the basket!*

Surprise! When has that ever happened in your life, where you take a lid off a basket and there is a person in there? Well, there it is. There is a person. He’s wondering, who is this person? God tells Zechariah who this person is.

***8*** *And he said, “This is Wickedness.”*

Wickedness tried to get out, so Zechariah

*And he thrust her back into the basket, and thrust down the leaden weight on its opening.*

So here is a basket representing iniquity and sins. The person in the basket is representing the desire for sin. It is wickedness itself. Here it is in the midst of Zechariah’s presence. What is going to happen now? Well, we read about what God does.

***9*** *Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, two women coming forward!*

They’re walking straight toward the basket.

*The wind was in their wings.*

So they’re not normal women. They are women with wings.

*They had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and heaven.* ***10*** *Then I said to the angel who talked with me, “Where are they taking the basket?”* ***11*** *He said to me, “To the land of Shinar,*

That’s Babylon. So they just came out of exile in Babylon. Babylon is a place of idolatry. It is a place of moral corruption. It is a place of the love of money and the love of power, all these things that are spoken of in Scripture as contrary to God and to His purposes. So they take the basket to the land of Shinar. What are they going to do with the basket there? They’re going

*to build a house for it.*

They’re going to build a temple for it.

*And when this is prepared, they will set the basket down there on its base.”*

It’s going to become a place of worship that represents a kingdom away from God’s people, instead of worshiping the true God, that is wholly devoted to this idol, this idol of wickedness, this false religion. Zechariah is being told that this basket of wickedness and of sin is going to be taken out of the people of God’s presence, out of Jerusalem. It’s still going to be there in the world, but there is going to be ultimately, a removal of wickedness from God’s people. Why is this so important? Well, God is so righteous that not only does God relentlessly judge sin, but God will not allow sin to have an eternal future.

The story of God in this world, the worldview that the Bible presents is that God created this world good. There was no evil in it. There was an angel that went off in rebellion. That’s where evil started. It didn’t start with God. It started with a created being. So evil itself, wickedness itself had a beginning. Then through temptation, sin and wickedness entered into the human race. Now it has become part of each one of our hearts. This wickedness has entered into us. We can’t get away from it. All of life is being in its presence. God sends the Messiah to bring freedom from the guilt of sin and from the power of that sin to take authority over our lives. But nonetheless, it’s present.

In a lot of tales related to worldview, we have kind of this struggle between good and evil that lasts forever and ever and ever and ever and ever and ever and ever. Now, it’s possible that the Christian worldview could be such that we could say, “Sin is always going to be here and God is always going to judge it. So sin is just going to keep going, but God is going to smack it, smack it, smack it every time it pops up.” But that’s not what the Bible teaches. Praise God that’s not what the Bible teaches!

What the Bible teaches is that God began this world and created it for His glory. He’s going to end this world and it’s going to be for His glory, completely. Every part of it! Right now, we’re in this middle range where God has a plan for allowing evil to remain. He will judge evil. So He says, “Don’t connect to evil. Connect to my mercy and my grace through my Son. Don’t connect to it because you’ll be cursed and judged in that. But know that at the end, there is going to be a time where just as sin had a beginning, sin is going to have an end. It’s going to be removed completely. After that takes place, my people who have received the benefit of my mercy through my Messiah, they will live an eternal existence where sin is never ever a problem. The temptation to sin or the presence of sin is never a problem ever again.” Imagine that! Imagine living forever. That is the plan of God for the future of His people. He wants you to know, “You have to struggle with sin right now, but there is going to be a day that I’m going to take wickedness of sin and put it away up in Shinar, in Babylon. I’m going to take it out of the presence of my people.”

Let me ask you a question. When does that take place? It didn’t take place before Zechariah. It was still future. It didn’t take place immediately after. If you go to Jerusalem today, there is still wickedness and sin in the city of Jerusalem. Is that a surprise to you? It’s called The Holy City, but it’s not holy right now. Not yet! When is that going to take place?

Well, if you jump forward to Revelation 17 and 18, during this Tribulation period where God’s wrath is being poured out, it’s the ultimate culmination of this promise about, “I’m going to judge sin. I’m going to clean out the house.” At the end of that time, there is a kingdom that Revelation actually calls Babylon. Right here, it’s called Shinar. It’s a false kingdom that is lead by first, a false leader. It’s a false christ, false messiah, the antichrist. A false religious leader also is going to be part of that for a long time until he is set aside. At the end of that time, in Revelation 17 and 18, the Messiah comes, and guess what? Even before the culmination of the end with a final finishing blow, God begins to destroy Babylon in such a way that even all the nations of the world who haven’t aligned themselves with God yet, begin to mourn.

**Revelation 18:10** They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, “Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come.”

**Revelation 18:2** And he called out with a mighty voice, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!

They’re mourning it. God is active in this real world. We often don’t know exactly what God is doing through kings and princes and presidents and congresses and rulers. We don’t know exactly. But we do know how it’s going to all end up. It’s going to end up with a world that is in absolute rebellion of God. Then God’s Messiah is coming to say, “I’m putting an end to sin. I came the first time and what did you do when the Messiah came the first time? You rejected Him and you put a crown of thorns upon His head. I allowed sin to remain, but I defeated its curse. Everyone who can come to me, the curse of sin is gone. It is over. It has no more power over people who are in me. But I’m going to come a second time and I’m not just going to deal with the judgment of God against sin. I’m going to deal with the very presence of sin from this place.” God is not going to allow sin to go on forever and ever and ever. It’s going to be completely put to an end.

So what’s the application? The application is whenever sin becomes alluring to us, “I see people who enter into sin and it seems like they’re really getting ahead,” remember the end. There is no future for any person who binds their heart and their life to sin. There is no future in it. There is only judgment and then there is only a removal from any purpose, any connection to anything good, right, true, holy. If we connect our life to sin, we will come to the same end as sin. If we connect our life to Jesus, the Messiah, we will receive glory with Him. So let us repent of sin and have a life of repentance, and let us continue to believe in Jesus Christ. Believe first for that initial joy of receiving the life of God in your soul. But continue in believing and living with the light of God’s life in your soul day by day.

**Vision #8 The Four Chariots: God will send His Messiah to rule the world.**

What a vision this is! Chariots always reference war. What it is, is God showing, “I’m putting an end to sin by making war against the nations.” So all these nations that seem like they’re being successful and mighty and they’re following these false gods, there is going to be a day when God shows His power. Zechariah is shown that day. These four horses go out to the ends of the earth in chapter 6.

 ***4*** *Then I answered and said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?”* ***5*** *And the angel answered and said to me, “These are going out to the four winds of heaven, after presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth.* ***6*** *The chariot with the black horses goes toward the north country, the white ones go after them, and the dappled ones go toward the south country.”* ***7*** *When the strong horses came out, they were impatient to go and patrol the earth. And he said, “Go, patrol the earth.” So they patrolled the earth.* ***8*** *Then he cried to me, “Behold, those who go toward the north country have set my Spirit at rest in the north country.”*

He’s saying that the nations are unable to resist God, once in power He sets this judgment in motion. The nations are like a drop in the bucket to Him, regardless of their military might. They’re nothing compared to God. Revelation 19 is a great chapter to read about the power of the Messiah when He comes and the sword is coming out of His mouth to defeat these nations standing against God.

Has this happened yet? Have the four horses gone out before the whole earth? No, it hasn’t yet. There are still many godless nations. Most of the nations of the world are very godless. God’s Messiah has not yet come to complete this plan. There is yet a future point to Zechariah and to our day, to be completed.

I’m going to close with verses 9-15 because this talks about this Messiah. This is such a fascinating picture! It’s so encouraging! So this summarizes all eight visions. There are three guys living up in Babylon yet. They’re Jewish and they’re coming down because they’ve heard progress is being made in the temple and they’re excited about that. They’re wealthy guys. They have made good businesses up in Babylon. They come down. They have silver and gold. They want to contribute to the temple. So Zechariah is told they’re going to enter into this house of Josiah.

***9*** *And the word of the LORD came to me:* ***10*** *“Take from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon, and go the same day to the house of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah.*

Evidently he is one of the upstanding citizens that are part of this Jerusalem group that now are living in the land, rebuilding the temple. As they come down to the house of Josiah, he says

***11*** *Take from them silver and gold, and make a crown,*

Now remember, they came down to use their money to build the temple and now he’s making a crown. Wait a minute! What would you do if that was you? You have all this money. You come down into the land. The person leading the group, Zechariah and Zerubbabel and Joshua are all part of this. They take your silver and gold. Instead of using it to build the temple, they start making a crown. You would say, “Wait a minute! What are you doing?” They say, “Wait a minute! God told us to do this.” God is in charge of this gift. Then they make this crown and what do they do?

There are two guys, remember these two witnesses we’ve been talking about through this book? There is Zerubbabel, who is sort of the administrative governmental leader and Josiah, who is the high priest. They made this crown and they’re approaching these two men. What are they going to do with it? You expect them to put it on Zerubbabel. He’s from the line of David. He’s in the kingly line. They come to Zerubbabel and put it right on Joshua’s head.

*and set it on the head of Joshua, the son of Jehozadak, the high priest.*

Joshua is from the tribe of Levi. It’s not lawful for a person from the tribe of Levi to be king. There hasn’t been anyone ever in the history of Israel who is from the tribe of Levi, being king. This is a shocker! What in the world? You’re taking the gold crown and you’re putting it on Joshua? He’s the high priest. There is supposed to be a king. There is supposed to be a priest. There is never supposed to be a joining of these two, at least in the nation up to this point. We read further about this. What an amazing thing this is, because it’s a symbol of a king that is going to come who is going to be the high priest. He is going to join these two offices in harmony. He is going to be worthy to be both the high priest and the king in the line of David. He says, “Set it on the head of Joshua.” By the way, what is the New Testament form of the name Joshua? It’s the name Jesus. It’s the same name.

***12*** *And say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Behold, the man whose name is the Branch:*

If you are a Jew living in this day, you’re going to know what this means. If you’re a Christian living in this day, you might say, “What does this mean? I don’t have any understanding.” If you were a Jew, you would have read Isaiah and Jeremiah, especially if you’re a Jew that has been exiled. You’re going to know the recent history. What did Isaiah and Jeremiah say? Let me just take a couple verses for you.

**Isaiah 4:2** In that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious,

This is a passage about the Messiah to come.

**Jeremiah 23:5** “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

They all know this is about a Messiah, the one who is going to bring in this righteousness and peace over the land. He’s sent from God, a special messenger. So now as Josiah is crowned, he is called the Branch. He is not the Branch, able to fulfill all that the Branch does. He is the Branch, symbolically. We know it’s a symbol. How do we know it’s a symbol? Let’s keep reading.

*for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD.*

Right away, Joshua is not rebuilding the temple. It’s Zerubbabel that is rebuilding the temple. This future Branch

***13*** *It is he who shall build the temple of the LORD and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne. And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”’*

That means there is a harmony between the priesthood and the royal office, the priestly office and the royal office. Notice this, now. This is the thing that makes us very aware that this is not about Joshua performing some kingly duty in Zechariah’s day. This is about a future Joshua, a future Messiah.

***14*** *And the crown shall be in the temple of the LORD as a reminder to Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah.*

This is a reminder of what God is going to do and what God promised. So if Joshua is the king, where would the crown be? It would be on his head. He is saying this crown is going to be where? It’s going to be in the temple. So after they crown Joshua to indicate the priest is going to be also the king, they take the crown off of Joshua’s head and they put it in the temple. Joshua doesn’t wear it anymore. Why would it be there? It would be there so that the people, every time they go to the temple, they’re going to see there is a priest-king who is coming. When He comes, all these prophecies that we just saw are going to be absolutely fulfilled. He’s going to bring in a rule of righteousness. He’s going to bring in a rule of peace. He’s going to bring in a rule of blessing. He’s going to build the temple to the Lord. Ezekiel talks about that in the millennial kingdom. He is going to rule the world in majesty. Again, when Jesus came the first time, He was despised and forsaken. When He comes the second time, the Scripture says every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. The nations will gather around and declare Him to be king and Lord and submit to His rule. This is a Messiah who this revelation teaches us will be a priest who mediates between us and God and a king who rules over us. Jesus possesses all the credentials to be our high priest and our king. So what are we to do?

As we consider the promise of a future king that is coming, we recognize that Jesus fulfilled the first part of His mission when He came the first time. He will fulfill the second part of His mission to be a literal king building a real temple in a real place, and building a kingdom. We await His return. What hope there is in the midst of the darkness of this world, to know that a day is coming when the Messiah will come! He will set everything that is upside down, right. He will set everything that is wicked away and bring in righteousness and peace. This is our future! Praise God!