

Zechariah 1:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD shewed me four carpenters.

Analysis

In Zechariah's vision sequence, after seeing four horns representing nations that scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem (v. 19), 'the LORD showed me four craftsmen' (harashim). These craftsmen/artisans are agents of judgment against the oppressors—their purpose (v. 21) is to 'terrify and cast down the horns of the nations that lifted up their horn against Judah to scatter it.' The symbolism reveals God's sovereign orchestration: He raises up nations to discipline His people, then raises up other nations to judge the discipliners. Historical fulfillment included Persia conquering Babylon, Greece conquering Persia, Rome conquering Greece. Ultimately, Christ is the final 'craftsman' who will destroy all hostile powers at His return (Revelation 19:11-21). God's providence governs even pagan empires, ensuring His redemptive purposes prevail despite human opposition.

Historical Context

The 'four horns' likely represent the major empires that oppressed Israel: Assyria (conquered Northern Kingdom, 722 BC), Babylon (destroyed Jerusalem, 586 BC), Medo-Persia (though liberators, still ruled over Jews), and perhaps Greece or a collective symbol of all oppressors. The 'four craftsmen' are divine agents: Babylon fell to Persia, Persia to Greece, Greece to Rome. Zechariah's visions assured discouraged returnees that God controlled history and would vindicate His people. Daniel's parallel visions (Daniel 2, 7) show successive empires culminating in God's eternal kingdom. This prophetic pattern demonstrates that no matter how powerful oppressive regimes appear, God will bring them down in His timing, using means of His choosing.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing God's control over nations and history sustain my faith during times of political turmoil?
2. Do I trust that God will ultimately vindicate His people and judge those who oppose His purposes?

Interlinear Text

שְׁאַלְמָנָה אֶת־יְהוָה וְיִתְגַּדֵּל־עַל־יְהוָה
And the LORD shewed me four carpenters

H7200

H3068

H702

H2796

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