

In the midst of these circumstances, God wants His people to know that, if they will return with their hearts to Him, Jerusalem will once again be the city of His choice and the neighboring cities of Judea will also prosper. The enforced peace of Persia assures the opportunity to build without molestation. Just as God had raised up the Chaldeans to punish His people, so He has raised up Persia to protect them during the period of reconstruction. Thus the time is ripe for the rebuilding of the temple and the city.

## Chapter XXVII—Questions

### A Vision of Horses

1. The eight visions which begin with 1:7 are designed to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Describe the first vision.
3. What was Zechariah's immediate response to this vision?
4. Who were the horsemen of the first vision?
5. What was the question of the angel to Jehovah?
6. Was Jehovah's answer harsh?
7. What was Zechariah instructed to do?
8. Why was Jehovah displeased with the nations?
9. God had returned to Jerusalem with \_\_\_\_\_.
10. How does Jehovah's answer here relate to *Haggai 1:2-4*?
- 11.<sup>OV</sup> The horsemen are symbolic of \_\_\_\_\_.
12. What do the various colors of the horses represent?
13. What, in this first vision, is directly related to Zechariah's reason for writing in apocalyptic style?

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### A VISION OF FOUR HORNS AND SMITHS

ZECHARIAH 1:18-21

RV . . . And I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. And Jehovah showed me four smiths. Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are the horns which scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head; but these are

come to terrify them to cast down the horns of the nations, which lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.

LXX . . . And I lifted up mine eyes and looked, and behold four horns. And I said to the angel that spoke to me, What are these things, my lord? And he said to me, These are the horns that have scattered Juda, and Israel, and Jerusalem. And the Lord shewed me four artificers. And I said, What are these coming to do? And he said, These are the horns that scattered Juda, and they broke Israel in pieces, and none of them lifted up his head: and these are come forth to sharpen them for their hands, even the four horns, the nations that lifted up the horn against the land of the Lord to scatter it.

### COMMENTS

Zechariah's second vision is also a vision of restoration. What the four horns have scattered, the four smiths will re-unite.

The horn is a frequently used symbol for the military might of a nation or a ruler. To a pastoral people, the horn of the lead ram lends itself quite naturally to such symbolism. In this case, the four horns refer to the four powers who had had a hand in the scattering of both the northern and southern kingdoms.

Assyria, of course, as the destroyer of the northern kingdom, answers to the first of these horns. Babylon, who actually smote Judah, and Egypt, upon whom the Jews had depended for protection from Babylon, are easily seen as the second and third powers involved in their scattering.

It is a bit more difficult to account for the fourth horn. Traditionally the commentators have divided into three schools of thought on the matter. Some have said that the four horns are Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, and the Medo-Persians. Assyria and Babylon are obvious. Egypt is understandable since their failure to provide the protection for which Judah had entered into an alliance with her contributed to the scattering of the people.

The difficulty lies with the Medo-Persians. It was this empire which overthrew the Babylonians and opened the way for the return from exile. It was first Cyrus and later Darius, rulers of the Medo-Persian kingdom, who issued the edicts permitting the return and allowing the rebuilding. It seems highly unlikely, therefore, that this power should be included among those who scattered Judah.

The second school of thought among the commentators indicates that the number four is figurative of the four points of the compass.

The powers therefore would be: to the north the Assyrians, Chaldeans and Samaritans; to the south Egypt and Arabia; to the east Ammon and Moab, and to the west Philistia. To see this interpretation of the four horns requires the ignoring of the historic relationships among the powers indicated.

The third hypothesis presented is that the first two horns were Babylon and the Medo-Persians. The third and fourth powers had at the time of Zechariah not yet risen. These would be the Graeco-Macedonians under Alexander and the Roman Empire. This interpretation results from an attempt to force Zechariah into the mold of Daniel, chapters two and seven, where four powers are predicted prior to the coming of the Messianic kingdom.

This view presents many difficulties, not the least of which is the previously mentioned fact that the Medo-Persians are historically cast in the role of deliverer and protector of the remnant rather than among the scatterers of Judah and Jerusalem.

If we will examine the pre-exilic history of Judah's neighbors, we will discover a fourth, almost forgotten power. Prior to the rather confusing shift of alliances which finally produced the Medo-Persian empire, the Medes had themselves been a power to be reckoned with in the middle east. It was they who warred against Assyria, finally destroying the capital city of Nineveh and swept across western Asia to the gates of Sardis.

Within a generation after having destroyed Nineveh, the Median empire came to an end. Its tenure was short, so short in fact that it contributed little to the rise of civilization as we know it. The exploits of Tiglath-Pileser and later of Sargon write a brief but bloody chapter in ancient history.

It was Sargon who placed several Israelites in the cities of Media (cf. *II Kings* 17:6,24), thus contributing to the scattering of God's people.

It was under Cyaxares that the Median confederation reached the zenith of its brief power. Nobopalassar, the satrap of Chaldea joined Cyaxares in an alliance against Assyria and his daughter was given as wife to Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king who "scattered Judah and Jerusalem."

The Medes later, under the corrupt influence of Cyaxares' successor son, became weakened to the point that they were easy prey for the rising power of Cyrus the Persian who annexed Media to form the Medo-Persian empire.

The horns of Zechariah are then, in my opinion, Assyria, Egypt, Media and Babylon. The four pre-exilic powers who contributed to the scattering of both Israel and Judah.

(Verses 20-21) The Septuagint has *artificers* where our text (the Revised Version) has smiths. The King James translators render the word "carpenters." The idea in the word itself seems to be those who are "skilled in demolition."

In Zechariah's second vision he is perplexed and asks "*what come these to do?*" The answer indicates that these four skillful workers are come to destroy the four powers who had scattered Judah and conquered the holy land.

In a figure the Lord promises the prophet that the world powers would be broken, indeed the Assyrians, Egyptians, Medes and Babylonians were already broken. The Medo-Persians, Greeks and Romans each fell in turn. God is ruler over human history. The nations He raises up He has also the power to pull down.

One reason the returned Jews were so hesitant to begin rebuilding was that they feared their neighbors. Rehum and Shimshai and other Samaritans opposed the building of the temple (*Ezra 4:8*). Sanballat and Tobiah and the Ammonites and Arabians opposed the building of the wall (*Nehemiah 4:7*). The prophet must reassure the people that God will pull down any power "*which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.*" The time has come to build and Jehovah will brook no interferences.

## Chapter XXVIII—Questions

### A Vision of Four Horns and Smiths

1. Describe Zechariah's second vision.
2. The horn is frequently used to symbolize \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Who are the horns?
4. Why is the fourth horn harder to identify?
5. Why would the Medo-Persian empire not likely be included among those who scattered Judah?
6. To see the horns as representing the four points of the compass requires one to ignore \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Discuss the difficulties in the third hypothesis listed above, in which the commentators attempt to force the four horns into the mold of Daniel.

8. Who is the fourth, almost forgotten, power involved in the pre-exilic history of Judah?
9. Discuss the term smiths in 1:20-21.
10. Why did the returning Jews hesitate to attempt the building of the temple?

## CHAPTER XXIX

### A VISION OF A MEASURING LINE

#### ZECHARIAH, CHAPTER 2:1-13

RV . . . And I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then said, I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof. And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, and said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls, by reason of the multitude of men and cattle therein. For I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and I will be the glory in the midst of her. Ho, ho, flee from the land of the north, saith Jehovah; for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heavens, saith Jehovah. Ho Zion, escape, thou that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon. For thus saith Jehovah of hosts: After glory hath he sent me unto the nations which plundered you; for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. For, behold, I will shake my hand over them, and they shall be a spoil to those that served them; and ye shall know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me. Sing and rejoice, o daughter of Zion; for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah. And many nations shall join themselves to Jehovah in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And Jehovah shall inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and shall yet choose Jerusalem. Be silent, all flesh, before Jehovah; for he is waked up out of his holy habitation.

LXX . . . And I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a man, and in his hand a measuring line. And I said to him, Whither goest thou? And he said to me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth of it, and what is the length of it. And, behold, the angel that spoke with me stood by, and another angel went forth to meet