Whoever Curses Israel God Curses
Zechariah 1:18-21

God made a covenant with Abraham that he would be the father of a great nation; this covenant came in two parts: a generational covenant and a land covenant; the generational covenant is found in Genesis 12: 2-3; the land covenant is in Genesis 17:7-8.

The generational covenant has five parts to it: 1. From out of the loins of Abraham will come a great nation called Israel; 2. Abraham will become an honorable house-hold name; 3. He will be greatly blessed by God as his name means “father of a multitude” and was called “God’s friend forever” (2 Chronicles 20:7); 4. Those nations that bless Israel God will bless, and those who curse Israel God will curse; 5. From out of the loins of Abraham all the nations will be blessed in that through his bloodline the Messiah Himself will come.

The land covenant is the land known as Canaan to which Abraham was called; it would be deeded to Abraham’s descendants forever; that land today is Israel.

The part of the covenant we will focus on is the treatment of Israel by the nations of the world; this becomes the background to the second of the eight visions the Lord gave to Zechariah; the purpose of Zechariah’s prophecy was to motivate the Jews to complete the rebuilding of the temple after a remnant of Jews returned from Babylonian captivity; in the first two years of their return they had built the altar and laid the foundation; Samaritan opposition to the rebuilding of the temple put a halt to the work for 16 years; In 520 BC God calls Zechariah to motivate the workers to get the temple built and He does so with “good and comforting words” (1:13) in the form of 8 consecutive visions.

In this study we will look at the second vision.

The Strength of Four Horns (1:18-19)
The significance of the horns... Horn (*karin*) refers to an animal horn used to sound a warning or to announce an event; in a symbolic way it refers to the power of a nation (Jeremiah 48:25; Lamentations 2:3; Psalm 75:10); to “lift up the horn” means to increase power (Psalm 89 and 92); the Antichrist is referred to as a horn (Daniel 7:21); the kingdom of the Antichrist is identified by 10 horns who are 10 kings (Daniel 7:24).

The scattering of Israel by four horns... In Zechariah’s vision he sees 4 horns which are 4 Gentile kings who scatter the enslaved people of Israel; the verb “scattered” (*zeruim*) is in the perfect tense which refers to completed action in the past, the present and the future; it has no time factor; the text could read: “These are the horns which have scattered, are scattering, and will scatter Judah....”

The statue in King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream... These four horns who scatter the Jews is clarified in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream as interpreted by Daniel; he saw a statue with a head of gold (Babylon), breast and arms of silver (the Medes and the Persians), belly and thigh of bronze (Greece), legs of iron (Rome, which divided into Eastern and Western Rome under Diocletian in 395 AD), feet partly of iron and partly of clay (to be identified); then a stone cut without hands crushed the statue and became a great mountain that filled the whole earth (Daniel 2:1-40).

Daniel then says of the feet and toes, made partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron that it will mingle with the seed of men but will not adhere to one another just as iron does not mix with clay, rather the kingdom shall be divided (Daniel 2: 41-43).

There were ten toes on the statue when the Roman Empire collapsed from within in 476 AD; 10 nations came out of the Roman Empire which eventually formed Europe: the Huns, the Ostrogoths, the Visigoths, the Franks, the Vandals, the Suevi, the Burgundians, the Heruli, the Anglo-Saxons, and the Lombards; but there is more to these ten toes as we will learn.

What an incredible account from Scripture that Daniel, 540 BC could reveal history nearly 1,000 years in advance!

Then Daniel tells us in the day of many nations, a stone will be cut out of a mountain without hands, it will break in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold and it will fill the earth (Daniel 2:35,45); the four horns in Zechariah’s vision are Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome.

The Scattering of the Jews by Four Horns  (1:19)
The first horn is Babylon... This empire invaded Jerusalem in 606 BC, 597 BC and again in 586 BC (see 2 Kings 25); this latter siege began January 15,588 BC and continued until July 18,586 BC; they burned down the temple, the king's palace, knocked down the walls before setting fire to the city and carried the survivors off to captivity; Judah became a Babylonian province.

The second horn is Medo-Persia... They were not as violent as the Babylonians, yet God was angry with them because they did not come to the aid of the Israelites during the Babylonian raids; they were among the indifferent nations; once the Persians conquered Babylon in 536 BC under Cyrus of Persia they kept a stranglehold on the Jewish people for 200 years; in the days of King Ahasuerus (486-464 BC) there was a plot to commit genocide against the Jews in Persia by wicked Haman; it was uncovered by Mordecai, uncle to Jewess Queen Esther.

The third horn is Greece... Alexander the Great in 330 BC swept through the then known world and crushed the Persians; it was after the death of Alexander in 323 BC the empire was divided into four sections each ruled by one of his generals; in 195 BC Antiochus Epiphanes became ruler of the Greek Seleucid section out of Syria which controlled Israel; He wanted to become another Alexander by gaining control of the other three sections of the empire; he made an invasion into Egypt to take on the Ptolemies; he was stopped by the Romans and on his way back to Damascus in 186 BC he took his frustration out on the Jews by committing “the abomination of desolation;” he offered pigs on the altar and set up the worship of Zeus Olympus in the temple; in 165, the Jews, in a surprise attack on Antiochus near Damascus led by Judas Maccabaeus defeated the Greeks; they cleansed the temple and celebrated with a festival of lights known as Hanukkah.

The fourth horn is Rome... Israel’s independence did not last long; in 63 BC Pompey crushed the forces of Judah and it became a Roman province; in 70 AD Rome destroyed the temple, a war against the Zealots which began under Nero (66 AD) but the destruction of the temple came under Emperor Titus; Josephus tells us 1,356,400 Jews were killed.

One group to escape the Romans were the Essenes who fled to Masada; they preserved copies of the Old Testament in caves later discovered in 1947 as the Dead Sea Scrolls; the Essenes ultimately all committed suicide once they discovered the Romans were coming after them.
The Sending of Four Craftsmen (1:20-21)

The craftsmen as “hammerers”... For every horn there is a craftsmen whom some refer to as “hammerers;” when a nation mistreats Israel God sends a “hammer” to pound down that nation.

The conquests by the “hammerers”...Persia hammered Babylon, Greece hammered Persia, Rome hammered Greece; when Rome fell, it was not defeated by an empire greater than itself, it collapsed from within; 10 nations came out of the fallen Roman Empire to form Europe; the number 10 is significant, for a one world government will come out of a revived Roman Empire; perhaps this is seen in today’s European Union.

Europe is a godless continent out of which the Antichrist will come described as a beast having seven heads and ten horns (Revelation 13:1); the seven heads are seven Gentile nation that held Israel captive: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome with the seventh being the future empire of the Antichrist.

The clarification of the 10 horns on the beast... The 10 horns are 10 kings who are subordinate to the Antichrist as he divides the one world government into 10 administrative districts (see also Daniel 7:1-7).

Daniel noticed in his own dream another horn, a little one, that emerges from among the 10 horns and before which 3 of the horns were plucked out by their roots (Daniel 7:8); he will speak “pompous words” (Daniel 7:8); he will abandon laws and institute his own system (Daniel 7:25); he will be given power for 3/12 years (Daniel 7:25); this “little horn is the Antichrist who will rule the world during the second half of the Tribulation (see 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10; Revelation 13,17).

Remember the dream of Nebuchadnezzar with the statue with legs of iron with ten toes partly of clay and partly of iron? They represented the 10 nations that came out of Rome, but they have an end time meaning as well.

The composition of the European Union... On January 1,1958 the European Common market with 6 nations was formed but its charter called for 10 nations; today it is known as the European Union with 28 countries and its capital in Brussels; there are nations like Greece and Portugal that are like clay, and nations like Germany and
England that are like iron; the number 10 is significant in that it speaks of the nations that came out of the Roman Empire but can also refer to the original charter of the European Union; could it be that the European Union out of which the Antichrist will come is the fulfillment of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the 10 toes on the statue?

In the day the Antichrist rules with power for 31/2 years, the fourth craftsmen comes like a stone carved without hands from a mountain that will strike the image at its toes and feet and the image crumbles; then the stone--- the Kingdom of God--- fills the whole earth and it shall stand forever (Daniel 7: 34-35;42-44); the fourth craftsmen is Jesus Christ coming to earth in glory and power to defeat the kingdom of the Antichrist (Revelation 19:11- 20:1-6).

The Surety of Israel’s Preservation (1:19-21)

The certainty of more horns… In Zechariah 1:19 there is the phrase “the horns have scattered Judah…”;” the word “scattered” is perfect tense, meaning the action was complete in the past, in the present, and will be completed in the future; this gives us reason to believe there will be future horns like the initial four.

The clarification of other horns...

Consider 15th Century Spain as a horn… Spain was the greatest power in the world in 1492 when Queen Isabella ordered every Jew to convert to Christianity or be expelled; 250 thousand Jews were expelled with nothing but the cloths on their backs; tens of thousands died trying to reach safety; many were killed as rumors had it that they swallowed gold and diamonds so their stomachs were cut open by brigands hoping to find treasure; this was the year Columbus set sail and discovered America financed by money taken from the Jews.

By the 17th Century Spain was facing political and economic problems and suffered military defeats at the hands of France, Portugal, Holland as world power shifted to France; today Spain is a relatively weak nation militarily with little respect from the world’s superpowers; could France be that hammer that brought Spain down?

Consider Nazi Germany as a horn… Adolph Hitler launched the Holocaust gassing some six million Jews; the hammers were the Allied Forces which defeated the Nazis to end World War II.
Consider Great Britain as a horn... In the 19th Century the British Empire was friendly to Israel and had a deeply Christian influence; with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire following World War I, the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 was made to divide the Middle East between the British and the French; Britain was given Palestine; in 1917 their government issued the Balfour Declaration saying they would make Palestine a homeland for the Jewish people; in 1922 they turned against the Jews and gave ⅔ of Palestine to form the nation of Jordan; once the Holocaust broke out they refused to allow Jews from Europe to go home to Israel only to have them die in Nazi Concentration Camps; at the end of World War II they sided with the Arabs because of the oil; shortly thereafter their worldwide empire crumbled and today it is but a memory; could God be the hammer that caused the collapse of the British Empire?

Could the United States be a horn?... The Obama administration has held Israel in contempt the moment he took office; he has sought the favor of Muslims and marginalized Israel and its leaders; he made an agreement with Iran and gave them 150 billion dollars to lay aside their nuclear program for 10 years while Iran shouts “Death to America” and “Death to Israel” and violates the agreement by shooting off long range ballistic missiles capable of striking Tel Aviv; according to an article in the Jerusalem Post, Obama has threatened after the 2016 elections to force the UN to divide Israel and make a homeland for the Palestinians with East Jerusalem as it capital; will God be the hammer to bring down the United States?

God made a covenant promise with Abraham and the nation of Israel: “I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you” (Genesis 12:3).