

Zechariah 1:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.

Analysis

The angel explains the craftsmen's purpose: 'These are the horns which have scattered Judah... and these are come to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.' The Hebrew 'le-harid' (to terrify) indicates causing trembling/panic—those who scattered God's people will themselves experience terror. 'Cast out/down' (le-yado'ah) means to drive away or throw down these horns (symbols of power). This divine retribution demonstrates the lex talionis principle: those who scattered will be scattered, those who terrorized will be terrorized. Yet God's justice serves redemptive purposes—clearing away obstacles to His people's restoration. This anticipates Revelation's vision of Christ defeating all hostile powers and establishing His kingdom (Revelation 11:15, 19:11-21). God is zealous for His glory and His people.

Historical Context

Historically fulfilled as empires fell in succession: Babylon to Persia, Persia to Greece, Greece to Rome. Each oppressor of God's people eventually faced judgment. For Zechariah's audience in 520 BC, this vision assured them that though currently under Persian dominion (even if benevolent), God would

ultimately free them completely. The eschatological horizon points to Messiah's reign when all Gentile powers will submit to Israel's King (Philippians 2:9-11). The New Testament reveals the mystery: Gentiles who believe are grafted into God's covenant people (Romans 11:17-24, Ephesians 2:11-22), while unbelieving Israel faces temporary hardening until 'the fullness of the Gentiles has come in' (Romans 11:25).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does knowing God will judge all who oppose His purposes help me endure present injustice patiently?
2. Do I trust God's timing in bringing down oppressive powers, or do I grow impatient with His patience?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	מָה	אֵלֶּה	וַיָּבֹאוּ	לַעֲשׂוֹת	וַיֹּאמֶר	
And he spake	H4100	H428	I What come	these to do	And he spake	
H559			H935	H6213	H559	
וַיֹּאמֶר	אֵלֶּה	קֶרְנוֹ	אֲשֶׁר	לְזַרְוֹתָהּ:	אֶת	יְהוּדָה
And he spake	H428	These are the horns	H834	to scatter	H853	Judah
H559		H7161		H2219		H3063
כִּפִּי	אִישׁ	לֹא	הִנֵּשָׂא יָדוֹ	רֹאשׁוֹ	וַיָּבֹאוּ	אֵלֶּה
so that	no man	H3808	did lift up	his head	I What come	H428
H6310	H376		H5375	H7218	H935	
יָדוֹ	אֶת	לְזַרְוֹתָהּ	אֶת	קֶרְנוֹ	הַגִּבּוֹרִים	
to fray	H853	them to cast out	H853	These are the horns	of the Gentiles	
H2729		H3034		H7161	H1471	
הִנֵּשָׂא יָדוֹ	קֶרְנוֹ	אֵל	אֶת	יְהוּדָה	לְזַרְוֹתָהּ:	
did lift up	These are the horns	H413	over the land	Judah	to scatter	
H5375	H7161		H776	H3063	H2219	

Additional Cross-References

Zechariah 1:19 (Parallel theme): And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What be these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

Psalms 75:10 (Parallel theme): All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

Lamentations 2:17 (Parallel theme): The LORD hath done that which he had devised; he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old: he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied: and he hath caused thine enemy to rejoice over thee, he hath set up the horn of thine adversaries.