

Horses, Horns & Heavenly Hosts

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Date: 02 May 2021

Preacher: Rev. Murdo M Campbell

[0 : 00] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read, the book of the prophet Zechariah, and chapter 1.

Zechariah chapter 1, and if we read again at verse 7, where we read there, And so on.

We live in troubled times. We live in troubled times. You know, it's a phrase that we often hear when someone is describing the day and generation that we live in.

But the truth is, since the fall of Adam, every generation has said, we live in troubled times. And we're still saying it. And we're still saying it because there's still distress, disorder, disease, decline, destruction, and death.

We live in troubled times. You know, it doesn't matter what generation we live in. Because of our indwelling sin, we live in troubled times.

[1 : 32] But you know, it's what we do and where we go with our trouble. That's what really matters.

That's what's important. Because when we feel unsettled and uncertain and unsure about the future, you know, we can often look to family or friends or finances or even feeble men.

And even though many would want to deny it, the truth is, our help is in the name of the Lord. Our help is in the name of the Lord.

And you know, that's what the Lord's people in Zechariah needed to be reminded and reassured of. Because after living in lockdown in Babylon for 70 years, this returned remnant.

They had now been in the land of Israel for 15 years. But they were still unsettled. They were still uncertain. And they were still unsure of what the future held for them.

They still didn't know what the Lord was doing in their lives. And how the Lord was working in their lives. And that's why Zechariah received all these visions.

[2 : 37] In fact, he received eight visions. Eight visions to encourage this discouraged remnant. And to help them process, plan and even prepare for the future.

And this evening we're going to consider the first three visions of Zechariah. And I want us to think about them under three headings. Three visions under three headings.

Helpful horses, harmful horns and heavenly hosts. Helpful horses, harmful horns and heavenly hosts.

So first of all, helpful horses. Helpful horses. Let's read from verse 7 again. We're told that on the 24th day of the 11th month, which is the month of Shabbat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, saying, I saw in the night and behold a man riding on a red horse.

He was standing among the myrtle trees in the glen. And behind him were red, sorrel and white horses. Now, if you remember last Lord's Day, we considered the context to the book of Zechariah.

[3 : 55] And we learned that Haggai and Zechariah, they were colleagues in the ministry. They had the same call and the same commission to comfort and also to confront God's people with God's word as they began living and looking beyond lockdown.

And with the temple left lying derelict and desolate for 15 years, Haggai and Zechariah, they both began prophesying and proclaiming God's word in the year 520 BC.

Haggai began with a call to rebuild in August 520 BC. And Zechariah, he followed with a command to repent in November 520 BC.

And what's interesting is that both prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, they're both dated to the second year of the reign of King Darius.

King Darius, he was, of course, a Persian king. He was the successor to King Cyrus. But, you know, if we compare the dating of Haggai and Zechariah's prophecies, if we compare them to the dating of Isaiah's prophecy, we see that Isaiah's prophecy was dated according to the descendants

of King David.

[5 : 15] Isaiah chapter 1, verse 1, it reads, The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

Isaiah's ministry, it began before lockdown in Babylon. And it began during the reigns, the reign of Davidic kings.

But Haggai and Zechariah's ministry, it took place after lockdown, during the reign of a heathen or a secular king. And by making this comparison, what we ought to realise is that what's been emphasised to us in the book of Zechariah and also Haggai, is that they were preaching into a day where the spiritual state of the nation was very low.

That in many ways, like we are today, the Israelites, they were being ruled and governed by godless and secular leaders.

And yet the role and the responsibility of the church was to proclaim God's word in their day and generation. You know, it's a reminder to us, Zechariah and Haggai should be an encouragement to us, that even though we have rulers who are secular and godless, we still have the word.

[6 : 42] And we still need to preach the word into our day and generation. But for Zechariah, God's word came in the form of visions.

And as we read, Zechariah saw these visions. He saw them three months after his ministry began, on the 24th day of the 11th month.

Now, according to scholars, this works out as the 15th of February, 519 BC. And so three months into his ministry and about five months into rebuilding and restoring the temple, we see that the Lord spoke to this returned remnant through Zechariah's visions.

Now, in the Old Testament, the Lord not only revealed himself through the law and the prophets, he also revealed himself through dreams and visions.

We have seen dreams in our study of the life of Joseph, where God spoke through dreams. God spoke to Joseph and his family through dreams.

[7 : 48] But the difference between a dream and a vision is that in a dream, the prophet is a passive viewer of what's been revealed. But in a vision, the prophet is an active viewer.

He's able to interact with what he's witnessing in his vision. And that's what we see here in Zechariah. We also see it in Ezekiel and Daniel and also in the book of Revelation.

There's interaction because they're visions and not dreams. But now as those who have received the full and final revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ, what we need to understand is that the canon of Scripture is closed.

Therefore, there's no more laws. There's no more prophecies. There's no more dreams. And there's no more visions that are to be added to Scripture because God's chosen means of communication is his word.

His word that has been written. As the writer to the Hebrews affirms, he says, In these last days, God has spoken through his word. His word, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[9 : 01] Now, Zechariah had eight night visions in one night. It was a very busy night for Zechariah. And in his first vision, he saw helpful horses.

He saw helpful horses. He says in verse 8, I saw in the night, and behold, a man riding on a red horse. He was standing among the myrtle trees in the glen, and behind him were red, sorrel, and white horses.

Then I said, What are these, my Lord? The angel who talked with me said to me, I will show you what they are. So the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered, These are they whom the Lord has sent to patrol the earth.

And they answered the angel of the Lord, who was standing among the myrtle trees, and said, We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth remains at rest.

So Zechariah, he says that he saw a man on a red horse, standing among the myrtle trees. But who was this man?

[10 : 06] Well, we read in verse 11 that he's the angel of the Lord. He's not an angel of the Lord, but he is the angel of the Lord, which is important.

Because, you know, we often say that large doors, they swing on small hinges. But in this case, large theological truths, they swing on small words.

And this is one example, because an angel of the Lord is any angel of the Lord. But the angel of the Lord is the Lord himself. He's the covenant king.

He's the second person of the Trinity. He's the Son of God. He's a pre-incarnate Christ. He's the Lord Jesus Christ. So the angel of the Lord is King Jesus.

And so when you read through the Old Testament, and the angel of the Lord is mentioned, we see that he is King Jesus. It's King Jesus.

[11:06] The angel of the Lord appeared to men like Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Elijah, and Isaiah. He is the angel of the Lord. And so it's King Jesus that Zechariah sees in his vision.

He sees him on a red horse, standing among the myrtle trees. Now, the reason Jesus is standing among the myrtle trees is because the myrtle was a beautiful tree.

It had fragrant dark green leaves and scented white flowers. And the myrtle tree, it was often used in Israel to make a headpiece that would be worn by a bride on her wedding.

And so the myrtle tree was a symbol of blessing and a symbol of fruitfulness. And that's what King Jesus is proclaiming to his people. He's promising to his people.

He's promising them blessing and fruitfulness. But notice where King Jesus is standing among the myrtle trees. We read that he's standing in the glen.

[12:15] He's in the ravine. Or he's in, literally, he's in the bottom. Literally, it means he's in the depths. He's in the depths. The Lord is down in the depths.

King Jesus is down in the depths because his people are down in the depths. He's down in the depths because his people are down in the depths.

They're unsettled. They're uncertain. They're unsure about the future. And his people are down in the depths. And they're actually echoing the words that we were singing in Psalm 130.

Lord, from the depths, to thee I cry. My voice, Lord, do thou hear. Unto my supplications voice give an attentive ear.

They're down in the depths. But the amazing thing is, King Jesus is down in the depths with them. He's down in the depths with them. And he's promising prosperity to his people and blessing to his bride.

[13:13] And, you know, that's the wonder of who King Jesus is. Whether we're living in the 5th century BC or the 21st century AD, the wonder is our King Jesus, he doesn't leave us in the depths of depression and despair on our own.

No, he comes to comfort us. He comes to strengthen and sustain us. He comes with his promises, his promises of blessing to his bride.

He comes to us when we're down in the depths. That's the wonder of our Jesus, my friend. But, you know, there's more because we're told that standing behind King Jesus were red sorrel and white horses.

Now, these horses and their angelic riders, they're not to be confused with the four horsemen in the book of Revelation. They're often referred to as the four horsemen of the apocalypse.

But the word apocalypse, it means revelation or vision. But Zechariah's angelic horsemen, they're not to be confused or compared with the four horsemen of the apocalypse because they're completely different.

[14:31] They're different because, as we read, the angel of the Lord or King Jesus, he is on a red horse.

Literally, the colour of the horse was blood red, symbolising bloodshed and war and judgement. The white horses, they symbolised purity, victory, joy and peace.

But then the sorrel colour, which was a yellowy-brown colour, it symbolised what John L. Mackay described in his commentary.

He said, a mixed state of affairs, a place of limbo, where there's neither bloodshed nor healing, neither war nor peace, neither victory nor defeat.

It's a place of limbo. And as you'd expect, Zechariah, seeing his first vision, he couldn't work out what it actually meant. And so the Lord had to explain to Zechariah in verse 11, saying, we have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth remains at rest.

[15:42] All the earth remains at rest. And you know, as the commander-in-chief, King Jesus, he sent out his red, white, and sorrel horses with their angelic riders, he sent them out throughout the earth to inspect what's happening.

And the report they bring back is that all the earth is at rest. All the earth is at rest. I don't know, on the surface, it sounds so promising, because the earth is at rest.

It's peaceful. There's no world wars. There's only world peace. There's peace between countries, peace between communities, peace among churches. And you know, is that not what we want to see?

Do we not want to see world peace? But the thing is, this world peace wasn't the peace of the Prince of Peace. It wasn't the peace of the Prince of Peace, because the Prince of Peace says, he says in verse 15, I am exceedingly angry with the nations that are at ease or at peace.

For while I was angry, but a little, they furthered the disaster. The peace of the nations wasn't a gospel peace.

[16:59] It was a godless peace. Because the nations, they had this careless concern and a careless commitment to the kingdom of God. They had a careless concern and a careless commitment to the kingdom of God.

There was a lack of interest and a lack of involvement with the people of God. They were at ease in their sin. And they had no interest in the saviour. And you know, with this return remnant so unsettled and so uncertain and so unsure about their future, and with this overwhelming opposition and obstacles, it left them feeling so small.

They felt small thinking that they're irrelevant and they're insignificant to the world around them. And they thought, well, what's the point? What's the point?

We're not getting anywhere. We might as well give up. But you know, I love how the Lord comes to his bride, the church, and he speaks, as we're told, gracious and comforting words.

And he says to them, don't give up. Thus says the Lord, I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy. My house shall be built in it, declares the Lord of hosts, and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem.

[18:24] Cry out again, thus says the Lord of hosts, my city shall again overflow with prosperity, and the Lord will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.

You know, don't you just love that? Our King Jesus, he comes to us when we're unsettled, uncertain, and unsure about the future, when we're overwhelmed by opposition and obstacles, thinking that we're so small and so irrelevant and so insignificant, and he comes to us and he invites us to come to him.

He invites us to come to him. And you know, is that not what he says to us in the gospel? Come to me. Come to me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

That's the invitation that's being held out here. That when we're uncertain and unsure and even unsettled with all that's going on around us, we're to come to Jesus with it.

And so we witness helpful horses, but then secondly, harmful horns. Harmful horns. So helpful horses and harmful horns.

[19:42] Now look at verse 18. It says, And I lifted my eyes and saw and behold four horns. And I said to the angel who talked with me, What are these? And he said to me, These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

Then the Lord showed me four craftsmen, and I said, What are these coming to do? He said, These are the horns that scattered Judah, so that no one raised his head. And these have come to terrify them, to cast down the horns of the nations who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter it.

So Zechariah's second vision was a vision of four horns. And as you know, horns, they're mentioned throughout the Bible. There was a ram's horn that was blown to mark the beginning of the Jewish New Year.

There were also four horns on the altar of incense and the altar of sacrifice in the temple. Horns are mentioned throughout the Bible. But in the Bible, horns are a symbol of strength, power, and authority.

A horn is a symbol of strength, power, and authority. Which is why Zechariah, he asks an angel of the Lord, not the angel of the Lord this time, he says, What are these?

[21:03] And the angel explains, These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. Now, these four horns in Zechariah's vision, they are closely related to the four beasts mentioned in Daniel's vision in Daniel chapter 7.

In fact, it seems that the four beasts and the four horns are the same message. It's a message Daniel received when living in lockdown in Babylon, and it's also a message that Zechariah received looking beyond lockdown in Babylon.

Because what we see is that the four beasts and the four horns, they were four empires that the Lord used in history as part of his perfect plan and purpose for the people of God and the proclamation of the gospel.

The four beasts, my friend, and the four horns, they are the four empires which the Lord used in history as part of his perfect plan and purpose for the people of God and the proclamation of the gospel.

Four beasts, four horns, which are four empires. There was the Babylonian Empire, the Persian Empire, the Greek Empire, and the Roman Empire.

[22 : 29] And as you know, the Lord used the Babylonian Empire in order to chasten and challenge the Lord's people to covenant faithfulness. The Lord called them to repent.

And in 605 BC, as we looked at this last Lord's Day, it was then that the Israelites were invaded, they were taken captive to live in lockdown in Babylon for 70 years, and they were there under the rule and reign of King Nebuchadnezzar.

But then in 539 BC, the Babylonian Empire, it fell to the Persian Empire. And the Persian Empire was raised up under the authority and the power and the strength of King Cyrus.

And as we said last Lord's Day, the Lord used King Cyrus both to free and to finance the Israelites when they were sent back to the promised land of Israel.

And so when the remnant returned to rebuild and restore and renew and rededicate their commitment to the Lord, as we saw in the opening verses of Zechariah, the people repented.

[23 : 38] The Lord said, return to me and I will return to you. And so the people, they returned not only to the land but they also returned to the Lord. But as we said, Zechariah's visions were to give this unsettled, unsure and uncertain remnant, it was to give them comfort and assurance about their future.

And that the Lord's care, his concern and his commitment to his people, it hadn't changed. Despite the passing of time, despite all these horns that were rising up and falling and scattering the people, the Lord was still the same.

The Lord was still there to care for his people and comfort his people and the Lord was still committed to his people. And then we see the third horn because about 200 years after Zechariah's prophecy, the Persian Empire fell in 331 BC and they fell to the Greek Empire.

And it was during the Greek Empire that the Lord used the influence of Alexander the Great. He used his influence so that there would be one common language throughout the Greek Empire.

They had a common language. It was called Koine Greek or Common Greek. It was a common language that was used throughout the Empire. It was an international language.

[25 : 07] It was the language of the marketplace. And that had an impact and an influence upon the Jews because for many of them their first language wasn't Hebrew or Aramaic.

Their first language was Koine Greek. And when the New Testament was written we see that it wasn't written in Hebrew like the Old Testament. The New Testament was written in Koine Greek so that it would have an international audience.

And then we see that in 146 BC at the Battle of Corinth the Greek Empire which had risen to power they then fell and the Roman Empire arose to power.

And it was while the Roman Empire was in power that 250,000 miles of road were built creating passageways into Europe.

Jesus as you know he was born during the Roman Empire which is why he was crucified. He was crucified using the form of capital punishment that was meted out by the Romans.

[26 : 18] And yet it's always amazing that we have prophecies about Jesus' crucifixion. We have all these prophecies given centuries before Jesus hung upon the cross for our sin.

And it was these prophecies were given long before crucifixion was even invented. But as we said the four beasts in Daniel's vision and the four horns in Zechariah's vision they emphasise the strength and power and authority of these four empires.

These four empires that the Lord used in history as part of his perfect plan and purpose for the people of God and the proclamation of the gospel.

I always find it incredible when you consider the history of the church of God. When you consider history my friend you see so clearly that it's his story it's God's story it's God's story of redemption because what we see is that by the time Jesus issues his great commission by the time the Babylonian Empire and the Persian Empire and the Greek Empire and now the Roman Empire by the time the Roman Empire is sort of drawing to its conclusion Jesus issues his great commission to go from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria to the uttermost parts of the earth and the wonderful thing was by then there was one common language for the gospel to be written in and spoken about and there were all these roads all these roads spreading out from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the earth for the gospel to travel upon and to spread into Europe and my friend we tonight here in Barboursville and beyond we are the beneficiaries of these four horns we are the beneficiaries of God's perfect plan and purpose for the people of God and the proclamation of the gospel and you know it should be a reminder and a reassurance to us that when kingdoms and empires and governments and rulers when they rise and when they fall they do so at the Lord's command it's all at the Lord's command because heaven is his throne and the earth is his footstool all these empires and nations and governments and rulers they rise and fall at his command and you know when we think about that in relation to our up and coming election you know whoever is elected prime minister and whoever becomes our first minister it's all according to the supreme and sovereign appointment of the Lord he is the one who is ruling over and over ruling in every decision and every election and everything that's going on in our world our responsibility my friend is to remain faithful and to remain prayerful our responsibility as Christians in our day and generation is to remain faithful and to remain prayerful and you know what better encouragement for a discouraged remnant who were unsettled uncertain and unsure about their future what better encouragement to receive than to know that the Lord of hosts is on our side the Lord of hosts is on our side and that brings us to consider lastly heavenly hosts heavenly hosts heavenly hosts heavenly hosts look at verse 1 of chapter 2 and I lifted my eyes and saw and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand then I said where are you going and he said to me to measure Jerusalem to see what its width and what is its length and behold the angel who talked with me came forward and another angel came forward to meet him and said to him run say to that young man

Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls because of the multitude of people and livestock in it and I will be to her a wall of fire around declares the Lord and I will be the glory in her midst you know chapter 2 it opens with Zechariah's third vision which is a man with a measuring line and it closely relates to what we read actually in chapter 1 and verse 16 therefore thus says the Lord I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy my house shall be built in it declares the Lord of hosts and the measuring line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem now the man with the measuring line he isn't the same man who was among the myrtle trees he's not the angel of the Lord he's not the Lord he's not King Jesus but what Zechariah sees in his vision is one of the returned remnant he sees a builder a builder who has come with his measuring line but the builder hasn't come to measure the temple because well the restoration project of rebuilding the temple it's already underway this builder instead he has come with his measuring line to measure the city of Jerusalem to determine its width and its length now this vision was an important encouragement to this discouraged remnant who were unsettled and uncertain and unsure about their future and it was important because one of the things which left this returned remnant always on edge was the possibility of another invasion there was always the possibility of another invasion it had been less than 60 years since the

[32 : 38] Babylonians had invaded the city of Jerusalem destroying the temple and ransacking the palace and tearing the walls of Jerusalem to the ground that was in 586 BC and now in 520 BC this small remnant who had returned to the city of Jerusalem they returned to rebuild the temple but their greatest worry was that they had no defence system they had no walls and they had no army and so they felt exposed and they were afraid that they'd be invaded again and with such a small number of God's people many of them could see that they didn't have the manpower they didn't have the resources they didn't have the finance to restore the temple and to restrain their enemies and to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem Jerusalem and the result was that many of them they had a defeatist and a negative attitude and they just said well what's the point why should we bother we're not going to get anywhere anyway and you know my friend we can have that same defeatist and negative attitude when it comes to building

God's kingdom we can look at the church in our day and generation and we can see that she's small and she's weak and she's fragile and we can think well what's the point we might as well close up shop why should we bother but you know what we forget is what this returned remnant forgot the Lord of hosts is on our side the Lord of hosts is on our side you know everyone loves Psalm 46 because it's a favourite Psalm and it's in Psalm 46 that we are reminded that God is our refuge and our strength in straight suppressing day therefore although the earth removed we will not be afraid but Psalm 46 it concludes explaining why God is our refuge and our strength it says our God who is the

Lord of hosts is still upon our side the God of Jacob our refuge forever will abide you see my friend the reason God is our refuge and our strength is because he is the Lord of hosts he is the Lord of hosts he is the Lord Almighty he's the Lord of the armies of heaven he's the commander in chief of all the heavenly hosts therefore my friend why do we live our lives uncertain and unsettled and unsure about the future why do we focus upon all the opposition and the obstacles why do we focus on these things and not the opportunities why do we see the problems and not the provision and the promises you know because the promise my friend the promise is the Lord of hosts is on our side the Lord of hosts is on our side and that's the hope and the assurance which is given to us here that's what we read in verse four where it says the Lord said to him run say to that young man Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls because of the multitude of people and livestock in it and I will be to her a wall of fire around declares the Lord and I will be the glory in her midst you know although the walls of Jerusalem they wouldn't be rebuilt for another 80 years under the leadership and direction of Nehemiah and yet the man with the measuring line measuring the width and the length of Jerusalem he's informed that Jerusalem is going to be a city without walls it's going to be a city without walls because the Lord is going to be a wall of fire around them the Lord is going to be a wall of fire around them and what the Lord was asserting and assuring this returned remnant is the promise of his protection he's a consuming fire isn't he the Lord is a pillar of fire and he promises here that he's going to be a wall of fire around his people it's a promise of protection it's a promise of protection and you know this is something

Isaiah prophesied about nearly 200 years earlier and you know it's one of those promises of God's word that I often go back to and I often cling to it's in Isaiah 54 verse 17 no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper and every tongue that shall rise up against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn for this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their righteousness is of me saith the Lord it's a wonderful promise and it's a promise of the Lord's protection of his people but more than that the Lord promises not only his protection he also promises his presence amongst his people because the thing is the Lord's people are precious to the Lord you're precious to the Lord if you're one of the Lord's people tonight you are precious to the Lord and he says about you as he says in verse 8 you are the apple of my eye precious in God's sight precious in God's sight and you know what the Lord said to his church then and his church now is I will be a wall of fire around her and the glory in the midst of her

[38 : 42] I will be a wall of fire around her and the glory in the midst of her as you know for generations the Lord he dwelt amongst his people in the form of a glory cloud or the Shekinah glorious as the rabbis called it it was the glory cloud and that glory cloud had led the children of Israel through the wilderness into the promised land it was that glory cloud which rested in the holy of holies in the tabernacle and in the temple but the Lord's promise of protection and his presence it's made more personal here he says I will be to her a wall of fire all around and I will be the glory in her midst it's made more personal here personal to the church because the thing is when the temple was finally rebuilt in 516

BC the glory cloud the Shekinah glory of God it never returned the glory wasn't in the midst of the people like it had been in Solomon's temple and because the glory cloud never returned to the second temple to the new temple for generations the Lord's people they thought that the Lord had abandoned them but the Lord's promise of his glorious presence the Lord's promise that he would be a wall of fire around them and that his glory would be in the midst of them the Lord's promise of his glorious presence it was to appear not in the form of the cloud but in the form of the Christ the glorious presence of God was to appear not in the form of the cloud but in the form of the Christ and that's what John tells us in his gospel he tells us that the word who was in the beginning with God and who was God that same word became flesh and dwelt among us the angel of the

Lord became flesh the angel of the Lord on the red horse among the myrtle trees he became flesh and dwelt among us he tabernacled among us he made his presence among us why so that we would behold his glory the glory as of the only begotten of the father full of grace and truth full of grace and truth I will be a wall of fire around her and my glory shall be in the midst of her and you know my friend the wonderful thing about this promise a promise that points to Jesus the wonderful thing is that the promise of the Lord's presence is not only with his people it's within his people it's within his people he dwells in us by his holy spirit he makes his dwelling among us and in us and because of this we have the promise and the assurance of his protection of his presence his provision and his prosperity we have all these great and precious promises given to us because of his glory that is in the midst of us as Paul says it's through Christ that all the walls have come down that middle wall of partition has come down it's through

Christ that there are no longer barriers and boundaries to the gospel it's through Christ that the invitation is to whosoever and it's through Christ that the promise to the remnant is that there will be growth there will be expansion the mustard seed will flourish it will have small beginnings but it will flourish from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria to the uttermost parts of the earth and it will flourish my friend because the Lord of hosts the angel of the Lord on the red horse among the myrtle trees he has said in his word he has said on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it this is the wonder of God's promises to us that even though we may think we're small and insignificant you know the Lord has a plan he has a purpose in all that he's doing and he is working it all together for good and ultimately for his glory that his glory would be in the midst of us oh my friend you might look in the day at the day and generation that we live in and you might mourn over this day and generation and think we live in troubled times but there have been troubled times since the beginning and you know you might feel uncertain about the future and unsettled about the future and unsure about what the future holds for God's people and God's kingdom but you know the wonderful truth remains and it remains tonight the God of the 46th Psalm he is still enthroned on high heaven is his throne the earth is his footstone and as the psalmist says our God who is the Lord of hosts is still upon our side the God of

Jacob our refuge forever will abide my friend don't lose heart the Lord is on his throne the Lord is on his throne may the Lord bless these thoughts to us and let us pray together oh Lord our gracious God may give thanks for the encouragement in thy word thy word that reminds us that thou art still enthroned on high and that even though we may look at the powers and the superpowers of this world that seem to have so many forces and so many armies and so much power and influence upon people and yet we give thanks that there is nothing to thee that kingdoms and empires rise and fall at thine own word and that as the psalmist says he in heaven sits shall laugh the Lord shall scorn them all oh Lord we marvel at thine own sovereignty and the glory of God help us we pray to fear thee to realize that thou art sovereign thou art supreme thou art one who is in control and a [45 : 53] God who is doing all things well help us then to trust thee to trust thee with all things even the church to realize that it has not been built by men but it has been built by our king king Jesus and he is saying to us tonight that I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it oh Lord encourage us we pray keep us we ask keep us faithful to the end and ever looking to Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith cleanse us we pray for Jesus sake amen well we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this evening by singing the words in psalm 46 psalm 46 in the sing psalms version and we're going to sing the last two verses psalm 46 from verse 10 be still and know that I am God on earth exalted high and all the nations of the world my name will glorify the Lord almighty is with us to strengthen and sustain for Jacob's God our strong defense and fortress will remain these verses of psalm 46 to God's praise peace still and know that I am God on earth exalted high and all the nations of the world my name my name will glorify the Lord almighty is with us to strengthen and sustain and sustain or take us from our strong defense and fortress will remain our and our

Lord our and and to our oh and how