

God Remembered
Zechariah 1:18-21
Chapter 3
"The Horns and Smiths"

Then I looked up and saw four horns. So I asked the angel who was speaking with me. "What are these?"

And he said to me, "These are the horns that scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem."

Then the Lord showed me four craftsmen. I asked, "What are they coming to do?"

He replied, "These are the horns that scattered Judah so no one could raise his head. These craftsmen have come to terrify them, to cut off the horns of the nations that raised a horn against the land of Judah to scatter it." **Zechariah 1:18-21**

God has promised to keep the nation of Israel safe through all the trials and tribulations that she will face throughout her history. Even in the tiny nation's darkest days, God has preserved them through the fire. This is the overall theme in the prophetic book of *Zechariah*. While God has indeed punished His chosen people for their rebellion, He is also very aware of the satanic persecution of Israel. The devil has endeavored to destroy Israel from the earliest onset, for he knew that the Messiah, Yeshua (Jesus), The Great Deliverer Himself would one day descend from the line of Abraham.

A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. She was pregnant and cried out in labor and agony as she was about to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven: There was a great fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads were seven crowns. Its tail swept away a third of the stars in heaven and hurled them to the earth. And the dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she did give birth it might devour her child. She gave birth to a Son, a male who is going to rule all nations with an iron rod. Her child was caught up to God and to his throne. The woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared by God, to be nourished there for 1,260 days. **Revelation 12:1-6**

When Zechariah saw the vision of the four horns he was not only seeing into Israel's recent past, but also into the distant future. For God laid out before him the plight of the nation of Israel beginning with the Babylonian captivity and stretching all the way to the last kingdom of men upon the earth. This period of time is referred to in Scripture as "The Times of the Gentiles," and it marks a long swath of history in which the tiny nation of Israel will be trampled upon and dominated by the kingdoms of men.

The times of the Gentiles began with the destruction of Jerusalem, and subsequent Babylonian captivity, and will culminate when the last empire ruled by the antichrist will finally be destroyed at the coming of Christ. Until then, Israel will never truly be free of her tormentors. We can see today for ourselves the despicable hatred directed toward the descendants of Abraham. Make no mistake. The nations of this world despise Israel because they are satanically inspired to do so. The great dragon has been trying to devour the chosen people as far back as the days of Abraham himself. So we should not be surprised to learn that anti-semitism is on the rise, even within our own country.

One of Israel's greatest defenders has been the true church of Jesus Christ. But sadly, Christian influence is waning in this wicked world, for the Church itself is shrinking in number. This too has been foretold in Scripture, for Paul wrote of a great falling away from the faith prior to the coming of the antichrist.

Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him: We ask you, brothers and sisters, not to be easily upset or troubled, either by a prophecy or by a message or by a letter supposedly from us, alleging that the day of the Lord has come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way. For that day will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he sits in God's temple, proclaiming that he himself is God. **2 Thessalonians 2:1-4**

As the influence of the Church fades and the nations become more and more apostate, the hatred of the Jews will increase to the point when the antichrist will do his very best to exterminate them from the face of the earth. Those who refuse to worship him will be mercilessly slaughtered in a holocaust even more brutal than that of Hitler's Nazi regime or the bloody reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. We must always bear in mind that The LORD keeps His promises, and therefore, all who would curse the descendants of Abraham will find themselves accursed in the end. This is the message of Zechariah's vision of the four horns and the subsequent four "smiths" or "craftsmen". To all who would raise their hand against Israel, God will in turn raise up a mighty warrior to strike them down.

So, just who are these "horns" who would scatter and devour the nation of Israel? They are the very same nations that the book of *Daniel* reveals to us, when he interpreted the dream of the Babylonian Monarch, Nebuchadnezzar. The four horns are the four empires that have mercilessly exercised dominion over the Israelites for centuries. In order, they are Babylon, Medo-Persia (who were in power in Zechariah's day), as well as two dynasties Zechariah never saw in his lifetime, namely Greece and Rome. Each of these kingdoms were thrown to the ground by their successors, save the Roman Empire, which literally fell apart from the inside out. But Daniel prophesied that one day, a master craftsman would come to obliterate that remaining empire as well!

Modern day Europe is now the disjointed remnant of the ancient Roman empire. The anti-christ will rise to power in the last days to revive and re-establish Rome. And when Rome once again raises its hand against the people of God, the Prophet Daniel speaks of the time when it too shall be shattered to pieces.

A fourth kingdom will be as strong as iron; for iron crushes and shatters everything, and like iron that smashes, it will crush and smash all the others. You saw the feet and toes, partly of a potter's fired clay and partly of iron — it will be a divided kingdom, though some of the strength of iron will be in it. You saw the iron mixed with clay, and that the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly fired clay — part of the kingdom will be strong, and part will be brittle. You saw the iron mixed with clay —the peoples will mix with one another but will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with fired clay.

"In the days of those kings, the God of the heavens will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, and this kingdom will not be left to another people. It will crush all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, but will itself endure forever. You saw a stone break off from the mountain without a hand touching it, and it crushed the iron, bronze, fired clay, silver, and gold. The great God has told the king what will happen in the future. The dream is certain, and its interpretation reliable."

Daniel 2:40-45

So we know for certain which nations the four horns of Zechariah's vision represent. Horns are symbolic of power in the Scriptures, so the horns represent the empires or world powers who would terrorize the Jews during the times of the Gentiles. But who are the four smiths, or craftsmen in the vision? These are the ones who are responsible for the ultimate downfall of these world empires. God in His sovereignty has and will raise up mighty men for the purpose of subduing all the nations who would be a curse upon His chosen people. Remember His promise to Abraham, **"I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt"** (Genesis 12:3).

So the craftsmen are those mighty men whom God raised up to defeat the same nations who treated Israel with contempt. The Babylonians were overthrown by Cyrus The Great, the mighty Persian king whose armies conquered Babylon in a single night (***Daniel 5***). The second craftsman was none other than Alexander The Great whose swift and mighty armies overthrew the Medo-Persian empire in 331 BC.

The third craftsman would have been the Roman commander Pompey (and others) who defeated the Greeks in 146 BC. The Romans took their time in overthrowing Greece, and eventually, wore down the Grecian defenses by their continuous assaults on the empire. The Greek commander Pyrrhus won battle after battle against the Romans, but the cost upon his armies eventually led to their downfall. So while he won many battles, he eventually lost the war. This is why a win that ends up costing more than it was worth is now called a "Pyrrhic victory."

The final craftsman who will ultimately defeat the revived Roman Empire is yet to come upon the scene to wage the final battle and bring an end to the times of the Gentiles. When the anti-christ comes to power, Rome will once again rise from its slumber. A ten nation confederacy will coalesce around this powerful demonic leader in an attempt to dominate the entire world. Many will be seduced by the persuasive power of Satan's puppet leader, much like the multitudes flocked to Adolph Hitler in Nazi Germany. The antichrist will promise peace and prosperity (***1 Thessalonians 5:3***), but he will deliver nothing of the sort. He will even make a covenant with the nation of Israel and will rebuild their temple upon Mount Moriah. But three and one half years into that agreement, he will set up an image of himself within the temple and command all to worship him as God. The Scriptures refer to this wicked act as ***"the abomination of desolation."*** (***Daniel 9:27***). Jesus warns of this time in ***Matthew 24***:

"So when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place" (let the reader understand). "then those in Judea must flee to the mountains. A man on the housetop must not come down to get things out of his house, and a man in the field must not go back to get his coat. Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days! Pray that your escape may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. For at that time there will be great distress, the kind that hasn't taken place from the beginning of the world until now and never will again.
Matthew 24:15-21

So the persecution that will take place during the final Gentile kingdom will be worse than all that has come before it. All who refuse to worship the beast (antichrist) and take his mark will be executed, thus once more, the people of God will fall into in dire persecution and contempt. But this will last but for a season.

The antichrist will reign in his kingdom for seven years, a period of time known as "The Tribulation." This period will culminate with God sending forth His ultimate "Craftsman" to cut off the antichrist's "horn of power". And that final Craftsman is none other than Christ Jesus Himself, the King of kings and Lord of lords. He is the Stone that was cut out from the mountain, a metaphor for being the only begotten Son of God. He was not cut out by human hands as Daniel prophesied, but rather, He was with God, and He was God (***John 1:1***). When Christ returns, the suffering of Israel will be forever ended. And a remnant of the Jews, who refused the mark of the beast, will turn to Christ in repentance. This is called the Great and terrible day of The LORD in Scripture and will lead to the reclamation of Israel and its salvation.

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord. "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Write on a scroll all the words that I have spoken to you, for look, the days are coming" — this is the Lord's declaration — "when I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel and Judah," says the Lord. "I will restore them to the land I gave to their ancestors and they will possess it."

These are the words the Lord spoke to Israel and Judah. This is what the Lord says:

**We have heard a cry of terror,
of dread — there is no peace.**

**Ask and see
whether a male can give birth.
Why then do I see every man
with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor
and every face turned pale?**

**How awful that day will be!
There will be no other like it!
It will be a time of trouble for Jacob,
but he will be saved out of it.**

**On that day—
this is the declaration of the Lord of Armies—
I will break his yoke from your neck
and tear off your chains,
and strangers will never again enslave him.**

**They will serve the Lord their God
and David their king,
whom I will raise up for them.**

**As for you, my servant Jacob,
do not be afraid—
this is the Lord's declaration—
and do not be discouraged, Israel,
for without fail I will save you out of a distant place,
your descendants, from the land of their captivity!
Jacob will return and have calm and quiet
with no one to frighten him.**

**For I will be with you—
this is the Lord's declaration—
to save you!
I will bring destruction on all the nations
where I have scattered you;
however, I will not bring destruction on you.
I will discipline you justly,
and I will by no means leave you unpunished.**

Jeremiah 30:1-11

So God remembers His promises, each and every one of them. And just as He will fulfill all that He has promised to Israel, He will also do for those who place their faith and trust in Christ Jesus. He is the stone that was cut out of the mountain, but not by human hands. He is the stone that the builders rejected and has become the chief cornerstone. And He is the ultimate craftsman who will destroy the kingdoms of this world once and for all.

He came as a humble servant born in a manger to suffer and die upon a cross as The spotless Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world. But when He returns, He shall come as The Mighty Lion of Judah to sit upon the throne of David and rule the nations with a rod of iron. This is a promise that we know our God will keep. And so we must bow before this great King of kings and LORD of lords while there is yet time. For all who believe in Him will never be ashamed (**Romans 10:11**).

Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus.

**who, existing in the form of God,
did not consider equality with God
as something to be exploited.**

**Instead he emptied himself
by assuming the form of a servant,
taking on the likeness of humanity.
And when he had come as a man,**

**he humbled himself by becoming obedient
to the point of death—
even to death on a cross.**

**For this reason God highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,**

**so that at the name of Jesus
every knee will bow—
in heaven and on earth
and under the earth—**

**and every tongue will confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

Philippians 2:5-11

Our God Remembers!