

## ZECHARIAH: GOD'S PRESENT DIRECTIVES AND FUTURE HOPE

### III: God's Promise To Destroy Judah's Gentile Oppressors

(Zechariah 1:18-21)

#### I. Introduction

- A. Zechariah along with Haggai called the returning Hebrews back to rebuilding the temple, and he gave God's directives and future hope. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the Book of Zechariah," p. 1310)
- B. Zechariah 1:18-21 presents the second prophetic vision on the judgment of the Gentiles and Israel's restoration and the institution of the Messianic Kingdom. (Merrill F. Unger, Zechariah, 1974, p. 25)
- C. This second vision is about four horns and four craftsmen – the horns representing entities that scattered and oppressed Judah, Israel and Jerusalem, and the four craftsmen representing those entities that God would use to destroy the horns that scattered and oppressed His people. We view the passage for insight and application:

#### II. God's Promise To Destroy Judah's Gentile Oppressors, Zechariah 1:18-21.

- A. Since the first vision of the red-horse rider among the myrtle trees in the ravine expressed God's anger against the Gentile nations for their oppression of Israel, this second vision built on that theme to express God's consequent punishment of Israel's Gentile oppressors, *Ibid.*, p. 35.
- B. Accordingly, the second vision initially presented four horns, and the angel speaking with Zechariah explained that they represented the entities that had scattered [and mistreated] Judah, Israel and Jerusalem, Zechariah 1:18-19. We identify the horns as four successive Gentile nations that run through "the times of the Gentiles:"
  1. To help us identify these horns, we presume that "the scope of this vision is the same as that of the other seven night visions (Zech. 1:7-6:8). All of them (and this one is no exception) extend through the centuries and on to the establishment of the [Messianic] kingdom over Israel. All of them have their fulfillment in events preparatory to the setting up of that kingdom or to the established order which will prevail in the millennium itself," *Ibid.*, p. 37.
  2. Thus, the "four horns then must symbolize the four great powers which will be coterminous [parallel] with 'the times of the Gentiles' (Luke 21:24), which period began with Judah's captivity under Nebuchadnezzar (605 B. C.) and runs to the second advent of Christ," *Ibid.* These powers are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Macedonian Greece and Rome, *Ibid.* (cf. Daniel 2:36-43).
  3. The fourth horn, representing Rome, has not yet been destroyed, but has subsided in power, but it will be revived in the future Great Tribulation Period under the antichrist, Daniel 2:44a; Revelation 13:1-10.
- C. After presenting the horns, God showed Zechariah four "craftsmen" (NIV, ESV) who would terrify and cast down the four Gentile nations that had oppressed Israel, Zech. 1:20-21. We thus explain these craftsmen:
  1. Since the four horns represent four successive Gentile empires that span "the times of the Gentiles" from Judah's fall to Babylon to the Messianic Kingdom, the four craftsmen "must represent four successive powers likewise running coterminously [parallel] with the very same period and used by God to terrify and to cast down the enemies of God's people," *Ibid.*, p. 40.
  2. Daniel 2:31-45 with 7:2-13 teach that "three of the horns in turn and under the punitive hand of God *become*" craftsmen, "while the fourth and last horn is cast down by the world-wide kingdom set up by . . . Christ" who returns "to dash in pieces His enemies who are . . . His peoples' enemies (Ps. 2:1-12). Thus the first horn (Babylon) is cast down by Medo-Persia, the second horn. The second horn (Medo-Persia), accordingly becomes the first" craftsman. "The second horn (Medo-Persia) is cast down by the third horn, and thus becomes the second" craftsman. "The third horn (Macedonian Greece) is in turn cast down by the fourth horn (Rome), which thus becomes the third" craftsman. "The fourth horn (Rome), the most dreadful of all, *does not become a*" craftsman "but in its revived ten-kingdom form of the last days is destroyed by the fourth" craftsman, "*the millennial kingdom* set up by the returning 'King of kings and Lord of lords' (Rev. 19:16," *Ibid.* The Millennial Kingdom is seen in Daniel 2:37-45 as the stone cut from the mountain that destroys the image that represents the previous successive Gentile oppressors of Israel.

***Lesson:*** Due to God's anger at four successive Gentile empires that have scattered and oppressed His people as "horns," these empires will themselves be terrified and destroyed by four "craftsmen," successive empires that God will use to punish each of Israel's oppressive empires, with Christ destroying the last oppressive empire of Rome.

***Application:*** (1) May we not mistreat the Hebrew people, for the Abrahamic Covenant of Genesis 12:1-3 still holds so that God will punish those who oppress them. (2) May we hope in Christ's coming Kingdom blessings!