THE ESCHATOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

ZECHARIAH 1:18-21

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree Master of Divinity in
Grace Theological Seminary
May 12, 1978

Just as prophecy has intrigued other students of the Bible, my interest was aroused concerning the exact meaning of the vision given in Zech. 1:18-21. This vision of the horns and the smiths is the second of eight received by the prophet.

The interpretation of prophecy has always produced varied results. Therefore, it is imperative to set the proper groundwork by establishing certain principles for prophetic interpretation. These principles were culled from the major works on the interpretation of Scripture.

The passage was carefully scrutinized exegetically. This was done to determine the exact meaning and usage of the most significant words of the text. It was determined that the word "horn" must refer to some Gentile nation or king that will literally "scatter" Israel. The action attributed to the "craftsmen" (to throw down the horns of the nations) could not describe actual craftsmen. The figurative use must have been employed describing some nation. Regarding the word "scatter," the Pi'el stem indicated an actual scattering of people was meant.

The "terrifying" of Zech. 1:21 strongly suggested military activity for this is its normal usage in the Hiph'il stem. The craftsmen's purpose is to "throw down" the strength of the nations scattering Israel. A search of Scripture yielded the conclusion that only God or a nation engages in this activity.

Regarding the interpretation of the horns and the smiths, viewpoints fell into 2 categories-those emphasizing quality and those emphasizing quantity. Interpretations which emphasized quality used improper exegesis and violated the accepted rules of hermeneutical interpretation. The only interpretation which adhered to sound exegesis and hermeneutics was the one which postulated the nations of Daniel 2 to be the horns and smiths. This view has the advantage of agreeing with the prophetic framework in the Book of Revelation. This is the view to which the author adheres.

Accepted by the Faculty of Grace Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree
Master of Divinity

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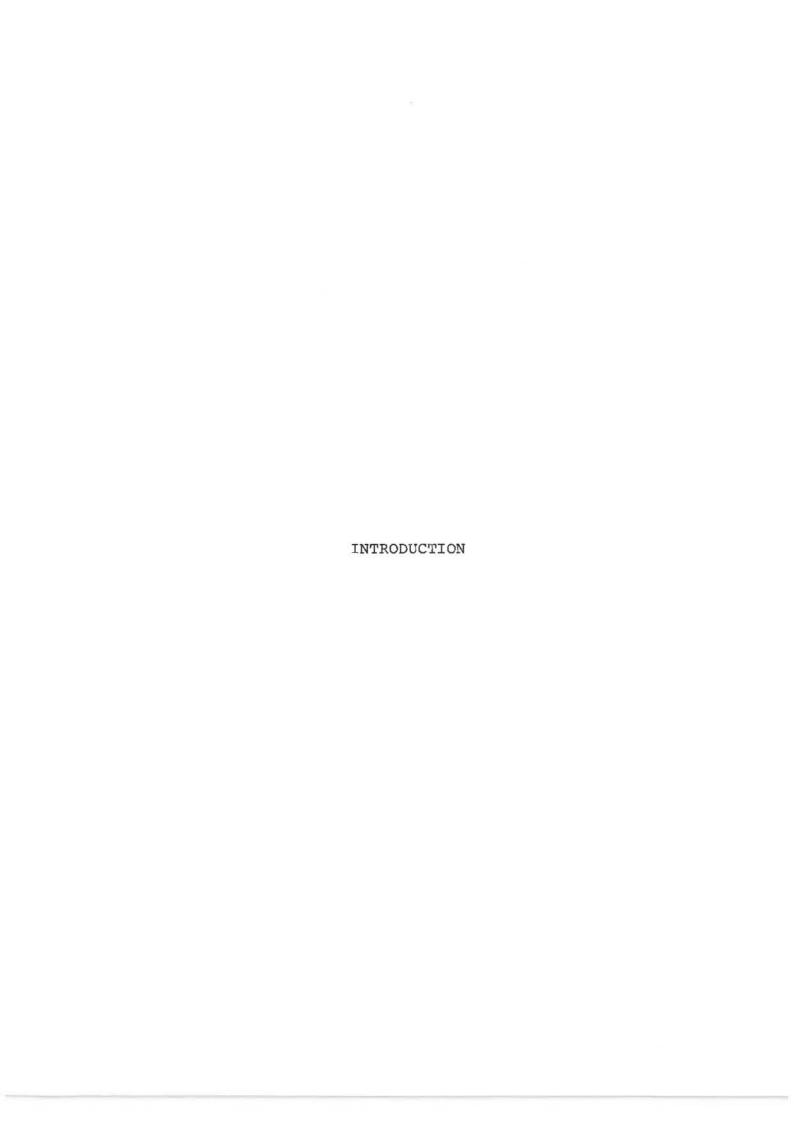   Advisor

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CHAPTER

HEBREW TEXT

HEBREW TEXT

This text is according to <u>Biblia Hebraica</u>, edited by

Rudolf Kittel.

1 וָאֶשָּׂא אֶת־עֵינַי וָאֵרֶא וְהִנֵּה אַרְבַּע קְרָנוֹת: 2 וָאֹמַר אֶל־
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אֶל־אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה לְזָרוֹתָהּ:

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Purpose of This Study

The subject of this thesis is the prophet Zecha-
riah's vision of the horns and the smiths (Zech. 1:18-21).
Therefore, the author has as his goal to seek the best
interpretation of this vision. This will necessitate a
careful investigation of both the horns and the smiths (or
"craftsmen" as they are called by the N.A.S.B.) by means of
grammar, Biblical usage, and historical data. The main
problem is their identification--who or what they are--and
how the smiths will "terrify" and "throw down" the horns.

The Need for This Study

The fact that Zech 1:18-21 is not part of the main-
stream of Biblical prophecy does not decrease or minimize
the importance for this study. Just as Paul felt the
necessity to preach "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27),
students of the Word of God are obligated to engage in a
vigorous analysis of the entire scope of Scripture. Thus,
any passage, however obscure or out-of-the-way, is suitable
for examination.

There are two very important reasons for this study. The first is to ascertain the correct interpretation of Zech. 1:18-21. Secondly, a proper interpretation of this passage will lead to a better understanding of other prophetic passages.

Even though this study probably will not produce any significant changes in the salient aspects of eschatology, it should produce an interpretation consistent with the major doctrines. Such a study should demonstrate the depth, reliability and accuracy of the Bible. For the conservative, such vindication is sufficient to pursue the issue of the "horns and the smiths."

The Procedure for This Study

The procedure of study to be utilized in the consideration of this topic is based upon the grammatical-exegetical-historical method. The method of analysis will be two-fold.

First, an intensive and thorough grammatical analysis of the major Hebrew words of the passage (horn, smith, scatter, terrify, and cast down) will be made. Then the author will scrutinize the various interpretations that have been offered as solutions. Those ideas which do not coincide with the grammatical and exegetical observations

previously established, will be rejected. Finally, on the basis of the above procedures, the author will advance his own conclusion.

CHAPTER II

THE INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY

As the role of the Middle East in world affairs
increases, interest in Biblical prophecy has proportionately
increased. Books regarding the future are appearing at a
steadily increasing rate. They appear to be stimulating
man's natural curiosity regarding the future. However, much
of the literature on this topic is confusing as well as
abundant. The Apostle Peter wrote that "we have also a more
sure word of prophecy" (2 Pet. 1:19). Yet, as Duty notes,
"we cannot have a sure word of prophecy unless we have a
sure method of interpretation. The conflicts and differ-
ences between teachers of prophecy are due mainly to the
differences in their methods of interpretation."[1] Farrar,
in his magnum opus, History of Interpretation, concluded
that "the misinterpretations of Scripture must be reckoned
among the gravest calamities of Christendom."[2] Thus, the
need for some principles of interpretation to guide one in
the area of prophecy is a necessity.

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[1]Guy Duty, Escape From the Coming Tribulation
(Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1975), p. 9.

[2]Frederic W. Ferrar, History of Interpretation
(Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1961), p. 39.

This chapter will discuss the literal method of interpretation, the reasons for interpreting prophecy literally and eight principles of prophetic interpretation. This material is foundational for if one is to interpret Scripture properly, the correct hermeneutical method must be employed.

The Literal Method

The literal method of interpreting the Scriptures has been demonstrated through repeated usage to be the most worthy method of analyzing the Bible. It is also known as the grammatical-historical method.

Definition of the Literal Method

This method operates on the assumption that the words of Scripture can be trusted. Since God wants His Word understood, it is logical to assume that His revelation is based on regular rules of human communication.

The literal method of interpretation is that method that gives to each word "the same exact basic meaning it would have in normal, ordinary, customary usage, whether in writing, speaking or thinking."[1]

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[1]J. Dwight Pentecost, Things to Come (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), p. 9.

Ramm says:

> The customary, socially-acknowledged designation of a word is the literal meaning of that word (emphasis his).
>
> The literal meaning of a word is the basic, customary, social designation of that word (emphasis his).
>
> To interpret literally means nothing more or less than to interpret in terms of normal, usual, designation.[1]

Another author says that literal interpretation "means to explain the original sense of the speaker or writer according to the normal, customary, and proper usages of words and languages."[2]

Thus it can be seen that interpreting God's revelation involves discovering the normal, ordinary, and customary meaning and usage of the words in the text.

Evidence for the Literal Method

The literal method of interpretation is supported by strong evidence. Ramm gives the following support:

> (a) That all literal meaning of sentences is the normal approach in all languages. . . .
>
> (b) That all secondary meanings of documents, parables, types, allegories, and symbols, depend for their very existence on the previous literal meaning of the terms. . . .

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[1] Bernard Ramm, _Protestant Biblical Interpretation_ (Boston: W. A. Wilde Company, 1950), p. 64.

[2] Paul Lee Tan, _The Interpretation of Prophecy_ (Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, Inc., 1974), p. 29.

(c) That the greater part of the Bible makes adequate sense when interpreted literally.

(d) That the literalistic approach does not blindly rule out figures of speech, symbols, allegories, and types; but if the nature of the sentence so demands, it readily yields to the second sense.

(e) That this method is the only sane and safe check on the imaginations of man.

(f) That this method is the only one consonant with the nature of inspiration. The plenary inspiration of the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit guided men into truth and away from error. In this process the Spirit of God used language, and the units of language (as meaning, not as sound) are words and thoughts. The thought is the thread that strings the words together. Therefore, our very exegesis must commence with a study of words and grammar, the two fundamentals of all meaningful speech.[1]

Since God's Word is His revelation to mankind, it should be expected that it would be given in such exact and specific terms that His thoughts would be accurately conveyed and understood when interpreted according to the laws of grammar and speech. Such a conclusion favors a literal interpretation, for an allegorical method of interpretation would only confuse the meaning of the message given by God.

Objections to the Literal Method

The opponents of the literal method have raised numerous objections. However, as the writer evaluated

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[1]Bernard Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation, pp. 54 ff.

these criticisms he realized that the differences are not interpretational but theological. Thus, the real differences are between the amillennialist and premillennialist and between the pretribulation and posttribulation rapturists. These theological divergences will be treated in the section entitled "dispensational premillennial eschatology" in this chapter.

For the present let the reader note that the major interpretational group opposed to literalism is the allegorists. Their method of interpretation, allegorical, is an ancient one for it obtained an early prominence among the Jews of Alexandria.

Ramm defines the allegorical method as the "method of interpreting a literary text that regards the literal sense as the vehicle for a secondary, more spiritual and more profound sense."[1] Angus and Green define an allegory as "any statement of supposed facts which admits of a literal interpretation, and yet requires or justly admits a moral or figurative one."[2]

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[1]Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation, p. 21.

[2]Joseph Angus and Samuel G. Green, The Bible Handbook (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d.), p. 220.

Fritsch summarizes it thus:

> According to this method the literal and histori-
> cal sense of Scripture is completely ignored, and
> every word and event is made an allegory of some
> kind either to escape theological difficulties or to
> maintain certain peculiar religious views. . . .[1]

Two examples of the allegorical method are as fol-
lows. The journey of Abraham from Ur to Haran is inter-
preted as the imaginary trip of a Stoic philosopher who
leaves sensual understanding and arrives at the senses.[2]
Pope Gregory the Great's interpretation of the Book of Job
is "that the patriarch's three friends denote the heretics;
his seven sons are the twelve apostles; his seven thousand
sheep are God's faithful people; and his three thousand
hump-backed camels are the depraved Gentiles."[3]

Thus, the reader can see that the allegorical method
is laden with inherent dangers that render it unacceptable
as a worthy method of interpretation. These dangers are:
first, it does not interpret Scripture; second, the basic
authority for interpretation is the mind of the interpreter
and not Scripture; and third, the conclusions of the

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[1]Charles T. Fritsch, "Biblical Typology,"
Bibliotheca Sacra 104 (April, 1947): 216.

[2]Cited by Frederick W. Farrar, History of
Interpretation, pp. 190-41.

[3]Alva J. McClain, The Greatness of the Kingdom
(Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959),
p. 143.

interpreter are not subject to verification. Thus the allegorical method makes it impossible for Scripture to be interpreted properly and, hence, must be rejected in favor of the literal (grammatical-historical) method.

Reasons For Interpreting Prophecy Literally

This section will show why prophecy, since it is part of the Word of God, should be interpreted like other portions of Scripture. The four salient reasons which exist for a literal interpretation of prophecy are: 1) Scriptural authority, 2) historical fulfillment, 3) early church precedent, and 4) logical necessity.

Scriptural Authority

Prophecy can be interpreted literally because this is the method employed by the Bible itself. When the Magi inquired where Chirst was to be born, the chief priests and scribes answered by quoting Micah 5:2. Obviously, they believed in a literal fulfillment. God warned Noah and his generation of an impending flood. Only Noah interpreted the warning literally. The Lord also predicted (prophesied) the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18-10), urging Lot to flee certain death.

"The peoples of Israel had long been forewarned by all the prophets of their destruction and of their inevitable deportation."[1] Likewise the contemporaries of Jesus knew about their impending crisis with the Roman armies in 70 A.D. Although there was time to prepare, they failed to heed the warning literally (Luke 19:4144; 21:20-24).

Another reason prophecy can be interpreted literally "is that human language originated from God" and "He chose it as the medium of revelational communication."[2] God did not use an unintelligible or unknown language to communicate His truth to us because He considered earthly language an adequate means of revelation. Ryrie correctly observes:

> If God be the originator of language and if the chief purpose of originating it was to convey His message to man, then it must follow that He . . . originated sufficient language to convey all that was in His heart to tell man.[3]

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[1]Rene Pache, The Return of Jesus Christ (Chicago: Moody Press, 1955), p. 15.

[2]Paul Lee Tan, The Interpretation of Prophecy, p. 61.

[3]Charles C. Ryrie, Dispensationalism Today (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), p. 88.

Historical Fulfillment

Historical fulfillment of past prophecies argues for literal interpretation of those that are future. "The only way to know how God will fulfill prophecy in the future is to ascertain how he has done it in the past."[1] The Bible contains hundreds of prophecies that have been fulfilled literally. Let the reader's attention be directed to the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy.

Boyer mentions twenty-four specific details that were fulfilled at Christ's death. Only five are listed.

1) Sold for thirty pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12; Matt. 26:14-15).

2) Betrayed by one of His own friends (Ps. 41:9; 55:12-14; Matt. 26:49-50).

3) Silent before His accusers (Isa. 53:7; Matt. 27:12,14).

4) Garments divided by casing lots (Ps. 22:18; John 19:23-24).

5) Buried in a rich man's tomb (Isa. 53:9; Matt. 27:57-60).[2]

There are also predictions in the Old Testament concerning ancient nations and cities that were fulfilled literally. For example:

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[1]Charles L. Feinberg, Premillennialism or Amillennialism (Wheaton, Ill: Van Kampen Press, 1964), p. 18.

[2]James L. Boyer, Prophecy: Things to Come (Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1973), pp. 26-27.

1. Babylon. One of the greatest of ancient cities is now a totally deserted area. The prophets Isaiah (Isa. 13:19-21) and Jeremiah (Jer. 51:26, 43) predicted its demise.

2. Samaria. Although Christ visited this city several times, the old city no longer stands. Micah 1:6 predicted Samaria's ruin--even down to its foundations.

3. Tyre. Although this was a great city of ancient times, it has not been inhabited for 2,300 years just as Ezek. 26:3-16 predicted.

Another dramatic event that fulfilled prophecy was the creation of the modern state of Israel in 1948. Because of the obvious nature of this fulfillment, non-literal interpreters are divided on how to evaluate this restored Israel. Some interpreters concede the fulfillment saying:

> If Israel's return to Palestine is compared with prophecy we may say that this present-day return would seem to be a literal fulfillment of prophecy, if the prophecy may be thus literally interpreted.[1]

The restoration of Israel in modern times is an established fact and has demonstrated that prophecy must be interpreted literally.

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[1]Martin J. Wyngaarden, The Future of the Kingdom in Prophecy and Fulfillment (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1955), p. 189.

Early Church Precedent

There are two important beliefs held by the early church which attest to the fact that the early Christians interpreted prophecy literally. These two beliefs are the earthly reign of Christ and the imminent return of Christ.

Support confirming the fact that the early church believed in the millennial reign of Christ on the earth comes from a variety of sources.

A liberal theologian writes:

"Christian hopes for the next two generations (after Christ) revolve about this primitive notion of the heavenly Christ soon to return to inaugurate a new regime upon a miraculously renovated earth . . . It was also a fundamental item in the early preaching to the Gentiles."[1]

An anti-premillennialist observes that "if any premillennialism existed in the early church it was during the first four centuries of its history."[2]

Phillip Schaff, the noted church historian writes:

The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene age is the prominent chiliasm, or millennarianism, that is the belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years, before the general resurrection and judgment."[3]

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[1]Shirley Jackson Case, The Millennial Hope (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1918), p. 117.

[2]George L. Murray, Millennial Studies (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1948), p. 192.

[3]Phillip Schaff, History of the Christian Church (7 vols; New York, N.Y.: Charles Scribner and Co., 1884), II, 614.

Thus it has been demonstrated that a belief in the earthly millennial reign of Christ was the prevailing belief of the early church. Such belief is founded upon a literal interpretation of prophecy.

The early church believed that the coming of the Lord was imminent. A non-literal interpreter admits that "the early church definitely believed in the second coming of Jesus Christ, and seemed to cherish the conviction that His coming was imminent."[1]

Indeed, the early Christians actually expected their Lord to come _during_ the lifetime of John (cf. John 21:20-23).

Since the early Christians expected Christ to return at any moment, it can be inferred that they did not expect any event (such as the Great Tribulation) to intervene before hand.

Practical Necessity

If the literal method is abandoned, as the Alexandrian church fathers did, than a plethora of conflicting interpretations arises. Each exegete becomes his own authority, no concrete test of an acceptable interpretation is available, and chaos is ensured.

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[1]Murray, _Millennial Studies_, p. 192.

A similar situation now exists in the arena of
prophetic interpretation. Among non-literal pro-
phetic interpreters, a state of virtual interpretive
chaos exists. It is rare, for instance, to see a
well-ordered and definitive work by an amillennial
interpreter setting forth positively and consistently
his prophetic interpretations. On the contrary, amil-
lennial writings usually concentrate on attacking and
ridiculing the premillennial position. This approach
is probably one of necessity, for amillennialists
seldom agree with each other in specific interpre-
tations of prophecy except to be against the earthly
millennium.[1]

The issue of literality is crucial, especially in

prophecy, for once it is surrendered, the temptation to

spiritualize greatly increases. Soon all objectivity is

lost and chaos results.

This section has demonstrated the dire results of

the non-literal method and the superiority of the literal

method in interpreting prophecy.

Principles of Prophetic Interpretation

In order to interpret Bible prophecy correctly,

certain principles of prophetic interpretation must be

employed. The regular principles of hermeneutics used by

all conservatives to interpret Scripture can also be used to

interpret prophecy. Although prophecy may have its

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[1]Tan, The Interpretation of Prophecy, p. 73.

peculiarities, Terry observes that "we nevertheless must employ in its interpretation the same great principles as in the interpretation of other ancient writings."[1]

The regular and accepted principles of hermeneutics are: the language principle, the historical-cultural principle, the Christocentric principle, the contextual principle, the analogy of faith principle, the progressive revelation principle, the single interpretation principle, and the simplest alternative principle. Each of these rules demands further consideration.

The Language Principle

This principle says that the words of the prophets "should be taken in their usual literal sense, unless the context . . . clearly indicates that they have a symbolic meaning."[2] Thus the interpreter is obligated to give careful scrutiny to the language (meaning, syntax, idioms, phraseology, etc.) of the passage under consideration. When commentators slight the study of language in prophecy, this often results in faulty exegesis and wrong conclusions.

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[1] Milton S. Terry, Biblical Hermeneutics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), p. 418.

[2] Louis Berkhof, Principles of Biblical Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966), p. 152.

The Historical-Cultural Principle

The apostle John lived 1,500 years after Moses. Over 1,800 years have passed since the close of the canon. It should thus be expected that the customs, habits, language expressions, cities, states, travel routes, geography and the people themselves would change over this long span of time.

Therefore, the interpreter "must determine the historical background of the prophet and the prophecy."[1] For example, a knowledge of Edom is required to understand Obadiah while the history of Syria necessitates a proper comprehension of Jonah. Since history is necessary to understand the prophet, and that some historical event occasioned the giving of the prophecy, its importance should not be minimized.

The Christocentric Principle

This principle views Christ as the central figure and focus of all history and prophecy. Rev. 19:10 says "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." On the road to Emmaus Jesus explained to the two disciples "the things concerning Himself in _all_ the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27). The centrality of Christ in prophecy is therefore an

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[1]Ramm, _Protestant Biblical Interpretation_, pp. 228-29.

indispensable element in prophetic interpretation. The
interpreter must interpret prophecy Christologically because
Christ is the theme of prophecy.

The Contextual Principle

According to this principle every verse and passage
must be studied with careful attention given to the con-
text.[1] Hartill says "every verse must be studied in light
of its context. Never take a verse out of its setting and
give it a foreign meaning."[2]

Proper use and application of this principle will
not allow one to make Scripture prove anything he wants it
to prove. The study of context is obligatory in prophetic
interpretation. Whenever context is considered, clues to
the proper interpretation will always be discovered.
Prophecy is not a group of unrelated revelation, but a
harmonious unit given by means of inspiration.

The Analogy of Faith Principle

This principle is based on the assumption that
Scripture is its own best interpreter. This procedure is
justifiable on the ground that the Bible does not contradict
itself.

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[1]Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation, p. 230.

[2]J. Edwin Hartill, Biblical Hermeneutics (Grand
Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1947), p. 70.

When applied to interpretation, the principle of the analogy of faith demands that every interpretation be in harmony with the uniform teaching of Scripture. Interpretations which do not harmonize with the accepted teachings of the Bible are disallowed. Passages must not be explained on the basis of individual texts, but on the whole tenor of Scripture.

> The prophetic Scriptures are not to be taken alone and interpreted without regard for the rest of Scripture. Always we must safeguard our interpretations of prophecy by comparing them with the full teaching of the whole Bible. God doesn't contradict himself.[1]

The analogy of faith principle is a foundational principle and a basic presupposition in Scripture interpretation.

The Progressive Revelation Principle

This principle says that "God makes the revelation of any given truth increasingly clear as the Word proceeds to its consummation."[2] This is to say that the complete revelation of God was unfolded progressively and gradually, not in complete, final form all at once.

However, a word of caution is in order. It must not be assumed that earlier revelations have been superseded

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[1] Boyer, Prophecy: Things to Come, p. 16.

[2] Hartill, Biblical Hermeneutics, p. 73.

by later ones. Old Testament revelations have not been supplanted by those in the New Testament. Revelation was given in such an orderly fashion by the Holy Spirit, that the possibility of its contradiction is non-existent.

The Single Interpretation Principle

This rule states that the meaning of a particular passage is contained in a single interpretation. In other words, "each passage of Scripture has but one basic meaning displayed linguistically."[1] If several meanings can be gleaned from a portion of Scripture, then confusion is the result and comprehension is practically impossible. If one discovers a multiplicity of meanings and interpretations from a passage, he has probably violated one of the afore-mentioned principles. Only one interpretation can be assigned to each passage of Scripture.

The Simplest Alternative

Should alternative interpretations arise that explain the text equally well, the interpreter may then choose the one which least damages the passage and sounds most plausible. This is known hermeneutically as "the simplest alternative principle." Caution must be advised because the use of this method involves only valid

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[1]Tan, The Interpretation of Prophecy, p. 119.

alternative interpretations. Those that fail to meet the above qualifications are to be considered as non-valid. For example, where one compares posttribulationism and pretribulationism, the former is found to be simpler, but posttribulationism is to be rejected because of its tendency to spiritualize.

Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the necessity of interpreting Scripture in a literal fashion. It has been shown that: 1) this is the way the Bible interprets itself; 2) historical fulfillment of past prophecies argues for a literal interpretation of those yet future; 3) the early church must have utilized a literal interpretation since it believed in a visible reign of Christ for a thousand years; and 4) to avoid confusion and chaos in interpretation, literality must be adopted. The literal method of interpretation thus carries strong support.

The writer believes that a non-literal method of interpretation is adopted because of a desire to avoid the obvious interpretation of the passage. One's personal desire to harmonize the Scriptures with a predetermined system of doctrine takes precedence over bringing doctrine into harmony with the Scriptures. This is a regrettable but unforgivable mistake.

If employed properly, the literal method will help the interpreter reach a correct and proper understanding of Scripture.

GRAMMATICAL CONSIDERATIONS

CHAPTER III

GRAMMATICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter will examine the various grammatical
and exegetical aspects associated with the Hebrew text of
Zechariah 1:18-21. This will include an analysis of the
significant words of the text, the meaning of those words,
the structure of the passage, plus any other relevant mat-
ters. The Hebrew words to be scrutinized are "horn" (קֶרֶן),
"smith" or "craftsman" (חָרָשׁ), "scatter" (זָרָה), "terrify"
(חָרַד), and "cast down" (יָדָה). Let the reader's attention
now be directed to the word "horn" (קֶרֶן).

The Meaning and Usage of קֶרֶן

In Zech. 1:18, 19, 21 the Hebrew word translated
"horn" is קֶרֶן. Both Gesenius[1] and Brown, Driver, and
Briggs[2] list the meaning for this word as "horn." Unger
notes that the word appears in all the cognate languages

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[1]William Gesenius, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of
the Old Testament (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1849),
p. 944.

[2]Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs,
Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford: At
The Clarendon Press, 1907), p. 901. (Hereinafter known as
Lexicon).

(Assyrian qarnu, Arabic qarnun).[1] The etymology of this word is interesting for it appears in the Latin as cornu, in Gothic as haurns, in German as horn, and in English as "horn."[2]

The writer has determined that "horn" can be used both literally and figuratively in Scripture. In its literal use it denotes an actual horn. Upon being restrained by God from sacrificing Isaac, Abraham notices "a ram caught in the thicket by its horns" (Gen. 22:13). It may also be used of a trumpet constructed from the horn of a ram. In their preparation to conquer Jericho, Joshua instructs the priests to "carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord" (Josh. 6:5). The word is also used of a receptacle to hold oil. The Lord commanded Samuel, "Fill your horn with oil, and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons" (1 Sam. 16:1). In another usage (Ezek. 27:15) קֶרֶן is used to denote ivory tusks (i.e., horns).

Separate mention can be made of Daniel's visions in chapters seven and eight of his book. In the vision of chapter seven, the fourth beast had "ten horns" (7:7). A "little horn" then comes up pulling out three of the first

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[1]Merrill F. Unger, Zechariah: Prophet of Messiah's Glory (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963), p. 36.

[2]Unger, Zechariah, p. 36.

group of ten horns. In chapter eight Daniel sees "a ram which had two horns" (8:3), and a goat with a "conspicuous horn between his eyes" (8:5). The word "horn" in these two visions denotes a literal horn since it is attached to an actual animal. The fact that these are visions does not negate the actuality of the horns.

Horn may also be used in a figurative sense in Scripture. It is often employed as a symbol for strength and power, especially of nations and individuals. The symbol is "taken from bulls and other horned animals whose strength is in their horns."[1] (cf. Mic. 4:13; Dan. 8:3-4). In her prayer of thanksgiving Hannah rejoices in the fact that the Lord "will exalt the horn (strength) of His anointed" (1 Sam. 2:10). When the Lord declares "the horn of Moab has been cut off, and his arm broken" (Jer. 48:25) He obviously means Moab has no power left. Jeremiah writes in Lam. 2:3 "He has cut off in His fierce anger all the horn of Israel" (KJV).[2] This means that Israel will have its strength rendered harmless.

Another usage can be observed in the expression, the Lord is the "horn of my salvation" found in 2 Sam. 22:3 and Ps. 18:2, indicating that God is the means or instrument of

[1]Charles L. Feinberg, The Minor Prophets (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976), p. 278.

[2]All Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.

one's salvation. A further figurative use of "horn" is the name given to the projections at the four corners of the altar (Ex. 27:2). References attesting to this usage are plentiful in the Old Testament (Ex. 29:12; 30:2, 3, 10; 37:25, 26; 38:2; Lev. 4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34; 8:15; 9:9; 16:18).

Horn is also used to symbolize a Gentile king or his kingdom. "And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings" (Rev. 17:12). "As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise" (Dan. 7:24). Daniel 8:20 states, "the ram . . . with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia."

In Zech. 1:19 the interpreting angel informs the prophet "these are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem." Since a literal horn cannot scatter a nation, the author is forced to conclude, from the figurative usage of horn, that it is the strength of a nation, probably a Gentile king or his kingdom, that will arise to scatter the people of Israel.

The Meaning and Usage of חָרָשׁ

The term חָרָשׁ is a masculine noun having the general meaning of "graver, artificer, workman, or craftsman."[1] Brown, Driver and Briggs note that the word can refer to one who works in stone (2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Chr. 14:1), wood

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[1]William Gesenius, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 350.

(2 Sam. 5;11; 1 Chr. 14:1; 2 Ki. 12:12; 22:6; 2 Chr. 24:12; 34:11; Ezra 3:7; Jer. 10:3; Isa. 40;20; 44:13), metal (Dt. 27:15; I Chr. 29:5; Isa. 40:19; 54:16; Hos. 8:6; 13:2), or precious gems (Ex. 28:11).[1] It can also denote an idol-maker (Ex. 35:35; 2 Ki. 24:14, 16; Isa. 45:16; Jer 24:1; 29:2). The word appears once in Ezek. 21:31 with a figurative meaning describing workmen who are "artificers of destruction," i.e., those "skilled in destruction" (NASB).[2] The Septuagint "translated the word as $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\sigma\upsilon\epsilon\varsigma$, whence the Authorized Version obtains its 'carpenters'"[3]

Since "graver," "artificer," and "smith" are too archaic, and "carpenter" is too narrow a term, current English suggests the words "craftsman," "artisan," or "skilled workman," as being most appropriate.

In verse 21 the "craftsmen" are described as having come "to terrify, to throw down the horns of the nation." This describes actions which are totally foreign to actual craftsmen who work in wood, metal or stone. Thus the author is forced to conclude that "craftsmen" is used figuratively in this passage. Whoever these craftsmen are they have thee

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[1]Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Lexicon, p. 360.

[2]Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Lexicon, p. 360.

[3]Charles L. Feinberg, God Remembers: A Study of the Book of Zechariah (Wheaton: Van Kampen Press, 1950), p. 41.

ability "to terrify" and "to throw down the horns of the nations who have lifted up their horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it" (Zech. 1:21).

The Meaning and Usage of זָרָה

The meaning of this verb is listed by both Gesenius[1] and Brown, Driver and Briggs[2] as "to scatter, fan, or winnow." Even the Arabic cognate word has the meaning of "to scatter or winnow."[3] Its usage is quite straightforward in the Old Testament. The golden calf was burned and ground into powder which was then "scattered" over the water (Ex. 32:20). Burning coals from censers are to be "scattered" abroad (Num. 16:37). In Ezek. 5:2 one-third of the hair of the son of man "shall be scattered" to the wind. The word זָרָה is also used of "winnowing" grain (Ruth 3:2; Isa. 30:24) and metaphorically of winnowing mountains (Isa. 41:16). It is further used in Jer. 15:7; Ezek. 6:8 and 36:19 in the sense of "to fan" in chastisement.

The Pi'el usage is significant for it is used in a general and a particular sense. In the general sense such things as "the wicked" (Prov. 20:26), "evil" (Prov. 20:8),

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[1]Gesenius, _A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament_, p. 287.

[2]Brown, Driver, and Briggs, _Lexicon_, pp. 279-280.

[3]Gesenius, _A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament_, p. 287.

"winds" (Job 37:11), "dung" (Mal. 2:3), and "knowledge" (Prov. 15:7) may be "scattered" or "dispersed." In the particular sense only people, with one possible exception, are scattered. Israel may be scattered (Lev. 26:33; 1 Ki. 14:15; Ps. 44:11; Jer. 31:10; Ezek. 5:10, 12; 20:23; 22:15), as well as the people of Hazor (Jer. 49:32), Elam (Jer. 49:36), Babylon (Jer 51:2), and Egypt (Ezek. 29:12; 30:26). In Zech. 1:19 the word "scattered" (זָרָה) appears in the Pi'el stem (זֵרוּ) which indicates that an actual scattering of people is being meant. Whoever or whatever the horns are, they must cause or produce a literal scattering (or dispersal) of the inhabitants of Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

The Meaning and Usage of חָרַד

This verb presents no grammatical difficulties, for both Gesenius and Brown, Driver, and Briggs translate this word as "to tremble or be terrified."[1] An adjective (חָרֵד) if derived from the verb and is translated as "afraid" or "trembling."[2] The verb occurs thirty-nine times and the adjective six times in the Old Testament.[3]

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[1]Gesenius, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, pp. 342-343 and Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Lexicon, p. 353.

[2]Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Lexicon, p. 353.

[3]Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, Ltd., 1890), p. 462.

The Biblical usage of חָרַד is of great import for
with only three exceptions it always refers to people. Even
the three exceptions refer to an actual trembling or quaking.
In Ex. 19:18 Mt. Sinai "tembled violently" because the Lord
descended on it. Ezek. 26:18 says the "coastlands" will
tremble while Isa. 41:5 mentions the fact that "the ends of
the earth will tremble." Thus when verse 21 says "these
(craftsmen) have come to terrify them" it must be interpreted
to mean an actual terrifying of people.

Also significant is the fact that חָרַד appears in
the Hiph'il stem three times (Jud. 8:12; Ezek. 30:9; Zech.
1:21). In Jud. 8:12 and Ezek. 30:9 it is military forces
that are terrified or routed. This provides strong support
that in Zech. 1:21 military forces are also being terrified.

The Meaning and Usage of יָדָה

The meaning of יָדָה depends on the stem in which it
appears. In the Qal and Pi'el stems it means "to throw or
cast." In the Hiph'il and Hithpa'el stems the word means
"to give thanks, praise or confess."[1] In the Qal and Pi'el
יָדָה appears only three times (Jer. 50:14; Lam. 3:53; Zech.
1:21). In Zech. 1:21 the form is a Pi'el infinitive con-
struct and can be translated "to throw down." This trans-
lation is the one adopted by the NASB and the one with

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[1]Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Lexicon, p. 392.

which the author concurs.

In every occurrence the word takes an object--
arrows, stones, or horns. Since the nations of the world do
not possess a literal horn, this must be a figurative usage.
The best explanation of this figurative horn is to identify
it as the symbol of a nation's strength and power.[1] There-
fore, the craftsmen's purpose is to "throw down" the strength
of the nations scattering Israel. When asked to identify
what can destroy a nation's power, the author could identify
only two objects--God (Dt. 11:4: Job 12:23; Ps. 5:6; Jer.
12:17; 15:7; 51:55; Zeph. 2:13) or another nation (2 Ki.
13:7; 19:17-18; Est. 4:7; 9:6, 12, 24; Isa. 37:19).

SUMMARY

Let us briefly review the results of the previous
grammatical research. For "horn," it has been suggested
that it refers to a nation, even possibly a Gentile king or
his kingdom. For "craftsman," the writer's conclusion was
somewhat vague, for he has been able to determine only that
craftsmen is used figuratively in this passage. However, it
was also noted that they must have the ability "to terrify"
and "to throw down" the nations scattering Israel. A Gen-
tile king and his nation could be an appropriate solution.
For "scatter," it was concluded that, because of the Pi'el

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[1]See pp. 5-6 of this monograph.

stem an actual scattering was meant. The conclusion was reached that it was people who were "to be terrified." Since "terrify" also occurs in the Hiph'il stem strong support was given to the position that military forces are involved. For the word "throw down," nothing definite was concluded except that God or another nation must be involved.

Thus either God, a nation, or a Gentile king is the best identification of the horn. All three of these are used in Scripture of scattering other nations. A Gentile king (or his nation) could be the "craftsman," that is, the agent of the literal scattering. This could even involve military activity as suggested from the Pi'el stem, which would account for the "throw down" of the horns of the "nations who have lifted up their horns against the land of Judah . . . " (Zech. 1:21).

INTERPRETATION OF THE HORNS

CHAPTER IV

INTERPRETATION OF THE HORNS

The various views offered to identify the horns and
the smiths fall into two catagories; first, those inter-
pretations that recognize little Biblical significance or
historical correlation and, second, those that try to
identify, Biblically and historically, four actual agents.
The majority of commentators do not see any particular
necessity for identifying the agents of Israel's scattering.
Let the reader's attention now be directed to the interpre-
tation emphasizing quality.

Interpretations Emphasizing Quality

There are six views in this subtopic to be con-
sidered on the interpretation of the horns.

Totality of Opposition

Several commentators feel that the four horns cannot
be identified precisely and resort to a mystical interpre-
tation of this passage. Carroll enunciates this view when
he says: "These are the nations, not four necessarily, but
the nations that have been sufficient to scatter Jerusalem

from all sides."[1] Dods also prefers this view saying, "four horns were seen as representing the totality of Israel's enemies--her enemies from all quarters."[2] Other adherents to this position are Greathouse,[3] Nichol,[4] Baldwin,[5] and F. B. Meyer.[6] The viewpoints of Baldwin and Meyer require additional comment for they are willing to concede two views on the identity of the horns. Baldwin, in naming the horns, says it "represents the totality of opposition," but then identifies the nation of Babylon as being represented by the four horns.[7] F. B. Meyer also sees the "universality of the hostility to Israel and Judah" but also feels that the

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[1]B. H. Carroll, "Zechariah," An Interpretation of the English Bible, ed. by J. B. Cranfill (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1948), p. 275.

[2]Marcus Dods, The Post-Exilian Prophets: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi in Handbook for Bible Classes (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1879), p. 71.

[3]William H. Greathouse, "Zechariah," Becon Bible Commentary (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1966), 5, p. 350.

[4]Francis D. Nichol, ed., The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1955), IV, pp. 1089-1090.

[5]Joyce G. Baldwin, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1972), p. 104.

[6]Frederick B. Meyer, Prophet of Hope: Studies in Zechariah (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1952), p. 25.

[7]Joyce G. Baldwin, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary, p. 105.

horns are enemies of the church.[1] Unfortunately, in seeking

for an interpretation, to give choices according to the

degree of pressure applied provides no answer if the inves-

tigator's hermeneutical system allows for only one meaning

for a phrase in a text.

The author rejects these views as erroneous since

they treat the passage improperly. The commentators feel

that this passage contains indefinite numbers or symbols

that do not require an exact solution. Such a system of

hermeneutics does not do justice to prophetic literature.

Enemies of Israel

A second view is that the horns represent the enemies

of Israel. This group has the tendency to name the specific

opponents of Israel whereas the aforementioned viewpoint

exhibits no such tendency. Perowne identifies them as

Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, and Medo-Persia on the basis that

they have already scattered Israel.[2] Barnes is in general

support of this view but identifies the horns as the Samari-

tans on the north, the Ammonites on the East, the Edomites

on the south, and the Tyrians and Philistines on the west.[3]

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[1]F. B. Meyer, Prophet of Hope: Studies in
Zechariah, p. 26.

[2]T. T. Perowne, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and
Colleges: Haggai and Zechariah (Cambridge: University
Press, 1893), p. 73.

[3]William Emery Barnes, Haggai and Zechariah (Cam-
bridge: University Press, 1917), p. 32.

Henderson believes that they are the powers hostile to the Jews and the ones that had scattered them from their own land.[1] Others adhering to this explanation are Lange,[2] Lowe,[3] Baxter,[4] and Henry.[5] Henry seems to make this passage refer to both Israel and the church. This blurring of the distinctions between Israel and the Church can lead to serious problems in interpretation as Ryrie[6] has aptly demonstrated. In first explaining the vision Henry says it is the "enemies of the church bold and daring, and threatening to be its death . . ."[7] Later, he explains it by

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[1]E. Henderson, The Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets (London: Hamilton, Adams and Company, 1845), p. 373.

[2]John Peter Lange, Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Minor Prophets (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1885), p. 29.

[3]W. H. Lowe, "Zechariah," Ellicott's Commentary on the Whole Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, [n.d.]), V. p. 566.

[4]J. Sidlow-Baxter, Explore the Book (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960), IV, p. 242.

[5]Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, [n.d.]), IV, p. 1407.

[6]Charles C. Ryrie, Dispensationalism Today (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), pp. 86-109.

[7]Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible, pp. 1406-1407.

these remarks: "The Jews were surrounded with them (horns) on every side; when they avoid one horn that pushes at them, they run upon another."[1] Such a system of hermeneutics that allows for alternate conclusions must certainly be suspect. Also very little connection was presented between the horns and the enemies. Any enemy of Israel would suffice as long as it causes problems for them. Under this reasoning Nazi Germany would even qualify as one of the "horns." Therefore, these views have to be rejected.

Danger on all Sides

This view takes a symbolic view of the number four and takes it to mean danger on every side. Higginson says "the people of God are ever surrounded by a menacing world."[2] Watts feels that the number four "may be understood as a number of completeness rather than trying to identify specific historical empires to which they might refer."[3] Once again sound principles of interpretation and exegesis will reject a symbolic view of interpreting

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[1]Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible, p. 1407.

[2]R. E. Higginson, "Zechariah," The New Bible Commentary, ed. by D. Guthrie and J. A. Moyer (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), p. 790.

[3]John D. W. Watts, "Zechariah," The Broadman Bible Commentary, ed. by Clifton J. Allen (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1972), VII, pp. 316-317.

numbers. As one author has noted, "the mystical or symbolical interpretation of numbers has little place in a sound system of hermeneutics."[1] Thus these views must be discarded.

Enemies of the Church

This position views the four horns as enemies of the Church. Yet there is not unanimous agreement in who these enemies are that oppose the Church. Laetsch feels that it "embraces all nations that have opposed and will oppose the Church of God."[2] However, Meyer enumerates them as priestcraft, worldliness, Christian Science, and spiritualism.[3] Matthew Henry feels no compulsion to identify the enemies, simply calling them "bold and daring and threatening . . ."[4] It should also be noted that Henry and Meyer also hold that the horns are the enemies of Israel and the totality of opposition respectively.

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[1]John J. Davis, Biblical Numerology (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968), p. 124.

[2]Theodore Laetsch, Bible Commentary: The Minor Prophets (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), p. 416.

[3]Frederick B. Meyer, Prophet of Hope: Studies in Zechariah (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1952), p. 26.

[4]Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, [n.d.]), IV, p. 1407.

These views must also be rejected because of the blurring of the Church and Israel, when this prophecy refers to Israel only.

Human Agencies

A fifth view sees the four horns as "human agencies." This notion is exposed by Tatford who says that it "is probably useless to speculate on the identity of the powers represented by the four horns."[1] But then he later says "it seems evident that they were human agencies . . ."[2] He does not spell out who these human agencies are or the evidence that led him to conclude this. Thus, because this view lacks support, it must be rejected.

Babylon

Although Baldwin primarily feels that the horns represent the totality of opposition against Israel, she also makes the following statement, "The last world empire, Babylon, itself represented by the four horns, had been overthrown by the four workmen, that is, the Persian world empire."[3] To say the least, this is very poor exegesis.

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[1]Frederick A. Tatford, The Prophet of the Myrtle Grove: An Exposition of the Prophecy of Zechariah (London: Henry E. Walter, Ltd. and Prophetic Witness International, 1971), p. 24.

[2]Tatford, The Prophet of the Myrtle Grove, p. 24.

[3]Baldwin, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary, p. 105.

Two interpretations are offered with the reader left to pick the one that strikes his fancy. Also, how can Babylon be the last world empire? In the broad overview of Gentile world kingdoms listed in Daniel 2 and 7, Babylon is the <u>first</u> kingdom, not the last. Baldwin does not give any support for calling the last empire Babylon. Thus the writer must reject this view.

Interpretations Emphasizing Quantity

The previous viewpoints, for the most part, did not emphasize the numerical aspect of the four horns. Perowne and Barnes identified actual nations, the former mentioned four and the latter naming five. The usual view is that it is the enemies of Israel--their identity not being important. The following interpretation mentions four specific nations pictured in the dream-image of Daniel 2.

The Nations of Daniel 2

The most important portion of prophetic Scripture is Daniel chapters 2 and 7 in which the entire future of history is pictured "through four successive Gentile empires, the last of which, in a reconstitutued form, continues even into the last days."[1]

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[1] Leon Wood, <u>A Commentary on Daniel</u> (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), p. 48.

Those commentators holding to this position feel
that since Zech. 1:18-21 is prophetic in nature, some
prophetic framework must be used. The best framework is
that given in Daniel 2 and 7. Also, since "four" horns are
mentioned, the correct interpretation should have four
nations or individuals as those horns. Further, it must be
pointed out that God does not change his program. It con-
tinues in effect until His purposes are accomplished. Also,
"it is the characteristic of Zechariah's visions and prophe-
cies, that the Divine messages contained in them are gen-
erally based on revelation already granted to the former
prophets . . ."[1] The writer concurs with this idea of all
revelation having a common unity. Therefore, the best
interpretation is to see the four horns of Zech. 1:18-21 as
the four Gentile world kingdoms.

Unger will be used as a representative of those
adhering to this view.

> The four horns then must symbolize the four
> great world powers which will be coterminious with
> "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24), which
> period began with Judah's captivity under Nebuchad-
> nezzar (605 B.C.) and runs to the second advent of
> Christ.[2]

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[1]David Baron, The Visions and Prophecies of
Zechariah (London: Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel,
1951), p. 46.

[2]Unger, Zechariah, p. 37.

In addition to Baron and Unger, others holding this view are Pusey,[1] Gaebelein,[2] Keil,[3] and Feinberg.[4]

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[1]E. B. Pusey, <u>The Minor Prophets: A Commentary</u> (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), II, p. 346.

[2]Arno C. Gaebelein, <u>Studies in Zechariah</u> (New York: Francis E. Fitch, 1911), p. 23.

[3]Carl F. Keil, <u>The Twelve Minor Prophets</u>, Biblical <u>Commentary on the Old Testament</u> (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1880), II, p. 239.

[4]Charles L. Feinberg, <u>God Remembers: A Study of the Book of Zechariah</u> (Wheaton: Van Kampen Press, 1950), p. 39.

INTERPRETATION OF THE SMITHS

CHAPTER V

INTERPRETATION OF THE SMITHS

The views offered to explain the "smiths" also fall
into two categories. The first to be examined are those
emphasizing quality.

Interpretations Emphasizing Quality

There are five views in this subtopic to be con-
sidered on the interpretation of the smiths.

Human Agencies

One view is that the "smiths" are human agencies.
Perowne says the smiths "indicate generally the human
agencies, corresponding in number and variety to the enemies
of Israel."[1] Another whose viewpoint is similar is Nichol.
He says "the artisans represented the agencies used by the
Lord in restoring His people and the house of His worship."[2]
The reader will notice that no individual human agencies are
named or even attempted to be named. Any person or indi-
vidual would be all right to these men. Such a "loose" view

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[1]T. T. Perowne, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and
Colleges: Haggai and Zechariah, p. 73.

[2]Nichol, The Seventh-day Adventist Commentary,
p. 1090.

as to identity is inimical to a correct system of herme-
neutics. Since this view is deficient it will have to be
rejected.

God's Chosen Instruments

One expositor feels that it is the "chosen instru-
ments" of God that have come to terrify and destroy the
horns.[1] This person also identified the horns as the
"enemies of the church" (cf. page 18). Therefore, he can
confidently say "there is no oppressor of God's Church so
proud, so boastful, so strong but God is stronger!"

This view overlooks the fact that the vision is
directly related to Israel, not the Church. The plain
language of Scripture clearly indicates that the horns "have
scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem" (1:19). Therefore,
this opinion must be rejected.

Skilled Craftsmen

A third viewpoint is expressed by Barnes. "They are
not warriors, but men qualified to take a leading part in
rebuilding the Temple.[2] Once again no reason for the

[1]Laetsch, Bible Commentary: The Minor Prophets,
p. 416.

[2]Barnes, Haggai and Zechariah, p. 32.

number four is given except that "they (like the horns) come
from the four quarters of the compass."[1] Again it will be
observed that four is given a symbolic interpretation which
immediately makes this view suspect. Also this view does
not adequately explain how the craftsmen will "throw down
the horns of the nations . . " (Zech. 1:21). The clear
language of the text is enough to refute this view.

Punishment

Another popular view declares the smiths to be
"punishment" inflicted upon Israel's enemies. Henderson
summarizes the thoughts of this group by saying, "All that
is meant to be conveyed, is the adquacy of the means employed
to effect the punishment of the nations which had afflicted
the people of God."[2] Lange, in similar terms, views the
smiths to be "the various powers which God raises up and
employs to overthrow the agencies which are hostile to his
people."[3] Lowe[4] also subscribes to this theory. Again,

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[1]Barnes, Haggai and Zechariah, p. 32.

[2]E. Henderson, The Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets
(London: Hamilton, Adams and Company, 1845), p. 373.

[3]Lange, Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Minor
Prophets, p. 29.

[4]Lowe, "Zechariah," Ellicott's Commentary on the
Whole Bible, p. 566.

due to symbolical (almost mystical) rendering of 'four,' the lack of definiteness in identifying the smiths, plus little to substantiate the view, the writer is forced to discard this interpretation.

Friends of the Church

This belief is expressed by Matthew Henry when he says it is "the friends of the church active and prevailing."[1] Although Meyer, Laetsch, and Henry identified the horns as the enemies of the church, only Henry is consistent in his views naming the smiths as the friends of the church. Laetsch, as mentioned before, feels that the smiths are God's chosen instruments. Meyer, as will be discussed later, designates Cyrus, Alexander, Rome, and Gaul as the smiths.

This opinion cannot be correct for it assumes a symbolical interpretation of the numeral 'four' and the language of the text plainly states the smiths have come "to terrify" and "throw down" the horns of the nations. This interpretation is deficient in both areas.

Interpretations Emphasizing Quantity

The above interpretations did not give any significance to the number four, but the following views will

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[1]Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible, p. 1407.

identify four individuals or nations as the smiths with one exception.

Persia

Baldwin[1] identifies the four smiths as Persia. Previously, she had identified Babylon as being the four horns and now views the Persian empire as "casting down" Babylon. Although this view can be considered historical, it is not prophetic. Babylon carried Judah into exile in 605 B.C. and was later granted permission to return when Persia conquered Babylon (538 B.C.). Thus, this vision only reveals past history and not the future. The writer can recall no instance in the Bible where the past is revealed in a dream or vision. What purpose would be accomplished by revealing the past? Also, Baldwin does not identify the smiths precisely enough. If the numeral 'four' is involved, there should be four smiths. This is not the case in her interpretation.

Four Judgments of Ezekiel 14:21

Although Tatford does not hold to this view, he does cite it as being held by some commentators.[2] The four

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[1]Baldwin, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary, p. 105.

[2]Frederick A. Tatford, The Prophet of the Myrtle Grove: An Exposition of the Prophecy of Zechariah (London: Henry E. Walter, Ltd. and Prophetic Witness International, 1971), p. 26.

judgments of Ezekiel 14 are war, famine, wild beasts, and pestilence. There is no documentation for this view. In criticism of it, it is difficult to understand how wild beasts could "terrify" or "throw down" a nation. Also these four judgments come upon Jerusalem, but the smiths come to assist Jerusalem. Thus, this explanation must be cast aside.

Rabbinic Interpretation

Many of the earlier rabbis naturally applied the vision of the horns and the smiths to their own nation since the vision properly dealt with Israel. Feinberg explains this view as follows:

> The rabbis of Israel, noting the passages of the old Testament that portrayed a suffering Messiah, inferred that God would send Messiah the Son of Joseph as a forerunner of Messiah the Son of David, to suffer in order to prepare the way for the rule of the latter.[1]

Therefore, the interpretation of the smiths is given by the rabbis as Messiah, the Son of David, Messiah, the Son of Joseph, Elijah, and the righteous priest.[2]

This is an interesting hypothesis and attracted many adherents among the rabbinical class. But this, too, has

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[1]Feinberg, God Remembers, p. 42.

[2]Ibid.

to be cast aside for none of the above mentioned ever "terrified" or "cast down" any nations.

Jewish Leaders

Henry promotes the view that the four smiths are Jewish leaders that helped in rebuilding the Temple and the walls of the city. He identifies them as Zerubbabel, Joshua, Ezra, and Nehemiah.[1] Previously, he had designated the smiths as being the "friends of the Church." Now he interprets them as four important Jewish leaders that were of great value in rebuilding post-exilic Jerusalem. It is conceded that the Bible contains examples of double references (prophecies given for two audiences separated in time). In this case, however, double reference does not apply. Therefore, Henry's interpretation is erroneous. He also makes the fulfillment to be the present and not the future.

World Rulers

Wright identifies the four smiths as Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Cambyses, and Alexander.[2] This is a good view since four persons are named, each of which was a military leader, thus satisfying the requirement (established in the

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[1]Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible, p. 1407.

[2]C. H. H. Wright, Zechariah and His Prophecies (London: Hamilton, Adams and Company, 1879), p. 27.

grammatical analysis) that the smiths must "terrify" and "throw down" the nations scattering Israel. However, each of these individuals themselves did not throw down a nation. It was as the heads of great armies that they conquered foreign nations. Therefore it is better to identify the smiths as nations with the ability "to terrify" and "throw down" the horns of the nations scattering Israel. This leads us to the correct view.

The Nations of Daniel 2

The best interpretation is to identify the smiths as the nations causing the overthrow of the dream-image of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2. These nations would be Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. If the "horns" are identified as the nations of Daniel 2 and 7, then we are inextricably bound to continue in that same prophetic framework. To switch would be to commit the same errors observed previously in those expositors that held two different views.
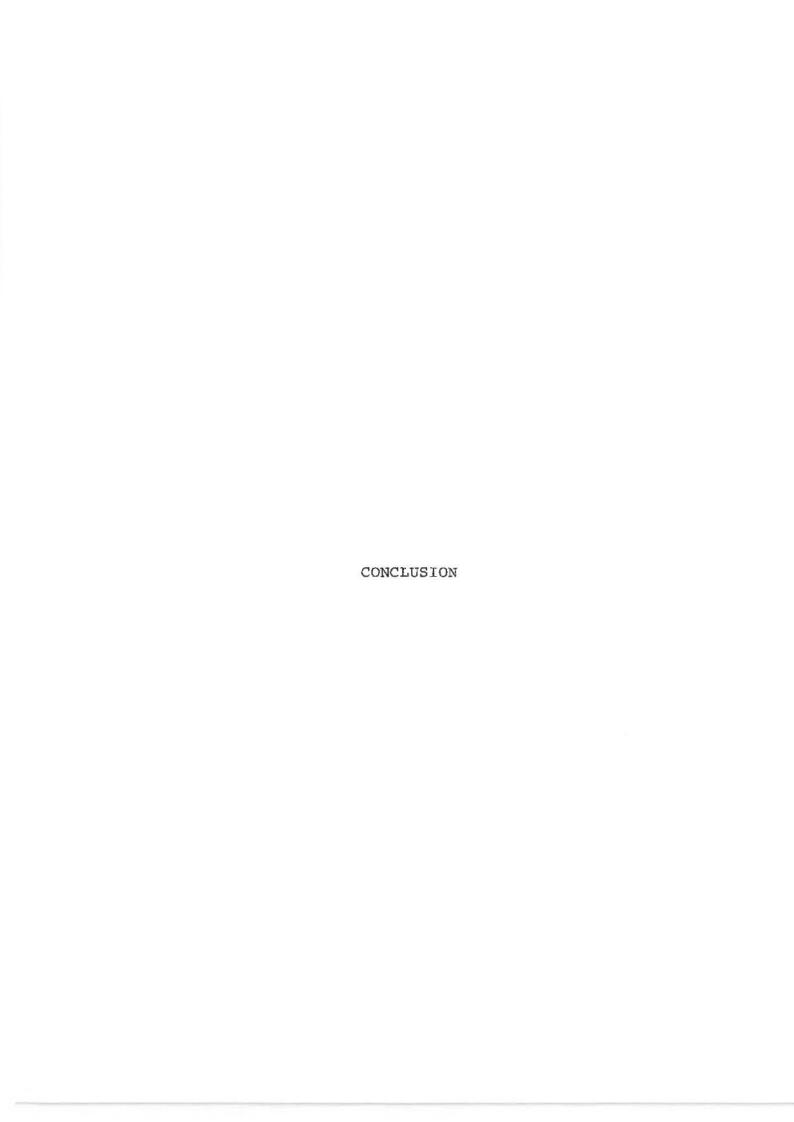
Those who believe that this is the correct view are
Feinberg,[1] Unger,[2] Baron,[3] and Keil.[4] This view also
agrees completely with the conclusions reached in the
grammatical analysis. These nations displayed a literal
scattering of the nations who dispersed Israel. The Pi'el
stem of "scatter" suggested military activity and it can be
seen that this is exactly the case. This viewpoint does not
interpret the numbers symbolically or ignore the clear
language of the text. For the reasons cited above, this is
the one and only explanation that satisfies the grammatical,
historical, and exegetical aspects of Scripture. It is the
one which the writer endorses.

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[1]Feinberg, God Remembers, pp. 39-42.

[2]Unger, Zechariah, p. 37.

[3]Baron, The Visions and Prophecies of Zechariah,
p. 46.

[4]Keil, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament:
The Twelve Minor Prophets, p. 239.

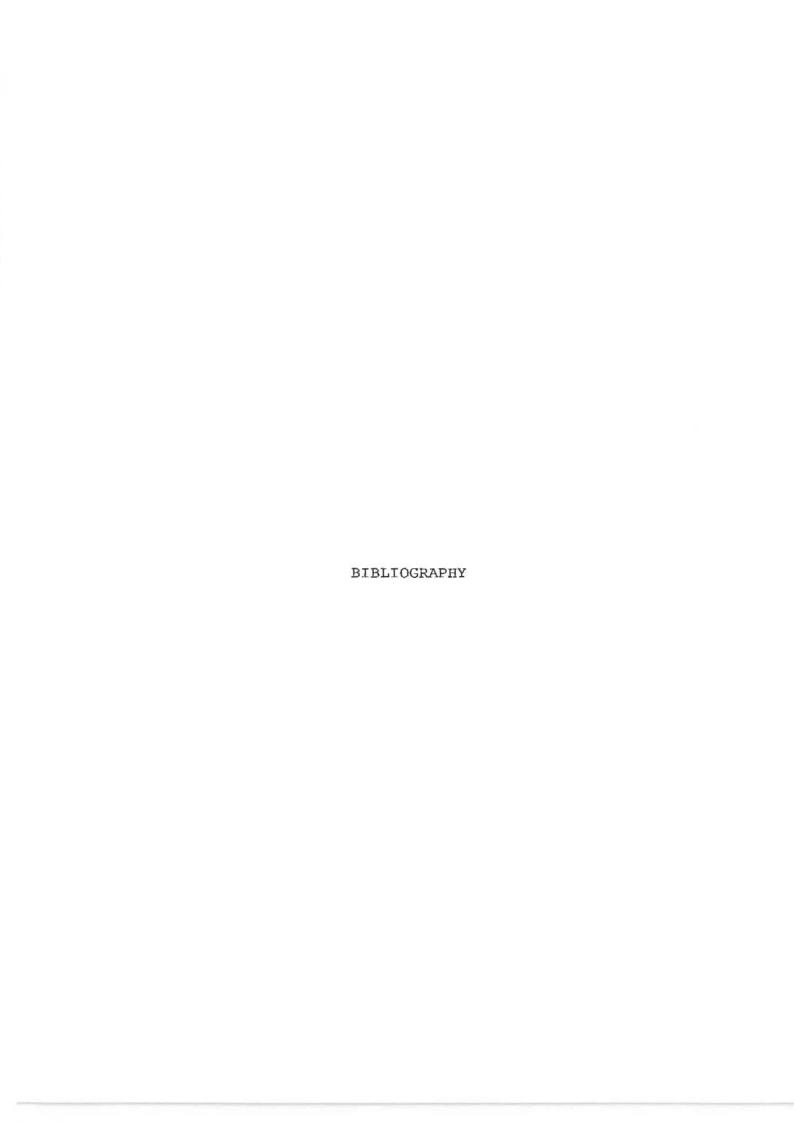CONCLUSION

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

A reasonable interpretation of Zechariah 1:18-21 has been presented in this monograph. This interpretation is based upon the principles of an inductive hermeneutic utilizing a normal understanding of the language in its grammatical, historical context. This hermeneutic, uniformly applied, will enable the interpreter to understand the true meaning of the text.

A careful grammatical analysis of the major words of the text yielded beneficial results. It was decided that the "horns" had to be a Gentile nation or king since only these agents could cause a literal "scattering" which was required on the basis of the Pi'el stem and the fact that the text states the inhabitants of Judah and Israel will be scattered. This follows the rule that language is to be interpreted in its usual, customary fashion. The actions attributed to the "craftsmen," to throw down the horns of the nations, argued for a figurative usage. Yet they were to accomplish a literal scattering. The Hebrew word "to tremble," with three exceptions, always refers to people. This word also appears in the Hiph'il stem only 3 times

(Judges, Ezekiel and Zechariah). Since both Judges and Ezekiel refer to military armies, it must be so in this passage too. The horns that the craftsmen would "throw down" were decided to be a symbol of a nation's strength and power.

The various interpretations offered to explain this passage were found to be deficient on several bases. The historical-cultural principle was violated in the interpretation involving the church. Some interpretations were so vague that no nations were even identified. Also, no consistent hermeneutical principles were followed by other commentators.

All these deficiencies were remedied by the view that the nations of Daniel 2 (Babylon, Medo-Persio, Greece and Rome) is the best explanation. This view treated the number "four" in its literal, rather than symbolic sense. It is also in conformity with God's prophetic plan for the future as revealed in the New Testament. Finally, a Jew living in the time of Zechariah, when confronted with a prophetic passage, would naturally tend to think of Daniel's prophetic framework.

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