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Second Vision Israel's triumph over enemies! Zechariah 1:18-21

Zechariah 1:18-21, *Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there were four horns. ¹⁹ And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these?" So he answered me, "These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem." ²⁰ Then the Lord showed me four craftsmen. ²¹ And I said, "What are these coming to do?" So he said, "These are the horns that scattered Judah, so that no one could lift up his head; but the craftsmen are coming to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the nations that lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it."*

We know the whole world is in a constantly rebellion against God. This is also the same with Israel.

We do not see any difference the rebellion against God and the nation of Israel.

The subject of the book of Zechariah is also the same.

The nations who have raged against God have showed that anti-God rage in their attitude toward Israel. Israel has suffered at

the hands of the nations. By the time Zechariah writes Israel suffers and will continue beyond this prophecy.

Zechariah comforts Israel in the midst of the time of trial and tribulation and suffering at the hands of nations who rage against God and His people.

Zechariah comforts his people by the series of visions that he receives from God. God grants to him visions of comfort to give to the people of Israel. So that they have the confidence that God is going to move in their behalf ultimately.

Zechariah 1:7-17 the first vision of the rider on the red horse among the myrtle trees. We noted that the picture was the myrtle bushes literally in the hollow place, or the place of humiliation and degradation, outside the city of Jerusalem.

The picture is of Israel.

The city is broken down.

They have come back from captivity in Babylon, but the wall has not been rebuilt.

The temple has not been rebuilt.

They have not reinstated their national identity.

They are under humiliation and degradation in a low place outside.

They were pleading with God to take them back into the city, and to be again God's people in the place of prominence.

Suddenly amidst the myrtle bushes, appears a rider on a red horse, and we see him defined as the **Angel of the Lord**, which is the Old Testament name for **Christ**.

Christ appears in the midst of the myrtle bushes.
The pictures are one of coming judgment.

There are red horses speaking of blood.
There are white horses speaking of victory.

The Angel of the Lord is about to lead the children of Israel from the place of humiliation to the place of victory.

It was not long after that vision, only four years, until things began to be rebuilt and the temple was built.

In 80 years, the walls were built, and the prophecy came to pass. The rider on the red horse, the Angel of the Lord, the Defender, Protector of Israel moved in and despite the opposition, and in spite of the nation's surrounding, reestablished Israel in the land.

God was comforting His people with the knowledge that they would be in the place of victory again. They would be back as a nation with their temple, and with their city, and with their wall.

While the prophecy had an immediate identity, it also had a future significance. There was coming a day when the great

Angel of the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, would come and once and for all finally establish Israel in the land in the great millennial kingdom.

At that point, they would come back to prominence.

At that point they would reign.

Christ would sit on the throne of David on Mount Zion.

The times of the Gentiles would be over.

God would rule the world again through His nation Israel.

We saw an immediate historic fulfillment and a future fulfillment prophetically in that first vision.

What God was saying there is summed up in one verse.

V 15, *I am exceedingly angry with the nations at ease; For I was a little angry, And they helped—but with evil intent.”*

God is going to move against the oppressors of His people, the persecutors of His people, the enemies of His people.

Psalm 44:22, *Yet for Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

When the world is killing us, it is really God that they have in mind. They are antagonistic to Him.

We see the same thing in the New Testament.

When the world persecutes the Church, who is it they are really persecuting?

The Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:24, *I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,*

I am willing to suffer the blows meant for Christ who suffered the blows meant for me.

There is an inseparable identification between God's people and God.

To persecute God's people is to persecute God.

To persecute the Church is to persecute Christ.

Acts 9:4, *Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"*

God is inseparably forever identified with His people.

The nations have been raging in turmoil and unrest against God. They have manifested it in a hatred against His people.

Now at this present time is true of the Church.

This has been true of Israel throughout history.

God righteously reacts against the enemy of His people.

That is the question in Zechariah's time.

The people were saying that God brought us back from captivity, but here we are in the hollow place outside. We have not rebuilt the city. How long will the enemy nations reign around us? **When will everything be right?**

V 15, *the nations were at ease.*

Everything was great with them, but it was not so great with Israel.

The picture of the red horse rider, and He is about to move and shed blood, win victory, and reestablish Israel.

This had an immediate fulfillment within four years. But it is a greater fulfillment when He comes to set the kingdom for His people again. Israel will reign as God's special people in the millennium.

Second Vision:

The second vision dealt with the same as the first one.

God has just said to them that He is going to come in judgment. He is going to deal with those nations that have treated them wrongly.

If you were a Jew today and you were looking up at God, you might say, “God, it has been a long time of oppression. We are small, and weak. We wonder if we ever hope for deliverance from the powers of our aggressors.”

Luke 21:24, *And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*

Jerusalem was broader than just the city. The city is representative of all the land that God gave them in the covenant promise, all the way from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean and all the north and south area as well.

All of that will never belong to them until the times of the Gentiles is ended.

Jerusalem will be trodden down in some way, shape, or form until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

The ultimate comfort that Zechariah is giving them is yet distant in the future.

How long will the aggressor mercilessly ground the Jew in the dust. How long will this go on?

The answer comes in the second vision.
Here we find out just how long.

This takes us all the way to the second coming of Jesus Christ. Now, we are looking at the times of the Gentiles.

The times of the Gentiles is the period of time in which Jerusalem was trodden down by Gentiles powers. Jerusalem was ruled or lorded over by Gentile nations.

It is a period that began about **600 B.C.** It began when Nebuchadnezzar came in and Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians, and the Jews were carried as captive to Babylon.

The first group were taken captive in about **605** and the major element in **586 B.C.** for about a 20-year period this captivity was going on. They were being taken in. Of course, they were there for **70 years.**

From that time, Jerusalem, for the first time since the land of Canaan was given to them, that land was dominated by Gentile power, the Babylonians.

That was the beginning of the times of the Gentiles. Jerusalem will continue to be trodden down until the times of the Gentiles is ended.

It has not ended yet and is still trodden down. They had some portion of it not the fullness. They do not have the whole land God originally gave to them. They have not begun to touch as far east as the Euphrates. The

south, and even the north, they are just isolated in one little area. Jerusalem is anything but free. All the land God promised is not yet theirs.

They are still living in the times of the Gentiles when Israel knows aggressors and overlords from Gentile lines.

The whole picture of the times of the Gentiles comes to a great climax under the rule of the Antichrist.

That is not a biblical term for him, because the Bible says there are many antichrists.

He is the beast.

He has the little horn.

He is the willful king.

He is the prince of the people who will come.

He has all kinds of terms.

If you like to use Antichrist, that is all right if you understand what you mean.

But the rule of the Antichrist will consummate the times of the Gentiles. At the peak of his rule, Jesus returns.

- ✓ The times of the Gentiles comes to an end.
- ✓ Christ sets up His kingdom,
- ✓ Christ will reestablish Israel in the land.
- ✓ Christ will reign on the throne of His father David,
- ✓ The promise of the Davidic throne is fulfilled.

But until that time, we are seeing the times of the Gentiles.

The nations may foolishly rage against God, the nations may persecute His people, but nevertheless, the Bible says that God will triumphantly place His Son on the throne in Zion.

History is the story of God taking back His land for His people.

As we come to Zechariah, the times of the Gentiles. But God gives the people a vision through Zechariah that shows them it will not always be this way. Their enemies will be dealt with before them.

The message of the vision is very straightforward.

V 18, *Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there were four horns.*

Two elements in the vision:

- Four horns,
- Four hammerers.

Zechariah 1:18 - 21



4 Horns vs. 4 Craftsmen

Interesting to note that all these visions happen on one night.

All these visions came in succession on the same night when the prophet was awake because a vision is not a dream.

V 18, *Then I raised my eyes*

Zechariah 2:1, *Then I raised my eyes and looked, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand.*

Zechariah 5:1, *Then I turned and raised my eyes, and saw there a flying scroll.*

Zechariah 6:1, *Then I turned and raised my eyes and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of bronze.*

Why does he have to do that all the time?

Because it seems to him the most normal response after he sees one of these visions to bow his head in meditation and prayer. The interpreter angel must come along and poke him to look up again for the next one.

He is so overwhelmed by each of them that he falls and bows in meditation. He sinks in an attitude and a response of thankfulness.

The interpreter angel nudges him a little with a supernatural poke, and he pops up again, and he sees the next of his supernatural pictures on God's divine screen.

He can perceive the imperceptible.

V 18, *looked, and there were four horns.*

Behold means you will not believe it.

Four horns.

These are animal horns.

Most likely the horns of rams, though the animal is not named. The Hebrews word **Geren** often means a horn for blowing.

In the book of Joshua, they walked around the city and blew horns and those were animal horns. It can mean a horn that is used as a receptacle.

1 Samuel 16:1, *Now the Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons."*

But the most frequent use is as a symbol of power. When the horn is used, it speaks of power because that is the way an animal uses it.

Jeremiah 48:25, *The horn of Moab is cut off, And his arm is broken," says the Lord.*

God has taken the power of Moab away.

Lamentations 2:3, *He has cut off in fierce anger Every horn of Israel; He has drawn back His right hand From before the enemy. He has blazed against Jacob like a flaming fire Devouring all around.*

God has cut off the power of Israel.

Psalms 75:10, *“All the horns of the wicked I will also cut off, But the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.”*

Cutting off the horn is the symbol of conquering the power. Whenever a hunter goes out to hunt a beast, as soon as he kills the beast, he takes the horn. He puts it up in his den.

Why?

Because it is a symbol of his power conquering the power of that beast. An old principle.

To “lift up the horn,” a phrase that is used in Psalm 89 and Psalm 92.

To lift up the horn means to increase power.

Psalm 18:2, *The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*

David calls the Lord the Horn.

The Hebrew word used here is **Gerem**.

God is the ultimate horn.

God is the ultimate power.

So, it is a symbol of power.

When Zechariah lifts up his eyes, he sees four symbols of power.

The horn can express the power of an individual or the power of a nation. In the case of the horn of Moab, or the horn of Israel. It often symbolizes a Gentile king as representative of a kingdom.

It often speaks of a Gentile king as representative of a kingdom.

Daniel 7:21, *“I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them,*

This horn is the one that we call the Antichrist. So, here it is used of an individual, but representative of a whole system.

Daniel 7:24, *The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings.*

We can see here that the horns are used in Daniel’s prophesy to refer to Gentile kings. Gentile kings who are representative of Gentile nations.

Daniel 8:3, *Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last.*

The two horns represent the kingdoms of Medea and Persia that came together to be the Medo-Persian Empire.

These horns are Gentile kings associated with their kingdoms. Zechariah looks up, and he sees in this vision four Gentile kings associated with Gentile kingdoms.

V 19, *And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these?" So he answered me, "These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem."*

These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

Simple to identify.

These are the political powers, the national Gentile entities that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

He uses all the possible terms for the country in order to sum it up. All the designations for God's people are used. They have scattered God's people of Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

The words "scattered" appears in the past tense, but the verb **zeru** in Hebrew is a perfect tense. According to some of the Hebrew scholar's indication of the perfect tense is that it does refer to completed actions.

It can be a complete action in the past.

It can be a completed action in the present,

It can be a complete action in the future.

It has no time factor.

Rather than put it in the past, we would read it this way that these are the horns which have scattered, are scattering, and will scatter Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

Taking it in its broadest that these are the horns which scatter, at any point in time when it is done, at any point in time during the entire era known as the times of the Gentiles.

Who are these four horns?

We cannot really find four nations, at that point in history, and clearly identify them as the four horns.

So, that leaves us with two basic explanations.

One is that the four horns is simply a symbol of Israel's foes in general, and that the "four," the number four, is simply symbolic of the whole world.

The four winds,

The four corners of the earth.

The four symbolize the whole idea of worldwide, universal kind of persecution.

The "four" is not significant.

Technically a symbol of worldwide persecution.

There are some weaknesses with that.

Second view:

The four horns which scatter have scattered, are scattering, and will scatter, using the fullness of that possible Hebrew tense are

the four great world empires that make up the times of the Gentiles. This is most probable.

Daniel was a prophet during the captivity. Zechariah came out of the captivity when he was relatively young. No doubt he knew Daniel very well and acquainted the prophesies.

These are the four horns which have scattered, or are scattering, or will scatter Jerusalem and Israel, is pointing out the four great empires in the time known as the times of the Gentiles.

The ancient Targum renders this as four definite kingdoms.

The Jewish interpreters believed that it was four definite kingdoms, which they do not name.

Kimchi, rabbinical scholar of the **12th century**, said that these are the four monarchies.

They are the Babylonian monarchy,

The Persian monarchy,

The Grecian monarchy.

He never named the fourth one.

Kimchi does not name the fourth one because he was sure what the fourth one was going to be Rome. But he does note that every one of these was guilty of grievous persecution against Israel. Consequently, that is why they are called to judgment here.

Since it is consistent with these visions that we are going to see in Zechariah have a future element. They cannot just wind up in history in the time of Zechariah, in the **6th century before Christ**. They cannot wind up there.

There is too much future for them.

Since that is true of all of them, we believe that's also true of this one.

Rather than that is just four nations that existed then, and they have been scattered, and that is the end of the story, there needs to be the same future element that appears in the rest. It is obvious even the rabbis saw this.

So, what we are seeing here then is something that has the same future element that the rest of the visions have, and the four horns symbolize the four great world powers that will make up the times of the Gentiles.

It began with Judah's captivity under Nebuchadnezzar, and the times of the Gentiles runs all the way to the second coming of Christ.

During all that time, Jerusalem is trodden down, even today it is still not liberated.

What are these four empires?

Daniel names them.

They are just as clear as they can be:

Babylonian, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.
After that comes Israel's kingdom.

When the prophecy was written, which of those kingdoms was in existence?

Medo-Persia.

By the time of Zechariah, it is the end of the Babylonian captivity.

Babylon had been defeated, and the Medes and the Persians had taken over.

Daniel records how they took over the feast of Belshazzar.

So, Medo-Persia exists.

There is one great kingdom that has scattered.

There is one great kingdom that is scattered.

There are two yet to come that shall scatter Judah, Jerusalem, and Israel.

Daniel identifies these four in Daniel chapter 2.

Daniel 2:1, *Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him.*

had a lot of dreams, and he had one specific dream. God gave him a dream that pictured the entire history of the times of the

Gentiles to this first great Babylonian world ruler. These are the four great empires that ruled the world, which is a civilized world that we know in that area.

These four empires began with Nebuchadnezzar. God gave him an amazing dream of a picture of the whole thing until the end when Christ would come.

He forgot the dream. He could not remember it.

Daniel 2:5-6, *The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap.⁶ However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honour. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation."*

Daniel 2:11-13, *It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."¹² For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.¹³ So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.*

Daniel was one of the wise men.

Daniel requested, before all the wise men could be killed, he would like to come and tell the king the dream, because he could do it.

Daniel 2:19-22, *Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven. ²⁰ Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. ²¹ And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding. ²² He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him. ²³ "I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, And have now made known to me what we asked of You, For You have made known to us the king's demand."*

Daniel tells the king the dream and its interpretation.

Daniel 2:31-35, *"You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendour was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. ³² This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, ³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. ³⁴ You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them*

away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

He saw a statue. A great, huge statue.

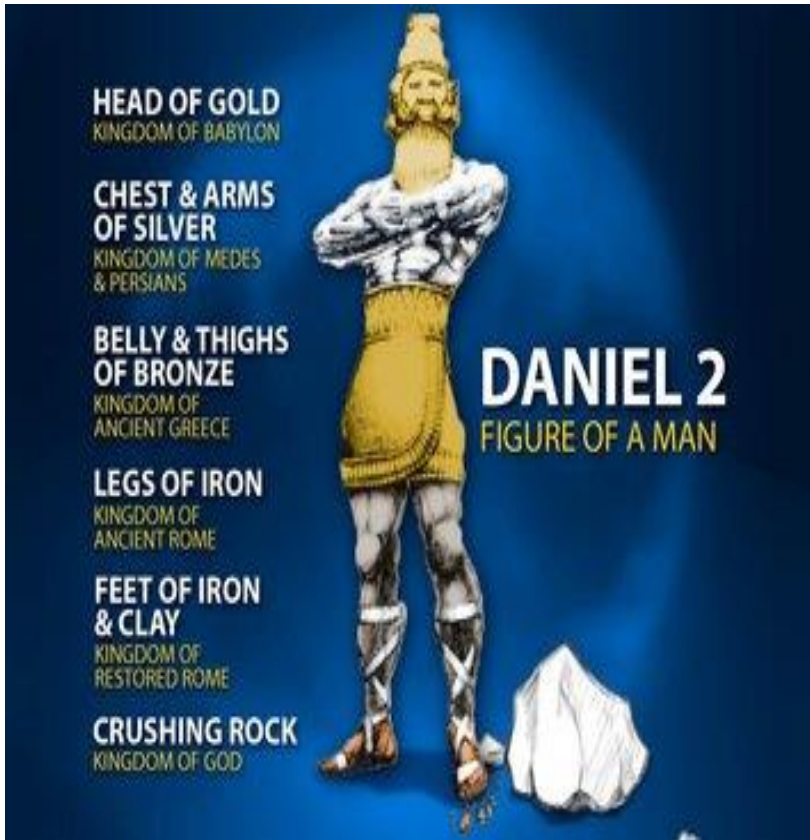
What does it mean?

Daniel 2:36-38, *“This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. ³⁷You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; ³⁸and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold.*

Nebuchadnezzar, and your kingdom of Babylon, that is the head of gold. Gold speaks of riches.

Isaiah 14:4, *that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: “How the oppressor has ceased, The golden city ceased!*

Babylon is the golden city. You are the head.



Daniel 2:39-40, *But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.⁴⁰ And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.⁴¹ Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of*

iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.

The second kingdom of silver was Medo-Persia.

We know that because the Medes and the Persians conquered Babylon.

The Greeks conquered the Medes and the Persians, Alexander the Great. That is the kingdom of bronze.

The kingdom of iron was the Roman Empire, long in the future. The Roman Empire consisted of two legs, and the kingdom shall be divided. There was the Eastern Roman Empire, and the Western Roman Empire, exactly what God had said.

Daniel 2:42-43, *And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. ⁴³As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.*

The Roman Empire had its problems. It was brittle at points.

We have those four kingdoms.

How is it going to end?

Daniel 2:44, *And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the*

kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

The kingdom will not be left to other people. it shall break into pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

Daniel 2:45, *Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.”*

Do you know who the stone cutter of the mountain without hands is?

Christ.

Without hands refers to His virgin birth.

- ✓ He has no human source.
- ✓ Nobody made Him.
- ✓ No artisan crafted Him.
- ✓ Nobody formed Him.
- ✓ He always was.
- ✓ He is the eternal God in human form.

Do you know what happened to that stone?

It smashes the world empires.

It turns into a mountain and fills the earth.

That is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Did you notice that that fourth kingdom has ten toes?

Feet and toes? And he makes a big thing about the toes. He keeps talking about the toes in verse 40 through 43.

Many scholars have tried to figure it out.

When was it that the Roman Empire had a ten-nation confederacy?

Because there are ten toes on two feet.

They have tried to find that in history, and there is no stage of history which corresponds to the toes of the image.

Daniel 7:7, *“After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.*

In one vision, an image with ten toes.

in another one, a beast with ten horns.

Somehow the Roman Empire is going to consummate in a ten-nation confederacy.

Now, that has never happened in the history of the Roman Empire yet.

The Roman Empire was never conquered by another empire. It simply fell into abeyance because of its inside decay.

What the Bible is saying is that the Roman Empire will be revived in the end time in the form of a ten-nation confederacy. Nations once geographically a part of the Roman Empire will reconstitute an organization, and they will be that final form of world government that the Lord Jesus Himself will come against and smash with His own power to set up His eternal kingdom.

Is that a possibility?

A ten-nation confederacy in Daniel 2 to come and end this. Now, that is yet the future. The Roman Empire is in abeyance now, but the future will be restored.

The king got all excited when Daniel told him his dream, and he made him a big shot in the country.

Daniel 2:48-49, *Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon.* ⁴⁹ *Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.*

Daniel gave him a panorama of world history.

It is possible that Nebuchadnezzar became a believer in the true God over that incident.

Daniel 4:33-34, *That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like*

oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws. And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honoured Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation.

The great king of the Babylonian Empire, and he was sleeping on the ground, and dew all over his body. His hair is like an eagle's feather, and his nails turned like bird claws growing. He was a mad man!

Daniel 4:35-37, *All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?"³⁶ At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honour and splendour returned to me. My counsellors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me.³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.*

Something happened to him because Daniel gave him these visions.

Daniel 7:3-7, *And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. ⁴The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. ⁵“And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: ‘Arise, devour much flesh!’ ⁶“After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. ⁷“After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.*

Four great big beasts come out of the sea.

The first beast is like a lion, and it had eagle's wings.

This is a reference to the Babylonian Empire.

The lion is the king of beasts, and this was the king of kings, the ultimate.

The eagle is the king of birds, and this is the king, the ultimate, Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian Empire.

Four Beasts in Daniel 7



1

- Like a Lion
- With eagle's wings
- Wings plucked later
- Lifted up from earth
- Man's heart given



2

- Like a Bear
- Raised up on its side
- Had 3 ribs in its mouth
- Was told to arise and devour much flesh



3

- Like a Leopard
- With 4 fowl's wings
- Had 4 heads
- Given dominion



4

- Exceedingly dreadful, terrible beast
- Iron teeth, brass nails
- Had 10 horns
- A little horn, which plucked 3 horns

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But its wings were plucked. It had a man's heart, and some say this refers to the humiliation, the humanness of Nebuchadnezzar that came during those terrible seven years of insanity that he suffered. But that's Babylon. Like a lion, a fierce kingdom.

The second is like a bear. It raised up itself on one side. This big bear that Daniel sees, and one arm is in the air. It is like raising a strong arm. The reason is because Persia was stronger than Medea. The bear had two arms, but one was stronger and lifted up. That represented Persia being greater than Medea.

Three ribs in its mouth.
It had devoured Lydia, Suziana, and Asia Minor. These represent those three ribs. It was set to expand west.

It started with Lydia and Suziana and Asia Minor and just kept going and devouring flesh, the Medo-Persian Empire.

The third one is the leopard, and it is known for swift and fierce. A picture of Alexander the Great, that leopard who swept across the east of Europe, conquering rapidly in his wake.

This leopard has four wings and four heads.
Alexander divided his empire among his four great generals.

The fourth one was a weird one. Some kind of horrible thing. It broke into pieces. It stamped the residue with its feet, and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it with ten horns.

The ultimate end, the Roman Empire, a ten-nation confederacy.
It was dreadful.
It was terrible.
It was strong.
It had iron teeth.
It devoured.
It broke.
It stamped.

A picture of the tremendous military power of the Roman Empire. Rome ruled the world for 1,500 years. Powerful.

Daniel 2



Babylon
605-539 BC

Medo-
Persia
539-331 BC

Grecia
331-168 BC

Rome
168 BC-476 AD

Daniel 7



So, God shows Daniel again the four kingdoms. Their moral character is beastly.

The lion devours.

The bear crushes.

The leopard springs on its prey.

The different beast stamps out its enemies.

That is Gentile history.

Who are the victims?

Victims all the way along the people of God.

Each of those empires persecuted Israel.

The first was **Babylon**.

Babylon conquered and slaughtered the Jews from **605 to 586 B.C.**

Tragic day in the history of Israel we will find in 2 Kings 25.

This is Nebuchadnezzar's siege in Jerusalem.

Whenever they wanted to take a city, they just camped around the city, and they would not let anybody in or out. Soon everybody ran out of food, water, disease, plague, much cannibalism occurred.

They would even begin to eat their children. The terrors of famine and disease that came.

***2 Kings 25:3-10**, By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine had become so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. ⁴Then the city wall was broken through, and all the men of war fled at night by way of the gate between two walls, which was by the king's garden, even though the Chaldeans were still encamped all around against the city. And the king went by way of the plain. ⁵But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook him in the*

plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him. ⁶ So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him. ⁷ Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon. ⁸ And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month (which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. ⁹ He burned the house of the Lord and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire. ¹⁰ And all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around.

2 Kings 25:21-22, *Then the king of Babylon struck them and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive from its own land. ²² Then he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, governor over the people who remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left.*

The land of Judah became a Babylonian province.
The royal house of David reigned no more.

Six hundred and fifty years after the children of Israel had, under Joshua, set foot on the Promised Land, they were gone.

Jeremiah 34:22, *Behold, I will command,' says the Lord, 'and cause them to return to this city. They will fight against it and take it and burn it with fire; and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without inhabitant.'"*

What God spoke through Jeremiah came to pass.

Archeological evidence indicates that there is not a single known case of a town in Judah being continuously inhabited during the exile. They wiped it out.

The Babylonians brutalized Israel. They went way beyond what God had intended.

Second the **Medo-Persians**.

The Medes and the Persians were not so violent in persecuting Israel, because by this time Israel was just nothing but a bunch of slaves living in Babylon.

But their kind of persecution was different.

When Israel needed help, they were indifferent.

V 15, *"The nations are sitting still and at ease."*

They were indifferent to needy people.

The persecution of the Medes and the Persians was a terrible, cold, calculating, indifference to a nation in desperate need. Maybe that's just as tragic.

Maybe that's just as bad to be indifferent.

They kept a stranglehold on Israel for two centuries. Even though the city, and the temple was rebuilt, Israel was poor. Israel was politically insignificant.

They had very little freedom.

They were quietly slaves to the Gentiles.

It got worse, because after Medo-Persia came Greece.

Greece.

The leopard of Greece began to sweep across, and there was terrible violence. Absolutely terrible.

In **195 B.C., Antiochus Epiphanes** became the leader or the governor of Israel for the Greeks. His name was Antiochus. He called himself Epiphanes because Epiphanes means "the greatest." He called himself Antiochus Epiphanes, and the people called him Antiochus Epimanes, which means the madman. He took over the rule of Palestine for Greece who started to influence the region.

There were historical books called the **1, and 2, and 3 Maccabees.**

2 Maccabees 4:7-17, *Later, when King Seleucus died and Antiochus (known as Epiphanes) became king, Jason the brother of Onias became High Priest by corrupt means.⁸ He went to see^[a] the king and offered him 27,000 pounds of silver with 6,000 more pounds to be paid later.⁹ Jason also offered him an*

additional 11,250 pounds of silver for the authority to establish a stadium where young men could train and to enrol the people of Jerusalem as citizens of Antioch.

¹⁰ The king gave his approval, and just as soon as Jason took over the office of High Priest, he made the people of Jerusalem change to the Greek way of life. ¹¹ He began by abolishing the Favors that John had secured for the Jews from previous Syrian kings. (John was the father of the Eupolemus who later went to Rome to make an alliance and to establish ties of friendship.) Jason also did away with our Jewish customs and introduced new customs that were contrary to our Law. ¹² With great enthusiasm he built a stadium near the Temple hill and led our finest young men to adopt the Greek custom of participating in athletic events. ¹³ Because of the unrivalled wickedness of Jason, that ungodly and illegitimate High Priest, the craze for the Greek way of life and for foreign customs reached such a point ¹⁴ that even the priests lost all interest in their sacred duties. They lost interest in the Temple services and neglected the sacrifices. Just as soon as the signal was given, they would rush off to take part in the games that were forbidden by our Law. ¹⁵ They did not care about anything their ancestors had valued; they prized only Greek honours. ¹⁶ And this turned out to be the source of all their troubles, for the very people whose ways they admired and whose customs they tried to imitate became their enemies and oppressed them. ¹⁷ It is a serious thing to disregard God's Law, as you will see from the following events.

Jason non-Levite became high priest through political influence.

He brought his own nation to the Greeks fashion, where he built gladly a place of exercise inside the temple.

The height of Greek fashions and increase of Greeks manners. They all became athletes.

Jason came in, and he became high priest, and he built a stadium for athletics. All the priests gave up their priestly functions to become athletes. They left the ministry to go into athletics.

All the priests are not supposed to be throwing discus and throwing javelins around. They are supposed to be serving God. But God was doubly displeased, because in those days all athletic endeavor was conducted in nakedness.

The body was covered only with olive oil. That was all. Stark naked. It was intolerable to a Jew to see the priests running around in the altogether within sight of the temple.

Stark naked, in full view of the worshippers in the temple, right next to the Holy of Holies. What an incredible desecration.

To make things worse, Antiochus Epiphanes thought it would be great to break the backs of Jewish religion. So, he slaughtered a pig on the altar in the temple and stuffed pork down the throats of the priests. That was not the end of it.

The Jewish athletes wanted so much to identify with the Greeks that they began to avoid circumcision, and they became uncircumcised.

They rejected their Abrahamic identification.

Nakedness, for a second time in Israel's history, became a serious sin. The first time was when they got involved in the Canaanite fertility rituals.

Athletics, in those days, constituted a religious act of worship for Zeus and Apollo. So, they were involved in pagan idolatry.

Finally, in **186 B.C.** Antiochus Epiphanes went all the way, plundered/desecrated the temple, set the city on fire, tore down the houses, took women and children captive, and stole all the cattle.

He set up the worship of Zeus right in the altar of the temple of God. Most of the people decided not to fight it, and they joined it.

But a few decided to fight it. Namely, a man by the name of Mattathias and his sons. Mattathias started a revolution. He died. His oldest son, **Judas Maccabeus** took up the revolution and led what is known in Israel's history as the **great Maccabean Revolution**. It happened just a hundred years before our Lord arrived.

They came out of the mountains, and for a while they threw the yoke of Greece off. But it did not last very long, because Greece was kind of losing anyway.

Very soon the great iron jaw of Rome came through and captured them again.

Romans Empire.

In **63 B.C.**, **Pompey, the Roman general**, marched his troops into Jerusalem, and the great, crushing, powerful Roman beast took over. Judah became a Roman province.

It had been a Babylonian province,
a Medo-Persian province,
a Greek province, and now
a Roman one, the times of the Gentiles.

Do you know how the Romans treated them?

Read the Gospels in the New Testament.

Within a generation, after the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus, they suffered what Luke 21:22 calls the “days of vengeance.”

Jesus had said, “There’s going to be a terrible judgment on Jerusalem.”

From **A.D. 66 - A.D. 70** is called the Jewish War, when Rome did war on Israel.

The Jews would not sit quiet under Rome's rule. There were groups called the zealots. They were really reactionaries, nationalists, Zionists, fanatics.

They were always trying to overthrow Rome. The revolts kept coming.

Finally little Jerusalem threw the gauntlet down at the feet of imperial Rome.

Nero called his finest general, who later became the emperor himself when Nero committed suicide, a man by the name of **Titus Vespasian**. Titus Vespasian was the brilliant soldier who had conquered Britain. Titus took his troops and marched to little Jerusalem. He first came to Galilee, and he attacked the north.

The bloody butchery began. By October of **67 A.D.**, Galilee was subdued. 6,000 Jews were hauled off as slaves to build the Corinthian canal.

He wiped out and butchered Galilee. He was ready to go to Jerusalem, but something happened.

Nero killed himself because of that, there was a political upheaval, and Titus wanted to get in on the act and become emperor. So, he let everything kind of stay the way it was, and they had an occupation of Galilee, but the southern part hadn't been taken yet.

Titus went back to work himself into becoming emperor.

Titus came back in 70 A.D. in the spring of that year, outside Jerusalem, with an army of 80,000 men.

The holy city was swarming with pilgrims because it was Passover. The Romans attacked with what they called scorpions. They were quick-firing engines, mechanical things that fired bricks and rocks. They had things they called **Ballistas**, which were great, huge, stone throwers. They said they could throw a hundred-pound stone six hundred feet.

They had battering rams.

They came to Jerusalem, and they began to smash, and they burst through the north part of the wall and occupied the north of the city.

They brought in **Flavius Josephus**, whom they had captured in Galilee, and they said, "You tell those people to surrender so we don't need to destroy their city and so we don't need to slaughter the people."

Josephus pleaded with them, and they would not. So, the Roman army just moved in.

Titus crucified as many as **500 Jews** a day on the crosses outside. He wiped out the forest around the city making crosses. An unbearable stench arose from the crucified and those dead from starvation and those killed in battle whose bodies were

not removed. They threw 100,000 bodies over the wall just to get the stench outside the city.

None of them could escape, the Romans built a massive earth wall outside the other wall so no one could get away.

Famine, disease, plunder, people starving and reeling in the throes of death, and some record that they began, too, to eat their children.

Finally, the temple went down, and the Holy of Holies was burned to ashes. The loss of life was unimaginably high.

There were **1,356,400** Jews killed.

The last little group fled to the south, to a place called **Masada**, which is a high mountain down at the end of the Dead Sea. They fortified themselves there. When the Romans finally got there, rather than give themselves up to the Romans, they committed suicide. The Romans came into Masada, they found nothing but dead bodies.

Archeologists have found no evidence of Israel's existence in Palestine after **70 A.D.** None. Not even a tombstone with a Jewish inscription. They were wiped out.

There is got to be more of that Roman Empire because it is got to be around in a ten-toe confederacy when Jesus comes.

The European Common Market.

Obadiah 1:10-14, *“For violence against your brother Jacob, Shame shall cover you, And you shall be cut off forever. ¹¹In the day that you stood on the other side— In the day that strangers carried captive his forces, When foreigners entered his gates And cast lots for Jerusalem— Even you were as one of them. ¹²“But you should not have gazed on the day of your brother In the day of his captivity; Nor should you have rejoiced over the children of Judah In the day of their destruction; Nor should you have spoken proudly In the day of distress. ¹³You should not have entered the gate of My people In the day of their calamity. Indeed, you should not have gazed on their affliction In the day of their calamity, Nor laid hands on their substance In the day of their calamity. ¹⁴You should not have stood at the crossroads To cut off those among them who escaped; Nor should you have delivered up those among them who remained In the day of distress.*

You joined the fray against My people, and you were not called to do that. He lays it on Edom.

They should not have been on the slaughter.

Zechariah sees this scene. The times of the Gentiles. The scene has another element. This shows how fast it is going to come.

V 20-21, *Then the Lord showed me four craftsmen. ²¹And I said, “What are these coming to do?” So he said,*

“These are the horns that scattered Judah, so that no one could lift up his head; but the craftsmen are coming to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the nations that lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.”

Four artisans/ Four workmen/Four carpenters/Four smiths.
The word can be used for a stonemason. A stonemason in those days used a hammer to break the stone. A carpenter who used a hammer or a metal smith, a blacksmith who used a hammer.

He is talking about hammerers.
A hammer for each horn.

What would a hammerer do?

He would hammer.

For every horn, there is a hammer to smash it.
For every one of these world empires, there was a crusher.

Hammers to smash the horn.

Be comforted, Israel, because for every nation that rises against you, there is going to be a hammer to crush that nation.

What God is saying is that Israel is indestructible.

The myrtle bush may burn, but it will never be consumed. They have lifted up their heads, and they are going to be crushed.

Who was the hammer that smashed Babylon?

Medo-Persia.

Who was the hammer that smashed Medo-Persia?

Greece.

Who was the hammer that smashed Greece?

Rome.

Who is the hammer that will smash Rome?

The Lord Jesus Christ.

The stone was cut out without hands. This is exactly what happened.

The Babylonian Empire was smashed by the Medes and the Persians. Belshazzar was having a big party in his palace. They were all drunk. The Medes and the Persians came outside the city.

The city had a river that ran right through it. They diverted the river. The riverbed dried up. They walked right under the wall. At that very instant, a hand appeared on the wall at Belshazzar's feast and said "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin." "You are weighed in the balances and found wanting. The kingdom is gone from you."

God's Spirit wrote it on the wall just as they came in and destroyed the city. The hammer smashed the first horn.

In **333 B.C.**, at the great **Battle of Issus**, **Darius III**, the king of the Medo-Persian Empire was crushed by Alexander. The Medes and the Persians were overthrown by Alexander the Great.

Alexander defeated an army of a half-a-million soldiers. Incredible thing. Of course, it had been about a hundred years before that that they had destroyed the entire Medo-Persian fleet. It was not long after Alexander got things going that the Roman hammer fell on him.

In the **second century B.C.**, the Western Mediterranean became a Roman lake, and it began to move and conquer.

The fourth hammer is the Lord Jesus Christ.

He will come to end the fourth phase of government, the revived Roman Empire.

- ✓ God is running history.
- ✓ God cares for His people.
- ✓ God protects His people.
- ✓ God blesses His people.
- ✓ God deals sternly with those who treat His people wrong.

Be good to Christians.

Be good to people of Israel.

Where will you be when it all ends?

I know where I will be.

“When the stone comes to crush the world’s kingdoms, when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory.”