

Lift up your Heads and Worship

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[0 : 0 0] If you could turn now in the Bible, please, to Zechariah. Zechariah chapter 1 and chapter 2.

For those who are visiting, for those who may be missed or even to Zechariah, I know you've got the book that we're most familiar with in the Bible. It's a book of visions.

Zechariah is a fairly young man, we think. He's not exactly sure of his age, but he's a fairly young man and God takes hold of him and begins to speak to him one night through a series of dreams, a series of visions. And visions are not something I think that we find hard to grasp as a concept. We live in an age that's very visual. Much of our lives is taken up with looking at screens. And that's what Zechariah in some ways is doing here.

God is speaking to him at night and then speaking through him to his people. And he's doing it not so much using words, but God is using pictures. He's displaying for Zechariah what he would have him see on various screens. And tonight I'd like us to look at two screens or two visions.

And from that comes two points in application. And I'll just give you the two points to guide us in our thinking. The first point in application is we are encouraged through Zechariah and his first vision to lift up our heads and worship God. Lift up our heads and worship God. And the second vision that Zechariah has, the application that drops out from that vision is an encouragement for us to lift up our tools and work.

[2 : 0 4] So that gives us a structure. First of all, in the first vision from verse 18, and we'll get to the end of chapter 1. Lift up your heads and worship.

What does Zechariah see in this vision? Well, there's really two things that I want to underline in this vision that Zechariah sees. He sees, first of all, four horns.

And then he sees four craftsmen. Four horns, first of all, verse 18. Then I looked up, says Zechariah, and there before me were four horns. I asked the angel who was speaking to me. There was an interpreting angel alongside Zechariah that he's in conversation with, trying to understand these visions.

So Zechariah, he asks the angel who was speaking to me, what are these? He answered me, these are the horns that scatter Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

So we see these four horns. And there's certain things in the Bible that we see repeatedly and we know there's significance in them.

[3 : 1 8] And horns in the Bible always speak about power. When we read about horns, we're seeing a code word for power. In Daniel, that was studied some time ago when we were still in the community centre, we saw that in the visions that Daniel had.

We saw that still Wednesday evening in Psalm 92, I think it was, and horns are symbolic of power.

And so Zechariah, he sees four horns. And the fact that there are four horns signifies that the four directions from which these hostile powers that were attacking God's people came from, the four horns, some of the common haters say, are the significant of the four points of the conference.

And God's people were under attack from all directions. Assyria and Chaldea attacked them from the north.

And Egypt attacked Judah from the south. The Philistines attacked them from the west. Ammon and Moab attacked God's people from the east.

[4 : 37] So what we see here is that God's people were under fire from all directions. That's what Zechariah was seeing in symbolic form in this vision.

And that's what God's people had experienced. And we had experienced it. They were under attack. They were stubborn.

And you know, that's what God's people in a hostile world would always experience. Robert, who was with us this morning, he ventured into the sea.

And we see it again in this vision. And we hear Jesus' words that we so often hear and so often see. Jesus said to his people, his disciples, as they're coming to him, he says, in this world you'll have trouble.

Be aware of it. Ephesians 6 says, for our struggle, Paul's writing to the church of Christ, to Christian believers, and Paul says, for our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

[5 : 59] Zech and I was seeing what God's people were experiencing back then, and God's people have experienced over time in history, and God's people are still experiencing today the fact that from all four directions, there's trouble.

There's struggle. There's a path. And the degrees to which you and I struggle, really, but that's what God's people have been told to expect as an experience.

If we go to India tonight, and we speak to brothers and sisters in Christ, they will tell us about this. in terms that we couldn't bear.

If we go to China tonight, if we go to Pakistan, if we go to Iran, if we go to Iraq, go to Turkey, go to parts of Nigeria, go to Syria, go to Thailand, go to Egypt, the list is almost endless.

That's the experience. Our brothers and sisters in Christ, they're struggling. because there is a spiritual warfare, there is a spiritual attack.

[7 : 22] Now, if that's your experience this evening in your own personal walk, if you feel at present not a sense of peace, but a sense of being under spiritual pressure, don't be discouraged by that.

the devil trying to discourage us with that. But don't be discouraged when you come under and discourage us with that.

Be encouraged because this is evidence in part of the fact that we belong to God. Let me say a contrast to you.

If this is not out of its feelings, if we know nothing of this spiritual struggle, if we know nothing of a struggle and the pressure that comes spiritually upon us, then well, maybe it's because God for a season is shielding us in his mercy.

Maybe. Maybe. But maybe it's because we're not being bold enough in speaking about Jesus.

[8 : 46] Take that on board. I need to take that first. Robert said that this morning, where God is blessed, the devil is missing.

He says, if we don't feel the pressure of the devil against us on our walk, he said, maybe it's because we're traveling the same direction as the enemy.

And we need to take that on board. Sometimes as a church, when things are quiet and settled, often we take that as a good sign.

It's not always a good sign. Sometimes when all is peaceful and the world is not happening and the devil seems to have gone quiet, sometimes it's a sign that we're not reaching out with the gospel.

Day by day, in the places that God has put us, we're not reaching out with the gospel of Jesus Christ as boldly as we should be.

[10 : 11] God has blessed us, he's given us many gifts, even what we stand in. It's a gift from God. A place where we can commit and worship him, and a place from which we can go out with the gospel and encourage more people to come in and hear about Jesus.

When we go out and we have that zeal and determination to win souls for Christ, the devil reacts us. And we feel the harm of Satan against us, as God's people did in 520 BC.

Four words. The second thing we see in this vision, it's a four craftsmen. Then the Lord showed me four craftsmen.

I asked, what are these coming to do? He answered, these are the horns that scattered Judah, so that no one could raise his head. But the craftsmen have come to terrify them and throw down these horns of the nations who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter his people.

So there's the four horns that speak about the oppression against God's people and the fear that was instilled within them. But then Zechariah showed the four craftsmen.

[11 : 43] Someone said to me in the course of the last week, there's good news and there's bad news. What do you want first? I take the bad news first.

I always take the bad news first. And Zechariah in this vision, he's given the bad news that he already knew first. And God showed him the ugliness of the four horns.

But then he quickly shows them the beauty of the four craftsmen who were coming. You know, there's the bad news which makes the good news all the more compelling.

And that's how God works. Now, sometimes we encounter slick salespeople people. They never give us the bad news, they just give us the good news. They don't give us reality.

They just give us a sales pitch. God doesn't give us a sales pitch. He doesn't gloss over spiritual reality. He tells us plainly about the battles that we'll find ourselves in.

[12 : 49] He shows us our sin in a way that drives us to an end of ourselves. us. He shows us the enemy who comes at us to destroy us.

He doesn't hide the bad news from us, but he doesn't leave us to sink into despair. He quickly takes us from the bad news into the good news. He shows us our sin in order to lead us into salvation.

He shows Zechariah the four horns, but he quickly shows him the four craftsmen that would come to throw down these horns. It's an interesting term, craftsman.

Has anyone here got an authorized version of the Bible? Farrakhar. Farrakhar, what's the word for craftsman in the authorized version?

Verse 20. Oh, carpenters. Carpenters. See, an authorized version, the word that's used translated, that the NAB takes as craftsman, is carpenters.

[14 : 00] That should get our minds going, I think. That should get our hearts still in. Now, you know when we think about the term, it's a peculiar term.

When God's people are terrorized by these four horns, we expect that God might send hunters or warriors to attack him and to crush these horns of power.

But no, the Lord shows Zechariah four craftsmen, four carpenters who are going to come and cause the four horns to be cast down.

Where does your mind go when you hear the word carpenters? Does your mind go anywhere when you hear the term carpenters?

I think you should do. Mark chapter 6 verse 3, remember when you saw Jesus, they say, isn't this the carpenter?

[15 : 21] Jesus came. He was the carpenter from Muzzle. So what are we seeing here in this vision?

I think we're seeing some 520 years before Christ came into the world, the gospel beginning to be foreshadowed. I think Zechariah is getting a glimpse into the cosmic battle that Jesus the carpenter was about to step into.

See, the devil, his horn had caused people's heads, God's people's heads, to drop verse 21.

So when Zechariah sees them, when he sees God's people at this point in history, their heads are down. Why does the devil want God's people not to raise their heads verse 21?

Well, the devil wants God's people not to raise their heads so that they won't look to God, so that they won't lift their eyes to the hills to see the one who made the hills, so they won't see God's face, so they won't see God's face, so they won't see his glory, so they won't worship him, so they'll lose their courage, so they'll be terrified and immobilized.

[16 : 52] face. And that's where God's people had been, heads down like a defeated army, heads down like a football team that's losing 10-0.

But Zechariah is being shown, and defeat seems to have settled upon God's people. Zechariah is being shown that the carpenter will come to lift our drooping heads, so that we will see the glory of God in the face of Christ, and we will worship him.

Zechariah is being shown that the carpenter will come, and he will work not so much in the darkness of night visions, but he will work in the darkness of Calvary, and the work the carpenter will do will not be so much a work of taking something and making it out of wood, but the work the carpenter will do will be to hang on a cross of wood, to make an end of all of our sins, and yes, he will suffer, his heel will be bruised, but in doing so, he will crush the horn, he will crush the head of the serpent, and he will secure for God's people eternal victory.

Zechariah was seeing these things in small measure. But tonight, we see these things clearly in Christ.

The carpenter who was foretold, who was foreshadowed here, he did come. The work of salvation that was so necessary that he came to do is finished.

[19 : 11] The victory that was promised has been won. John 22, he has done it.

The horn has been thrown down once and for all, and God's people, who were so terrified and so oppressed are eternally safe in Christ.

So as we see Christ tonight, as I think we are speaking, as we see Christ tonight, as we surveyed his wondrous cross, our hearts should fill with courage and joy, and we should lift up our heights and worship, and we should lift up our voices and praise.

Are you feeling defeated tonight? Are you feeling cast down? feeling like we're under attack, crying, that we just can't survive it?

Don't be discouraged by it. It's what God's people were seeing and experiencing and always will for as long as we are in time.

[20 : 56] But Christ came. God's God's God's love it. He's the one who calls us to lift up our heads and worship.

That's the first vision, the first point. I think it's as much as we're able to go with tonight. God's God's God's God's God's God's love it. Amen.

Amen. Heavenly Father, we thank you for these visions. We thank you for the point of according to Jesus. And we thank you that all that was foretold and did come from pass.

We thank you that although your people in Israel on that day were so much under pressure, so pressed, so hard pressed, they were not defeated and crushed.

But the Savior always promised that we are given. And we thank you that the promise that we are given is that if we trust in him, then we share in the eternal victory that he has won for us at Calvary.

[22 : 19] We know the reality of the spiritual struggle in our own hearts. We feel sometimes the hostility of the world and the devil against us in our daily experience and our living in time.

And yet we thank you, Lord, that you are with us. And you will never leave us nor forsake us. We see, Lord, the effects of sin in us and align us.

We struggle, Lord, to come to terms with the disappointments and the pain that we endure in this world. Even as we come to terms with loss and grief and death, these things are so real and they are so painful.

But we thank you that Jesus came to wage war with the enemy of our soul, to wage war against them, to save us from them, and to give us the assurance of a place in heaven, a place where there's no pain and no suffering and no struggling because there is no sin, no enemy of our soul, a place where you are with your people and each one of us who are in Christ is able to look in wonder, love and praise after our Saviour.

name of us, Lord, we pray to entang Luke and faith to Jesus, so that we will have the assurance that in eternity we will see the wonder and the beauty of his glory and all fullness and that we will be with him and we will even be like him.

[24 : 19] And we ask all this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.