

Zechariah 1:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white.

Analysis

The first vision begins: 'I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white.' The night vision suggests divine revelation through dreams. The 'man' on the red horse likely represents the Angel of the LORD (pre-incarnate Christ, v. 11). Red may symbolize war/judgment; speckled (or brown/sorrel) and white suggest variety. Myrtle trees in the 'bottom' (valley) create the scene. This mysterious vision introduces angelic reconnaissance reporting world conditions to God.

Historical Context

Myrtle trees (Hebrew: *hadas*) grew in Palestine's valleys and produced fragrant leaves. They symbolized peace and divine favor (Isa. 41:19; 55:13). The bottom/valley setting suggests a secluded, protected place. Ancient Near Eastern kings sent reconnaissance scouts to assess conditions; this vision portrays heaven's similar intelligence gathering. The multiple horses suggest angelic agents reporting to the LORD's representative.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does this vision of angelic reconnaissance assure us that God comprehensively knows world conditions?
2. What does the man on the red horse (likely Christ) standing among myrtle trees teach us about His presence with His people?

Interlinear Text

סוס ים	על	רכב	איש	והנה	הל לילה	כא יתיו
horse	riding	and behold a man	I saw	by night		
H5483	H7392	H376	H2009	H3915	H7200	
אשר	ההדס ים	בין	עמד	והוא	אדם ים	
among the myrtle trees	and he stood	him were there red				
H834	H1918	H5975	H996	H1931	H122	
שרק ים	אדם ים	סוס ים	ואחרי	במצלה		
speckled	him were there red	horse	and behind	that were in the bottom		
H8320	H122	H5483	H310	H4699		
					ולבנים:	
					and white	
					H3836	

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 6:4 (Parallel theme): And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

Revelation 2:1 (Parallel theme): Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

Isaiah 41:19 (Parallel theme): I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together:

Isaiah 55:13 (Parallel theme): Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Zechariah 13:7 (Parallel theme): Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.