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ZECHARIAH THE PROPHET – LESSON 4

THE FOUR HORNS – KINGDOMS

Zechariah's second night vision showed four horns. Horns represent kingdoms or nations. The prophet asked the angel what they represented.

The angel answered (Zechariah 1:18-19), ***"...These are the horns (empires) which have scattered Judah. (southern kingdom) Israel, (northern kingdom) and Jerusalem. (God's holy city)."***

Then in verses 20-21 the LORD showed him four "carpenters." The angel explained that these were kingdoms appointed ***"to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles which lifted up their horn (nation) over the land of Judah to scatter it."*** To "fray" means to fight against. "Carpenter" meant "carver" as to carve up the previous "horn" (empire) and "smith" as to forge a new empire domination over Judah.

Judah's (and Israel's) idolatry was punished by allowing a "horn," a national gentile empire to conquer and rule over them and scatter them across the lands. Each of the four "horns" were deposed by another "carpenter horn" in succession until God's work was done and Messiah comes on the scene.

Bible scholars almost unanimously agree the four horns represented Babylon (605-538 B.C.), then Persia (c. 538-c.320 B.C.), thirdly Greece (c. 320- c. 160 B.C.) and lastly Rome (c. 160 B.C. - 476 A.D.). The "carpenters" would be Persia (fraying Babylon), the Greece (fraying Persia) then Rome (fraying Persia), but the "fourth carpenter" would then be a problem because they were not "frayed" until about 476 A.D. by "barbarians." Furthermore, Rome did "scatter" them, but Messiah had come (Jesus) and Rome then "pulled together" the church starting about 312 A.D.

I believe the four "horns" were Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece. The four "carpenters" would be, in order, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome.

The Assyrian empire was the largest ever up until their time, and the fiercest. They raided Israel (the northern kingdom) in 732 B.C., taking captives. They then totally conquered Israel in 722 B.C., took most of the remaining Jews captive, and scattered them among various other nations as mentioned in verse 19. They were the only empire to do that to Israel, the ten tribes of the north. The other "horns" that followed only dealt with Judah since Israel had already been scattered. Babylon, Persia, and Grecian empires impacted Judah and Jerusalem only. These three served the dual purpose of a "horn" and a "carpenter." Rome became the fourth and final "carpenter" as it deposed the fourth "horn" Greece.

Proof of Zechariah's accuracy as a prophet is seen in the fact that some of these nations (horns and carpenters) had not yet risen to power, yet he "saw" them.

The lesson here for us is that God has a plan for the world. He raises nations and rulers and takes down nations and rulers according to His plan, not ours. We can pray that we will be safe and protected even if our nation were to fall.

We already know from prophecy that most nations will fall to the Antichrist and a New World Order (one-world government, religion, economy, and social order). God has determined it and we cannot stop it. We can pray that it will not be in our lifetime, but God will decide that.

Just as God showed Nehemiah (and Daniel) the kingdoms, so has God also ordained the future kingdom, one evil under Antichrist, and the other one righteous under Jesus. I wish to be part of the last one! How about you?