



## Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

# Short Study 042: Biblical Symbols 6: The Horn

Study Author: Michael Button

**Introduction:** Animal horns served two practical purposes in biblical times. Hollowed out, they made receptacles for holy oil used in anointing, such as used by to anoint kings (1 Sam 16:1; 1 Kings 1:39), and as a trumpet (called a *shofar*), to sound a warning, a summons or to announce a feast (Ps 81:3). Symbolically, they stood for power (why might this be appropriate?).

Scriptures apply the symbol to the following. Read the suggested passages, write down what is said about the horn, then – bearing in mind that ‘horn’ stands for power – consider, “What does this mean for me?” You can print or copy the table below.

Read the following passages and identify to whom the passage refers and what it says about the horn.

	<i>To whom or what the horn belongs</i>	<i>Passage</i>	<i>What it says about the horn</i>	<i>What it means for me (directly or indirectly)</i>
1	The Lord	2 Sam 22:3 Psalm 18:2 Luke 1:69		
2	The nation of Israel*	Lam 2:3 Ezek 29:21		
3	The King of Israel*	1 Sam 2:1,10 Psalm 132:17		
4	God’s people – the saints	Psalm 148:14		
5	Those who acclaim the Lord	Psalm 89:17		
6	The individual (“my”)	Psalm 92:10		
7	Enemies of God’s people	Jer 48:25		
8	Godless rulers and empires	Daniel 7:8,20		

\* See Rom 11:13-19 to understand how this can apply to Gentile Christians.

**To think about:** The altar of sacrifice, in the Tabernacle and the Temple, had horns on each of its four corners (read Exodus 27:2, 29:12 and 1 Kings 50-51). In the light of what you have just studied, do you think this might have had symbolic significance?

**To dig deeper:** Read about horns in a Bible Dictionary or Encyclopaedia.