

The Second Vision: Horns & Craftsmen

Jeff Rogers / Lamplighter Bible Study
Zechariah 1:16-21

Our text is **Zechariah 1:18-21**, and it contains the second of Zechariah's 8 visions. Implicit in this second vision is God's omnipotence over all other powers, forces, or attacks. Zechariah is reminded that nothing happens outside of the purview of God's providence. Nothing. We must live this truth by faith. Without question, God's omnipotent power appears absent at times in world history, the trajectory of nations, and even in a believer's life.

Zechariah has just seen and heard God say He is "*exceedingly angry with the nations that are at ease*" (**Zech 1:15**). God's anger raises the question the remnant would demand an answer to from Zechariah: "**God's angry? Fine, but what is He going to do about it?**"

Everybody has something that "*scattered them*." A season, a loss, a person, a sin, a power, you couldn't push back against. The people of Zechariah's day had been scattered for 70 years. In this second vision, God shows them what He does with the nations that scatter His people.

I. Four Horns – The first question, "What are these?" (Zech 1:18-19)

A. Horns in Old Testament Israel

1. Practically, used as musical instruments and containers for oil. Samuel filled a horn with oil and anointed David (**1 Sam 16:1, 13**).
2. Protectively, horns stood on the four corners of the altar (**Ex 27:2**), and a man in danger could grab them for refuge (**1 Kgs 1:50**). The horn was a place you ran towards for protection.
3. The strongest animals in the herd had the biggest horns, so the horn became the everyday word for strength, power, and authority (**Deut 33:17**).

B. Horns as a symbol in Scripture

1. Of power and honor given by God
 - a) Hannah sings, "*My horn is exalted in the LORD*" (**1 Sam 2:1**) and ends, "*He will exalt the horn of his anointed*" (**2:10**). This is the first time "anointed," Messiah, appears in Samuel, and it is tied to a horn.
2. Of pride and arrogance: (**Psa 75:4-5; Dan 7:8,20**). Lifting your own horn is the sin of the strong.
3. Of God's saving power: "*The LORD is my rock...the horn of my salvation*" (**Psa 18:2**);

C. What the four horns are in Zechariah's vision

1. Some see them as four specific world rulers. Others see them, as in Daniel, as a sequence of world empires (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome).
2. Best supported by the text: the four are the four directions of a map, the powers and rulers that came from every side to scatter God's people. Zechariah uses four similarly elsewhere: "*I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heavens*" (**2:6**).
 - a) The text points to this in **1:19**; "*have scattered*" is past tense, a completed action.
 - b) The angel names Israel, and only Assyria scattered Israel (722 BC). Assyria is not in Daniel's four. The Daniel connection leaves out the one nation the angel's definition requires.

D. The angel's definition in 1:19:

1. "*Scattered*." – one of the uses of the word is "*winnowing*," tossing grain so the chaff blows away. This was the warning God gave to Israel that has now come true (**Lev 26:33; Deut 4:27; Ezek 5:10**).
2. The horns were the instrument of a discipline that God had promised. (**Isaiah 10:5-14**). This is **Zechariah 1:15** in action: "*I was angry but a little, and they furthered the disaster.*"
3. The result (**Zech 1:21**) "*...so that no one raised his head.*"

II. Four Craftsmen – The Second Question, "What are these coming to do?" (Zech 1:21)

A. The word "craftsmen"

1. Skilled workmen who work with wood, stone, jewels, and metals. Used for those who constructed the tabernacle (**Ex 35:35; 38:23**) & repaired the temple (**2 Kings 12:11**). Ordinary skilled workmen, the same kind of men the remnant were, standing on a half-built temple site.
2. **Isaiah 54:16-17** uses the same word: "*I have created the smith who blows the fire of coals and*

produces a weapon...I have also created the ravager to destroy; no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed." God makes the craftsman. That is the point of the word, not the temple: the men who take down empires are God's workmen, made and set by him

B. **The "craftsmen" arrive** - Four horns are answered by four craftsmen. God answers every threat.

C. **What they came to do (Zech 1:21):**

1. *"To terrify"* – the horns unexpectedly face total loss and tremble at the judgment.
2. *"To cast down"* – lifted up and thrown down. **Psalm 75:10**, *All the horns of the wicked I will cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be lifted up.*
3. History was already proving the craftsmen. Assyria fell in 612 BC. Babylon fell in 539 BC. Cyrus (**Isa 45:1**), though the craftsmen are nameless in Zechariah.
4. These craftsmen remind the remnant that spiritual victory does not come by human power (**Zech 4:6**), and God finishes and fulfills all His promises.

III. The Carpenter – The Third Question, "Who finishes this?"

A. **The Craftsmen point past themselves to Someone yet future**

1. Zerubbabel laid the foundation, and his hands will finish it (**Zech 4:9**) And, there is a future greater builder Zechariah points to in **Zechariah 6:12–13**, *And say to him, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, "Behold, the man whose name is the Branch...It is he who shall build the temple of the Lord and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne."*
2. The Greek Old Testament translates "craftsmen" in **Zech 1:20** with "tektonas." That is the same word used in **Mark 6:3**; **Matt 13:55**. *"Is not this the carpenter?"*
3. God used workmen to cast down the horns. The Builder of all things is His Son.
 - a) **Hebrews 3:3–4**, *For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. 4 (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.)*

B. **The Horn of Salvation answers the horns that scattered (Luke 1:69)**

1. A priest named Zechariah, whose name means "*the LORD remembers*," breaks 400 years of silence. He sings: *"[He] has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David... that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us"* (**Luke 1:69–71**).
2. He sings this *"to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham"* (**Lk 1:72–73**). Zechariah's 4 horns scattered Israel. God answers with one **Horn** from David's house.
3. Hannah's horn **1 Sam 2:10**, **Psalm 132:17's horn**. The *"sprout for David"* arrives in Bethlehem.

C. **The Carpenter casts down the last horn**

1. **At the cross:** *"He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him"* (**Col 2:15**).
2. **At His return:** *"The ten horns that you saw are ten kings... They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings"* (**Rev 17:12, 14**; see also **Dan 7:11, 26** and **2 Thess 2:8**).
3. **Israel's story is not finished.** *"Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled"* (**Luke 21:24**). The scattering Zechariah saw has a final regathering still ahead (**Rom 11:25–26**).

D. **The Carpenter gathers the scattered**

1. Caiaphas prophesied that Jesus would die *"not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad"* (**John 11:52**).
2. The horns scatter; the Carpenter gathers. For the believer, this is the bridge: the same Lord who deals with nations deals with whatever has scattered you (**Rom 8:35–39**).

IV. Light for our Path – "Lift your head"

- A. Everybody has something that scattered them. The remnant had 70 years of it. Name yours.
- B. The horns scattered *"so that no one raised his head."* Scattering keeps your head down!
- C. The One David called *"the lifter of my head"* (Ps 3:3). Talking about the end of the times of the Gentiles, Jesus says: *"Straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near"* (**Lk 21:28**).
- D. *Return to me, and I will return to you* (**Zech 1:3**). The call hasn't changed: Some of what scattered us, we did ourselves. He still says, return!
- E. The horns that scattered us do not get the last word. Jesus, the Carpenter, the all-wise Master-Builder from Nazareth who gathers, does. He has disarmed them at the cross; He will cast them down at His return, and until then He is still building. So, lift your head!