

PROPHECIES OF DANIEL

by Louis T. Talbot

Talbot's exposition of the Book of Daniel as comprehensive prophecy of Gentile world dominion from Nebuchadnezzar to Christ's return, presenting God's sovereignty over nations and the establishment of His eternal kingdom.

15 Chapters

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00.6-Foreward

FOREWORD

It was at the urgent request of my radio listeners that in 1937 I put into printed form the lessons on the Book of Daniel which I had been broadcasting over a period of months. God so signally blessed their distribution that a second printing was called for in 1940 and now it appears a third edition is required.

As I have gone over these pages in preparation for this reprint, my heart has been deeply impressed with the tremendous change in the world picture during the brief period which has intervened since the lessons were first published. I am not a "date setter" as this exposition plainly bears testimony, but I would be blind and faithless if I could not discern in the swiftly-moving events of our day ample indications that the "time of the end" cannot be far off. Surely the words of Luke 21:28 are for us today: "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

Therefore, it is with the prayer that the Holy Spirit may use this series of lessons to teach what "God hath spoken" concerning things to come that we enter upon this study and send forth these lessons, trusting Him for an abundant harvest of souls through these printed pages.

- Louis T. Talbot

00.7-Introduction

INTRODUCTION

TWENTY-FIVE centuries ago, through the prophet Daniel, God outlined the course of Gentile world power, from its beginning to its end. In so doing, He told us that such changes had to take place before “the times of the Gentiles” could “be fulfilled.” How important it is for us to “search the Scriptures,” even the Book of Daniel, just now, when we see “upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” (Luke 21:25-26)!

May the Holy Spirit teach us this marvelous prophecy, so timely in this present day. Then, in spite of the wars and persecutions and tragedies and bloodshed, of which we read in bold headlines from day to day, we shall “look up,” for our “redemption draweth nigh,” even the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to rule in righteousness and peace.

It is a remarkable and significant fact that even men of the world, who have no personal interest whatever in Christianity, are convinced that this is a crisis period and that vast changes are impending. All students of prophecy have the same feeling which is intensified by their increased study of the Word of God and the knowledge it affords concerning the course of human and divine events.

We sometimes listen to men who question the authority of the Bible, and we wonder why it is that they do not study the Bible carefully and accurately. If they had any spiritual insight at all, they would see on its pages an accurate outline of the march of the ages and the trend of the times. They would see that prophecy is rapidly becoming history. God has written aforetime many prophecies concerning Christ, the Gentile nations, and the Jewish people.

Many of these prophecies have been fulfilled, and it would seem that the remainder are about to be realized, for “coming events cast their shadows before.”

The only way one can understand conditions in the world today is by bringing them under the lens of Holy Writ. The Book of Daniel throws a great deal of light on the chaotic conditions of Europe, Asia, and the world at large.

DANIEL-THE INSPIRED WRITER

It seems hardly necessary to take time to prove that Daniel was the divinely-inspired author of the book which bears his name, and that he lived in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, and Cyrus.

We are living in a day, however, when this fact is denied.

Destructive critics and so-called modernists would have us believe that this book was written by a pious Jew hundreds of years after Nebuchadnezzar’s death, after these things had become history, and that the writer was a historian rather than a prophet.

They place the date of the book at the time of the Maccabees several hundred years after Nebuchadnezzar's time, and claim that it was written after the events narrated therein had become history. They say that the language used was prophetic to make it more interesting.

However, there are many infallible proofs that the Book of Daniel was written by Daniel, and that its record is authentic. If you would like to make a study of those proofs, I would recommend that you read Sir Robert Anderson's work, "Daniel in the Critics' Den." That is a good title, for Daniel is being assailed more in the "critics' den" than he was in the lions' den!

Dr. A. C. Gaebelein once compared the destructive critics of God's infallible Word to crickets. He said, like the crickets, they are little creatures, black, living in the dark, and making a loud noise. And so they are!

When I was a student in a theological seminary in Chicago, I listened for an hour to one of these destructive critics as he argued that Daniel could never have lived before these prophecies came to pass. Before that professor sat some three hundred young men who were to fill pulpits in our churches! May God soon bring to naught such blasphemous apostasy! He will one day, when Jesus comes again.

The Jews of Christ's day recognized the Book of Daniel as a part of the Old Testament canon, as stated by Josephus, the historian. They accepted all its claims to be a prophecy, as well as Daniel's own repeated statement of its authorship, under divine guidance.

And the most convincing proof to a child of God in regard to this matter is the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ referred to the author as "Daniel the prophet" (Matthew 24:15). Christ did not say, "Daniel the historian."

That statement satisfies every believing heart that the Book of Daniel is authentic, a prophecy inspired by the Holy Spirit of God.

Daniel could look down the centuries and see the things that were to come to pass because God, as it were, put a telescope to his eye and let him see His great plan and purpose through the years. THE THEME OF DANIEL In the Book of Daniel God has been pleased to reveal, in a broad, sweeping outline, this prophecy: The Commencement, the Character, the Course, and the Consummation of "the Times of the Gentiles."

Now we must distinguish between the two expressions, "the times of the Gentiles," and "the fulness of the Gentiles."

Our Lord used the former to designate Gentile world dominion when He said in Luke 21:24,

"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

But the words, "the fulness of the Gentiles" (Romans 11:25), refer to the full number of the Gentiles to be a part of the church, which is "the body" or "bride" of Christ. Therefore, Paul in Romans 11:13-25 was warning the Gentiles not to be high minded. He said that "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

James, likewise, at the first church council in Jerusalem, said the same thing, that "God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name"; and that afterward He would

“return, and build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down” (Acts 15:14-18).

“The tabernacle of David” speaks of Israel, and after the church is complete, when “the fulness of the Gentiles be come in,” then it is that God will deal once more with Israel.

“The times of the Gentiles” began with Nebuchadnezzar, and will end with the return of Christ in glory. It is this vast sweep of Gentile world power that God outlined to Daniel before any of it had become history. It was to this period that our Lord referred when He said that Jerusalem should be “trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

During that period, God said through Daniel, the Gentile nations were, to exercise lordship over the earth, and especially over the Jewish nation and the land of Palestine. From Nebuchadnezzar unto the last Caesar of the revived Roman Empire this period extends, even unto the personal, visible, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ to the earth.

“The times of the Gentiles,” therefore, occur during the interval which marks the interruption of the times of the Jews. Now the times of the Jews were interrupted when they were carried away captive to Babylon, and will resume when “the times of the Gentiles” have been fulfilled. God permitted the Babylonian captivity because of Israel’s sin. He had sent Jeremiah to warn His people of this impending judgment, but they would not listen to His pleading. Of this we shall have more to say later. But Israel will listen to God’s voice once more when the Son of God shall sit upon “the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever” (Luke 1:32-33).

As we pursue our study of this fascinating book, we shall see how marvelously events-many of which have now become history-verify the prophecies which God gave through Daniel hundreds of years before the events transpired.

We must bear in mind that at the time Daniel wrote, very little of the record contained in the Book of Daniel had been fulfilled. The greater part of it was still future and much of it had reference to events that were to come to pass hundreds of years after Daniel had passed away.

Our study, therefore, will not only give us an intelligent understanding of what may be expected of the Gentile nations in the future, but it will also confirm our faith in the Bible as the Word of God. God is the only Being who knows the end from the beginning; and any book that portrays events hundreds of years before they take place, must have as its Author the only One who knows the future. That One is the living God! OUR CHART-AN OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

We need to urge you, my friend, to read the Book of Daniel through, from beginning to end, repeatedly, prayerfully, if you would get a bird’s-eye view of this prophecy. And in this continued reading, we believe that a study of the chart in the front of this book will be helpful.

{IMPORTANT eSWORD MODULE NOTE eSword is incapable (at the time of the making of this module - Spring, 2011) of incorporating graphics into the .topx format. The man responsible for digitizing this text, Mr. Virgil Butts at www.baptistbiblebelievers.com has put two of Talbot’s charts online. Their locations are here: <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=%2b%2bgR%2fmp9UpM%3d&tabid=410&mid=1308> <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=KWUiQ%2fxbnRs%3d&tabid=410&mid=1308>} For example, you will note that we have stated the theme at the top of the chart, underneath the title. And God’s word to

Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou . . . art a king of kings" (Daniel 2:37) introduces the period of "The Commencement, Character, Course, and Consummation of 'the Times of the Gentiles,'" even as the return in glory of Christ, the "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:16) brings to an abrupt close this period of Gentile world dominion. (See top of chart).

Then you will note that, on our chart, we have outlined the Book of Daniel by chapters, indicated by the parallel columns running up and down the page. Each chapter is complete in itself; and each chapter culminates in a foreview of events to occur "in the latter time," that is, in the end of this age. Please note these words on the chart-"in the latter time." They are important, for they indicate events to transpire after the translation of the church.

This present age, or church period-from the cross to the rapture-is represented on the chart by the horizontal strip of blue. It was not revealed to Daniel, and is to be kept in mind in our study of this prophecy as a long parenthesis in God's great plan, not revealed to the Old Testament saints.

We put it in the chart to make clear to us in this age just where the church comes in. If you will fold the chart so the two black, horizontal lines which border the strip of blue will meet, then you will see the outline of what God told Daniel concerning things to come.

Every careful student of New Testament teaching knows that the church began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47), and will be translated, caught up to be with Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), before the events of "the latter time" (see bottom of chart) begin to run their course.

Moreover, every careful student of New Testament teaching knows that the calling out of the church, "the bride of Christ," was not revealed to the Old Testament saints. It was made known to Paul, by special revelation, but "in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men" (Ephesians 3:5). Yet "from the beginning of the world" it was "hid in God"-this "eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," that "unto him" should "be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." (See Ephesians 3:1-21).

The twelve apostles did not understand about this church age. They expected the Lord to establish His kingdom immediately, while He was on earth. It was as though they and Daniel and all the Old Testament prophets were standing in the distance, viewing two mountain peaks which seemed close together. One represented Christ's first coming as the suffering Saviour; the other, His second coming as the reigning King. But what they could not see, from the distance, was the great valley between the mountain peaks. That valley might well represent this church age, not seen by man until God gave the vision to Paul.

So you see, my friend, it is a great parenthesis separating the part of Daniel's vision which has already been fulfilled from that part which yet remains to be fulfilled, after the church has been translated, forever to be "with the Lord." This church age, then, comes in between "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1:11).

Now, with our open Bibles before us, let us follow the chart, chapter by chapter, for an outline view of this book. This is important, if we are to get the most from our detailed study later.

Chapter 1 tells the story of Daniel and his friends separated unto God from the evils of Babylon.

And these Hebrew youths are a remarkable type of the faithful remnant in Israel who will refuse to worship the Antichrist “in the latter time,” after the church has been translated.

Chapter 2 tells the story of Nebuchadnezzar’s forgotten dream, which God revealed to Daniel with the interpretation thereof.

It is a remarkably complete picture of all Gentile world power, from Nebuchadnezzar unto the return of Christ in glory, the “Stone” which will smite “the image” on the “ten toes.” Comparing chapter two with the chart, we note that all of this prophecy has been fulfilled except that of the revived Roman Empire, represented by the ten toes. This will be completely fulfilled “in the latter time,” when the Antichrist rules.

Chapter 3 tells of the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar set up; of the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to worship the image; and of their deliverance from the burning fiery furnace.

What a wonderful picture it is of the faithful Jewish remnant who will refuse to worship the image of “the beast” “in the latter time”! Indeed, chapters 3-6 foreshadow the moral conditions which will prevail at the end of the age.

Chapter 4 gives us the strange vision of Nebuchadnezzar, and the interpretation thereof.

His pride and madness foreshadow the pride and raging madness of the Gentile nations, culminating in the awful climax of pride and madness “in the latter time.” Nebuchadnezzar’s reason was restored, and the stump of the great tree was left, a prophetic picture of the Gentile nations which will be saved and will enter into the millennial reign of Christ on earth.

Chapter 5, with the story of Belshazzar’s feast and the overthrow of Babylon, typifies the sensuality and revelry of the Gentile nations and the overthrow of the false religious system “in the latter time.”

Chapter 6, Daniel delivered from the lions’ den, is another Picture of the faithful remnant in Israel, which will be delivered from the “beasts” described in Revelation 13:1-18, who will hold sway “in the latter time.”

Chapter 7 gives us God’s view of Gentile world power, depicting the nations as ravenous beasts.

Nebuchadnezzar’s vision of the great image, in chapter 2, shows us man’s view of these same world powers. To man they appear great; to God, as wild beasts. Surely we are seeing today something of God’s view of the raging nations, with their poisonous gas, dive-bombers, armored tanks, machine-guns, atom and hydrogen bombs, biological warfare, horrible implements of war, death, and wholesale destruction!

Is it a mere coincidence that the coat-of-arms or emblem of almost every Gentile nation bears the image of a beast? The British lion, the Russian bear, the American and the German eagle, the Chinese dragon and serpent-these are some of the tokens of the bestial character of the vicious tendency in the Gentile world powers.

Chapter 8 tells us of that part of the Roman Empire, out of which the Antichrist will come “in the latter time.”

Chapter 9 gives us the great prophecy of the “seventy weeks” of Daniel—a comprehensive, exact prophecy of God’s dealings with Israel from Daniel’s day until Christ returns in glory. Only one week (the literal Hebrew word is one ‘seven’); only one period of seven years, of the seventy “sevens,” remains to be fulfilled. It will be the terrible seven years of the Antichrist’s rule “in the latter time.” But Israel’s Messiah-King will return to end that “reign of terror,” to deliver the faithful remnant in Israel, and to set up His righteous kingdom on earth.

Chapter 10 presents the angelic ministry on behalf of Daniel, and the opposing forces of Satan and his fallen angels. It all foreshadows the day, “in the latter time,” when Satan and all his hosts shall be “cast down” out of “the heavenly places,” shortly before our Lord’s return in glory to bind Satan and finally to send him to his eternal doom. (Compare Ephesians 6:12-17 with Revelation 12:7-12; Revelation 20:1-3; Revelation 20:10).

Chapter 11 gives us a life-sized portrait of the Antichrist and his great antagonists “at the time of the end.”

Chapter 12 pictures the time of “Jacob’s trouble,” even unto the consummation of all these things “in the latter time”—yea, even unto the glorious reign of Christ on earth in peace and equity and righteousness.

There is no description of Christ’s kingdom in Daniel. We find that in Isaiah and in Revelation and in other portions of the prophetic Scriptures. Daniel tells us, rather, how that kingdom will be established.

What a vast store of “wisdom and knowledge” God will open up before us as we study the Book of Daniel! And how this study will put the urge in our hearts to pray, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

Do you want God-given wisdom, my friend, concerning things to come? Then you will find it as the Holy Spirit unfolds to you the Book of Daniel. Do you want to be a winner of souls, snatching them “as brands from the burning”? Then let the Holy Spirit put zeal into your heart through the study of this marvelous portion of His Word. It was through the prophet Daniel that the Holy Spirit said in Daniel 12:3,

“They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

~ end of Introduction ~

01-Four Godly Hebrew Youths....

FOUR GODLY HEBREW YOUTHS AT BABYLON'S HEATHEN COURT

CHAPTER ONE

Foreshadowing the Faithful Jewish Remnant "in the Latter Days" THE first chapter of the Book of Daniel is introductory, presenting:

- (1) The record of the first deportation of the Babylonian captivity (Daniel 1:1-2);
- (2) the faithful witness of Daniel and his three friends at Babylon's heathen court, and God's blessing upon them (Daniel 1:3-20);
- (3) the statement concerning Daniel's long life, "even unto the first year of king Cyrus" (Daniel 1:21).

Here we are told that Daniel lived through the entire period of the seventy years' Babylonian captivity. But that was not all; for not only did he live to see the faithful remnant in Judah return to their own land, after seventy years, as God had foretold; but Daniel also continued to live in Babylon "in the third year of Cyrus" (Daniel 10:1), still being mightily used of God, still receiving prophecies from God for His people.

Daniel's was a long life, signally blessed of the Lord as he witnessed to four great monarchs, during their successive reigns, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus. Chapter one presents a foreview of all this, as well as the secret of the power of his godly life.

If we keep before us the theme of the Book of Daniel, "The Commencement, Character, Course, and Consummation of 'the Times of the Gentiles,'" we see also in this first chapter a foreshadowing of the faithful Jewish remnant "in the latter days," during "the great tribulation" which will come upon God's ancient people, Israel.

For Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, living separated lives at Babylon's heathen court, are just a picture of the godly remnant in Israel who will refuse to worship the Antichrist in "the time of Jacob's trouble."

Therefore, our first lesson is historical, practical, and prophetic:

- Historical, in that it takes us back to the days of Judah's captivity in a heathen land;
- Practical, in that it teaches us many lessons for our Christian experience as we live in this world of sin;
- Prophetic, in that it points on to that yet future day when a faithful remnant in Israel will suffer indescribable persecution rather than dishonor their Messiah and Lord.

May the Holy Spirit take the things of Christ and show them unto us as we read and study together this first chapter of the Book of Daniel.

Daniel 1:1-2 tell of THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.”

Here we learn how the times of the Jews were interrupted and how “the times of the Gentiles” began.

For years God had been warning the children of Israel, through His prophets, that, unless they turned to Him, He would allow their land to be invaded by the enemy and their people to be taken captive. Long before the events described in the first two verses of the Book of Daniel had taken place, the Israelites had forsaken the faith of their fathers. They had given up the worship of the one true God and idolatry was rampant. The religion of the heathen nations was more attractive to them because they had forsaken the God of their fathers. As a consequence, the floodgates of iniquity were opened and the false religion which they had adopted was powerless to work the change in the hearts and lives of the people, which alone could avert the impending judgment of God.

These conditions had existed for 490 years, and during that time God had been speaking a warning message to the nation through the prophet Jeremiah and others, but the people turned a deaf ear. At last the patience of God came to an end and He put them in the school of experience in the city of Babylon for seventy years. There they learned that “there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 16:25).

How much the Gentile nations of today need to learn that lesson!

God has been striving with them for thousands of years. He has been speaking in love, in mercy, in kindness; but the nations are turning a deaf ear to His voice, ignoring the inescapable fact that one day-and that day, I believe, is not far distant-He will speak in the language of thunder! For if He spared not Israel when they sinned and turned their backs upon Him, you may be sure He will not spare the Gentiles.

In the days of Moses and Joshua, and even up to the time of David and Solomon, God had been with His people, Israel.

After the kingdom was divided, there was an occasional king who loved the Lord and sought to lead God’s people in the paths of righteousness. The father of Jehoiakim, during whose evil reign Nebuchadnezzar took Daniel and others in Judah captive-Jehoiakim’s father was the good king, Josiah, who repaired the temple, discovered the forgotten book of the law of Moses, and restored the temple worship. But Jehoiakim “did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord” (2 Kings 23:37), even as the nation had done for many years.

1. God’s Warning of Impending Captivity.

Through His prophets, and especially through Jeremiah, God had faithfully warned Israel of the impending judgment upon their idolatry, imploring them to repent and turn from their wicked ways, in order to escape this chastisement.

Let us turn to Jeremiah 25:1-14 to see one of these explicit warnings, where Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, is named, and where the seventy years' captivity and deliverance therefrom are foretold. Jeremiah 25:1 reads,

The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah the king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar [usually written, "Nebuchadnezzar"] king of Babylon . . .

Jehoiakim began to reign at the end of the year, which Jeremiah counts the first year of his rule; whereas Daniel reckons his reign from the beginning of the following year. Therefore, Jeremiah 25:1 speaks of Nebuchadnezzar's going to Jerusalem in "the fourth year of Jehoiakim"; whereas Daniel 1:1 refers to it as "the third year," the difference being only in the method of reckoning the time.

Doubtless Nebuchadnezzar thought he was going to Jerusalem of his own volition, to take the spoils; but Daniel says that "the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand" (Daniel 1:2), even as Jeremiah had foretold this captivity, saying in Jeremiah 25:8-9,

Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Because ye have not heard my words, behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof. . . . In these words Nebuchadnezzar was called by the Lord "my servant."

He was the human instrument used by the Lord God to discipline Israel and to cure her of idolatry. Although Israel as a nation is still rejecting her Messiah, she does not worship idols. Judah learned that lesson in Babylon.

2. Jehoiakim's Insult to God's Word. Written by Jeremiah, the Prophet.

And how did Jehoiakim receive Jeremiah's warning from God? Turn to Jeremiah 36:1-32 and read the story of his infidelity and wicked insult to the Word of God. When the prophecy of Jeremiah was read in Jehoiakim's presence, that evil king "cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth" (Jeremiah 36:23). Moreover, Jehoiakim sought to kill Jeremiah, "but the Lord hid him" (Jeremiah 36:26). How wonderfully God took care of His faithful prophet!

No wonder God sent Nebuchadnezzar to Jerusalem, and "gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand" (Daniel 1:2). No wonder He permitted Jehoiakim's dead body to be "dragged out of the gates by the Chaldean besiegers, and left unburied." (Compare Jeremiah 22:18-19; Jeremiah 36:30.) For that evil king added insult upon indignity to the God of his fathers, cutting to pieces and burning upon the hearth God's holy Word.

My friends, we have many Jehoiakims in professing Christendom today. Unless they repent of their sin, their fate will be no better than was that of this wicked king of Judah.

I remember that, when I was a pastor in Oak Park, Illinois, I was teaching the Book of Daniel. Another minister of that city announced that he, too, would speak on this same theme. This is what he said:

“I have been a minister for forty-five years. I have studied Daniel and Revelation, and I have concluded that no one can understand these books.”

That man might just as well have taken a penknife and cut Daniel and Revelation out of the Bible and cast them upon the hearth to be consumed. But Daniel and Revelation are still in God’s inspired Word! The Holy Spirit does teach His humble, earnest seekers after the truth some very precious and searching lessons from these marvelous portions of His Word.

3. Israel’s Apostasy.

Now Jehoiakim was only one of Judah’s wicked kings who led Israel in idolatry and sin. We have already observed that for 490 years these evil practices had continued. Every seventh year had been designated by the Lord as a sabbatic year, when the land should rest. God had told Moses and Joshua that Israel was not to plant or harvest the crops that year, and that He would provide all they needed. But by the time Jehoiakim ruled, Israel had robbed God of 70 of these sabbatic years; for 70×7 equals 490. And every seventh year they had stolen from God; hence the 70 years of the Babylonian captivity. God had been “keeping books,” and for Israel’s good the account had to be settled.

Today people are also forgetting the claims of God. Through covetousness or indifference or pleasure-seeking, man is doing with the Lord’s Day what Israel did with God’s year before the Babylonian captivity. Yet God’s blessings continue, even though His warning of judgment to come goes unheeded. It will not always be so.

One day our righteous God will speak up judgment, and His “enemies” will become His “footstool.” (See Psalms 110:1). Have you never bowed the knee to God? uh, my friend, “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way . . . Blessed are all they that put their trust in him” (Psalms 2:12).

4. The Faithful Witnesses to God in Babylon.

In this life the innocent always suffer with the guilty; and Daniel and his three Hebrew friends were captives in a strange land, although they had not bowed the knee to a heathen God.

Meanwhile, God had a message for Nebuchadnezzar, and He needed Daniel to deliver that message. He wanted some faithful witnesses to His grace and power; He needed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to walk with Him through the fiery furnace. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him” (Psalms 25:14).

Are you going through fiery trial, my Christian friend? Rejoice that you are “counted worthy to suffer” for Christ. (See Acts 5:41.) Rejoice that somehow, by His grace, you may give glory to God. Daniel lived in the days of idolatrous Israel; you and I live in this day of apostate Christendom. It cost something for Daniel and his friends to take a stand for God. It will cost us something too if we bear a faithful testimony to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

5. The Three Deportations to Babylon.

We have seen that Jehoiakim died before Nebuchadnezzar's intentions of taking him as a captive to Babylon were carried out. In the first deportation (606 B.C.), when Daniel and his friends were taken captive, Nebuchadnezzar took only "a part of the vessels of the house of God"; these "he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god" (Daniel 1:2).

Think of it! A heathen monarch putting these sacred vessels in a heathen temple! It was in "the land of Shinar" that Nimrod and the rebels of his day had built the tower of Babel, when God confused the tongues of man. "Babel" was the beginning of "Babylon." At Babel the mystery religion had its start; to Babylon the sacred vessels from Solomon's temple were taken, to the temple of Bel, Nebuchadnezzar's heathen god.

The second deportation of other captives from Judah took place in 598 B. C, eight years after Daniel was led away into Babylon. At this time Ezekiel was one of the prisoners of Nebuchadnezzar. And still later, in 588 B. C, this king of Babylon destroyed Jerusalem, took Zedekiah captive, slew his sons, put out his eyes, and left Israel's capital city in ruins. All this Daniel lived to see-and more. What heartache and sorrow must have been his portion! Yet God used him mightily at a heathen court, not only to lead Nebuchadnezzar to the Lord, but also to reveal prophecies that covered all "the times of the Gentiles," as well as "the seventy weeks" concerning Israel, even unto Messiah's kingdom on earth. Why could God reveal these things through Daniel? The answer is found in the familiar, beautiful story that fills most of this first chapter of the book that bears his name.

THREE YEARS' TRAINING AS COURTIERS

1. Youths of Royal and Noble Birth.

When Nebuchadnezzar wanted courtiers trained from among the Hebrew youths, he commanded Ashpenaz, "the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes," to prepare them to "stand before the king" (Daniel 1:3).

These Hebrew "children," or "youths", must have been very young; for some tell us that it was the custom of Oriental kings to begin the training of courtiers at the early age of twelve or fourteen years. Perhaps Daniel and his three friends were "of the king's seed." Certainly they were of the princely families.

2. "Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom" (Daniel 1:4) were to be chosen for the king's palace.

Youths in whom was no blemish, but well-favored, and skilful in all wisdom, and endowed with knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability to stand in the king's palace.

Such a description would seem to fit a youth more than twelve or fourteen years of age; it sounds more like the list of qualifications of a college graduate! But in any case, it gives us a good photograph, as it were, of Daniel and his three friends- handsome, physically attractive, endowed with good minds that had received special training. With such gifts, and with royal or princely blood in their veins, they were set apart for positions of honor in the king's palace. They were to be

taught “the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans” (Daniel 1:4).

Many youths so well-favored would have become ensnared with all the flatteries and seductions of a heathen court, with all its splendor and earthly glory. But these Hebrew youths were true to the God of their fathers, living a separated life, even in the midst of a heathen, Oriental court of a powerful, pagan king.

3. A Three Years' Course of Training.

Daniel 1:5 tells us something of the courage required of these Hebrew youths if they were to be true to the God of Israel:

And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat [or “dainties”], and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. This was the king's command; and he was an absolute monarch, holding the power of life and death. But small portions of the king's dainties and his wine were offered to idols, in the belief that the whole would be blessed to those who partook of this food and drink.

To eat from these, therefore, indicated a faith in the heathen gods, to whom the sacrifice had been offered.

Could Daniel and his three friends have sought to quiet their consciences on this score with the excuse that obedience to the king was a matter of life or death? What would you have done, my Christian friend? I ask myself the same question. It was no light matter that these devout Hebrew youths faced.

Paul met the same issue many years later. To him the meat offered to idols was just the same as any other meat. But to those who put their faith in the idols, Paul's partaking of that meat would have been an act of idol-worship. Therefore, the great apostle said, in 1 Corinthians 8:13 (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:7-13, 1 Corinthians 10:27-28),

If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

It may be that Daniel and his three friends had also taken the Nazarite vow; and if so, they could not drink wine without breaking this sacred vow of separation to God. (See Numbers 6:1-21) .

And yet again, it may be that to eat “the king's meat” would have been contrary to the Law of Moses, which forbade the eating of “things strangled” (Acts 15:20; Acts 15:29; cf. Leviticus 11:10-16). In any case, it was because they wanted to please “God rather than men” (Acts 5:29) that these Hebrew youths separated themselves from heathen practices. And in so doing, they pointed the mighty Nebuchadnezzar to their God. And possibly there are other Babylonians in heaven today because these four young men, gifted, educated, handsome, wise, were true to the God of Israel. And surely He deserves the best!

My young Christian friend, get all the education you can. Be as attractive and lovable as you can, for Christ's sake.

But, in the doing, remember that a godless world is looking on; and that God in heaven is looking to you to bear witness to His grace and His faithfulness and His power.

4. New Names for Daniel and His Three Friends.

Daniel 1:6-7 tell us the Hebrew names of these four godly youths, as well as the heathen, Chaldean names given to them by “the prince of the eunuchs.”

As names signified much in those days, let us note their meaning here:

“Daniel” means “God is my Judge”; “Belteshazzar,” “Bel’s prince.”

Now Bel was Nebuchadnezzar’s god. Daniel might have been flattered by his new name; but let us note how often he refers to himself as “Daniel.” Others might call him the prince of a heathen god; Daniel loved the name that linked him with the Lord-“God is my Judge.”

“Hananiah” means “Whom the Lord hath favored”; “Shadrach,” “Inspired or illumined by the Sun-god.”

“Mishael” means “Who is comparable to God?” “Meshach” signifies “Who is comparable to Shak,” the “Babylonian goddess” answering to the earth, or Venus, the goddess of love and mirth.”

“Azariah” means “Whom the Lord helps”; “Abednego,” “Servant of the shining fire” or the Fire-god.

In these changes, it is very evident that the Chaldeans expected to alienate these Hebrew youths from their God, dedicating them to the four chief deities:

“Bel, the Chief-god; the Sun-god; the Earth-goddess; and the Fire-god . . . To the last the three youths were consigned when refusing to worship the golden image” which Nebuchadnezzar set up (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown).

How loathsome these new names must have been to these four young men! “But God” - their God - “looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7), and He knew that their trust was in Him. Moreover, He honored their testimony by His mighty triumph over the heathen gods, whose names the Chaldeans gave to them, when He went with them through the fiery furnace and through the lion’s den.

We, too, bear a precious name - “Christian.” Do we honor Him, whose name it proclaims, before a godless world, by guarding our testimony, our daily walk? Surely Daniel and his friends can teach us many valuable lessons just here!

GODLY LIVES AT A HEATHEN COURT

1. Daniel’s Purpose of Heart.

Daniel seems to have been the leader in refusing to compromise the convictions of his soul, but certainly his three friends stood with him. In Daniel 1:8

Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself

It seems hardly necessary to add more about the reason why Daniel “purposed in his heart” not to deny His God. How could he make a show of worshipping idols when he loved his Lord? Oh, for more young people and men and women who will have purpose of heart concerning doubtful

things!

Daniel must have been courteous in his interview with the prince of the eunuchs; for he “requested” - he did not “demand” or speak rudely to his superior. True gentility is often sadly lacking in God’s people; yet it can be used for His glory, whereas a blunt word may do harm to the cause of Christ.

2. Daniel - Beloved of God and Man.

Not only do we read, in the book of Daniel, the reassuring greeting of the angel, “O Daniel, a man greatly beloved” (Daniel 9:23; Daniel 10:11; Daniel 10:19); not only was Daniel “greatly beloved” by God; but men, too, loved him.

We read in Daniel 1:9,

Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

God did that; and surely Daniel would have been the first to give God the glory for a personality that led men to love him-for the Lord’s sake. And how our Lord needs lovable Christians! He can make us more and more like Himself if we let Him.

3. The Ten Days’ Trial.

Let us read Daniel 1:10-16, noting all the details of this remarkable story. It was a terrible risk, which the prince of the eunuchs took, because he loved Daniel. Could it be that somehow he believed that the God of Daniel would take care of His own?

He well knew that he would endanger his own head by disobeying the king’s command. And yet he gave these Hebrew youths a ten days’ trial, during which time they had “pulse to eat, and water to drink.”

Pulse was “any vegetable grown from seeds,” so that what they had was a vegetable diet. Daniel knew that God would bless them in this action; therefore, he could safely say to the prince of the eunuchs, “As thou seest, deal with thy servants,” after the ten days’ trial had passed.

In Daniel 1:14-16 -

So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king’s meat. Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

Thus God honored their faith and their separation from heathen practices, even as He always honors the courageous testimony of His redeemed children.

TEN TIMES BETTER” THAN ALL THE WISE MEN OF BABYLON No wonder Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, after their three years of training for service in the king’s palace, were found by Nebuchadnezzar himself to be “ten times better than the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm” (Daniel 1:20)!

1. “God Gave Them Knowledge.”

“The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him” (Psalms 25:15). And spiritual truth is always “spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14). We must be separated unto God if we want to know His will, His plans, and His purposes. First purity of life, then knowledge-this is God’s order for the Christian. In Daniel 1:17 we find- As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. To Daniel, true to God, taught by God, were given visions and dreams to interpret for Nebuchadnezzar, and to teach God’s people concerning things to come. In these respects he was very much like Joseph, who stood before Pharaoh, interpreted his dreams, and told him of future things. Like Daniel, Joseph had “purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself” when he said to the wicked wife of Potiphar, “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9). Joseph kept his heart and life pure; therefore, “God gave him knowledge” and power with God and man.

The temptations of Daniel and his friends must have been very great; but they set themselves against all the sin and the evil and the idolatry of Babylon.

2. “Therefore Stood They before the King.”

They were given positions of great honor among the king’s courtiers, among the wise men of Babylon. “Ten times better” than all the magicians, or “sacred scribes, skilled in the sacred writings” of heathen Babylon; “ten times better” than all the astrologers, or “enchanters . . . practisers of the occult arts”!

No wonder these pagan wise men of Babylon became jealous of these four Hebrew youths. But their envious designs were of no avail, because the living God went with them through every trial.

And “they stood before the king.”

My dear Christian friend, one of these days you and I shall stand before the King of kings. Thank God! We shall not be afraid when we stand in His holy presence, for He has borne the penalty of all our sin “in his own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24). But what will He be able to say to us in that day concerning our service for His name’s sake? Shall we meet with His approval upon the testimony of our lives?

My unsaved friend, you, too, will one day stand before Jesus, the King and “Judge of all the earth.” (See Genesis 18:25; cf. John 5:22; John 5:27.) Shall you meet Him as your Saviour, redeemed and unafraid? Or shall you meet Him as your Judge, who will have to say to you, “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:23)? The God of Daniel is the Lord Jesus Christ. Accept His finished work on Calvary, and spend eternity with Him and with Daniel and with all those who love Daniel’s God.

DANIEL AND HIS FRIENDS-

A TYPE OF THE FAITHFUL JEWISH REMNANT

DURING THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Before we leave chapter one, let us see in it a prophetic significance, as well as these beautiful, practical lessons. Let us remember that this chapter is introductory to the whole book, the theme of

which is: "The Commencement, Character, Course, and Consummation of 'the Times of the Gentiles.'" And the prophetic picture is important.

Daniel and his friends represent the faithful Jewish remnant which will come into view at the end-time, that short period between the translation of the church and the return of the Lord in glory. During that period the Antichrist will be in power. He will be an absolute monarch, just as Nebuchadnezzar was.

You will find, as we progress in our study of this book, that Nebuchadnezzar had all power. Daniel says of him that "all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down" (Daniel 5:19). So it will be with the Antichrist, for of him we read that "the king shall do according to his will."

But there will be a remnant in Israel which will set its face against the pretensions and edicts of the monster who will be in authority.

That remnant will be the witnesses at the end-time. They will be the 144,000 of the seventh chapter of Revelation; and as Daniel was used to exercise power and influence for God in Nebuchadnezzar's realm, so the 144,000 will be used by God during the reign of the Beast to turn a multitude from sin to the one and only true God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Those saved during the tribulation period through the ministry of the faithful Jewish remnant are also described in the seventh chapter of Revelation. We shall learn more about this Jewish remnant of the end-time as we proceed with the study.

In closing, let us remember also that we are living in a day of gross apostasy, even as Daniel did at a heathen court. There are lost and never-dying souls all about us, before whom we want our lives "to tell for Jesus." They will, only if we love Him with all our hearts, and seek to make Him known.

When I was a pastor in a Texas town, I knew an elderly colored preacher, a dear saint of God.

One day I went to his home and found him seated at a little organ, his seven or eight children gathered around him as he sang, "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?"

Then, with the tears running down his furrowed cheeks, he turned to me and said, "It was my sin that sent Him to Calvary."

I think Daniel's love for the promised Redeemer must have been like that.

Is yours, my friend? If we love the Lord Jesus like that, then it will be our joy to purpose in our hearts not to defile ourselves in this evil world; we shall be looking forward to that day when we shall stand before the King!

Surely each one of us would praise Him even now in the lines of the old; hymn: When I stand before Thy throne, Dressed in beauty not my own;

When I see Thee as Thou art, Love Thee with unsinning heart;

Then, Lord, shall I fully know- Not till then-how much I owe.

~ end of chapter 1 ~

02-Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM-

A PROPHETIC OUTLINE OF "THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES"

CHAPTER TWO

IN THE second chapter of the Book of Daniel we find the most complete, yet the simplest prophetic picture in all the Word of God, a remarkable outline of Gentile world dominion, from beginning to end. It is, therefore, a graphic presentation of the theme of the book—"The Commencement, Character, Course, and Consummation of 'the Times of the Gentiles.'"

It is interesting to note that from the fourth verse of this chapter through the seventh chapter Daniel wrote in the Aramaic language, the vernacular of the Chaldean court in which he was a captive.

Except for "fifteen Persian and three Greek words," the rest of the Book of Daniel is written in Hebrew.

The destructive critics have sought to attribute the authorship to someone other than Daniel, on the basis of this use of other languages. However, this fact only verifies the Scripture that God used Daniel to write the record. What could be more natural than that, in the parts which have to do with these Gentile kings, he should use the language they spoke and understood? Surely it was known to Daniel, for he had received an intensive three-years' course in "the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans" (Daniel 1:4).

His presence at the court of Darius would surely cause him to know more than "fifteen Persian" words, as well as the "three Greek words," which he could easily have learned from "emissaries" of that country. What could be more natural than that, when Daniel's prophecy had to do with Israel, he should write in the Hebrew tongue? It is always easier to believe God's Word than to try to disprove it.

Before we begin to study the chapter, verse by verse, let us read it through, with our chart before us, to get the complete picture. It is the story of a forgotten dream, which God gave to the first Gentile world-ruler, then revealed to Daniel with the interpretation thereof.

That first Gentile world-ruler was Nebuchadnezzar, the man who interrupted the times of the Jews when he took the children of Judah as captives to Babylon.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S FORGOTTEN DREAM

AND HIS THREAT TO THE WISE MEN OF BABYLON

It was God who gave Nebuchadnezzar that dream, and it was God who caused him to forget it, in order that He might reveal through Daniel His plans and purposes of many centuries. In verses Daniel 2:1-13 we read that, when he awoke from his dream, Nebuchadnezzar tried in vain to recall

it; then he tried to throw off the disturbing impression it had made upon him. At last, according to the custom of the times, he sent for the wise men of Babylon and commanded them to make known unto him the dream with its interpretation.

This the helpless “magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans” were unable to do. They protested that no king had ever made such a demand of his wise men. Nebuchadnezzar was “angry and very furious,” and commanded that all of them should be put to death. Being an absolute monarch, he had this power.

Now the reason these wise men, schooled though they were in all the wisdom of the Chaldeans, were unable to help Nebuchadnezzar out in this matter, is found in 1 Corinthians 2:14 : But the natural man [no matter how wise he may be] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

“The natural man” is the unsaved man; he has not been born again by the Holy Spirit of God. The wisest of men, by human wisdom, are unable to reveal God or make known the things that pertain to God. This is as true today as it was in Nebuchadnezzar’s time. Please remember this and bear it in mind always.

Many young men and women are being led into infidelity today because they fail to see that all the learning in the sciences does not give a man spiritual perception. A knowledge of the sciences may qualify a professor to speak on things material and physical, but spiritual things can be revealed only to the man who is endued with the Spirit of God. The Chaldean wise men were dumb before Nebuchadnezzar because this matter pertained to the things of God.

Nebuchadnezzar had to learn that, before he could know anything of the wisdom of God, he had to reach the end of all human resources.

It was a cruel and an unreasonable threat that Nebuchadnezzar made to the wise men of Babylon, saying in Daniel 2:5,

If ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. But Nebuchadnezzar was a heathen monarch, with absolute power, probably “the basest of men” (Daniel 4:17). Something of his cruelty is seen in his ruthless treatment of the Jewish captives; for he “slew the sons of Zedekiah . . . before his eyes . . . Moreover he put out Zedekiah’s eyes, and bound him with chains to carry him to Babylon” (Jeremiah 39:6-7). And we know the tragic story of his destruction of Jerusalem, with its beautiful, sacred temple. Again, his causing Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be thrown into the fiery furnace is evidence of his cold cruelty.

We shall see, as we go on in this study of the Book of Daniel that Nebuchadnezzar is a type of the Antichrist, whose cruelty and wicked devices will be Satan-inspired.

So eager was Nebuchadnezzar to know the dream and the interpretation thereof that he offered “gifts and rewards and great honour” (Daniel 2:6) to any who could tell him his dream and the interpretation thereof. But he found none among his heathen wise men who could tell him the forgotten dream. And they admitted their helplessness, saying in Daniel 2:10-11,

There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter . . . there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

You see, they believed in pagan gods, not knowing Daniel's God, who was to be "made flesh" and dwell among men, even "the only begotten Son" of the Father in heaven. (See John 1:1; John 1:14.) Verse Daniel 2:13 states: And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

These words and the verses (Daniel 2:14-15) which follow tell us that up to this time Daniel and his Hebrew friends had not been told of the king's forgotten dream or of his stern demand.

Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain (or 'executioner') of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon: he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the tiring known to Daniel. **THE PRAYER OF DANIEL AND HIS FRIENDS ANSWERED**

Having requested time of the king, Daniel "went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions."

We note here that, in the inspired Record, he uses the God-honoring, Hebrew names of his friends, not their Chaldean names that honored pagan gods. Their prayer was one such as we should expect from these four young Hebrews, for Daniel asked his friends in Daniel 2:18 : That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

We learn many practical lessons from the example of these four young men, lessons which we dare not neglect.

If you ever need wisdom and guidance, my Christian friend, then have a prayer meeting. Seek the face of God. There is a "God in heaven" who not only reveals secrets, but who also hears the cry of those who desire to do His will and live for His glory. Daniel had separated himself from the evils of Babylon and had dedicated himself to God, and the great God would not fail him in his hour of need. The Lord God gave to him not only the dream but the interpretation, for "the secret" was "revealed unto Daniel in a night vision" (Daniel 2:19).

Moreover, there is power in united prayer, even as our Lord Jesus said to His disciples long ago in Matthew 18:19-20 :

If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

DANIEL'S THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR ANSWERED PRAYER Do you sometimes forget to thank God, my friend, when He answers your prayer? Daniel did not forget. Let us read Daniel 2:19-23, noting Daniel's praise, worship, and thanksgiving to the God of his "fathers." He ascribes to Him all wisdom and power and light. We might stop and preach a sermon, just on this beautiful paean of praise:

Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: he revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

DANIEL'S TESTIMONY BEFORE NEBUCHADNEZZAR Nor did Daniel hesitate to give all the glory to his God when he stood before that heathen king to tell him his dream and the interpretation thereof. When "Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste," Daniel took no credit to himself, but said to Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2:28; Daniel 2:30):

There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets. . . . As for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living. . . . When Paul stood before Felix and Festus and King Agrippa, like Daniel, he told those heathen rulers of the "God in heaven."

Every devout child of God is glad to have occasion to bear witness to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, and the One "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).

How we need such a testimony today! And how we need more Christians in the Lord's work who have Daniel's humility! **THE FORGOTTEN DREAM MADE KNOWN TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR**

Before we consider the dream itself, let us note the very significant words of Daniel in Daniel 2:28-29, when he told the king that God was revealing to him "what shall be in the latter days . . . what should come to pass." It would be well for us to underscore these words in our Bibles for they give us the key to the God-given interpretation of the dream. As the following verses explain, they tell us that Nebuchadnezzar's dream outlined what was then future history, most of which has now been literally fulfilled, and all of which will be literally fulfilled-perhaps very, very soon.

Let us pause just here to say that, when God spoke to Nebuchadnezzar through this dream, and later to Daniel through visions, these men did not have the complete Word of God in written form. People living today often ask me about their dreams. Let me tell you, my friend, God is not speaking to men today in dreams and visions. Why? Because it is not necessary. He has spoken "once for all" in His written Word and in the Living Word of God, even our Lord Jesus. (See Hebrews 1:1-2.) We have Daniel's prophecy and the Book of Revelation and all the sacred Scriptures. We have in the New Testament added light, above that which God gave to Daniel.

The more shame to us if we close our hearts and minds to it, not even seeking to find out what God has revealed to us in His Word!

Daniel reminded Nebuchadnezzar that his thoughts came into his mind upon his bed, as he wondered "what should come to pass hereafter" (Daniel 2:29). Would to God the people of our own generation were as concerned about the future as Nebuchadnezzar was! He was the most powerful monarch the world had ever known; and doubtless he wondered what would become of Babylon when he was gone. But he was a pagan, whereas we have God-given prophecy.

Therefore, we need not wonder about the future as he did. Nebuchadnezzar had to learn his own ignorance, his own nothingness before the "God in heaven," even as we have to learn the poverty

of our own resources if we would learn of Him.

Now we must not miss a single word of Daniel 2:31-35, if we want to get the message God has for us in this forgotten dream, made known by God to Daniel:

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

Note Daniel's utter faith in God's Word: "This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king" (Daniel 2:36). He did not ask, "Is this the dream?" He believed the "Thus saith the Lord." And from the conviction of his faith, he spoke with authority and assurance. We need more men like Daniel, men who will believe and proclaim the eternal, infallible Word of God!
THE INTERPRETATION-

A PROPHETIC PICTURE OF ALL GENTILE WORLD POWER

AND THE RETURN OF CHRIST IN GLORY

NOW let us read Daniel 2:37-45 to learn the God-given interpretation of the dream. Here we find that the image of the man, whose "form . . . was terrible," represents four Gentile world-empires, each indicated by different materials.

1. The Image of a Man.

Had you ever wondered why all Gentile world power is outlined here by the image of a man? I think it is because this period represents "man's day." God's authority has been repudiated by the world, and governmental affairs are now in the hands of man.

This fact explains why the world today is in a state of political, social, and economic chaos. Man, both Jew and Gentile, has repudiated the sovereignty of God, virtually saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." That has been the attitude of mankind toward God both before and since Christ came. Consequently, the history of the world has been written in blood and tears. Wars, anarchy, graft, lawlessness, have characterized "man's day." Man cannot govern himself; and as we proceed in our study of the Book of Daniel, we shall see how God had prophesied the utter breakdown of government in the hands of man. Thus we see that there is a significance attached to the fact that the image, which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, was in the form of a man.

Again, Nebuchadnezzar, a powerful, heathen king, viewed all Gentile dominion as man sees it, even as the "great image" of a man. When God gave to Daniel His view of this same period, in chapter seven, He showed Daniel four wild, ravenous beasts. That is how Gentile cruelty and lawlessness and greed appear to God.

2. Four Powerful Gentile World-Empires.

To Nebuchadnezzar Daniel said (Daniel 2:37-38):

Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

We see from this that the head of gold represented the Babylonian Empire, of which Nebuchadnezzar was the head, the supreme ruler.

In other words, "the times of the Gentiles" began with Nebuchadnezzar. But mighty though that empire was, it was to pass away and others were to arise according to Daniel 2:39-40 : And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. The names of the Medo-Persian and Grecian empires that were to arise successively, after the fall of Babylon, are given later in the Book of Daniel. Here they are represented by the silver and the brass. And there is no mistaking the identity of Rome, represented by the iron. A glance at our chart just here will help us to get the picture; it will also show us that only the revived Roman Empire, represented by the feet and the ten toes of the image, remains yet to be fulfilled-"in the latter time."

Secular history also tells us the names of these four world-empires. Our high school boys and girls know their records. But before these Gentile powers came into being, God gave Daniel this prophecy.

- In chapter five we read that Medo-Persia succeeded Babylon;

- In chapter eight, that "the king of Grecia," known to us as Greece, conquered the Medes and the Persians.

Under Alexander the Great this Graeco-Macedonian Empire became mistress of the world.

Greece, in turn, was overthrown; and fifty years before the birth of our Lord the Roman Empire came into existence and continued in power during the time the Son of God was on earth. All of this is confirmed by secular history, just one more proof of the fact that the Bible is, indeed, the Word of God.

This, then, is the meaning of what Nebuchadnezzar saw in the "great" and "terrible" image of a man:

Babylon-the head of gold. Medo-Persia-the breast and arms of silver. Greece-the belly and thighs of brass. Rome-the legs of iron. Rome Revived-the feet and toes of iron and clay.

What God did not reveal to Nebuchadnezzar and to Daniel was this present church age, represented on our chart by the strip of blue. But God did reveal to Nebuchadnezzar and to Daniel the last form of the Roman Empire, which will be revived "in the latter time," and which is represented in the image by the feet and toes, "part of potters' clay, and part of iron." Over this last

form of the Roman Empire the Antichrist will rule. Let us read the description of it in Daniel 2:41-43 : And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

3. The Smiting Stone-Christ's Kingdom on Earth.

We shall have more to say about these four Gentile world-empires later, but just now let us read to the end of the God-given interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. In Daniel 2:44-45 we see the end of Gentile dominion, which will be brought about when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory, smites the image on the feet, and brings to a close "the times of the Gentiles." For Christ is the smiting Stone. And in the days of these kings [represented by the ten toes] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure. In that day the Lord Jesus, the righteous King, shall rule "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Psalms 72:8). We shall also have more to say about this part of Nebuchadnezzar's dream later on in this study. But just now let us try to see what God is teaching us through this "great" and "terrible" image.

GENTILE DOMINION-

FROM ABSOLUTE AUTOCRACY TO DICTATORSHIP AND COMMUNISM

Let us note the lesson which the Spirit of God intends to convey by the metals of the image. Most valuable was the "head of gold"; and from the head to the feet each succeeding metal was of a baser kind:

GOLD

SILVER

BRASS

IRON

CLAY This indicates a gradual deterioration in the affairs of man, as "the times of the Gentiles" run their course, from an absolute monarchy to dictatorship accompanied by Bolshevism, Communism, and finally chaos.

There is no evolution theory taught here!

According to man's fallacy that the world is getting better and better, the head of Nebuchadnezzar's image should have been made of iron mixed with clay; the feet, of gold. There is only deterioration, not improvement, in Gentile world-dominion, according to the God-given

dream and the meaning thereof.

1. The Head of Gold-The Babylonian Empire.

Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom was likened unto gold because it was an absolute monarchy, God's ideal government. Nebuchadnezzar was not, however, God's ideal monarch! God's ideal Monarch is sitting at His right hand, and His kingdom is yet to be set up. One of these days, the ideal Monarch will rule over the ideal monarchy, and He will be "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:16).

We have already seen from our study that Nebuchadnezzar, as an absolute monarch, had the power of life and death. "Whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive" (Daniel 5:19).

He was not held responsible to a senate, parliament, jury, or judge. Just a word from him put the three friends of Daniel in the fiery furnace; yet Darius, king of the next world-empire of Medo-Persia, could not save Daniel from the den of lions, even though "he set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him" (Daniel 6:14). By the time Darius ruled, the "gold" had deteriorated to "silver," and there was less concentration of power. Darius was bound by the law of the Medes and Persians.

The "gold" of monarchy would be the right kind of government now if we could only get the right kind of ruler.

My friends, I am trying to show you God's view of these things.

I am glad to live in this democratic country. I am a naturalized citizen; and as I once paid allegiance to Great Britain, so now I love and pay allegiance to the United States of America. But why all the Communists, Fascists, and "fifth columnists," even in our own country today? Because democracy reverts to the "iron" of dictatorship mingled with the "clay" of the will of the people. If everyone in our democracy were God-fearing and law-abiding, there would be no need to fear that the very foundations of our own government might be undermined by cunning lawless ones from within.

A few generations ago the average American would have belittled such fears, but today our newspapers and magazines are filled with the threat of such danger. And God, who knows the end from the beginning, told Daniel 2500 years ago that the feet and toes of the image, part of iron and part of potter's clay, represented dictatorship and extreme democracy so-called; we know it as Communism today.

Moreover, I believe we are living in the period of the world's history when this final form of Gentile world-power will soon fill the stage of this drama which God calls "the times of the Gentiles."

2. The Breast and Arms of Silver-The Medo-Persian Empire.

As silver is inferior to gold, so the Medo-Persian Empire was less powerful, less autocratic, than that of Babylon. It was not that the army was inferior; it conquered Babylon. It was not that it controlled less territory; indeed, it covered more. But although the ruler of the Medes and Persians was made king because of his nobility of birth, yet his nobles were equal to him in rank, though not

in office. His power, therefore, was limited, not absolutely sovereign as was that of Nebuchadnezzar.

3. The Belly and the Thighs of Brass-The Grecian Empire.

Alexander the Great was ruler over the third, yet more inferior, empire. He was the “king” of Greece, not because of what history calls “the divine right of kings,” but because of his personal power and influence. Swiftly he conquered a vast amount of territory, vast for the days in which he lived, and wept because there were no more worlds to conquer.

Greece had a high form of art and culture, producing some of the greatest philosophers the world has ever seen. But it was a military government, with the power given to military leaders. Upon the early death of Alexander, his kingdom was divided. It was inferior, in concentration of power, both to Babylon and to Medo-Persia.

4. The Legs of Iron-The Roman Empire.

Not only was the emperor of Rome chosen by popular, military election, but the empire was later broken up into the Eastern and Western divisions, as represented by the two legs of Nebuchadnezzar’s image. There was no royal family; the rulers came up from the ranks of the common people. Yet they governed with an iron rule. History tells us of “The Iron Legions” of Rome. And Imperial Rome held universal sway when our Lord was born in Bethlehem and when He was crucified on Calvary.

The iron, most common of all these metals, was represented by the stern rule of the Caesars. The clay, even more common than iron, began to be in evidence more and more as the old Roman Empire went to pieces. And in the revived Roman Empire the clay will be even more in evidence, yet held in check by the “iron” of the last Caesar—a world-dictator, even the Antichrist.

5. The Ten Toes of Iron Mixed with Clay-The Revived Roman Empire.

As iron will not mix with clay, “so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken . . . they shall not cleave one to another” (Daniel 2:42-43). The Antichrist will be a dictator, indeed! But the will of the people will be in evidence, too. His reign will be far from that of which the “head of gold” speaks.

In the French Revolution the world saw the “clay” in a marked degree.

Chaos and terror reigned. The Lord’s Day was set aside. Ever since that time, extreme democracy, in the form of Socialism, Annihilism, Bolshevism, and Communism, has swept over the earth. With what result? That today 70 Per cent of the world’s population is subject to dictators!

I remember, when I was a lad in Australia, people were saying that woman suffrage would cure all the world’s evils. Now I am not opposing women’s rights; I am only saying that here was another appearance of “the clay,” the will of the people.

Think of the many dynasties that have been swept aside within the last score of years and more!

The Kaiser of the House of Hohenzollern, the Hapsburgs of Austria, the Sultan of Turkey, the Czar of Russia, the Emperor of China, to say nothing of many others of smaller countries! Think of the

diabolical will of Hitler and his Gestapo; of Mussolini's attempt at world rule; do not forget their dreadful fate.

The old ruling families have toppled from their thrones. The first president of Germany was a boilermaker, and a onetime paper hanger nearly dominated Europe. Thus the clay has been poured in!

Let me repeat it: If the people love God, then democracy is fine; but if they are anti-God, then democracy falls into the hands of the devil. And what a God-defying mass of humanity lives today in countries that, only a few years ago, had the gospel of our crucified and risen Lord!

Karl Marx, a German Jew and the founder of Communism, set out to get rid of "four abominable things":

- (1) The idea of God;
- (2) the superstition of religion;
- (3) the dictates of conscience;
- (4) the sanctity of the home.

I need not tell you the awful fruition of this seed-sowing, in the world today. One illustration will suffice. Recently a group of students of the Moscow University made an effigy impersonating our Lord Jesus; hanged it on a gallows; and burned it, dancing around it in fiendish glee all the while. I need not tell you that in the land of Martin Luther Christians were tortured in unspeakable prison camps; or that Mussolini's Fascist Creed was a blasphemous parody of our sacred Apostles' Creed. In Communist Russia today God is completely ruled out.

Surely the patience of our long-suffering God cannot tolerate much further these insults to His Word. Nor can Christendom, so-called, boast. With one-half largely pagan, and with a large part of the other half having repudiated God's Word, seeking to amuse instead of preaching the message of salvation by faith in the Christ of Calvary-with these flagrant insults to God, surely there must be a day of reckoning not far distant. Of the 150 million of our population today, 80 per cent never darken the door of a house of God. Only the long-suffering of our loving Lord, who is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9), delays the swift execution of His righteous judgment upon the God-defying millions.

But let us look again at Daniel 2:44 of our chapter, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom . . ." "In the days" of what kings? The ten kings represented by the ten toes of the image.

People often ask, "Why do you say that the Roman Empire will be revived in the days of the Antichrist?" Here is one of the clear answers of Scripture to that question; and it is enlarged upon and made even more plain in such related passages as Daniel 7:7-8, where the "ten horns" of the Roman "beast" are identical with the "ten toes" of Nebuchadnezzar's image; and the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, where the same ten kings are foretold.

Although today the old Roman Empire, represented by the legs of iron, is non-existent, the integral parts of that empire remain to this present time, though broken up into separate states. Out of the

territory of the Old Roman Empire ten kings will form a confederacy, over which the Antichrist will rule. That is the meaning of Daniel 2:44, "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom . . ." For the Lord Jesus Christ, the smiting Stone, will return in glory to end the rule of "these kings" and of their dictator, the Antichrist.

This, in brief, is what the Scriptures teach about the revival of the Old Roman Empire "in the latter time." When "the man of sin" is revealed, he will seem to the blinded world to bring peace to the warring nations that have fought one another ever since the Old Roman Empire fell apart. Into one great confederacy he will weld them-ten kingdoms with their ten kings, over which the Antichrist himself will be dictator. THE TRANSLATION OF THE CHURCH-

TO PRECEDE THE MANIFESTATION OF THE ANTICHRIST

It is a significant thing that the would-be world rulers have had as one of their ambitions the revival of the old Roman Empire. Napoleon had that ambition. Mussolini set his hand to that task. We do not know who will make the next attempt.

Ambitious rulers do not realize, however, that the revival of the Roman Empire will not take place until after God has taken the church out of the world. And surely, my friends, all signs point to the imminence of that glorious event!

Our Lord warned us against setting dates for His return, and we must not do that Yet His prophetic Word tells us much that causes us to look up, knowing that our "redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

It is the restraining power of the Holy Spirit in the world that is hindering the manifestation of "the man of sin." (See 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12).

Some years ago, when I was pastor of a church in Keokuk, Iowa, one of my elders took me over the power house and locks of the big dam that spans the Mississippi at that place. As I looked at that great wall of concrete, and the lake above it, I thought to myself, "What if a mighty hand should reach down and lift that wall?" Flood, devastation, and ruin would be rampant.

My friends, in 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 it tells that something of that nature will happen when the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit, working in and through the church, is taken away.

He who now letteth [hindereth] will let [hinder] until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked ["Lawless one"] be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

CHRIST-THE SMITING STONE

It is our Lord Jesus Christ who will suddenly and surely put to an end the wicked rule of the Antichrist; He is "the stone cut out of the mountain without hands," which will smite the image on the ten toes, as it were. Thus He will end "the times of the Gentiles" and usher in His own glorious kingdom. Then every vestige of Gentile power and misrule will forever pass away. Then the words of God, the Father, in Psalms 2:6, will be literally fulfilled, Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.

You will hear all kinds of false interpretations, my friend, concerning the smiting stone of this dream. Anglo-Israelism, a cult of our own day, holds that the smiting stone is the British Empire. However, those who teach this fallacy are having a difficult time at this present hour, trying to harmonize their theory with the events that are taking place all over the world. I heard one man say that the smiting stone is the Baptist Church!

The Word of God speaks plainly and finally: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." (See Daniel 2:44-45).

The "stone" in Scripture is often used to speak of:

1. Christ-The Smitten Rock.

Moses smote the rock in the wilderness, and the life-giving water gushed forth for Israel. Paul tells us that "they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4; cf. Exodus 17:5-6). As the "Rock of Ages," our Lord was "smitten of God, and afflicted" (Isaiah 53:4) when He died for us on the cross. And from His finished work on Calvary there flows a life-giving stream for all who will accept His salvation.

2. Christ-"The Stone Which the Builders (Israel) Rejected."

Again, when Christ came to present Himself to Israel as their Messiah and Lord, He was "the stone which the builders rejected" (Psalms 118:22; Matthew 21:42).

As the Stone rejected by Israel, He was also smitten by "the image," for He was crucified on a Roman cross. But when He comes again, He will smite-not be smitten by it!

It is necessary that we bear this in mind because some have erred in teaching that the falling Stone represents the first coming of Christ. This cannot possibly be the true meaning, for when Christ was on earth, Rome was an undivided empire- not, as it were, the two "legs of iron."

Moreover, He was crucified by Roman soldiers; Pilate and Herod delivered Him into the hands of the Jews. The image smote Him at the cross; He will smite the image when He comes to purify the earth of wickedness and misrule, and to reign in righteousness and peace.

3. Christ-"The Chief Corner Stone" of the Church.

And "the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes" (Matthew 21:42).

To Israel "a stumblingstone and rock of offence" (Romans 9:33),

He is to the church, composed of both Jew and Gentile, the "chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded" (1 Peter 2:6). "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11).

4. Christ-The Smiting Stone, to Fall Upon Gentile Dominion.

Now Nebuchadnezzar said to Daniel, "A stone was cut out without hands . . . and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Daniel 2:34-35).

A mountain in the Bible represents a kingdom. Here the reference is to the kingdom of Judah from which Christ came. The cutting out of the stone without hands speaks to us of His marvelous birth as the “seed of woman,” born of a virgin, without a human father. And one day He will come as “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

As the stone in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream “smote the image” and “became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth,” so shall the Son of God who was rejected 1900 years ago, return to this earth in power and great glory. With His coming all earthly governments shall pass away, the dominion of the Gentiles shall come to an end, and He shall be all in all.

My dear brother, are you ready to meet the Lord? Do you know Christ as your Saviour? Or are you among those who cry, “We will not have this man to rule over us”? Will you not humble yourself, fall at His feet, and put your trust in His redeeming grace, lest you be among those who shall be swept away as chaff when He shall return?

During the reign of Queen Victoria, Handel’s “Messiah” was being rendered at the Crystal Palace in London. When the great Hallelujah Chorus was reached, the audience rose to its feet. To the astonishment of everyone, the Queen, contrary to all royal custom, stood also.

Monarch though she was, she instinctively rose to honor Him, whom she loved. She crowned Him Lord of all, even as the wonderful chorus rang out, For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; King of Kings, and Lord of Lords! May God help us to realize that all honor is due Him, who died that we might live. May we give Him the adoration that is His due!

DANIEL MADE “CHIEF OF THE GOVERNORS . . . OF BABYLON” As we bring this lesson to a close, let us read the remaining verses of this second chapter of Daniel to see what effect this dream and its interpretation had upon Nebuchadnezzar, and how he promoted and honored Daniel. In Daniel 2:46 -

Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him.

You see, he was a heathen king, and “worshipped Daniel.” But we may rest assured that Daniel quickly forbade his worshipping him.

Indeed, the next verse (Daniel 2:47) indicates that Daniel pointed Nebuchadnezzar to his God; for we read that- The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret.

Later on Nebuchadnezzar came to know Daniel’s God, but here he refers to Him, in speaking to Daniel, as “your God,” not “my God.” And because he afterwards set up the image to be worshipped, we realize how little the God-given dream meant to him, how little he profited from its searching message. He had not repented; he had not humbled himself; he had no heart for Daniel’s God, even though he acknowledged the source of Daniel’s wisdom.

In this he was a picture of thousands living today who listen to marvelous gospel truth for years, yet are not receptive to its life-giving message.

My unsaved brother, every gospel sermon you hear, every radio Bible lesson that tells you the way of salvation, will increase your condemnation before the judgment bar of God.

But Daniel's Lord was guiding his life, and He put it into me heart of Nebuchadnezzar to promote Daniel to be his chief counsellor. Without doubt, God so planned it, in order that He might continue to have the faithful witness of Daniel and his three friends at this heathen court. In Daniel 2:48 -

Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel did not forget his friends, for he "requested of the king" (Daniel 2:49); "he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king"-the seat of justice, the place of great authority. (See Daniel 2:49).

My Christian friend, even though you bear a faithful testimony to your Lord, you may not receive in this life the honor and glory which God bestowed upon Daniel for his faithfulness. God may have a different plan for your life. But you may rest assured that He will not "forget your work and labour of love" (Hebrews 6:10).

He speaks to us plainly, saying in Revelation 22:12 :

Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

What is the Lord Jesus Christ to you, beloved? If He is not your Saviour, the Foundation Stone of your new life in Him, look to Calvary before He comes again as the smiting Stone to grind to powder a godless world. Put your faith in His finished work on the cross; and then you can sing, from a heart filled with praise:

Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee;

Let the water and the blood, From Thy riven side which flowed,

Be of sin the double cure, Save me from its guilt and pow'r.

~ end of chapter 2 ~

03-Nebuchadnezzar's "Golden Image"

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S "GOLDEN IMAGE"

AND

"THE BURNING FIERY FURNACE"

CHAPTER THREE

Foreshadowing "The Image of the Beast" and the Faithful Jewish Remnant during "The Great Tribulation"

CHAPTERS three, four, five and six of the Book of Daniel not only set forth the moral and religious conditions that existed at the beginning of "the times of the Gentiles"; but they also foreshadow the moral and religious conditions that will exist in the end of this age, during the reign of the Antichrist.

A glance at our chart will remind us of this fact. Each of these chapters contains the record of how God miraculously overruled the idolatry and pride and self-will of the early Gentile monarchs. And chapters three and six tell the story of God's mighty power on behalf of Daniel and his three friends. These four young men, therefore, are a striking picture, or type, of the faithful Jewish remnant "in the latter time."

In chapter three we have the story of Nebuchadnezzar's folly and pride and idolatry in setting up the "golden image" for all his subjects to worship; and here we have also the beautiful story of the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to bow down to the image, and of their deliverance from "the burning fiery furnace" by the God they loved and served. Let us turn to the chapter and read the familiar record beginning with verse 1.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S "IMAGE OF GOLD"

Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

1. The Dimension of the Image.

There is something very interesting about the proportions of the image.

We read that it was sixty cubits in height and six cubits in breadth. Six is the number of man, and the sixes in the dimensions of Nebuchadnezzar's golden image point onward to that one whose number is 666, even the Antichrist.

In Revelation 13:18 we read of this coming "man of sin":

Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man: and his number is Six hundred three score and six.

One of the sixes is missing in Nebuchadnezzar's image, possibly because the rebellious system was yet to be fully developed. Six is the number of human incompleteness; seven, of God's completeness. Six days are given to man for work, but the seventh day belongs to God. Even Satan's masterpiece, the Antichrist, cannot measure up to more than "six hundred three score and six."

As the cubit varied in olden times, we cannot know the exact size of the golden image which "Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up." If the cubit was eighteen inches, then the image was 90 feet in height and 9 feet in breadth. If the cubit was twenty-two inches, the image was 110 feet high and 11 feet wide. In either case, it was a huge idol; and a vast concourse of people could see it at the same time, as they bowed before it.

2. "The Dedication of the Image."

Four significant facts are stated in Daniel 3:2-7 concerning the dedication of Nebuchadnezzar's "image of gold":

- (1) He called together a great assembly of government officials to bow before the image;
- (2) He demanded that everyone in the realm worship the image, or be cast into "a burning fiery furnace";
- (3) He provided beautiful music to accompany the pagan ceremony;
- (4) Multitudes obeyed his command.

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

I wonder if we can visualize the scene which took place on the plain of Dura on that day which was set for worship of the image. In the distance stood the image of gold, possibly dazzling in the sunlight. A long procession of priests from the temple of Bel, their solemn ritual adding to the impressiveness of the scene, marched slowly across the plain. There fell on the ear the clear notes of the cornet, then the more gentle tones of the harp, the flute, and the psaltery, until the air was filled with music; and as the notes rang out, vast throngs of people fell down and bowed before the image which the king had set up. What a spectacle that must have been! What a scene well calculated to appeal to the eye and the emotions, stirring the souls of men until they gave to a

graven image the worship which belonged to God!

Satan knows the power of music to stir the emotions of man; let us not forget that this was a religious ceremony- religious, but bloodless. Nor will this age of Gentile dominion end irreligiously. Some of the most God-dishonoring ritualisms performed today in the name of religion are accompanied by beautiful music. And possibly the worship of the image of “the beast,” after the true church has been translated to be with the Lord, will be accompanied by skillfully-executed music.

But all such ceremonies are not beautiful to God or to those who love Him. They are a mockery.

About nineteen years had elapsed since God had told Nebuchadnezzar that “the head of gold” was to pass away, to be succeeded by three other Gentile world-empires. Could it be that in setting up his own image-all of gold-that he thought to change the decrees of God? Was he presumptuously believing that “great Babylon” which he had built (Daniel 4:30) would continue its autocratic rule, even until the time of the end? It seems that he must have attempted, in this blasphemous self-deification, to change the decrees of Daniel’s Lord.

The God-given dream portrayed “the head of gold”; Nebuchadnezzar’s image was all of gold. The one was a divine prophecy; the other a man-made attempt at self-glorification. I say “self-glorification” advisedly, because, while this golden image was that of Bel, Nebuchadnezzar’s chief god, it also deified the king himself as “the personification and representative of the Babylonian Empire” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown). What an insult to the Lord, who had given this heathen king a chance to love and honor Him!

“THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST”

All these circumstances and details concerning Nebuchadnezzar’s “image of gold” typify, in a marked way, “the image of the beast,” or Antichrist, which he will set up “in the latter time.” As we have already pointed out, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in suffering “fiery trial” rather than worshipping the golden image, are just a picture of the faithful Jewish remnant, who will go through “the great tribulation” rather than worship “the image of the beast.”

In the previous chapter we quoted from 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, showing that the true church must be translated to be with Christ before “the man of sin,” “the Lawless one,” is revealed. When he is manifested to the world, the Jews will be deceived by him, and will make a covenant with him for seven years-“the seventieth week (or, ‘seven’)” of Daniel’s prophecy in chapter nine. Many of the nation of Israel will be back in their own land then.

The Antichrist “shall confirm the covenant with many (Israelites-Daniel’s ‘people’) for one week (or period of seven years).” (See Daniel 9:27.)

And in promising Israel her land, he will also restore the temple worship of the Jews in Palestine. But in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

What is an “abomination” to a godly Jew?

It is an idol. And we believe that “the abomination of desolation” to which our Lord referred in His Olivet Discourse will be “the image of the beast,” which he will set up in the holy place of the Jewish temple “in the midst of the week,” that is, at the end of three and one-half years of that seven-year rule of the Antichrist.

Then what will happen?

Devout Jews, born again by the gospel of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus, as it will be preached during that time by the 144,000 Israelites, will realize that they have put their faith in a false Messiah, the Antichrist; they will know he is false when he sets up his image “in the holy place.”

They will cease to give allegiance to him; and he will persecute them with “great tribulation.”

1. What Christ Said about That “Abomination of Desolation.”

So terrible will that “time of Jacob’s trouble” be that our Lord warned Israel in Matthew 24:15-22, saying: When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains. . . For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.

2. What Paul Said about the Antichrist’s Demand for Worship.

Now let us read again a part of what Paul told us about “the image of the beast” in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. Writing of “the man of sin,” Paul said:

He opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God . . . whom the Lord shall consume with die spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

3. What John Said about “the Image of the Beast.”

And now let us turn to Revelation 13:11-18 to see what John wrote of “the image of the beast,” as he, like Paul, was guided by the Holy Spirit of God. Many Bible teachers believe that the two beasts referred to in this chapter are the political ruler, or the last Caesar, in Rome and the “false prophet,” who will be the religious leader and representative of the Antichrist, possibly in Palestine. This teaching seems to correspond with the reference to “the beast and the false prophet” in Revelation 20:10. However that may be, both will be antichrist, that is, against Christ; often the term “Antichrist” is applied to both personages.

Now will you read carefully all this passage in Revelation 13:1-18, noting especially Daniel 3:14-17 : And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast. . . And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

People often ask, "What is the mark of the beast?"

I do not know. This I do know: it will be some outward token of homage to and worship of "the beast." And those who refuse to receive it will be persecuted to death. There will be some godly Jews who will escape, but many, both Jew and Gentile, will be martyrs of that cruel monster. (See Revelation 6:9-11; Revelation 7:9-14).

We who live in this church age should be ashamed to refuse to give a testimony for Christ in any social circle, in any business office or home or school! How little we are called upon to suffer for Him!

My friends, this will be that short period, during which Satan will receive worship, for the Antichrist will be Satan's masterpiece. I have gone into detail to quote these scriptures, for I want you to see how graphically Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego foreshadow the faithful remnant in Israel who will refuse to worship "the image of the beast."

The furnace of their affliction will be heated with all the fury of Satan. Talk about anti-Semitism! That will be Israel's "great tribulation"! But "those days shall be shortened" by the return of Christ in glory. Then Israel will enter into the millennial kingdom of Christ on earth.

4. Some "Signs" That Point to the Coming "Man of Sin."

And how rapidly that day seems to be drawing near! It was never so before, in all the 1900 years that are passed. Israel has returned to Palestine in unbelief, even as God said she would. It is marvelous that Israel should have been restored to national status in our day.

Again, the rise of dictators in the world today foreshadows the manifestation of "the beast." Surely it is easier for our own generation to imagine what the Antichrist will be like than it has been to those living in former years.

Again, the trend of the thought of diplomats today is toward a federation of states. That is what is being considered in Europe.

Add to these things the "signs" of apostasy in Christendom and increased lawlessness in the earth, and you will realize how significant is this present day! We dare not set dates for the return of Christ, but it is the part of wisdom to "discern the signs of the times."

"THE BURNING FIERY FURNACE"

AND THE GOD WHO IS "ABLE TO DELIVER"

1. "Certain Chaldeans . . . Accused the Jews."

Let us read Daniel 3:8-28 of our chapter to see something of the courage and faith of the three Hebrew youths, and to see something of the love and power of their God. Possibly the jealousy of some or all of Nebuchadnezzar's princes and governors and other officials prompted them to encourage the king to demand worship, in order that they might have occasion to accuse "the Jews" (Daniel 3:8).

Perhaps they were watching to see what Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego would do. Certainly this is what happened when Daniel was cast into the lions' den. And as the king was both the civil

and the religious head of the empire, these jealous officials “accused the Jews” of treason.

Possibly they sought also, by their flatteries, to win favor with the king. And where was Daniel at this time? We well know that he did not worship the image. He was the second ruler in the kingdom, and must have been in another, distant part of the empire, possibly on official business for Nebuchadnezzar.

In spite of the fact that princes, governors, captains, judges, and dignitaries of every kind bowed the knee to the image; in spite of the dire threat concerning “the burning fiery furnace,” these three refused to yield their right to worship God.

We may well imagine that they had never before stood so erect, as they did on that memorable day! They had purposed in their hearts at the very beginning that they would not defile them-selves with the king’s meat; now they refused to defile themselves by bowing the knee to an idol, for they had not forgotten the first commandment, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” or the second, “Thou shalt not . . . bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.”

When it came to a choice between the word of the king and the Word of God, it did not take these men long to decide whose voice they would follow. The envious might gloat; Nebuchadnezzar might rage; obey they must!

The soul that knows God, my friend, cannot be diverted by gold or silver or favors or threats. Neither can the sophistries of this world seduce him. If our souls are linked with God, no matter what the test, He will help us to be faithful to Him. And you and I may be called upon to suffer for His name’s sake.

The church will not go through the tribulation period, but “coming events cast their shadows before”; and the sufferings of Christians in Russia and other lands today may be re-enacted in many parts of the world before the Lord takes us home to Himself. If we do have to suffer for Christ’s sake, may we be as true to our God as were the Hebrew youths in the days of ancient Babylon. I like to call them “Protestants,” for they “protested” against idolatry, even as Martin Luther and others of the Protestant Reformation “protested” against certain evils in the church of their day. There comes a time when a godly man or woman or boy or girl needs to protest against evil in some of its seductive forms.

2. “The Jews” Were “Brought before the King.”

In his “rage and fury” Nebuchadnezzar had Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego brought into his presence. Evidently he had loved these three Hebrews; possibly they had been valuable to him in his official business, for he gave them a second opportunity to bow before his image. But they did not follow the policy of many in our own day, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do.” Like the early Christians of a later date, they were willing to die for their faith.

The story is told of a Roman emperor who had a coliseum built by a skilful Greek architect, in whose honor he gave a great performance, dedicating the finished edifice. There were all kinds of sports. Then at the last a door was opened on the arena, and the spectators saw a little band of Christians enter. At the same time another door was opened, from which came roaring lions, ready to devour their prey. The emperor arose, praised the young architect for his achievement, then referred to the “sport” they had witnessed, warning any others of their certain fate if they embraced

Christianity.

The young architect, his face white, his lips trembling, stood to his feet and exclaimed, "I also am a Christian!"

His fate was that of his fellow-believers in Christ, but he went to his death with God-given courage which did not falter. It is to such men that we owe the preservation of the Word of God, as well as the privilege of reading and studying it openly and unafraid. May we be as bold and as fearless as they were in our testimony, whatever the cost.

3. "Our God . . . Is Able."

Nebuchadnezzar, in his rage, asked a blasphemous question, "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" The answer comes in Daniel 3:16-18 -

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. My friends, something like this will be the decision of the faithful Jewish remnant who will refuse to worship the image of "the beast" in the closing days of this age. They will refuse the claims of that Satan-inspired usurper, and because of their refusal, they will be cast into the "furnace" of "the great tribulation." But their God "is able . . . and he will deliver" them out of Satan's hand. Some will be martyrs, but they will go into the presence of Christ; others will be saved to enter into His millennial kingdom upon earth. For behind the dim unknown

Standeth God within the shadows,

Keeping watch above His own.

4. "Through Faith" They "Quenched the Violence of Fire."

The Holy Spirit must have had in mind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when He wrote, in Hebrews 11:34, that some of the heroes of faith had "quenched the violence of fire." He was writing to Hebrew Christians who knew and loved the story.

In verses Daniel 3:19-20, we read-

Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. The greatness of the miracle of God in preserving these three is seen in the fact that "the fire had no power" upon their bodies, "nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed upon them"- this, in spite of the fact that the furnace was so "exceeding hot" that "the flames slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego," to cast them into the fire.

Most wonderful of all, “the angel of the Lord,” even God in angelic form, came down to walk with His own through the fiery trial! The witnesses had seen the three Hebrews fall “down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.”

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

We know that the fourth was the Son of God in angelic form, but Nebuchadnezzar was a heathen king; he had many gods, of whom Bel was supposed to be the father of sons and daughters.

What blindness, even after the only true God, the God of Daniel, had spoken to that heathen king some years previously! But at least the testimony of the Hebrews had made its impression upon this pagan king; he acknowledged the power of their God-not his own god.

So in Daniel 3:28 -

Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. Are you going through sorrow and trouble, my Christian friend? The God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8). And His promise never fails.

In Isaiah 43:2; Isaiah 43:5 He says, When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. . . Fear not: I am with thee.

He who spoke these reassuring words many centuries ago is “able to deliver,” “able to keep,” “able to save to the uttermost” (Daniel 3:17; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25).

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you . . . but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy (1 Peter 4:12-13)

. . . that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:7).

We might go on endlessly, quoting the precious promises of our God, for they fill the pages of His inspired Word. But these will suffice to remind us that the God of Daniel and of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will go with us through every trial, ever reminding us that “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” when He takes us to be forever with Himself. (See Romans 8:18).

5. “There Is No Other God That Can Deliver after This Sort.”

In these words Nebuchadnezzar recognized the power of the God of the Hebrews, but he did not recognize His claims. He made a decree that no one in his realm should “speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.” He even promoted these three young men “in the province of Babylon.” (See Daniel 3:29-30.) But still he refused to worship the only true God.

Does that seem very strange, my friend? It does; yet how many there are today who respect their mothers’ God; they would not blaspheme His name; they even show Him a certain deference in public assembly. Still they have never bowed the knee before Him, in confession of sin and in repentance unto eternal life. They give assent to certain Scripture truth, yet do not accept it for themselves. They cannot fall at Jesus’ feet and exclaim, with Thomas, “My Lord and my God!” (See John 20:28).

Do you belong to this class, my brother? Then look away to Calvary’s Cross today, and be born again. The God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will not only save your soul; He will also go with you through “the burning fiery furnace” of affliction. When trouble comes, you will be able to say, with Job: “He knoweth the way that I take: and when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold . . . Though he slay me, yet will I trust him” (Job 23:10; Job 13:15).

That is what the Hebrew children said to a heathen king. That is what the faithful Jewish remnant will be able to say in that future “time of Jacob’s trouble,” when the Antichrist will try to compel them to worship his image which he will set up in the temple of restored Israel. And to all His children in every age our faithful, loving, omnipotent God is saying to us in a thousand ways:

Fear not, I am with thee; O be not dismayed; For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid.

I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand, Upheld by My gracious, omnipotent hand.

When thro’ fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;

The flames shall not hurt thee; I only design Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine. This God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death (Psalms 48:14).

And for all eternity in His presence there will be “pleasures for evermore” (Psalms 16:11).

~ end of chapter 3 ~

04-Nebuchadnezzar's Tree Vision....

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S TREE VISION-HIS PRIDE AND MADNESS

CHAPTER FOUR

Foreshadowing the Pride and Madness of the Gentile Nations “in the Latter Time” IN OUR last lesson attention was called to the fact that chapters three to six set forth the moral and religious aspects of “the times of the Gentiles,” especially as the age draws near its close.

In chapter four we have recorded the second strange dream of Nebuchadnezzar, “the tree vision,” foretelling his pride, insanity, and subsequent restoration, all of which is a foreshadowing of the pride, madness, and downfall of Gentile power in the time of the end, and the restoration of certain Gentile nations which shall enter into the millennial reign of Christ.

In his pride Nebuchadnezzar ignored the warning from the God of heaven concerning impending judgment, even as godless Gentile world power in the days of the Antichrist will not only ignore God, but will also defy Him with blasphemous insults to His name.

Chapter four is the record, preserved by Daniel, of what Nebuchadnezzar wrote, bearing testimony to God’s dealings with him.

It is the story of the conversion of a heathen king, as related by himself; for the closing verses of the chapter indicate that he accepted Daniel’s God as his own. How else could he “praise and extol and honour the King of heaven”?

We must give Nebuchadnezzar credit for being just as willing to testify for God after he was saved as he had been to testify for the devil before his conversion.

Can that be said of you, my Christian friend?

Do your neighbors know that you love the Lord?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DECREE

Let us read the first three verses of this personal testimony of one of the greatest monarchs the world has ever seen. What a wonderful thing is the grace of God, transforming vile, wretched sinners into sober, useful, humble servants of “the Most High”!

Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the High God hath wrought toward me. How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation. As we study the life of Nebuchadnezzar, we realize anew the wonder of the miracles of grace which God performs in human lives, for here He took a proud, haughty, heathen king, brought him low only to lift him up again, and restored to him the honor and glory of his kingdom.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S TREE VISION

1. The Troubled King.

With a false sense of security Nebuchadnezzar was "at rest," but God aroused him in a strange and startling manner. Listen to the king's own words in Daniel 4:4-5.

I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

Sin is a deceitful thing. All the time Nebuchadnezzar was "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1), even though he thought he was "at rest." It was a deceitful rest, a deceitful peace that he had. If a man's sense of security does not rest in the finished work of Christ, then we need to arouse him to his danger. It was the grace of God that troubled Nebuchadnezzar and aroused him in his soul. And everyone who is born again must pass through the experience of concern.

Are you praying for unsaved loved ones? That is a serious prayer; it may bring trouble-illness, loss of property, loss of loved ones. Sometimes God has to use drastic measures to arouse sinners to their need of a Saviour. He may know that only trouble will stir some hearts. A woman in my church had been praying for the conversion of her husband, but she was not prepared for the thing that led to his salvation. Her little girl was stricken with a serious illness, and died after a few days. The mother, though she was saved, rebelled in her heart; not so the father. The Homegoing of his little girl led to him to accept the Lord Jesus as his own Saviour. It took trouble to arouse him from his false sense of security.

I often think of what it took to arouse my own father. For years my mother prayed for his conversion-and what a testimony she gave before him and her children! But my father was proud, aristocratic, wealthy, not sensing his need of a Saviour. He was the head of a large liquor concern; he had no time for Christ.

However, the day came when he lost everything-money and health. My mother kept on praying, and God answered her prayer. In her heartache and trial she rejoiced in God, for my father was born again. He came to know what real treasure was. But it took trouble to arouse him.

2. The Wise Men Brought before the King.

When Nebuchadnezzar awoke from his dream, he made the same mistake he had made before; he called for "all the wise men of Babylon . . . the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers"; but they could not make known the interpretation of the dream (Daniel 4:6-7). Then "at the last" he asked Daniel to explain to him the vision. At this time he was still a believer in his pagan gods, for he addressed Daniel as one in whom was "the spirit of the holy gods" (Daniel 4:8-9; Daniel 4:18). Someone has said that at least he recognized that Daniel's God was "holy"; for his own gods he made no pretense to holiness.

3. The Dream.

Read Daniel 4:10-17 to get the king's record of what he dreamed. He saw "a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great." He saw also that "the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of the earth." The leaves thereof were fair and the fruit

thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. As the king looked upon this great tree, he saw “a watcher and an holy one,” evidently an angel, come down from heaven, and heard him cry aloud, commanding that the tree be hewn down, its branches cut off, and its fruit scattered. The words of Daniel 4:15-17 are especially significant; for the “holy one” continued:

Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: let his heart be changed from man’s, and let a beast’s heart be given unto him; and let seven times [i.e., seven years] pass over him. This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAM When Nebuchadnezzar had finished relating his dream to Daniel, he commanded him to “declare the interpretation thereof.” Then Daniel “was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him.” It was not an easy task that Nebuchadnezzar had given to Daniel, for it meant telling the king of his sins, his seven years of insanity that were to come upon him in chastisement for sin, before he would give God the glory that was His due.

No wonder Daniel’s “thoughts troubled him.”

But the king spake, and said, “Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee.”

Whereupon Daniel answered and said, “My Lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.” Daniel wished his king no ill.

1. “The Tree . . . Is Thou, O King.”

Faithfully Daniel gave to Nebuchadnezzar the God-given interpretation in Daniel 4:20-22 : The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth. . . It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. As the “head of gold” of the image of chapter two, Nebuchadnezzar had great power and authority. Although he did not literally conquer all the world, he had the power to take as much as he saw fit to take. His dominion was “to the end of the earth.”

2. Nebuchadnezzar’s Madness Foretold.

Because this first Gentile world emperor did not give God the glory, he had to be severely disciplined for seven years, driven insane; and in Daniel 4:23-25 Daniel told the king: And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him; this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king: that they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall

pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

Evidently Nebuchadnezzar had that form of insanity that caused him to think he was a “beast of the field.” Therefore, he acted accordingly. Often insane people imagine that they are kings, rulers, even God. It was a severe chastisement, but Nebuchadnezzar had to learn to give God the glory, to know “that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.”

3. Nebuchadnezzar’s Restoration Also Foretold.

The king’s actions for the year following this dream do not indicate a willingness to turn from his evil ways, but if the vision did make him afraid, at least Daniel’s assurance that his kingdom would be restored to him, after seven years, must have been of some comfort.

This is what Daniel said about this part of the dream in Daniel 4:26 :

And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.

4. Daniel’s Wise Counsel to the King.

Daniel, trusting in the forgiving love of his God, sought to turn Nebuchadnezzar from his evil way (Daniel 4:27) knowing that God does abundantly pardon.

Wherefore, O king, [he said,] let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S PRIDE This was the dream and this was the God-given interpretation thereof. But Nebuchadnezzar’s heart was filled with pride, and he turned a deaf ear to Daniel’s advice and pleading.

All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? The margin of some Bibles renders these words as follows: “At the end of twelve months he was walking upon the royal palace of Babylon.”

He was walking upon the flat roof of his palace, viewing the beauty and glory of his kingdom. We are told that the outer wall of his new palace “embraced six miles,” with two other “embattled walls within, a great tower, and three brazen gates.”

It was, indeed, a beautiful city, the capital of a mighty kingdom. But Nebuchadnezzar refused to heed God’s warning or to learn the lesson God had tried to teach him a whole year previously-“that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.”

His pride and egotism made him puffed up, boastful, defiant toward God. Moreover, he seems to have oppressed the poor, for Daniel had begged him to “shew mercy to the poor.” No doubt the poor, under great stress, had built for him his beautiful city and palace.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S MADNESS

While the word [of proud boasting, Daniel 4:31] was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken: The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

Seven years a madman-thinking himself a beast of the field-with matted hair and "nails like birds' claws"-unkempt -wretched! What a spectacle the once proud monarch must have made! But God kept His promise to Nebuchadnezzar, for when the seven years were passed, He restored the king's reason, as well as his kingdom and glory. According to Daniel 4:34-35 - NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S RESTORATION AND HIS PRAISE TO GOD And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? As we try to imagine the terrible experience through which Nebuchadnezzar had gone, we get an idea of the full meaning of these words. Surely no one knew better than he that Daniel's God did rule "according to his will" in heaven and on earth!

It was all a very great miracle-this dealing by God with this heathen king. The king himself seems to have realized it, for he linked his thanksgiving to God with the return of his reason.

Note his further words of praise and blessing to God in Daniel 4:36-37 : At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

It was a hard lesson, but surely it was worthwhile, for it meant the salvation of his soul. God alone knows what his testimony may have meant after he turned to Him, possibly leading others to glorify and extol His name.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S EXPERIENCE-

A FORESHADOWING OF THE PRIDE AND

MADNESS OF THE GENTILE NATIONS

All that we have considered thus far in this lesson has to do only with the application of the message to Nebuchadnezzar himself. But we must keep in mind the fact that, in the Book of Daniel, God is outlining to us the complete picture of Gentile world power, as well as His special dealings with Israel, which we shall study in chapter nine.

Therefore, just as the chapters which we have already studied have a prophetic, as well as a practical and historical, application, so also does this fourth chapter have a prophetic lesson for us.

It foreshadows the haughty pride and madness of Gentile world power, especially in “the latter time.” And as Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom was restored unto him, so also there will be some Gentile nations which will enter into the millennial reign of Christ on earth.

1. The Significance of the Tree in Prophecy.

First let us see the typical use of the tree in the Word of God.

In Isaiah 5:1-7 we read the parable of the Lord’s vineyard, where “the house of Israel” is described as “the vineyard of the Lord of hosts.” How patiently and tenderly God had planted and cared for His vineyard! He had led Israel out of Egypt with a mighty hand, guiding and guarding her for centuries. But when He looked for grapes, He found only “wild grapes.”

Again, in the eleventh chapter of Romans, Paul compared Israel to the good olive tree; Gentiles, to the wild olive tree, which had been grafted into the good tree—a picture of Israel’s rejection of her Messiah, and of God’s giving the gospel to the Gentiles.

In our study of the first chapter of Daniel we spent some time trying to make plain that God permitted the Babylonian captivity because of Israel’s apostasy, in order to bring her to repentance. And it was then that “the times of the Gentiles” had their beginning—with Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon. So great did this kingdom become that God compared it to a great tree, reaching “unto heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth.”

In Ezekiel 31:3 the prophet used the tree as a picture of the Assyrian kingdom. And our Lord likened professing Christendom to a great mustard tree, in whose branches dwell “the birds of the air,” symbols of evil, as well as born-again souls. (See Matthew 13:31-32).

The tree vision which God gave to Nebuchadnezzar not only has to do with that heathen king; it also outlines all Gentile world power, even unto the kingdom of our Lord Jesus on earth.

2. The Pride of the Gentile Nations.

Greatness and pride—how truly these two features characterize the Gentile nations! Think for a moment of the greatness of Gentile dominion, of her great cities, her achievements in every line, especially in science, architecture and inventions; of her defense program, with millions of men under arms, and with every conceivable death-dealing device to use in defense against any attempt at her overthrow.

The secrets of air, land, and sea have been delved into and discovered. Distance between nations has been almost annihilated, and countries have been brought into proximity as a result of the marvels of scientific achievement. So great has Gentile dominion become that the average man feels practically sure that any attempt at its overthrow would fail.

Some time ago I gave an address to a group of business men in the city of New York. I spoke to them on what God had said concerning the end of Gentile dominion and the return of the Son of God to the earth.

At the close of the address one of my hearers, a jurist, took me to the window of the hotel.

Pointing to the great city whose streets and avenues lay before us, whose huge buildings reared their heads against the sky, he said, "I cannot believe that a civilization like this could ever pass away in the manner in which you have described!" He went on to speak of America's greatness and the greatness of other Gentile nations, and expressed the belief that Gentile dominion would continue forever.

Although I reminded him of the fact that the earth was covered with the ashes of civilizations that had forgotten God, he was still skeptical. But Gentile dominion will come to an end, just as everything that is not built upon God and His Anointed will come to an end. What keen disappointment awaits this godless civilization-what disaster!

3. The Madness of the Gentile Nations.

The insanity of Nebuchadnezzar gives us a picture of the Gentile nations as God sees them, in their infidelity toward Him and His Word.

- In his intelligence and authority, Babylon's great king represents "the powers that be," which "are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1);

- In his pride and consequent madness, he represents the blasphemous indignities heaped upon God and His Word by Gentile powers, especially as it will be in the time of the end.

For coupled with the greatness of Gentile dominion are pride and an arrogant independence of God. The feeling which made Nebuchadnezzar say, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?" is the same spirit which causes the nations of the world today to ignore God and to deny His Christ.

This will become increasingly evident as the age draws to a close. Running parallel with the marvelous achievements of recent years has been a terrible departure from God. The educated, intellectual classes are rapidly taking up a form of infidelity which leaves out God, His Word, and His Son, Jesus Christ.

In America alone it is said that seventy million people never darken the doors of a church from the beginning of the year to its end. We talk about Gentile nations as if they were Christian, some of them, but at heart they are not. We talk about Christian America, and we thank God for every Christian privilege that is ours. But millions in our country are veritably pagan! So are millions in the other Gentile nations which are considered Christian. The spirit of recent years, as never before in the Christian era, has been like that of Nebuchadnezzar when he said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?"

Gentile madness has not yet been fully manifested.

The height of insanity will be reached after the true church has been taken out from among the peoples of the earth, when the Antichrist, God's arch-enemy, has been given a place of authority and is made the object of worship. In that day the earth will see the complete fulfillment of the prophecy of the second Psalm, which was partially fulfilled when Herod and Pilate, Jews and Gentiles "were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ" (Acts 4:25-27; cf. Psalms 2:1-2).

What madness! No wonder the Spirit of God, foreseeing these things, added in Psalms 2:4-5 :

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

While the height of insanity among the Gentile nations will not be reached until after the church has been translated, forever to be with the Lord, even now we see on every hand signs of this rapidly approaching blasphemy.

A few years ago Professor Leuba, of Bryn Mawr College, sent a questionnaire to 5,000 representative scientists of our country, selected from the following groups: physicists, sociologists, economists, bacteriologists, and ethnologists. He asked them for a statement concerning their faith in God, the Bible, and the immortality of the soul. He received replies indicating that 3,000 had no faith in a personal God, in the infallibility of the Bible, or in immortal life. And literally millions of our youths are being trained by just such "scientists falsely so called" (1 Timothy 6:20).

This madness, this insanity, is not confined to the intellectual leaders of our country; it has made great inroads into our spiritual life, until today hundreds and thousands of our young ministers are being taught a heathen philosophy.

In his book entitled *The Beliefs of 700 Ministers*, compiled from as many replies to questionnaires sent to 1,500 Protestant ministers, "chosen at random from twenty denominations," Dr. George Herbert Betts, a professor of Northwestern University, revealed the following startling facts: Of the ministerial students from this group, 36 per cent were not sure of the omnipotence of God; 91 per cent were not sure of a personal devil; 75 per cent did not believe in the virgin birth of Christ; 71 per cent were not sure of the vicarious atonement of the Lord Jesus on the cross; 58 per cent did not believe in His bodily resurrection from the dead; and 82 per cent did not accept the New Testament as the complete and final revelation of God to man.

My friend, if such unbelieving men as these fill our pulpits- and they do; by the scores-what can you expect from the laymen who sit under their teaching? No wonder our churches are empty, while places of amusement are crowded on the Lord's Day. God will surely judge such apostasy. Because He is holy and righteous, He must! When the true church is translated, the false religious system, which for a time will be linked with the last, bestial form of Gentile world power, will in turn be devoured by that same political world empire. Thus God will permit one evil thing to destroy another. We shall have more to say of this when we come to the study of the next chapter of Daniel.

I tell you, the Gentile world, filled with pride, is a spectacle of veritable madness-that part of it which is opposed to God. Any right-thinking man or woman will agree that a person like Hitler was insane in his hatred of Christ and of believers in Jesus. Think of the suffering of the Jews and the Christians who fell a prey to his fiendish tortures and murders and living deaths!

Think of the cruelty and the defiance against God and His Word that were encouraged by Josef Stalin and by his followers since his death! Do you suppose for a minute that our just God, our holy God, can tolerate very much longer such rebellion and cruelty and blasphemy of Gentile leaders?

If the Lord tarries, and if atheism and indifference increase much more, our country, as well as the other nations, will surely see the judgment of a righteous God. Gentile world dominion, like Nebuchadnezzar's tree in the dream God gave to him, is spreading out its branches. But the day will come when God will cut down the tree. That will be the day when the Smiting Stone, even the Lord Jesus, will fall upon the "ten toes," as it were, of the image of the second chapter of Daniel.

But there is also a bright side of the picture; for Nebuchadnezzar's restoration foreshadows the Gentile nations which will be saved, and will enter into the millennial reign of Christ. Let us consider that wonderful portion of our lesson just here.

4. The Saved Gentile Nations in the Reign of Christ.

You will remember that Daniel explained to Nebuchadnezzar that the stump of the tree which had been cut down was a picture of his restoration, following his seven years of madness.

It is also typical of the Gentile nations which will listen to the preaching of the 144,000 Jews during the reign of the Antichrist and will receive these missionaries from the house of Israel during the terrible persecution that will come upon them. Therefore, they will be saved to enter into Christ's glorious kingdom on earth.

Read carefully Matthew 25:31-46, noting that this is the judgment of "all nations" (Matthew 25:32)-not individuals; that some are compared to "sheep"; others to "goats"; that to the "sheep nations" the Lord will say in that day when He returns in glory, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Christ's "brethren," according to the flesh, are Jews.

This is clearly a picture of the day of reward and the day of awful judgment which will come upon the "sheep nations" and the "goat nations" respectively for their treatment of Israel in that coming "time of Jacob's trouble."

Would you like to read about the 144,000 Jews who will preach "the gospel of the kingdom" during the reign of the Antichrist?

Then turn to the seventh chapter of Revelation, where we learn that there will be 12,000 of these faithful missionaries from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Read how in that day many Gentiles, as well as Jews, will be saved by their testimony. How? By the blood of the Lord Jesus, as in every age, of course! For they will wash "their robes. . . white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14).

However, their message will be the gospel of the coming King, even as John the Baptist and the twelve disciples and the Lord Himself preached "the gospel of the kingdom" before He was rejected by Israel nearly two thousand years ago. (See Matthew 24:14).

Their message will be, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2).

In this church age our message is the gospel of grace. Yet do not forget that in every age men are saved by faith in the Christ of the cross, and by Him alone.

The multitudes who are saved in that awful day, when “the man of sin” rules, will offer their praise to “the God of heaven,” even as did Nebuchadnezzar many centuries ago. They will “praise and extol and honour the King of heaven!”

My friend, are you rushing on with the God-defying world today? If you are, let me warn you in the words of the Psalmist (Psalms 49:6-7; Psalms 49:10-11):

They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him . . . For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue forever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. May God make us all winners of souls, snatching them as brands from the burning, pointing them to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in whose presence we shall dwell forever! He “hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven” for us (1 Peter 1:3-4).

He is the God of Daniel and of all those who love Him; for He is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8).

~ end of chapter 4 ~

05-Belshazzar's Feast and the Fall of Babylon

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST AND THE FALL OF BABYLON

CHAPTER FIVE

Foreshadowing Gentile Godlessness and the Fall of "Mystical Babylon" "in the Latter Time"

THE STORY of Belshazzar's feast, with its gross sensuality, revelry, and blasphemy, is a significant picture of the godlessness and flagrant apostasy which will characterize the Gentile nations at the end of this age.

As Belshazzar's feast was a religious ceremony in the name of his heathen gods, even so that climax of human wickedness in the name of religion, called "Mystical Babylon," will be the most daring sacrilege and insult to the God of Daniel that the world has ever seen. Moreover, as the fall of ancient Babylon came upon the very night of Belshazzar's blasphemous feast, so also will the fall of "Mystical Babylon," "the scarlet woman" of the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of Revelation, come upon her in the hour of her most flagrant blasphemies.

This is recorded in the fifth chapter of Daniel. And what a picture it is of the moral and religious conditions which will characterize the closing days of "the times of the Gentiles"!

"GREAT BABYLON" When Nebuchadnezzar walked upon the roof of his palace, exclaiming, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?" he was looking upon what was then the greatest city in the world, humanly speaking, and in some respects the greatest city the world has ever seen.

Historians tell us that it was surrounded by high walls which were so broad that on the top as many as three or four chariots could be driven abreast. To protect the city from the enemy, a moat was dug around the walls. One hundred and fifty ponderous gates of solid brass guarded the entrances to this capital of the empire, a veritable fortress, which was supposed to be impregnable.

The Euphrates River, which ran right through the city, was lined with brick; canals were dug; and a great reservoir was excavated outside the walls.

This metropolis was divided into six-hundred and seventy-six squares, each two and one-fourth miles in circumference. These squares were bordered by fifty streets, each one-hundred and fifty feet wide, every one of them straight and level and fifteen miles long.

It was a city of magnificent residences, beautiful parks and pleasure grounds. Every high school boy today knows that the "hanging gardens of Babylon" were one of the seven wonders of the ancient world; history tells us that these hanging gardens rose, tier upon tier, until they reached the height of the great wall itself.

We have seen in our former studies that Babylon was first called Babel; that it was founded by the rebel, Nimrod, of whom we read in Genesis 10:8-10; Genesis 11:1-9. We learned also that at Babel the world saw the beginning of the mystery religion which covered the ancient world, and

which will flourish once more “in the latter time.”

In the days of Belshazzar two magnificent palaces and the temple of Bel were within the city walls. This heathen temple was one mile in circumference. Here all the mysteries of ancient astrology were practiced; here “the queen of the heavens” was worshipped; and here the sensual and idolatrous ceremonies of this mystery religion had their fountain-head.

Yet in spite of its beauty and wealth, in spite of its magnificence and luxury, Babylon was a city in which evil reigned supreme. To the inhabitants vice was a virtue; every form of sin and wickedness was indulged in without shame. Seated upon Babylon’s throne was Belshazzar, a man profligate in character, sensual and selfish, as well as insulting to the God of heaven.

Little did Belshazzar realize that the River Euphrates, upon which this city depended, was to be the means leading to his own death and the overthrow of his kingdom, for about three months Cyrus, king of Persia, had unsuccessfully besieged Babylon. Then on the very night of Belshazzar’s unholy debauchery, an annual feast to his heathen gods, this Cyrus, guided by two deserters, turned the Euphrates into a new channel and marched his army into the city by way of the old river-bed.

Although Cyrus was the real conqueror, all of this was done in the name of Darius, who was probably “of the seed royal not only of Media, but also of Persia.”

Therefore, only the name of Darius is mentioned in the record by Daniel (Daniel 5:31). Later on, Cyrus became ruler over the empire. As God had foretold one hundred years before his birth, he permitted the faithful Jewish remnant to return to Jerusalem during his reign.

Read Isaiah 44:28; Isaiah 45:1-6 to see how God even named this ruler before he was born, declaring that He would raise him up for Israel’s sake. Note especially Isaiah 44:28 :

Cyrus . . . is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

“Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18)!

Nearly two hundred years before the fall of Babylon God had also foretold, in minute detail, the doom of this great city, when He inspired the prophet Isaiah to write the message. Again, more than half a century before Belshazzar met his death; God had used Jeremiah to foretell the same details. But Belshazzar cared nothing for the Word of God. He seems not to have known Daniel before the night of his impious feast, but there were devout Jews in his kingdom who could have told him of Daniel’s God. And from our present chapter we read that Daniel reminded him of what he already knew concerning God’s dealings with his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar.

Belshazzar was without excuse!

However, we may be sure that Daniel knew and believed what Isaiah and Jeremiah had written. What a comfort it must have been to him to know that the Lord God was going to put it into the heart of Cyrus to let the faithful ones return to his beloved Jerusalem, to rebuild her temple and her walls! We may be sure that he knew also the doom that was to fall upon wicked Babylon, for he believed the Word of his God.

Let us read just a few of the many verses that foretold so minutely the destruction of that idolatrous city (Isaiah 13:17-22; cf. Jeremiah 51:11; Jeremiah 51:28; Jeremiah 51:37; Jeremiah 50:38-40); and let us remember that they were written by God's prophets long before they came to pass:

Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them. . . And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwellingplace for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant. A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up [surely this is a graphic prophecy of the changing of the river bed in that fateful night!]; for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols. Therefore . . . it shall be no more inhabited for ever.

Let me call attention just here to the fact that these and similar prophecies definitely state that the city of Babylon shall never be rebuilt.

This is important to remember; for there are those who teach that "Mystical Babylon," described in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of Revelation, has reference to the actual city which shall be rebuilt.

Later in this lesson we shall consider these chapters more closely.

Let us note here, in passing, that the prophecies which we have just read concerning the eternal desolation of ancient Babylon, together with all the prophetic Word of God, teach us that "Mystical Babylon" is that idolatrous religious system which had its beginning at Babel, and which will meet its awful doom when the Antichrist rules on earth. Then "the beast" of Revelation will turn upon "the scarlet woman," even "Mystical Babylon," and devour her.

Thus God will permit one evil thing to destroy another.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST-AN ORGY OF REVELRY AND BLASPHEMY On the very night when the Persian army was turning the waters of the Euphrates into another channel, Belshazzar, all unconscious of what was going on outside those walls, was presiding at "the feast of death." It was "a great feast to a thousand of his lords"; and he "drank wine before them," his wives, and his concubines.

With a false sense of security they reveled in unholy mirth, praising and worshipping their "gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone." What a scene it must have been! Rich foods, fragrant wines, beautiful women, possibly entrancing music, delirious excitement, an atmosphere of sensuality, and a fearful worship of heathen gods! Neither the king nor his guests knew that the enemy was battering at their very doors, that an army was working its way beneath their walls.

Herodotus tells us that on the night when the Persian army turned the waters of the river, all the streets were filled with scenes of riotous revelry -in this annual feast to their heathen gods. Adultery was rampant, and the citizens wandered up and down the streets in a dazed, besotted condition. Even the guards upon the walls were intoxicated.

Then Belshazzar, in his drunken frenzy, did something that his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, would never have done. Nebuchadnezzar was “father” of Belshazzar in the Biblical sense, even as David is called “father” of Jesus (Luke 1:32).

Read verses 2-4 of our chapter (Daniel 5:2-4) to see the daring sacrilege which Belshazzar committed:

Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.

Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

Those sacred vessels from the house of the Lord in Jerusalem had been put by Nebuchadnezzar in “the house of his god” (Daniel 1:2). But even in his idol worship he had enough respect for them and for the religious convictions of the captive Jews not to desecrate them by drinking wine from them! That was an insult to God. THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL In grace God withholds His hand up to a certain point; then He must act in judgment. He bears with the folly and sin of man to a degree, but there is such a thing as exhausting the patience of the patient God Himself. Thus will it be when our Lord Jesus, the smiting Stone of the second chapter of Daniel, falls upon godless, defiant Gentile world power to destroy it. And thus it was in the days of Babylon’s wicked king, Belshazzar.

1. “The King Saw the Part of the Hand That Wrote.”

When Belshazzar called for the sacred vessels from the temple in Jerusalem, his sin reached its height. And “in the same hour came forth fingers of a man’s hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king’s palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote” (Daniel 5:5).

What a silence must have fallen upon that company as the “fingers of a man’s hand” suddenly appeared and began to write upon the wall! In the night as they reveled in a lordly palace hall,

They were filled with consternation At the Hand upon the wall!

2. “Then Was the King Greatly Troubled.”

Horror and darkness filled Belshazzar’s soul. He was paralyzed with fear (Daniel 5:6-9).

Then the king’s countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then came in all the king’s wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his

countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished.

Belshazzar's actions here remind us of the attitude of the average unsaved man in times of dire distress. It is easy to appear brave in the glare of things. Infidels are usually blatant until they face death.

I remember once preaching on the streets of a certain city in Iowa. In the crowd was a man who scoffed at the message of salvation by faith in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. A few days later he was suddenly stricken with a serious illness. I called at the hospital to see him.

When I entered his room, his chin quivered and tears filled his eyes, as he told me, "I did not believe what I said the other night."

Thank God! His grace saved even a man like that!

But sometimes the scoffer waits too long, and hardens his heart against God even to the last. It was so with Belshazzar. Like the foolish virgins who, after it was too late, tried to buy God's free gift-for oil in the Scriptures is a symbol of the Holy Spirit- like those foolish virgins, Babylon's blasphemous king looked back upon the fearful consequences of a misspent life.

Shocked and frightened by the supernatural occurrence, he called aloud for the heathen enchanters and soothsayers; he did not turn to the God of the Hebrews. He made extravagant promises of what he would do for any who would interpret the writing upon the wall. But they were just as helpless as he was, just as ignorant of the meaning of the mysterious message. How could they decipher it when they knew nothing of the things of God?

A man's godless friends cannot help him when he is face to face with death and eternity. He may gather them around him, and call upon them for aid, but he will go out into loneliness and despair if he depends on them. 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, The natural [unregenerate] man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Only in the Lord Jesus Christ can one find help in such an hour.

3. "The Queen . . . Spake and Said . . . Let Daniel Be Called."

Evidently the queen-mother had not been in sympathy with the feast; at least, she had not been present, for now "by reason of the words of the king and his lords," she "came into the banquet house" (Daniel 5:10). She knew Daniel; and she knew what Daniel's God had done for Nebuchadnezzar.

History tells us that she was either the mother or the grandmother of Belshazzar; that is, she was either the wife of Nebuchadnezzar or of his son, Evil-merodach, also called Nabonidus, the father of Belshazzar. (See the questions in the concluding lesson of this series of studies for further information about Belshazzar's father, Nabonidus).

History also tells us that this queen-mother "completed the great works which Nebuchadnezzar had begun" and possibly had left unfinished at the time of his insanity.

"This accounts for the deference paid to her by Belshazzar."

We have already intimated that Belshazzar evidently did not know Daniel up to this time.

That might easily have been the case, as it was the Oriental custom for a change in kings to mean also a change in the office of “the master of the magicians.”

Moreover, Belshazzar would hardly have wanted a godly man at his licentious court, nor would Daniel have sought such a position. Had he been there when the king called for the sacred vessels, from which to drink wine, surely Daniel would have protested against such an insult to His holy God! His very life would have been a rebuke to Belshazzar.

And the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed: there is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods . . .

Here the queen used the very same words as did the heathen Nebuchadnezzar, “. . . the spirit of the holy gods.” But let us note her words, “There is a man . . .”

My friends, apostasy is never complete in the earth. God always has His faithful witnesses, even in the dark days of sin and unbelief. May He ever be able to say of you and of me, “There is a man . . .”- one whose testimony for Him is certain and true! Surely our circumstances are not more difficult than were Daniel’s.

In Daniel 5:11-12 -

There is a man . . . and in the days of thy father [or “grandfather”] light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers; forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.

4. “Then Was Daniel Brought in before the King” (Daniel 5:13). And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry?

Then Daniel listened while Belshazzar repeated what the queen had said about him; he listened to the king’s command to interpret the writing; he listened to his promise of gifts and promotion in the kingdom to the place of “the third ruler”- Nabonidus, father of Belshazzar, was first ruler; Belshazzar, second, a joint-king, but subordinate to his father; whereas Daniel was made “third ruler in the kingdom” (Daniel 5:29).

Daniel listened to all the king had to say. Possibly at the same time his eyes caught sight of the sacred vessels, so dear to his own reverent heart. Then he answered the king in words that show the courage of his convictions.

I like the way he answered Belshazzar; there was no fawning; there was no self-seeking in his attitude. He had not answered Nebuchadnezzar so, for he had a certain respect for him.

Something about Nebuchadnezzar had appealed to Daniel, for he was “troubled” when he talked to him about the tree vision which foretold the king’s madness and fall.

Moreover, Nebuchadnezzar had wanted the whole truth; you can do something for a man who wants the truth! Therefore, Daniel lovingly persuaded Nebuchadnezzar to turn from his evil ways, and escape the righteous judgment of God. But with Belshazzar it was quite different. Daniel had no respect for the profligate, blasphemous king. Evidently his righteous indignation was stirred. In Daniel 5:17,

Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

What the king promised meant nothing to Daniel. Was not “the head of gold” to pass away that very night? In his foolhardiness Belshazzar, even after the writing had been interpreted, went ahead, bestowing his gifts. But Daniel believed in the Word of God, and he did not want the king’s gifts and honors. We need ministers and Christian laymen today who are not afraid to speak the truth to rich and poor alike, without adulterating it or softening its stern mandates. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE WRITING In the interpretation of the handwriting on the wall Daniel brought three indictments against Belshazzar.

As we read them, let us note that these same indictments are also brought against apostate Christendom today:

1. Belshazzar Rejected the God-given Light.

Daniel rehearsed the story of God’s chastening of Belshazzar’s grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar. It should have been an object-lesson to the profligate king, but he ignored it completely, offering even greater insults to God. Therefore, Daniel drove home to him the lesson of his sin and folly, saying in Daniel 5:18-22 :

O thou king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: and for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: and he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the Most High God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will. And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this.

Let us note especially that last sentence, “Thou . . . hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this.”

God had given him light, but he had not profited by it; he had rejected the light. He had seen what God had done for his grandfather, yet he refused to humble himself.

If God held Belshazzar responsible, my friend, for the ray of light which shone across his pathway, what will He say to men living in the blaze of light which illuminates the world today? Every unconverted man in this country has more light than Belshazzar had. We have today the complete revelation of God to man in the Bible. We have the cross of Jesus-long ago a fact of history. It is a serious thing to reject God-given light, my unsaved friend.

With all our religious privileges, do we go on living the same old life? In many parts of the world Christian men and women cannot worship God unmolested, but in this country the radio takes the gospel into millions of homes. We can buy a New Testament or a whole Bible for only a few cents. We have our churches on almost every corner, street-preaching, tract-distribution. Think of our privileges! Think of our responsibilities! What will God say to us in that day when we stand before Him who is the "Light of the world," to give an account of our testimony here?

2. Belshazzar Desecrated the Sacred Vessels of God's Temple.

For this sin Daniel said in Daniel 5:23,

Thou . . . hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them.

How can we apply this scripture in the light of the teaching found in the New Testament? How do we desecrate the vessels of the temple of God? And what is the temple of God today? Not the John D. Rockefeller Church in New York City, not our great cathedrals.

When I was in Naples, I saw in a beautiful cathedral an altar of gold, studded with precious gems. Later I saw the glittering temples of Siam, one containing the Emerald Buddha. These buildings of brick and wood and stone are not the temples of God. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 6:19; there we read, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" [cf. 1 Corinthians 3:16 and other passages].

Since our bodies are God's temple, then, what are the vessels? Our hands, our feet, our voices, our minds, our hearts -all of these are vessels which we use either for honor or for dishonor. When we go to places where we cannot honor the Lord Jesus, when we think sinful thoughts, when we reach out for that which is not ours, when we seek our satisfaction in the things of the flesh, carnal delight and sensual pleasure-when we do all the things which our hearts tell us are dishonoring to God, then we are desecrating the vessels of His temple. They do not belong to us! We are not our own; we are "bought with a price," even the precious blood of Jesus. (See 1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

In Old Testament times God came down in the Shekinah Glory, to dwell in the midst in His people, Israel, in the Holy of Holies. Every devout Jew considered the vessels of the temple sacred. Nearly two thousand years ago, God came down to dwell in the midst of His people in the Person of His Son, our Saviour. When He went away, He sent His Holy Spirit to dwell in our bodies-our very hearts and lives. What a solemn thing it is for a child of God to "defile the temple of God"! And yet look at professing Christendom today. Surely the indictment God gave against Belshazzar through Daniel is being repeated even now against apostate Christendom. And "in the latter time" only the apostates in the professing church will be left on earth, after Christ calls all true believers Home. In that day these same indictments will surely apply to that false religious system.

3. Belshazzar Worshipped Idols.

The third indictment (in Daniel 5:23) Daniel brought against the king was this:

Thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified. Was that a sin peculiar to Belshazzar's day? Not at all! Men worship the golden calf today, just as they did in the time of Moses. The amount of gold a man has is of more moment to many people than the extent of his piety. God says that "covetousness is idolatry."

Where are our thoughts? On stocks and bonds and business shares? Or on the things of God? Is our worship from the heart? Or is it lip-worship only? Can it be said of us, as it was of Belshazzar, "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified"? Our Lord Jesus, in Gethsemane, could look up into the face of His Father in heaven and say, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4).

May He teach us how to glorify His wonderful Name!

4. The Writing Interpreted.

Having spoken these three indictments against the wicked king, Daniel then went on to give the interpretation of the writing. Having told Belshazzar that "the part of the hand" was "sent from him"; that is, from God, Daniel said, "This is the writing" and "this is the interpretation of the thing":

"MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it." "Mene" means "numbered." "TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." "Tekel" means "weighed." "UPHARSIN (or 'PERES'); Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." "Upharsin" means "dividers"; "Peres" is another form of the same root-word, and means "divided."

Even as Daniel was interpreting the writing, the waters of the Euphrates were being turned into another channel, and the enemy was marching into the city under the walls. Yet the misguided king, blind to the awful truth, commanded that Daniel be clothed with scarlet, that a chain of gold be put about his neck, and that a proclamation be issued, making Daniel the "third ruler in the kingdom." But it was true then, as it is now, that "man proposes, but God disposes"; for "in that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain."

"And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old" (Daniel 5:29-31). The "head of gold" had run its course, and "the arms and breast of silver" and now come into being!

GENTILE REVELRY AND BLASPHEMY "IN THE LATTER TIME"

One day God will write "numbered . . . and finished" over "the times of the Gentiles." And Gentile dominion, with all its false religious systems, will be "found wanting," and will pass away. Just as ancient Babylon met her doom while she was in the midst of a false sense of security, indulging in every form of vice, so also will Gentile world power go headlong toward destruction and the righteous judgment of a holy God.

The signs of the end are multiplying daily, but humanity as a whole is blind to them. Engrossed in a mad search for pleasure and amusement, men have lost sight of the inevitable end of it all. When Paul said that men would be "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;" he was talking about professing Christendom "in the last days" (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Christ told His disciples that, just prior to His second coming, there would be “eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage” (Matthew 24:38). Marriage is a divine institution, ordained of God. But “giving in marriage,” in the literal meaning here, signifies a looseness of the marriage relationship, an exchanging of wives and husbands. Is this prophecy not being fulfilled today, before our very eyes?

Appalling tragedies are shocking the consciences of men today-war, pestilence, famine, lawlessness, crime, human misery and suffering! Yet with millions going out into eternity, lost and undone, other millions are blindly seeking debasing pleasures. Surely “perilous times” are upon our own generation, while the great masses are following in the steps of Belshazzar, king of Babylon! THE FALL OF “MYSTICAL BABYLON” “IN THE LATTER TIME”

Just as ancient Babylon fell during an irreverent, religious feast, even so will “Mystical Babylon,” that false religious system which is to flourish once more, meet her certain doom “in the latter time.” John describes that false religious system in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of Revelation. Let us turn to that portion of the Word of God to see something of what he says.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he calls her “the great whore that sitteth upon many waters” (Revelation 17:1). “The waters . . . where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (Revelation 17:15).

In this same chapter “the great whore” is also called “the scarlet woman.” She is described as riding “the beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns” (Revelation 17:3; Revelation 17:12). “And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Revelation 17:5).

This “scarlet woman” is none other than apostate Christendom; and the beast upon which she will ride is none other than the Antichrist, who will rule over the last form of Gentile world power, even the revived Roman Empire, as indicated by the “ten horns,” which “are ten kings.”

All this dovetails with what Daniel and John and the Lord Jesus taught throughout their prophetic writings. We have seen something of the prophecy concerning the last form of Gentile world dominion in our study of the second chapter of Daniel. We shall see more of the same prophecy in our consideration of chapter seven. And here it is before us in unmistakable language in this seventeenth chapter of Revelation.

Now after the true church has been translated to be with Christ; after every born-again soul in every branch of Christendom has been taken away; then godless, professing Christendom will form a great confederacy, and will link hands with the last form of Gentile world power. That will be a complete union of church and state.

In other words, “the scarlet woman” will ride “the beast.” In that day all the ceremonialism and modernism and cults; all the heathen practices that began at Babel; all the bloodless, Christless religions will make a great worldly show of riches and power. It will be “a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (2 Timothy 3:5). Concerning this false system, this “Mystery Babylon,” the risen Christ will say, “I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:16).

God calls her “the great whore . . . with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication” (Revelation 17:1-2). How different is His name for the true church-“the bride of Christ,” “a chaste virgin” (2 Corinthians 11:2)!

John saw “the great whore” in “the wilderness” (Revelation 17:3); and no wonder, for a wilderness is a place where there is no new life in Christ.

There will be no real love in the heart of the Antichrist for “Mystery Babylon”; toward the end of the tribulation period, he will turn upon her and devour her.

Thus, as we have already observed, God will permit one evil thing to destroy another. “And the ten horns (ten kings) . . . these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire” (Revelation 17:16); “for strong is the Lord God who judged her” (Revelation 18:8).

Read all of these two chapters in Revelation carefully, to get the graphic details, telling of that coming Day of Judgment upon apostate Christendom. We can well imagine something of what that judgment will be, even as we recall what has been done in Russia in our own time to oppose all forms of religion, and what Hitler did in Europe against God and His people.

However, today the true believers are suffering along with the deluded, false professors of Christianity. In the coming day, after the true church has been taken to be with the Lord, the whole system will be filled with heresy and unbelief.

In that day all those who accept the message of the coming King, through the preaching of the 144,000 Jews of the great tribulation period, will suffer persecution, and even martyrdom, but they will not be linked with this “great whore.” They will heed the word of the Lord, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins” (Revelation 18:4). What a judgment awaits apostate Christendom!

My unsaved friends, are you ready for the time when Christ will call the church Home?

Are you born again by faith in His precious blood, shed on Calvary for your sins?

You may think that our civilization cannot be overthrown. Do you suppose Belshazzar dreamed that his mighty empire would be destroyed?

With the ruthless dictators of our generation, it is not so difficult for us to imagine great and terrible changes in our own civilization! If you should go to the land of ancient Babylon today, you would find no trace of that once beautiful, mad city. It lies buried beneath the mounds of centuries. The earth is covered with the wreckage of other civilizations which have flourished only to fall because they forgot God. One day our own civilization, too, will pass away.

Where will you stand in that coming time?

If you die in your sins, your doom is certain. If Christ comes for His church and you are not saved, you will go into “the great tribulation.” From the Scriptures, we infer that all who are left in professing Christendom in that day will be so hardened toward God, so ready to accept Satan’s “delusion,” that they will not heed the message of the 144,000 Jews, who will herald the coming Messiah and King, Jesus.

We cannot speak dogmatically on this point; but 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12, together with related passages, would indicate that those who shall have spurned Christ in this day of grace will not be willing to turn to Him through the ministry of His missionary servants, the Jews, in that coming day.

God's light is shining upon your pathway now. If you deliberately turn your back upon it, if you deliberately choose to walk in darkness, that darkness will be your lot forever!

I beseech you, in His name, "Hear his voice . . . Harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:7-8).

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31).

~ end of chapter 5 ~

06-Daniel's Preservation in the Lion's Den

DANIEL'S PRESERVATION IN THE LIONS' DEN

CHAPTER SIX

Foreshadowing Israel's Deliverance from "the Beasts" "in the Latter Time"

EVERY Sunday-school child knows the story of Daniel in the lions' den, but we wonder how many Christians know the typical teaching of this wonderful sixth chapter of Daniel? As we study it today, we want to see the details of its historical, practical message, so needed in our everyday lives. We also want to see in it the prophetic picture which it presents. For not only does the preservation of Daniel in the lions' den encourage our own hearts, strengthening us for every trial, but Daniel also represents his people, Israel; his deliverance from the lions is a marvelous picture of the deliverance of the faithful Jewish remnant, which will go through "the Great Tribulation" when "the beasts" of the thirteenth chapter of Revelation persecute them "in the latter time."

To this end, let us remember that chapters 3-6 of Daniel are typical of the religious and moral conditions that will prevail in the end of this age of Gentile world dominion. Let us remember that Daniel was cast into the den of lions during the reign of the first king of Medo-Persia, represented in Nebuchadnezzar's image by the breast and arms of silver. By that time Babylon, "the head of gold," had passed away.

DANIEL-"PRIME MINISTER" TO KING DARIUS When Darius came into power over conquered Babylon, he found Daniel in the exalted position to which Belshazzar had promoted him. Perhaps it was because Daniel had miraculously foretold Babylon's downfall that Darius wanted to keep so useful a man in his service. Usually the incoming regime falls heir to all the honors. Just how Daniel came to occupy such an exalted position at the court of "Darius the Median," we are not told. But we may be sure, that God was behind the scenes, bringing His servant into favor with the king, that he might continue to exercise an influence for good in the new empire, and that he might be used of God on behalf of his exiled people, Israel.

Darius had the reputation of being "weak and averse to business."

Perhaps he was only too glad to give responsible duties to another whom he could trust. At any rate, he made Daniel the second ruler in the kingdom-in England such a man is called Prime Minister; in our country, Secretary of State. Let us read the first three verses of our chapter for the Scripture itself:

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes [satraps], which should be over the whole kingdom; and over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

1. "An Excellent Spirit Was in Him."

Herein lay the secret of Daniel's success. The queen-mother in the days of Belshazzar had said the same thing of this Hebrew (Daniel 5:12). Daniel could be depended upon to see that "the king should have no damage." Therefore, he was made the first of three presidents, to whom the princes, or "satraps," were in turn responsible.

In Old Testament times the Holy Spirit of God came upon individuals for special service. Surely He came upon Daniel for very special service at the court of one king after another, throughout a long period of years. Daniel would have been the first to attribute his own "excellent spirit" to the mighty power in his life of the Holy Spirit of his Triune God.

2. "He Was Faithful."

When the other presidents and princes "sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom . . . they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him" (Daniel 6:4).

What a wonderful testimony to come from unwilling lips! Too often even our friends have occasion to find fault with us; and what of our enemies? But Daniel was faithful -first to his God; then to his king, even though he was an exile in a strange land.

Moreover, Daniel was old, possibly about eighty-six years of age. He might have given up, and said to himself that he had served his generation long enough. But no, he kept on serving, kept on being faithful. He was still busy for God! Through persecution and false accusation and trial he was ever faithful.

In all this, Daniel is a prophetic picture of the faithful Jewish remnant "in the latter time."

When the Antichrist and the kings associated with him seek to annihilate Israel, these witnesses for the living God will be true to Him. Through martyrdom and death and such tribulation as "never was," they will be, in very truth, "the faithful remnant in Israel."

"An excellent spirit" was in Daniel, and "he was faithful." Therefore, he was placed "over the whole realm" of Darius.

But there was another underlying reason for Daniel's success. He was a Jew, and God made the Jew to rule! Throughout the centuries, in spite of all the Hitlers and Stalins, in spite of bitter oppression and unscrupulous pillage of the Jew by wicked Gentiles, God's ancient people have prospered, far above the ratio of their number.

- Why is it that many of the greatest musicians, scientists, bankers, doctors, and scholars of the world have been Jews?

- Why is it that they have been blessed with an unusual capacity for acquiring wealth?

- Why is it that two out of every four names on Manhattan today are those of Jews?

We might turn to many portions of the Scriptures for our answer. We shall look at only one, the Word of the Lord (Deuteronomy 28:1; Deuteronomy 28:11-13) spoken through Moses to Israel many centuries ago: The Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth. . . And

the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods . . . The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God.

One day Israel will realize fully all these promised blessings, because God will keep His covenant with Abraham, and will rule through Israel over the whole earth. THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST DANIEL

Just as wicked men throughout the centuries have envied the Jew, so in Daniel's day the corrupt officials of the kingdom of Darius, political plotters, conspired to bring about the downfall of that godly man.

Because they could find no "error or fault" in him, they resorted to a cunning, scheming conspiracy to bring this to pass. Their own acknowledgement of Daniel's faithfulness was a wonderful testimony to his integrity. Try as they might, they could obtain no proof of any dereliction of duty on his part.

- His books could stand the light of any audit.
- He had not put his hand on a single portion of the public funds.
- He lived an open, clean, godly life, above reproach.

And what a testimony those jealous politicians gave of his faithful witness to his God!

How wonderful it would be if a similar statement could be made by the godless of our day concerning the Christian leaders and professed followers of Christ! If we are to witness for Him, then our characters must stand investigation.

In Daniel 6:5-9, we read-

Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. Then these presidents and princes assembled together (literally "came tumultuously" or "hastily") to the king, and said unto him, King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree. In this appeal to the egotism of the weak king, these jealous men won him by their flattery.

Moreover, the king was considered the representative of the Persian god, Ormuzd; therefore, according to the decree, he was to be worshipped. We are told also that the Medes and Persians regarded their king as infallible, because he did represent their heathen god; hence the immutability of the laws signed by him.

What a picture of the Antichrist!

That is one reason why God has recorded this story for us just here. During his brief reign upon earth; after the church has been translated, that “man of sin” will demand worship. He will sit “in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

The Lord wants us to see how this age will end; therefore, he lets us get a glimpse of the awful blasphemy that will oppose itself against Him in that day.

My friend, it is not very difficult for us to see how such a blasphemy could come to pass in the world in our day. If we see the shadows of the coming Antichrist even now, how much more will the reality vaunt itself when the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit, working in and through the church, is taken away!

DANIEL’S COURAGEOUS TESTIMONY FOR GOD

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

From this verse Daniel 6:10, I feel sure that Daniel was not afraid. He had had experience with the Lord God; therefore, he simply pursued his godly course. He knew that his Lord was able to deliver him, even as He had delivered his three friends from the “burning fiery furnace.”

- He did not open the window before he prayed; that would have been to court persecution.
- He did not close the window; that would have been cowardly.

He just did the customary thing.

As the ruler next to the king, he was necessarily a very busy man; yet he found time to pray “three times a day,” kneeling upon his knees in a position of humility and worship. In the face of threatened death by violent means, he “gave thanks before his God.” For what? For the persecution that was being heaped upon him? He faced a den of hungry lions! Daniel thanked God for salvation, for His love and grace and power. Read his beautiful prayers in this book that bears his name, to see some of the blessings for which Daniel must have thanked his God.

There is a reassuring exhortation to us in Php 4:6, accompanied by the precious promise of the verse that follows. If we do not know this passage from memory, let us learn it- and practice freedom from anxious worry and care, as Daniel did:

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

However dark the hour, we may always lift our hearts to God in praise, and say, “Father, I thank Thee.”

As if the decree had not been signed, Daniel prayed “as he did aforetime.”

And doubtless this experience drew him closer to the God he loved and worshipped. He did not try to meet craft with craft, although many a man in a similar position would have done so. Remember that Daniel was a Jew; he belonged to the shrewdest race the world has ever seen. Would it not have been natural for him to use all the cunning he possessed to outwit his enemies? But he did

no such thing. His weapons were not carnal; they were spiritual. May God grant that we shall ever be as true to Him as Daniel was! THE ACCUSATION AGAINST DANIEL

Then these men assembled [again the word means “came hastily and tumultuously”], and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king’s decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel [note the contempt-“That Daniel”], which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. When Darius heard the words of Daniel’s accusers (Daniel 6:11-13), only then did he realize that he had fallen into their trap. Only then did he know that their wicked conspiracy was formed, in order that they might get rid of Daniel. They had gone “hastily and tumultuously” into the king’s presence, apparently eager to do him honor, evidently not giving him time for deliberation before he had signed the decree. How Darius must have been vexed at his own susceptibility to their fawning flatteries!

How the enemies of Daniel must have gloated over their seeming triumph! But they had failed to take into account Daniel’s God! THE UNALTERABLE LAW OF THE MEDES AND PERSIANS

Three times in this chapter, in Daniel 6:8; Daniel 6:12; Daniel 6:15, we read of “the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.” It was a clever snare which these wicked men had set for the unsuspecting king; and try as he would, he could not change the decree. Herein we see one of the differences between “the head of gold,” which represented Nebuchadnezzar’s absolute monarchy, and the “breast and arms of silver,” symbolizing the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. You will remember that the word of Nebuchadnezzar was final, and none could dictate to him.

“Whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down” (Daniel 5:19).

But no such authority was given to Darius. He was bound by the unalterable law of the Medes and Persians, just as surely as was the weakest subject in his kingdom.

In this we see the deterioration in governmental power, just as silver is inferior to gold. It was not an inferiority in military strength, but in the degree of authority vested in the throne.

Democracy, or the will of the people, had already set in!

How much Darius loved Daniel may be inferred from the words he spoke and the things he did, once he realized the wicked intent of the conspirators. “Sore displeased with himself,” he “set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him” (Daniel 6:14).

But once more Daniel’s enemies “assembled hastily and tumultuously” unto the king, demanding the execution of the unalterable law. The insistence of their demands is seen in the fact that three times in the chapter, as we have already noted, we read that they went in confusion and with haste and tumult into the presence of the king; for that is the literal rendering of the word “assembled”

(Daniel 6:6; Daniel 6:11; Daniel 6:15).

It seems as though they could not wait for the regular procedure of the law, but urged speed, lest their scheming come to naught. That they were overtaken in their guilt was due only to the intervening providence of Daniel's God!

DANIEL IN THE DEN OF LIONS

Although the king could not raise a finger to avert the penalty which was about to descend upon Daniel, the prophet showed no evidence of fear. I am sure there was no tremor in his voice as he stood before his accusers. He had not denied his God; he knew that the Lord would deliver him or go with him through the trial.

Again, we would call attention just here to the power of his testimony, as shown by the king's words in Daniel 6:16 :

1. The King's Testimony concerning Daniel's God.

Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. Can it be said of you, my Christian friend that you serve God "continually"? I ask myself the same question. "Continually" is all the time. How often we sin against our loving Lord by the harsh word, by the unkind thought, by the overt act, or by the neglected duty! A heathen king could say of Daniel that he served his God "continually." May the Lord Jesus help us to be such witnesses to His love and grace!

2. God's Delivering Power.

Every precaution was taken in Daniel 6:17 that Daniel might not escape the intended death. And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

Darius was most unhappy; he passed the night in fasting.

"Neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him" (Daniel 6:18). He was not able to forget Daniel, even in his customary feasting and frivolity. Daniel 6:19-20

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Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

It is very significant that this heathen king admitted to Daniel that his God was "the living God."

Again he bore witness to Daniel's continual service to his Lord. We can imagine the joy that filled his heart, the wonder and amazement that the miracle wrought in his soul, when he heard the voice of Daniel, in Daniel 6:21-22 saying:

O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king,

have I done no hurt. The den of lions must have presented a wonderful scene during the hours of that night! Possibly Daniel spent the time singing the Psalms, for they were the Jewish hymnal. Perhaps God told him to rest. Maybe he put his head on one of the lions for a pillow. Certainly he must have praised God for His miraculous, protecting care! Perhaps he was too eager to sing God's praise to want to sleep. We do not know.

But this we know: Daniel's God was "able to deliver" from the lions' mouth. Daniel's God is our God, "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8)!

Oh, if we could believe and act upon this eternal truth!

Then we should never spend an anxious moment; we should never know a distracting worry! It is a sin, a form of unbelief, for us to worry; it is an act of doubting the love and faithfulness of our God. His holy angels are our "ministering spirits"; they watch over us, whether we are conscious of their ministry or not. (See Hebrews 1:14; Psalms 91:11-12; 1 Corinthians 4:9).

3. "Daniel Believed in His God."

When the king, "exceeding glad" that Daniel was delivered from the lions, "commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den," he found "no manner of hurt" upon him. Why? "Because he believed in his God" (Daniel 6:23).

Not only did Darius and all the heathen enemies of Daniel thus witness his great faith, but the Holy Spirit, many centuries afterwards, must have had Daniel in mind when He encouraged the hearts of persecuted Hebrew Christians, reminding them of the saints of old who, among other trials, had "stopped the mouths of lions" (Hebrews 11:33).

As we meditate upon this wonderful story, we can only exclaim, with the apostles of old, "Lord, Increase our faith" (Luke 17:5).

Let us remember that it is not always God's will to deliver His saints from tribulation; sometimes He wants them to witness unto Him, "even unto death." Many of the early Christians were thrown to the lions to please the whim of a diabolical emperor.

In the London Art Gallery, some years ago, I saw a beautiful painting entitled "Christ or Diana?" It was the portrait of a young girl, about nineteen years of age. She was standing before an image of the Greek goddess, Diana. There were the vestal virgins. There were the priests of this pagan deity. One of the vestal virgins held out to this girl a golden box of incense. All that was asked of her was that she put her hand in the incense box, and take an offering to present to Diana.

By her side stood her lover, begging her to obey, to save her life. But the girl knew the Lord Jesus Christ as her Saviour. Like Daniel of old, she could not deny Him. Her eye was fixed upon that "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10).

Her faith did not falter. She was cast into the arena, to be devoured by the lions, but the God of Daniel went with her through the ordeal, and took her Home to His presence forevermore.

He wanted to use her testimony before a heathen people, even as He may want to use your faithful witness to His grace and power, my dear friend in trouble.

“Have faith in God,” and He will go with you all the way.

CERTAIN JUDGMENT UPON THE WICKED

It was a fearful thing that Darius did to the enemies of Daniel. It is true that these wicked men brought the awful penalty upon themselves. But one may ask, “Why did their wives and children have to meet the same terrible fate?” (Daniel 6:24). It was a custom among the Persians that a man’s kindred should share in his punishment. This was contrary to the Law of Moses. It was not God’s law; it was pagan man’s terrible law. And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

Compare with this awful scene the just words of our righteous God in Deuteronomy 24:16 (cf. 2 Kings 14:6): The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin. The terrible fate of Daniel’s enemies is just a dim picture of the eternal doom of all who reject Daniel’s God.

As Daniel represents the faithful Jewish remnant in the “time of Jacob’s trouble,” even so his persecutors might well symbolize the Satan-inspired enemies of God’s ancient people, Israel, “in the latter time.” The Lord Jesus Himself will come to avenge His elect; and “the beast . . . and the false prophet” and all who will be deceived by “the man of sin” will be “cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” in that day of reckoning (Revelation 19:20).

My unsaved friend, will you not let Christ wash away your guilt by His atoning blood before it is too late? “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” unsaved, unfit for His righteous, holy presence! (See Hebrews 10:31). THE KING’S DECREE CONCERNING “THE GOD OF DANIEL”

It was a wonderful testimony that Darius gave to “the God of Daniel,” going as it did throughout all of the great empire. Let us read Daniel 6:25-27 just here:

Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. When we get to heaven, we shall not only see Daniel and his three Hebrew friends. Surely many souls in Babylon and Medo-Persia must have been won from idolatry to a faith in the living God by the testimony of Daniel’s consistent life!

“So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian” (Daniel 6:28). God prospered him; and he witnessed to Nebuchadnezzar, to Belshazzar, to Darius, and even unto Cyrus-to king after king, over a long period of years.

ISRAEL’S DELIVERANCE FROM “THE GREAT TRIBULATION” But one may ask, “Why is this story in a book which has to do with the course, character, and consummation of ‘the times of the Gentiles’?” Let us see if we cannot make this clear. After the church has been translated, God will take up Israel again and deal with her as a nation. It is then that the seventieth week of Daniel, of

which we shall study in chapter nine, will begin to run its course. In that day there will arise in Europe “the man of sin,” whose portrait is given on many pages of the Word of God. He is the Antichrist, “the beast,” the great persecutor of Israel.

During the reign of this Satan-inspired dictator, Israel will be back in her own land-not all of Israel, but many of this ancient people. They will be back there, but in unbelief, except for the faithful remnant who will be the missionaries of that terrible period. Many portions of Scripture tell of Israel’s return to her own land. We quote here only one of these, taken from Isaiah 11:11-12 : And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands (or “coasts”) of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The Antichrist will make a covenant with regathered Israel for a seven-year period. According to this agreement, he will promise the Jew national and religious liberty. He will observe this covenant for three and one-half years; then, as the head of the revived Roman Empire, he will demand universal worship. When he sets up his image in the holy place of the temple in Jerusalem, Israel will realize that he is a false Christ, will refuse to bow down to such an “abomination”; and her time of “Great Tribulation” will follow.

Meanwhile, the faithful Jewish remnant, of whom Daniel is a type, will witness to their soon-coming Messiah and King, even the Lord Jesus. John tells of this missionary band in the seventh chapter of Revelation - 144,000 Jews, 12,000 from each tribe. They will set themselves against the decree of the Antichrist, even as Daniel set himself against the decree of Darius. This “beast,” as he is called in Revelation, together with the false prophet who will represent him in Palestine, will seek to annihilate the Jewish nation. However, “for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (Matthew 24:22). God will be on the side of His people, to deliver them from the fury of these “beasts,” even as He delivered Daniel from the wild beasts in the lions’ den. In that day of “Great Tribulation” God’s people, Israel, will “flee into the mountains” (Matthew 24:16) to a place of refuge.

When we come to the study of the eleventh chapter of Daniel, we shall have more to say about the cities of Petra, to which many Bible students believe Israel will flee in that time of “Jacob’s trouble.”

They are ancient rock cities in the land of Moab; and that land will “escape out of” the Antichrist’s “hand” at that time of bitter persecution (Daniel 11:41). We cannot be dogmatic about this; but all the evidence points toward these prepared cities, hewn out of sheer rock, as a place of refuge for the Jew in the day of his most bitter persecution.

The late W. E. Blackstone, a godly man and a profound Bible student, was so convinced that the cities of Petra would afford a covert for Israel in that day that he purchased hundreds of New Testaments and hid them in the rocks there, so that God’s ancient people could find them when they flee there for safety from “the beast.” He wanted them to have the God-given message concerning their Messiah and coming King!

Isaiah 16:4 also seems to point to the fact that this will be a place of safety for God’s people when the fierce wrath of “the beast” is turned upon them: “Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be

thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler.”

The days I spent in that area, climbing thousands of feet, and examining that amazing “Rose-colored City of the Dead” were a never-to-be-forgotten experience in my life.

My Christian friend, we would remind ourselves again, before we close this chapter, that, although Daniel’s preservation in the lions’ den is a prophetic picture of Israel’s deliverance from “the beasts” “in the latter time,” yet we may take comfort also from this story of God’s protecting care of His own in every age. We are His children, and the sheep of His pasture. His Word tells us that He sees the sparrow that falls to the ground! Then how much more does He see us and care for us!

These are trying times, and even more “perilous times” lie ahead of this Christ-rejecting civilization.

Let us put our trust in the living God, if we expect to have peace and freedom from torturing worry and anxious care. He who watched over Daniel in the lions’ den is the only One who can give us a tranquil mind and heart in the midst of perplexities and problems which face us on every hand. We can afford to trust Him, for He never fails! And His gracious promise in Isaiah 26:3-4 reassures our fainting hearts:

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.

Let us not be among those who throughout the centuries have persecuted God’s people, Israel. The following lines, quoted from an unknown author, should cause us to search our hearts, lest we forget that to Daniel’s people we owe a debt of love-and that they stand in need of the gospel of their Messiah and our Saviour and Lord: THE JEW Scattered by God’s avenging hand, Afflicted and forlorn,

Sad wanderers from their pleasant land, Do Judah’s children mourn;

And e’en in Christian countries few

Breathe thoughts of pity for the Jew.

Yet listen, Gentile, do you love The Bible’s precious page?

Then let your hearts with kindness move To Israel’s heritage.

Who traced those lines of love for you?

Each sacred writer was a Jew.

And then as years and ages passed, And nations rose and fell,

Though clouds and darkness oft were cast O’er captive Israel,

The oracles of God for you

Were kept in safety by the Jew.

And when the great Redeemer came For guilty man to bleed,

He did not take an angel's name;

No-born of Abram's seed-

Jesus, who gave His life for you,

The gentle Saviour was a Jew.

And though His own received Him not, And turned in pride away,

Whence is the Gentile's happier lot? Are you more just than they?

No; God in pity turned to you.

Have you not pity for the Jew?

Go, then, and bend your knee to pray For Israel's ancient race;

Ask the dear Saviour ev'ry day To call them by His grace;

Go, for a debt of love is due

From Christian Gentiles to the Jew.

~ end of chapter 6 ~

07-Daniel's Vision of the Four Beasts

DANIEL'S VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS

CHAPTER SEVEN

Foreshadowing God's View of "the Times of the Gentiles"

CHAPTERS two and seven of the Book of Daniel present the same general prophecy, but from different points of view.

Both outline the entire period of "the times of the Gentiles," which began with Nebuchadnezzar and will end with the return of Christ in glory.

In chapter two Nebuchadnezzar, "the natural man," saw Gentile world dominion from the standpoint of the godless world; whereas Daniel, "the spiritual man," saw it from God's viewpoint.

Consequently, Nebuchadnezzar's vision presented the image of man, noble, stately, and magnificent; Daniel's vision set forth four powerful, Gentile world empires, represented by four ravenous, monstrous beasts, depicting the moral character of the nations.

The image which Babylon's king saw filled him with pride, and later he set up a golden image, demanding worship of himself; the vision which Daniel saw presented Gentile world power in God's unsullied light, revealing the brutality, the fierceness, and the greed of these Christ-rejecting kingdoms of men.

A glance at our chart will remind us that the theme of Daniel's prophecy is: The commencement, character, course, and consummation of "the times of the Gentiles."

A comparison of the pictures on the chart, illustrating chapters two and seven, will show how these two chapters set forth the same prophetic period of time.

Let us outline here this twofold picture of the one long period:

Gentile World- Empires - Viewed by Man (chapter 2) & Viewed by God (chapter 7)

Babylon Ch 2 - The Head of God Ch 7 - The Lion with eagle's wings

Medo-Persia Ch 2 - The Arms and Breast of Silver Ch 7 - The Bear with three ribs

Greece Ch 2 - The belly and thighs of brass Ch 7 - The beast like a leopard

Rome Ch 2 - The Legs of Iron Ch 7 - (A long parenthesis) Ch 2 & 7 - The Church Age which God did not reveal to Daniel The revived Roman Empire Ch 2 - The feet and ten toes of iron and clay

Ch 7 - The ten horns of the fourth beast, and "the little horn," who is the Antichrist Gentile dominion will end with the return of Christ Ch 2 - The Smiting Stone Ch 7 - The coming of the Son of Man in glory As we get this outline picture in our minds, let us remember that God did not reveal to Daniel

this church age. We have already seen that “in other ages” the church “was not made known unto the sons of men,” but that it was given to Paul by special revelation (Ephesians 3:1-12).

We have seen that the church began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47); and that in this age of grace God is calling out “a people for his name” (Acts 15:14)-both Jew and Gentile, to be the bride of Christ. After the church is complete, the Lord Jesus will call His bride Home to heaven. Then the events of “the latter time” will begin to run their course.

Briefly, these are:

- The manifestation of the Antichrist;
- his rule of seven years over the revived Roman Empire;
- “The Great Tribulation” upon Daniel’s people, Israel;
- The return of Christ in glory to set up His millennial kingdom on earth.

Therefore, just as the prophecy given to Nebuchadnezzar in the form of the image has already been fulfilled except for the feet and toes of iron mixed with clay, so also Daniel’s vision has been fulfilled except for the arising of the ten horns and “another little horn” of the fourth monstrous beast.

When the church has been translated, the toes of the image will come into prominence, which is another way of saying that the ten kings, represented by the “ten horns” will arise, dominated by “the little horn,” who is the Antichrist yet to be revealed. Thus the revived Roman Empire will run its course in a brief but powerful dominion. It will come to its end when the “stone cut out without hands,” even the Lord Jesus, smites the image upon the toes, and the whole is scattered like chaff before the wind.

The parallel to this scene, as described in chapter seven, is found in the coming of the Son of Man in power and great glory to slay the fourth, nameless beast, and to establish His millennial kingdom upon earth.

Once we get this outline picture of the two chapters, it is a simple matter to go back to fill in the details.

We do want to go back to get these details, lest someone say that all of this interpretation is fanciful and imaginary. Not at all! God gives us the interpretation of chapter seven, even as He did of chapter two. How minutely He has done it-presenting in chapter two the unsaved man’s view of “the times of the Gentiles,” as well as His own divine view in chapter seven! Here we have but another illustration of the eternal truth, spoken by Samuel, the prophet (1 Samuel 16:7), centuries before Daniel’s day, Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.

What a sad picture He must see today as He looks past the great civilizations, illuminated by the wonders of man’s genius, into the very heart of the nations themselves! Nor is this all, my friend. He searches out the hearts of individual men and women. Nothing is hid from His all-seeing eye.

As He turns the searchlight of His Holy Spirit upon your heart and life, what does He see hidden therein? Your friends may commend; the world may applaud, as it recounts your noble deeds; but

God's Word says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

If you want to stand before God unafraid and unashamed for all eternity, then let Him clothe you in His own righteousness, washing your sins as white as snow. This is the only way of salvation.

By the time Daniel saw the vision of the four beasts, some years had elapsed since God had given Nebuchadnezzar the vision of the image of a man, outlining Gentile world dominion from beginning to end.

We learn this from the opening words (Daniel 7:1-3) of chapter seven:

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters. Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

"THE FOUR WINDS" AND "THE GREAT SEA"

"The four winds" represent the providences of God; "the great sea" has both a literal and a figurative application, for it represents the Mediterranean Sea, as well as the great mass of humanity. If you will turn to a map of ancient Europe, you will see that the Mediterranean was called "The Great Sea." Perhaps you have such a map in the back of your Bible. But according to the imagery of the Word of God, "the sea" is also a figure of "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (Revelation 17:15).

Jeremiah tells us that "the nations are like the troubled sea."

It is a fact of history that the four, great Gentile world Empires, arising successively out of the sea of nations, bordered upon the Mediterranean; hence this twofold application of "the great sea" which Daniel saw.

He got a foreview of the troubled nations that border or surround the Mediterranean Sea.

Now Daniel beheld as "the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea." We said a moment ago that "the four winds" represent the providences of God, as they move among the nations. Daniel's God is still working; He is still on the throne! Although He permits the devil to deceive the Christ-rejecting nations during Gentile dominion, because those nations turn their backs upon Him, yet Satan will meet his eternal doom in the lake of fire. We cannot always understand the providences of God, but we can always trust His wisdom and His love!

"The wind" in Scripture is a figure of the Holy Spirit, as we read in John 3:8. Even as the wind blows where it will; even as we cannot see "whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

As Daniel saw "the four winds of the heaven" as they "strove upon the great sea," he seems to have witnessed a storm or conflict among the nations (Daniel 7:3-4), out of which the four beasts arose. **THE LION WITH EAGLE'S WINGS-REPRESENTING BABYLON** And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand

upon the feet [two feet] as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

It is significant that the Holy Spirit devotes only two verses of this chapter to the interpretation of the vision of the first three beasts (Daniel 7:12; Daniel 7:17), whereas most of the chapter has to do with the fourth beast and the interpretation thereof. The emphasis is laid upon the last form of the fourth kingdom- the revived Roman Empire under the dominion of the Antichrist; his doom; and the return of Christ in glory to put an end to Gentile misrule and to set up His own glorious kingdom on earth.

One of the two verses which the Holy Spirit devotes to the explanation of the first three beasts, including also the fourth, is Daniel 7:17 :

These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. As he heard this explanation, Daniel must have remembered Nebuchadnezzar's forgotten dream, which God gave to him, picturing these "four kings," or "kingdoms" (Daniel 7:23). It was not God's will to dwell long upon the first three kingdoms in the beast vision which He gave to Daniel. All three of these empires were to cover only a few centuries, whereas the fourth has already covered more than two thousand years. No wonder the Holy Spirit gave most of the interpretation to the fourth beast!

Moreover, the first Gentile empire; that of Babylon, was rapidly drawing to a close when God gave to Daniel this beast vision; and the second and third beasts, or empires, are described fully in the eighth chapter of this prophecy. Therefore, it was not necessary that further details be added here.

But there is an even more important reason why most of chapter seven is devoted to the "fourth beast" and the events that will take place at the end of the age. God wanted Daniel -and us-to look down the centuries to the close of Gentile misrule, and on to the righteous dominion of the "Prince of Peace."

Therefore, in much of Daniel and Revelation, to say nothing of other prophetic portions of the Word of God, He tells us about the last form of the kingdom represented by the fourth beast of Daniel's vision, the certain defeat of this masterpiece of Satan, and Christ's triumph over the devil and all his cohorts.

Living in this present age, we can look back over history, to see the exact, literal fulfillment of the minute details of Daniel's vision of the first three beasts. We can see the exact fulfillment of the first form of the fourth beast, in the history of ancient Rome. Nor is it mere speculation to say that "the signs of the times" seem to point to the nearness of the last form of the fourth beast of Daniel's vision-the revived Roman Empire. Prophecy is rapidly becoming history before our very eyes!

Now from what God has already told us about Babylon in Nebuchadnezzar's image, as well as in succeeding chapters, it is very easy for us to fill in the details concerning this first beast, even if we did not have secular history to verify the record.

Daniel saw that the first beast was "like a lion, and had eagle's wings." From man's point of view, Babylon appeared in its greatness as fine gold, but God permitted Daniel to see its real moral character, which was that of a ravenous lion.

As the lion is the king of the forest, so Nebuchadnezzar's monarchy was more absolute than any of those which succeeded it. The lion, a "symbol of strength and courage," typified Babylon, "the head of gold." The eagle's wings speak to us of the swiftness of conquest and of the wide-spread power of Babylon's great king.

In the British Museum today one can see the winged lions, carved in stone that once symbolically guarded Babylon. Again, the lion is ferocious, as well as majestic; and Nebuchadnezzar had the power of life and death -a power which he evidently exercised; for "whom he would he slew."

Daniel beheld until the wings of the lion were plucked- a picture of the decline of Babylon's power, especially of Nebuchadnezzar's seven years of insanity. But you will remember that when Nebuchadnezzar glorified the God of heaven, his reason was restored; hence the description of the lion that follows: ". . . and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet [two feet] as a man, and a man's heart was given to it."

As we think back over the inspired record of Babylon's rule, we can see why God viewed that empire as a wild, ravenous beast; for the opening chapters of Daniel's prophecy tell of Babylon's heathen gods, of Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, of the "burning fiery furnace," of Nebuchadnezzar's pride and madness, and of Belshazzar's defiant insult to Daniel's God. As a beast knows nothing of God; lives without consciousness of His love and power, so ancient Babylon came to her doom because she ignored the God of heaven. THE BEAR WITH THREE RIBS BETWEEN HIS TEETH- REPRESENTING MEDO-PERSIA And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. To Nebuchadnezzar the breast and arms of silver looked resplendent-that part of the image which represented Medo-Persia; but to Daniel, the servant of the Lord, it appeared in its beast-like character, pictured by the bear (Daniel 7:5). The words, "it raised up itself on one side," and is commented on in the margins of some, "it raised up one dominion."

As the name indicates, Medo-Persia was composed of two kingdoms, and was dominated by Persia, the stronger of the two. The "three ribs" refer to the devouring of the Babylonian lion by the second beast. As the bear is an "all-devouring" creature, so Medo-Persia was cruel and rapacious.

It is said that the Persian army killed its prisoners of war-it was so cruel! THE BEAST LIKE A LEOPARD-REPRESENTING GREECE

After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.

Alexander the Great, heir to Philip of Macedon, conquered Medo-Persia and extended the Grecian Empire into yet wider borders. So swiftly did he subdue these kingdoms that he is said to have "wept because there were no more worlds to conquer."

He died at the age of twenty-eight, having lived a dissipated life. Thus the swiftly-moving leopard aptly depicts his rapid conquests (Daniel 7:6).

Nebuchadnezzar saw the Grecian Empire as the brass of the image; but Daniel saw it as a cruel, wild leopard, stealthy and quick to leap upon its prey. The lion had been swift, with two wings of an eagle; but the leopard was even more swift, with "four wings of a fowl."

“The beast had also four heads.”

Alexander died childless; and having no heir to the throne, he was succeeded by four of his generals, who divided the empire among themselves.

- Cassander took Macedon and Greece;
- Lysimachus, Thrace and Bithynia;
- Ptolemy, Egypt;
- Seleucus, Syria.

That is why the beast that Daniel saw had four heads; it was God’s prophecy of this division of Alexander’s empire among his four generals.

“And dominion was given unto it.”

Alexander the Great is known as one of the world’s mightiest conquerors. We are told that with 30,000 soldiers he overthrew “several hundreds of thousands” of Persians.

It has been suggested that the leopard’s spots may well represent the many nations and tongues that fell under his sway; or, perhaps, “Alexander’s own variations in character, at one time mild, at another cruel; now temperate, and now drunken and licentious.” These are only suggestions; but they are based upon actual facts of history.

Before we consider the fourth beast which Daniel saw, let us note the only other reference in the chapter to the first three of these terrible creatures. It is in Daniel 7:12, and follows the vision of the return of Christ in glory and the doom of the fourth beast, whose body Daniel saw “given to the burning flame” (Daniel 7:11). As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

How marvelously this prophecy has been fulfilled; for though “their dominion” has been “taken away,” yet countries still exist bearing the names of Persia and Greece; and in the territory occupied by these first three empires there are people living today! THE BEAST WITH TEN HORNS-REPRESENTING ROME

After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things (Daniel 7:7-8). This fourth beast, “dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly” (Daniel 7:7-8), was a nondescript. There was no animal ferocious or powerful enough to describe this fourth Gentile world power.

“It was diverse from all the beasts that were before it,” yet it incorporated all the bestial characteristics of the others. The great “iron teeth” connect it unmistakably with the “iron legs” of Nebuchadnezzar’s image vision; and the “ten horns,” which represent “ten kings that shall arise” (Daniel 7:24), are parallel with the “ten toes” of the image of chapter two. “It devoured and brake in

pieces,” even as “The Iron Legions” of Rome were ruthless conquerors.

Daniel’s vision began with a portrayal of the first great Gentile power as a lion, the king of the beasts; but it ended, as far as the nations are concerned, with this fourth beast for which no name could be found.

What deterioration!

The same was noted in Nebuchadnezzar’s image vision. The head was of fine gold, but the other metals were of an increasingly inferior character, until at last the ten toes were of iron mixed with potter’s clay! From gold to clay! From a lion to a nondescript! This is the history of Gentile world dominion as God sees it. Outwardly it may seem to flourish, to make great advancement in civilization, science, and inventions; but morally the nations have become ever-increasingly beast-like in character.

We boast of our World’s Fairs and of our Napoleons. We make great statues of men who sometimes have been exceedingly wicked and cruel. But every page of human history has been stained with the blood of human suffering. And it requires no strain on the imagination for us to understand why God, looking down the centuries, compared Gentile world power to wild beasts.

As we think of Hitler and his Gestapo; as we think of Stalin and Mussolini; as we think of the hundreds of cruel monsters who did their bidding-dropping bombs on little children and the aged and infirm, machine-gunning helpless refugees, robbing the poor of their very bread and meat, murdering in wholesale fashion the countless thousands-as we think of these things, we can see something of what our just God must behold as He looks down upon such misery and bloodshed and carnage as the mind of man can hardly comprehend.

It was this fourth, nameless beast that cast the early Christians to the lions in the amusement arena; yea, it was this beast that crucified our Lord upon a Roman cross, permitting Israel also to thrust her Messiah out of the world which He had created.

It was this fourth beast that extended her borders farther than had any of the first three, literally surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. This beast was known as imperial Rome and conqueror of the world.

But this fourth beast has not yet been “slain” (Daniel 7:11); and from Daniel 7:7-8, which we have just read, we note that there is a still future fulfillment of the God-given prophecy concerning Rome. The “ten horns” represent ten kings of the revived Roman Empire. Evidently these kings will not be equal in power, even as the toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s image were not all the same size. There are the great toes, and there are the little toes on a man’s feet. Therefore, if we are, indeed, nearing the time when the church will be translated, when the revived Roman Empire will come into full power, would it be too much to suppose that possibly England and Italy may be the two great toes, as it were, of that confederacy? I think not, though this is not to be taken dogmatically.

As a dictator over these ten kings, “the little horn” will rule, even the Antichrist, who will be revealed after the church has been translated. A “little horn” at first, he will later conquer three of the ten kings; for Daniel saw “three of the first horns plucked up by the roots . . . and he shall subdue three kings” (Daniel 7:8; Daniel 7:24). With “eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth

speaking great things," he will blaspheme the God of heaven, posing as very God, sitting in the temple, "shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). THE JUDGMENT OF THE FOURTH BEAST BY "THE ANCIENT OF DAYS"

Daniel beheld the terrible fourth beast until he was judged, "slain," by "the Ancient of days."

It was while this beast was still in power that Daniel saw him meet his doom; and it will be while the Antichrist is exercising great authority that the Lord Jesus will come in glory to cast him who is called "the beast" "into the lake of fire" (Revelation 19:20).

It was while the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image, which represent ten kings of the revived Roman Empire, were still standing that the smiting Stone fell upon the image. And thus the prophetic Scriptures dovetail even to the minute particulars, concerning this coming "man of sin."

He is described by Daniel, by the Lord Jesus, by Paul, and by John in the last book of the Bible.

How Christians can close their eyes to these definite prophecies, even opposing any teaching concerning them is a mystery hard to explain. Unwittingly perhaps, yet without excuse, they let Satan lull them to sleep in a false sense of security; but the Word of God standeth sure. And these things are bound to come to pass, even as He said.

As Daniel beheld the vision, he saw that it was "the Ancient of days" who executed judgment upon the fourth beast. Let us read the description of this yet future scene, in Daniel 7:9-11 :

I beheld till the thrones (i.e., the human thrones) were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. (Oriental thrones were often rolled on wheels.) A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. This is a judgment scene, and it marks the end of Gentile world dominion.

What a sad ending! Nations flourishing today, boasting of national achievements, progress, and advancement, are to have a final chapter written to their history; and that chapter will be one of terrible judgment. Man refuses to see such an ending, and prefers to believe that all things will continue as they are now; but God's infallible Word tells of certain judgment to come upon the world of the ungodly.

And how plainly, how repeatedly the Holy Spirit has warned us of the righteous judgment of God! Daniel wrote of it in the verses we have just read. He saw in the vision that all the earthly thrones were cast down, and that the throne of "the Ancient of days" was set up.

This One is described here in language very similar to that of Revelation 1:13-18, telling of the glorified Son of Man. There we read of Him in His eternal power and glory. "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow"-the eternal "Ancient of days." John saw a "sharp two-edged sword" proceed out of His mouth; and we know that "the sword of the Spirit . . . is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17). By the Holy Scriptures, which godless men have spurned, our Lord will one day judge the nations and the individuals who have rejected this life-giving message

concerning the living Word, even Jesus, of whom the written Word speaks.

As Daniel looked upon this wonderful scene, he saw “thousands of thousands” ministering unto Him. We shall not be lonely in heaven, my Christian friend! “Ten thousand times ten thousand” will be there to behold the glory of our crucified and risen Lord, to serve Him, and to enjoy His presence for-evermore!

Daniel looked and saw that “the judgment was set, and the books were opened.”

This Scripture is parallel with that of Matthew 25:31-46, where our Lord Himself described the judgment of the nations in that coming day. It is not to be confused with the judgment of “the great white throne,” of which we read in Revelation 20:11-15; of that we shall have more to say a little later. But “when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Matthew 25:31-32).

In these words our Lord spoke of the same judgment which Daniel saw, when “all nations”—not individuals, but Gentile nations—will be gathered before Him. The question of entrance into “the kingdom” (Matthew 25:34) will depend upon how those nations shall have treated His “brethren,” the faithful Jewish remnant, during the tribulation period.

Those nations which receive these witnesses of the coming King will be rewarded by entrance into the millennial “kingdom” as nations; whereas those nations which persecute Israel in that awful “time of Jacob’s trouble” will be cast out “into everlasting punishment.”

Thus the “sheep nations” and the “goat nations” will be divided. And you will note that all this will take place before the millennial kingdom of Christ—a marvelous correlation of all prophetic Scripture, such as that recorded by Daniel. This judgment will take place “when the Son of man shall come in his glory”; the beast will be “slain,” or as John describes the same incident, he will be “cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Revelation 19:20). Likewise, Daniel adds that “his body” will be “destroyed, and given to the burning flame.”

Now I know that those who are post-millennial in their interpretation of prophecy teach that there will be just one great “judgment day,” and that the words of our Lord which we have just read from Matthew refer to individuals to be judged in that coming time. But these words speak plainly of “nations” that will be judged before the millennium. And a careful reading of the twentieth chapter of Revelation will show that between the judgment of the nations at the return of Christ in glory and the judgment of the wicked dead before “the great white throne,” a thousand years must elapse, the millennial reign of Christ.

Moreover, all the prophetic Scriptures dovetail with this twentieth chapter of Revelation; the teaching is as clear as a bell. Our Lord will return as the smiting Stone of Nebuchadnezzar’s vision, the Son of Man whom Daniel’s vision also portrayed. He will judge the nations, some of which will enter, as nations, into His glorious kingdom. The beast and the false prophet will be cast into the lake of fire at the time of our Lord’s return to purify the world of sin and blasphemy. Satan will be bound for a thousand years, and our Lord Jesus will rule “from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth” (Psalms 72:8). And after the thousand years have expired, then

the wicked dead will be raised, judged at “the great white throne,” and cast into the lake of fire.

Of course, the righteous dead shall have been translated with the church before “the man of sin” is revealed, before the seventieth week of Daniel’s prophecy runs its course, before the judgment of the beast, and before our Lord’s millennial reign on earth.

And the martyrs of the tribulation period, who will die after the translation of the church, will have a part in that “first resurrection,” before the rule of Christ begins. The details of this we are not told; but their resurrection will be a kind of ingathering, possibly at the time of their death. And God’s promise in Revelation 20:6; Revelation 20:14; Revelation 21:8 is reassuring:

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power . . . the second death is the lake of fire. My unsaved friend, if you do not accept the Lord Jesus Christ now as your Saviour, you will meet Him as your Judge when you stand before Him at “the great white throne.”

Let Him write your name in “the Lamb’s book of life,” or you will hear the solemn words in that coming day, “Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15).

Meet Him today as your gracious, loving Saviour; meet Him you must. His grace will save you, and His Word of promise in John 5:24 is sure:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Thank God! The sins of all who believe on His Son have been nailed to His cross. “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).

We have taken time to go into these judgments in some detail here because of the confusion that exists in professing Christendom today concerning them. If it is still not perfectly clear to you, my Christian friend, read and re-read carefully and prayerfully the Scriptures we have quoted. Ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten your eyes. And He will not fail to teach you these truths.

“THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN” AND HIS “EVERLASTING KINGDOM”

There can be no mistake about the One described in Daniel 7:13-14 of this seventh chapter of Daniel; for He is none other than the smiting Stone of Nebuchadnezzar’s vision, even our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And His coming back to earth in great glory will be for the purpose of ushering in His reign of peace and righteousness. Let us read together these wonderful words:

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Again, there are many other similar passages of Scripture which tell us that the Son of Man shall come with the clouds of heaven, in power and great glory.

Here are just a few of them: Matthew 24:30; Matthew 25:31; Acts 1:10-11; Revelation 1:7.

The Father will give to the Son in that day “the throne of his father David” (Luke 1:32), even as He promised many centuries ago, saying, “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion” (Psalms 2:6). And again, “The Lord [God the Father] said unto my Lord [God the Son], Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool” (Psalms 110:1). When the smiting Stone falls upon the last form of Gentile dominion, then that Stone will become “a great mountain,” and will fill the whole earth, even the glorious kingdom of our risen Lord.

Until He comes, this old world will never be free from blood and tears; pestilence and famine; “wars and rumours of wars.” But when He comes, whose right it is to reign, He will solve all the world’s problems-no other can! Oh, how we long for that wonderful day! And the last prayer of the Bible is our daily petition, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20).

Sometimes people ask me why we pray for the return of Christ, when it will mean that the age of grace, this church age, will be over. But surely you can see, my Christian friend, why we pray this prayer. The world has had the gospel for nearly two thousand years-I mean the gospel of the Christ of history. Of course, all the Old Testament saints were born again by the same Lord and Saviour, but they were looking forward to the Christ of prophecy. It has been almost two thousand years since He died and rose again; and yet there are more heathen on earth today than there were when He walked in Galilee. God did not plan that the church should “bring in the kingdom.” His Son will do that when He returns in glory! He alone can convert the world. But some will ask, “Then why preach the gospel? Is the church not a failure if she does not convert the world?” Not at all! That was never God’s plan for the church. In this present age He is calling out the church, which is the bride of Christ, composed of both Jew and Gentile, to be “a people for his name” (Acts 15:14). He Himself will one day take the church to heaven; then He will make a speedy end of sin on the earth, bringing in His own righteous kingdom. While we shrink from the awful thought of “the Great Tribulation” and the terrible judgments that must come upon this old world, we know that these things must come. Our holy God must judge sin!

Therefore, we pray, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” His return alone will put an end to human misery and blasphemy against His holy name.

Some time ago I went to the penitentiary at San Quentin, California, with special permission from the governor of the state to talk to a condemned man. I wanted to present to him the things of Christ. As I saw the man there in death row; as I saw hundreds of others incarcerated within those prison walls, I said in my heart, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” All this will be made right when Jesus reigns!

As we think of the thousands of our youth behind prison bars today; as we think of the inmates of asylums; as we think of the broken hearts and broken homes and broken bodies of suffering humanity, we pray again, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

THE FOURTH BEAST DESCRIBED IN DETAIL

Daniel was grieved in spirit and troubled by the beast visions. He went near to the heavenly messenger and asked him the truth of all this. Then Daniel was made to know “the interpretation of the things” (Daniel 7:15-16).

Much of this interpretation we have already considered in our present study. But let us note again that it was “the fourth beast” which troubled Daniel most. Therefore, Daniel 7:19-28 have to do with the interpretation of yet other details concerning this Antichrist, foreshadowed by the fourth beast. Then the closing verses of the chapter take us on, even unto the consummation of all these things, when “the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever” (Daniel 7:18).

“The saints” will share in the Lord’s glorious kingdom!

While it is true that the church will rule with Christ as His bride, yet the “saints” here refer to Daniel’s people, Israel, who will have come through “the Great Tribulation,” and will inherit an earthly kingdom.

Let us remember that Daniel was especially concerned about the fourth beast because his kingdom is to be in existence when the Son of Man returns in glory. The ten kings will be in power, but dominated by the “man of sin.” Concerning “the fourth beast” and the “ten horns”

Daniel said in Daniel 7:19-22 :

Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

We have already considered in some detail the content of the next two verses, which tell of the revived Roman Empire under ten kings, over whom the Antichrist is to rule. We have seen that he will subdue three of these kings, and that he will be a world dictator. But let us look at Daniel 7:25, where four additional thoughts are added concerning this terrible creature:

1. “And He Shall Speak Great Words against the Most High.”

That is, he will be a blasphemer of the God of heaven. This is what the Holy Spirit meant in Daniel 7:8, when He said that this fourth beast spoke “great things”-setting himself up against the God of Daniel.

My friends, we are living in a blasphemous age. Never were blasphemers as universal as they are today, not since the beginning of the Christian era. The present dictators are shadows or forerunners of the most arrogant infidel the world has ever seen. He will be given his throne and his authority by Satan. He will be the greatest diplomat, the shrewdest statesman, the most brilliant general that the mind of man can conceive. He will be a Napoleon, a Stalin, a Hitler, and a Mussolini rolled into one. Moreover, he will come with religious pretensions, deceiving the godless millions. Already in this series of studies we have often quoted what Paul said of him when he was writing to the Thessalonian Christians, that this “son of perdition” will sit in the temple of God, “shewing himself that he is God.”

That “man of sin” will not be made manifest until the church is translated; and of that day and hour God has not seen fit to tell us. Some believe that a dictator in Rome will prove to be the Antichrist.

The Fascist Creed reads as follows:

“I believe in:

- (1) Rome Eternal, the Mother of my fatherland;
- (2) and in Italy, her first born;
- (3) who was born of her virgin womb by the grace of God;
- (4) who suffered under the barbarian invader, was crucified, slain, and buried;
- (5) who descended into the sepulchre, and rose from the dead in the nineteenth century;
- (6) who ascended to heaven in her glory in 1918 and 1922 (by the march on Rome);
- (7) who is seated at the right hand of Mother Rome;
- (8) who will come thence to judge the quick and the dead;
- (9) I believe in the genius of Mussolini;
- (10) in our Holy Father, Fascism, and in the communion of its martyrs;
- (11) in the conversion of the Italians;
- (12) in the resurrection of the Empire! Amen.”

This gross blasphemy, a wicked parody of the Apostles’ Creed, gives us some idea of the extent to which man can go in his defiance of God. We must not try to apply the prophetic Scriptures to any man today. Mussolini possessed many of the characteristics of those God-defying kings who are to rule during “the seventieth week” of Daniel, but he has been destroyed. We shall not be here to find out just who “the beast” or “the prince of Rosh” or the “ten kings” who shall hold sway “in the latter time” will be; for the true church will be with the Lord before these men are manifested to the world.

I remember that, when I was a pastor in Oak Park, Illinois, I had the late William Jennings Bryan speak to my congregation. Afterwards I asked him why he did not teach the doctrine of the second coming of Christ, to which he replied that he had been prejudiced against it when he was a young man. The people of his community had set dates for Christ’s return, and had held all kinds of fanciful and fanatical interpretations of prophecy. What he said should be a warning to us, lest we, by our foolish speculations, not only disobey our Lord’s express command, but also prejudice the untaught against the doctrine of the “blessed hope” of His return.

2. “He Shall . . . Wear Out the Saints of the Most High.”

This is the next thing we are told about the Antichrist in Daniel 7:25.

In Daniel 7:21 we read that this fourth beast “made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came.” These saints refer, as we have seen, to the faithful Jewish

remnant of “the Great Tribulation” period. “For the elect’s sake,” the Lord Jesus, their Messiah, will shorten those days (Matthew 24:22); and He Himself will deliver His own! We must ever remember that the saints of the church age were not even revealed to Daniel. I think we have made this clear from the Scriptures, and need not repeat further just at this point.

3. “He Shall . . . Think to Change Times and Laws.”

These words mean that he will break the covenant that he will make with Israel, and will set himself up to be worshipped, changing Israel’s ancient “laws,” as well as his own false promises with God’s people.

Let us pause here to state definitely that these words do not refer to the pope of Rome, as a certain cult teaches. For example, the Seventh-day Adventists hold that the pope changed the Jewish Sabbath to the first day of the week; and they call this the changing of “times and laws.”

This is absolutely false!

In the first place, the pope had nothing to do with placing the Christian Lord’s Day on the first day of the week. God did that!

In the second place, the Jewish Sabbath and the Lord’s Day are two entirely separate days, with different purposes for their use intended by God.

We cannot go into this subject fully here, but a good footnote concerning it is found in connection with Matthew 12:1 in the Scofield Reference Bible. Suffice it to say just here that the Jewish Sabbath commemorated God’s creation rest; whereas our Lord’s Day commemorates Christ’s resurrection from the dead. The one was not changed to the other; they are two separate days. (See also 1 Corinthians 16:2).

4. “And They (Israel) Shall Be Given into His Hand until a Time and Times and the Dividing of Time.”

A “time” is one year; “times” are two years; “the dividing of time” is one-half year-in all, three and one-half years are given in these words. And again, this passage is an exact parallel of other portions of the prophetic Scriptures which tell of the latter three and one-half years of the tribulation period, “the time of Jacob’s trouble.”

When we come to the study of the ninth chapter of this book, we shall go more into detail about this period; but let us keep in mind that the Antichrist’s entire rule will be only seven years; and that even this period will “be shortened . . . for the elect’s sake.”

During the first part of his rule he will make the covenant with Israel, restore their temple worship, and promise them a national home in Palestine. Then “in the midst of the week [literally, ‘seven’] he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease” (Daniel 9:27). He will set up his own image in the holy place to be worshipped, demanding that Israel honor him as God or be persecuted to death. This will be “the abomination of desolation,” to which our Lord referred in Matthew 24:15.

This same Antichrist will also turn upon false, professing Christendom, even “the scarlet woman” of Revelation 17:1-18; Revelation 18:1-24. Thus he will seek to wipe out every trace of anything or anybody that reminds him of the Lord God (Daniel 7:26). But the judgment shall sit, and they shall

take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. This we have read earlier in this chapter-that Christ will come to judge the "man of sin," and to execute His righteous sway over the whole world (Daniel 7:27). And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

After Daniel had seen the vision, he concluded his record (Daniel 7:28) of what he had beheld and heard when he said:

Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.

Daniel was deeply "troubled" about the sins, as well as the sufferings of his people, Israel.

He loved his nation and his land.

Are you concerned, my friend, about the things that are to come upon the earth? Are you seeking to lead never-dying souls to Christ, so that they will be among those to be translated with His bride before these terrible judgments are meted out upon a godless world?

Are you sure your own sins are washed in the blood of the Lord Jesus, that you may be among that number when He comes for His own?

Daniel cared a great deal about the things that concerned God's people; and he "kept the matter" in his "heart."

That is the place to keep the Word of God, even as the Psalmist said centuries ago, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalms 119:11).

Let us be among those who keep these matters which God has made known to us in our hearts, as we "wait for his Son from heaven" (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

~ end of chapter 7 ~

08-The Vision of the Ram and the He Goat

THE VISION OF THE RAM AND THE HE GOAT

CHAPTER EIGHT

Foreshadowing That Part of the Roman Empire out of Which the Antichrist Will Arise AS WE enter upon the study of the eighth chapter of the Book of Daniel, let us keep in mind the central theme of the entire prophecy-the commencement, character, course, and consummation of “the times of the Gentiles.”

In our present lesson we see yet further details of things to come being unfolded to us by the Holy Spirit of God. When the vision recorded here was given to Daniel, all of it had to do with then prophetic events; whereas we today can look back and see that everything in Daniel 8:1-22 refers to men and empires that have come and gone.

We read about them on the pages of secular history. But Daniel 8:23-27 of the chapter before us have to do with “a king of fierce countenance” who shall appear “in the latter time” (Daniel 8:23); and he is none other than the Antichrist who is to come. Again, while Daniel 8:1-22 have to do with history, yet the men of whom they speak were shadows of that coming “man of sin,” who is more fully described in the closing verses of the chapter.

In our study of chapter seven we saw that the Antichrist will arise out of the territory which comprised the old Roman Empire, and that he will have associated with him ten subordinate kings who will do his bidding.

In chapter eight we shall see that God was revealing to Daniel that part of the Roman Empire out of which the Antichrist will come-the part over which Alexander the Great once ruled. In other words, the “king of fierce countenance” of Daniel 8:23 is the same as “the little horn” of Daniel 7:8. Some teach that these are two different persons; but such a position is contradictory, confusing, disastrous. A glance at our chart will show us that the ram of Daniel’s vision in chapter eight represents Medo-Persia; the he goat, Greece; “the notable horn,” Alexander the Great; the “four notable ones,” the four generals under whom Alexander’s kingdom was divided.

All this is set forth in Daniel 8:1-8 and Daniel 8:15-22. Daniel 8:9-14 have to do with Antiochus Epiphanes, an exceedingly wicked man who lived after Daniel’s day, fulfilling this prophecy in every detail-a graphic type of the “man of sin.” The chapter closes with a detailed description of that terrible Antichrist, who will rule on earth during the last, seven-year period of Gentile world dominion.

Let us read the chapter repeatedly getting the outline view of the whole, before we try to study it analytically.

As we read, we shall see that it is not man’s speculation that interprets the ram to represent Medo-Persia and the he-goat, Greece, for God Himself gives the full interpretation of the vision on

these inspired pages. Moreover, He gives us the key to the chapter; indeed, the key to the whole book, when He tells us in Daniel 8:19 that He wants us to “know what shall be in the last end of the indignation.”

God always wants us to “know” what the future has in store, not only concerning our own never-dying souls, but also concerning the ultimate development of world events and world movements. The Lord Jesus said to His disciples in the Olivet discourse, concerning the end of this age, “Behold, I have told you before . . . When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors” (Matthew 24:25; Matthew 24:33). Likewise, in Daniel’s prophecy He was telling us what shall take place “in the last end of the indignation”; that is, when the “cup of iniquity” of the Gentile nations is full.

Through the Apostle Paul God has also told us that He would not have us “to be ignorant” concerning His coming for His own, at the first resurrection and the translation of the church, before the Antichrist is revealed. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

God desires His people now to live their lives in the light of a revealed future. Yet some preachers actually tell their congregations that it is wrong to inquire from God’s Word regarding things to come.

Once I received a letter from a Sunday-school teacher who said she had been asked to give up her class, just because she was seeking to teach her group what God has written in the prophetic Scriptures. May we ever let the Spirit of God instruct us in every portion of His wonderful Word.

At least three times in the chapter before us He explains that the vision has to do with “the time of the end.” Let us look once more at these references:

- “At the time of the end shall be the vision” (Daniel 8:17);
- “I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation” (Daniel 8:19);
- “the vision . . . shall be for many days” (Daniel 8:26).

So then, because the complete accomplishment of what was revealed to Daniel concerns “the time of the end” of Gentile dominion, it must of necessity have a greater importance for us now than it ever had for others who have gone before us. “The last end of the indignation” has not yet been fulfilled. But every circumstance in the world today seems to indicate that the yet unfulfilled prophecies must surely come to pass in the not far distant future. Therefore, these things acquire an urgency for God’s people that should stimulate a keen interest regarding every detail of Daniel’s vision.

Some of these details of chapter eight had been revealed previously to Nebuchadnezzar and to Daniel.

The ram of chapter eight represents the same empire symbolized by the arms and breast of silver in the image of chapter two and by the bear of chapter seven; likewise, the he goat is none other

than that empire foreshadowed by the belly and thighs of brass in Nebuchadnezzar's vision and by the leopard with four heads and four wings of Daniel's vision recorded in chapter seven. In like manner, the Antichrist is described in chapters seven, eight, nine, and eleven, to say nothing of other typical chapters which foreshadow his manifestation, reign, and certain doom.

Let no one think for a moment that these oft-repeated references to the same four Gentile world empires and to the same Antichrist and his subject kings are given here merely for the sake of repetition. Not at all!

Each prophetic picture is set forth for a divine purpose, to present a different aspect of the character, course and consummation of "the times of the Gentiles." And, we repeat, the central thought of our lesson today is that chapter eight tells us the part of the old Roman Empire out of which the Antichrist will come.

And now let us read together the first two verses of chapter eight, which are introductory, giving us the circumstances under which Daniel received this vision from God: In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first. And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai.

Let us remember that, when Daniel saw this vision, Babylon had not yet fallen; for it was given to the prophet "in the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar."

Yet it foretold the second and third Gentile world empires-Medo-Persia and Greece. Daniel was not really in Shushan, but in the vision he saw himself as if he were there. At the time of this vision, Shushan was comparatively small; later it became the capital of Persia, after the time of Cyrus.

A glance at the map in the back of our Bibles will show that Elam was northwest of Persia proper, south of Media, and east of Babylon. The river of Ulai is now called "Kerah" or "Karasu." THE RAM AND THE HE GOAT 1. The Ram-Representing Medo-Persia.

In Daniel 8:3-4 we read:

Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great.

Daniel 8:20 leaves us in no doubt as to the identity of the empire represented by the ram; for the Angel Gabriel said to Daniel,

The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. The two horns, one higher than the other, and the higher coming up last, represent the same thing as that pictured by the bear which "raised up itself on one side" (Daniel 7:5). Media was more ancient than Persia. "Darius the Median" became king that night when the army of Cyrus conquered Babylon while Belshazzar was drinking wine out of the sacred vessels. But, as we have seen, Darius was weak; and his power lasted only two years. Then Cyrus became strong; and under him Persia dominated the consolidated kingdoms of the Medes and Persians. Thus the "higher" horn, or "king," "came up

last.”

Daniel saw the ram “pushing westward, and northward, and southward.”

The accuracy of Scripture is seen in the most minute details, for Daniel did not say that the ram pushed eastward. That was the direction from which the Persians themselves came! The maps of history show that the Medo-Persian Empire did push in the other three directions, conquering Babylon, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Asia Minor toward the west; Armenia, Iberia, even unto the Caspian Sea toward the north; and Judea, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Libya toward the south.

Such is this third prophecy concerning the second Gentile world power; for the breast and arms of Nebuchadnezzar’s vision, the bear of Daniel’s vision, and the ram—all foreshadowed in a marked degree the empire that has long ago fulfilled every word of the God-given message.

2. The He Goat-Representing Greece.

As Daniel beheld the ram, which “did according to his will, and became great,” he saw another strange sight, a conflict between the ram and “an he goat.” And he wrote in Daniel 8:5, saying: And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.

Before we consider this conflict between the ram and the he goat, let us read God’s interpretation concerning the he goat. It is found in Daniel 8:21, And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. From history we know that “the first king” of the Grecian Empire was Alexander the Great. He “came from the west” of Medo-Persia, “and touched not the ground,” so swiftly did he conquer his enemies. With “incredible swiftness” he “overran the world in less than twelve years.” Having lived a dissipated life, he died at about the age of twenty-eight. They tell us that he wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. He had been very angry with the Persians for their cruelties to the Greeks; therefore, he was “moved with choler against the ram.”

Let us read of the conflict in Daniel 8:6-7 : And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. In this figurative language God foretold the coming of the third Gentile world power. And history corroborates every word of it. Alexander, the heir to Philip of Macedon, welded together the independent, warring Greek states; turned eastward; conquered his enemies; and became a world ruler.

But Daniel (in Daniel 8:8) beheld until his power was broken:

Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.

Since Alexander died in the prime of life, while his kingdom was very powerful, the Word of God was literally fulfilled, in that “when he was strong, the great horn was broken.” He died from “fever at Babylon” at the time when his power was very great, i. e., “when he was strong.” Having no heir

to the throne, his kingdom was divided between his four generals, as we saw in the study of chapter seven. This is what Daniel meant when he wrote that “four notable ones” came up in the place of “the great horn” that was broken. Daniel 8:22 makes this very clear:

Now that [the notable horn, i.e., “the first king”] being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power. By way of review, we name again the four generals of history who divided Alexander’s kingdom—you will remember that we mentioned them in the previous chapter when we saw that the four heads and the “four wings of a bird” on the leopard represented these same four generals: Seleucus, ruling over Syria, Babylonia, and Media; Cassander, over Macedonia, Thessaly, Greece; Ptolemy, over Egypt, Cyprus; and Lysimachus, over Thrace, Cappadocia, Asia Minor.

Thus once more we see these prophetic pictures dovetailing -the belly and the thighs of Nebuchadnezzar’s image; the leopard with four heads and four wings; and the he goat whose notable horn was broken, in the place of which came up four notable ones, all portraying the same Gentile power known as the Grecian Empire.

We do not need secular history to vindicate and verify the inspired Word of God, but our faith is confirmed and God is glorified by the annals of uninspired men, as they bear record to the facts which God wrote before they came to pass.

ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES-A SHADOW OF THE ANTICHRIST

Earlier in this chapter we stated that Daniel 8:9-14 were prophetic of an exceedingly wicked man named Antiochus Epiphanes, who lived long after Daniel’s day, and who was a shadow of the Antichrist who is yet to come.

As Daniel saw “the notable horn” of the he goat broken, as he beheld until “four notable ones” came up in its place, he continued to witness the vision until “out of one of them (i. e., these ‘four kingdoms’) came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great” (Daniel 8:9). That “little horn” was Antiochus Epiphanes, of whom history tells. He “came forth” out of Syria, one of the “four kingdoms” into which Alexander’s empire was divided.

We must not confuse him with the Antichrist, who is called “the little horn” in Daniel 7:8. As we shall see from the study of Daniel 8:9-14, these verses prophesy concerning a man that has already lived and died- a veritable monster, who persecuted Israel, and is a remarkable type of the Antichrist.

In these verses we read at least seven things that are written of Antiochus Epiphanes:

1. He “Came Forth” out of one of the “Four Kingdoms” into which Alexander’s empire was divided. We have seen that this kingdom was Syria.
2. He “Waxed Exceeding Great”-“toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land” (Daniel 8:9). “The pleasant land” refers to Palestine.
- 3..He Exalted Himself. He “waxed great, even to the host of heaven” (Daniel 8:10). He defied Israel’s God, even setting up a statue of Jupiter in the Holy of Holies to be worshipped.

4. He Persecuted Israel. "He cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them" (Daniel 8:10). This was a forecast of the persecution of the spiritual leaders among the Jews. We need to bear in mind that this prophecy concerned Daniel's people, Israel.

5. He Claimed Honors Due Israel's Messiah. "Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host"- "the prince of the host" is the Messiah of Israel. (See Daniel 8:11.)

6. "By Him the Daily Sacrifice Was Taken Away!" Israel's morning and evening sacrifice was "taken away," that is, Antiochus refused to allow the Jews to offer the sacrifices that pointed on to Jesus, their Messiah and "the Lamb of God." "And the place of his sanctuary was cast down" (Daniel 8:11).

7. He "Cast Down the Truth to the Ground!" In his transgression, in his robbing Israel of her daily sacrifice, he "prospered" for a time (Daniel 8:12).

This is the God-given portrait of Antiochus Epiphanes, that terrible creature who was to come, and who long ago passed off the scene of this world's history. He succeeded to the throne of Syria about one hundred and twenty years after the death of Alexander. The Spirit of God, looking down the ages, saw in Antiochus a type of the Antichrist; that is why He recorded the portrait of that man of long ago, in order that he might be a foreshadowing of that other one who is to come. All that is written of Antiochus-and more-could be said of the coming "man of sin." He, too, will exalt himself as God, sitting "in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." He, too, will claim honors due only to Israel's Messiah, even our Saviour and Lord. He, too, will take away the daily sacrifice, persecuting God's ancient people-Daniel's people-in the "Great Tribulation" that is to come upon the earth.

So diabolical were the acts of Antiochus and so cruel was his persecution of the Jews that he was known as "Epiphanes, the madman." At one time he attacked Jerusalem and slew forty thousand Israelites, selling as many others into slavery. In diabolical mockery he had a sow killed and offered on the Jewish altar, scattering the broth over the sanctuary, defiling the Holy Place, and causing the daily sacrifice to cease for a time. With the setting up of the image of Jupiter to be worshipped, this blasphemy reached its climax.

What a picture of the blasphemy, the sacrilege, the revolting, abominable crimes of the coming "man of sin"! But Antiochus met a horrible death; he "was eaten of worms and ulcers, when on his way to Judea, intending to take vengeance for the defeat of his armies by the Maccabees" (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown). Again his terrible death is but a foreshadowing of the awful doom that awaits Satan's masterpiece, even the Antichrist in that yet future day. **THE CLEANSING OF THE SANCTUARY** No devout Jew could rest until the sacred altar and all the holy things had been cleansed of this blasphemous defilement by Antiochus. And as Daniel beheld the vision, he heard the conversation between two "saints" or "holy ones," angels of God.

Let us read Daniel 8:13-14 in the Revised Version:

Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said unto that certain one who spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the continual burnt-offering, and the transgression that maketh desolate, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then shall the sanctuary

be cleansed. This prophecy was fulfilled when Judas Maccabeus delivered Jerusalem and cleansed the sanctuary, about 165 B. C. This cleansing of the temple took place exactly 2300 days, of twenty-four hours each, from the time when Antiochus had defiled the holy things. These were 2300 literal days that passed, before the sanctuary was purified and re-dedicated to the service of the Lord.

Let us pause just here to expose a blasphemous heresy taught by the Seventh-day Adventists concerning this cleansing of the sanctuary.

A long time ago one named William Miller predicted that Christ would come again October 22, 1844, to “cleanse the sanctuary.” He said that Satan was the “scapegoat” of the Levitical law—a horrible blasphemy—and that God laid upon Satan all our sins. Such a perversion of Scripture is unthinkable; for we know that our Lord Jesus bore “our sins in his own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24)! William Miller had computed time from the issuing of the decree by Cyrus for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, counting 2300 years, not days as in Daniel 8:14, until October 22, 1844. It sounds ridiculous even to repeat his folly; but that is what he did; he counted 2300 years from Cyrus’ decree until 1844, and said that on that day Christ would return and “cleanse the sanctuary,” meaning an earthly sanctuary.

His followers sold their farms, their homes, their property of all kinds. They got into their “ascension robes,” sang hymns, and waited for the return of Christ. And yet our Lord Himself told us expressly not to set dates for His coming! When He did not return on October 22, 1844, many of Miller’s followers became avowed infidels—such is the tragedy of all heresy.

The Millerites broke up, but out of this movement Mrs. Ellen G. White formed a group which we know as Seventh-Day Adventists.

Mrs. White tried to make amends for William Miller’s error by saying that the “sanctuary” was heavenly, not earthly. She claimed that Christ did enter the Holy of Holies on October 22, 1844, to cleanse it from Satan’s defilement. Think of the audacity of such a statement! Our Lord was crucified, arose from the dead, and ascended into heaven forty days after His resurrection. Ever since that time He has been seated at the right hand of the throne of God, making intercession for His own. There He is today, our Great High Priest, our “Advocate with the Father.”

Evidently William Miller and Mrs. White and their deluded followers overlooked the plain statement of the inspired Record that the 2300 days were “evenings and mornings,” as a marginal reading so renders the words. To make them 2300 years is to pervert the Scriptures—to say nothing of the gross heresy of the doctrinal teaching set forth in this “sanctuary theory.”

DANIEL’S WITNESS TO THE GOD-GIVEN INTERPRETATION

After Daniel had seen the vision, he wrote these words (Daniel 8:15-19), explaining that it was God who gave to him the interpretation thereof: And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision. Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face

toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright. And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be.

Then follows the interpretation concerning the ram and the he goat, which we have already considered in detail (Daniel 8:20-22).

And from Daniel 8:23-27 the Angel Gabriel continued to speak to Daniel concerning what shall be “in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full” (Daniel 8:23). These remaining words of the chapter, as we have stated earlier in this lesson, give us another picture of the Antichrist, called here “a king of fierce countenance.” Let us see what the angel said about him. THE “KING OF FIERCE COUNTENANCE” This one described here cannot refer to Antiochus, for it is written in Daniel 8:23-25 that he shall “stand up” “in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full.”

In other words, the Antichrist, arising out of that part of the Roman Empire over which Alexander ruled, will “stand up” “in the latter time.” This old world has seen transgressors of evil intent-many of them! But the transgressors will not “come to the full” until “the man of sin” is revealed, and until he and his cohorts defy the God of heaven. The one described here is the same one of whom we read in the thirteenth chapter of Revelation. A king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power.

It is Satan who will give to the Antichrist his “power, and his seat [throne], and great authority” (Revelation 13:2); for Satan is “that old dragon.”

. . . and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people [i.e., Daniel’s people]. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and in their security shall he destroy [corrupt] many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.

Repeatedly in this series of studies we have read, from several portions of Scripture, that this “man of sin” will magnify himself as God, standing up “against the Prince of princes,” even our Lord Jesus.

Since the Holy Spirit has often repeated this warning for emphasis, shall we not also warn men to turn to Christ before that awful day comes when the Antichrist shall be made known? If God considers this repeated warning necessary, surely only Satan himself would dare close men’s eyes to its message. Yet that is just what he is trying to do-and all too often succeeding in doing.

After all his bitter persecution against Israel, after all his wicked blasphemy against “the Prince of princes,” the Antichrist will be “broken without hand,” that is, by God’s supernatural, divine power. He will be “cast into the lake of fire” when the Lord Jesus returns in glory to purify the earth, and to set up His kingdom of peace and righteousness. How we long for that glorious day! THE EFFECT OF THE VISION UPON DANIEL And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days.

With these words of Daniel 8:26 the Angel Gabriel concluded his message to God’s prophet, Daniel.

And in the closing verse of the chapter (Daniel 8:27) we read Daniel's own statement concerning the effect which the vision had upon him: And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.

Thus we see that the heart of Daniel was solemnized by the strange revelation which God had given him. Should not our hearts, likewise, be made solemn as we read and ponder the mysteries of His Word, even as we see before our eyes the fulfillment of His prophecies? "The king's business" requires haste; and the days may be few, in which we shall have time to witness as ambassadors for our coming King.

Daniel "did the king's business," even though his heart must have been heavy as he thought of all the sin of his people, and of the sufferings that were to come upon them. He trusted in the promises of his God, and went about "the king's business," witnessing to his Lord by doing the duties that were set before him.

Whatever our tasks may be, my Christian friend, let us ever remember that we are ambassadors for the "King of kings." His business is urgent. As ambassadors for Him, we are strangers and pilgrims here, for we look for "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10).

Meanwhile, we have a message from our King, and it can best be delivered to those for whom it is intended if our lives are consistent with our heavenly citizenship (Php 3:20). The message from our King is for those who are lost in sin, who do not know Him and His great salvation. It is a life-giving message, "Be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:20-21).

When I went to the death cell of that condemned man in San Quentin prison some time ago, the man of whom I wrote, I went to tell him of a pardon from my King. I had no right to offer him a pardon from the state of California. Such a verdict would have to come through legal procedure. But I could tell him of the One who took his place on Calvary's Cross, offering eternal redemption from the penalty of sin, so that he could be justified before the "Judge of all the earth," in the court of heaven, for all the endless ages.

Thank God, I found that condemned man clear on the plan of salvation, for years ago, under the ministry of the late Dr. R. A. Torrey, in the Church of the Open Door, Los Angeles, he had accepted Jesus as his personal Saviour.

Through the years he had grown cold and indifferent; he had lost his fellowship with his Lord, not his salvation. The result was a life of sin. It took an awful experience to turn him from his self-willed way. As I talked with him in his prison cell, I was convinced that he was born again, and repentant for his crime. Every evening before his execution he walked up and down his cell, singing, Rock of Ages, cleft for me,

Let me hide myself in Thee! His testimony before the guards and his fellow-prisoners bore fruit. What a wonderful Saviour we have!

This is our business for our King-to go to the lost with His life-giving message, His word of pardon and love and grace. This old world is rapidly speeding on to judgment; and how will sinners find

the Saviour if we do not tell them of His love?

My unsaved friend, I would not close this chapter without urging you to accept the message from our King. If you spurn it, you are giving allegiance to Satan.

If Jesus should take the church to heaven today, you would doubtless accept the “strong delusion” of the “king of fierce countenance” who is to come.

Put your faith in the atoning blood of Calvary’s Lamb, and He will wash you “whiter than snow”! But remember, “Now is the accepted time!”

~ end of chapter 8 ~

09- The Seventy Weeks in God's Calendar...

“THE SEVENTY WEEKS” IN GOD’S CALENDAR FOR ISRAEL

CHAPTER NINE

From the Close of the Babylonian Captivity to the Bringing in of “Everlasting Righteousness” AS THE seventy years’ Babylonian captivity draw near its close, Daniel was greatly concerned about what the future had in store for his people. He knew from the message of the prophet Jeremiah, sent to the exiled Jews that God would permit them to return to their beloved land of Palestine when the seventy years had expired. Therefore, he gave himself to prayer and fasting, and sought the Lord on behalf of his people.

His beautiful prayer and God’s answer in the form of a vision, telling His program for Israel, are recorded in chapter nine of the Book of Daniel.

The prophecy which God gave to His servant in answer to his prayer is usually called “the seventy weeks” of Daniel. Literally translated, the words mean “seventy sevens” of years which were “determined” upon God’s ancient people, from the close of the Babylonian captivity, even unto the coming of Christ in glory to “bring in everlasting righteousness” in His millennial kingdom (Daniel 9:24).

Seventy times seven equals 490 years. As we go carefully into the details of this prophecy, we shall see that our Lord was crucified at the close of the sixty-ninth “week”; that is, after sixty-nine times seven, equaling 483 years. If we subtract 483 from 490, we have seven left of this, God’s calendar for Israel.

That remaining seven years of Daniel’s prophecy will be fulfilled during the rule of the Antichrist on earth, after the church has been translated. As we keep in mind the fact that Daniel did not see, in all his visions, this parenthetical church age, then the message of “the seventy weeks” is clear and plain. It is usually considered a very difficult chapter, but as the Holy Spirit unfolds its meaning to us, it does not seem hard to understand at all.

It might well be called the backbone of all prophecy; it gives the key to all of God’s future dealings with Israel.

It appears all the more remarkable to us as we remember that, when God gave this vision to Daniel, every word of the message was then prophecy.

Sixty-nine of the “weeks” have been literally, historically fulfilled. The long parenthesis of this church age seems to be drawing near its close. When it is ended, then the last “week” of seven years will run its course.

But someone may ask, “Why is this vision concerning God’s dealings with Israel, from Daniel’s day until the second coming of Christ in glory, recorded in this book which has as its theme, ‘The Commencement, Character, Course, and Consummation of “The Times of the Gentiles?”’

The answer to this question is significant; “the times of the Gentiles” extend from the Babylonian captivity unto the return of Christ in glory; and they will end simultaneously with the fulfillment of the “seventy weeks” of Daniel’s prophecy. The last Gentile ruler will be the Antichrist, and his dominion will end with the return of the Lord Jesus to establish His kingdom of peace and righteousness.

In other words, “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24). Then Israel’s King, even Jesus, will take the throne!

Therefore, this ninth chapter of Daniel, with its message to Israel, must of necessity have to do with Gentile dominion in its relationship to God’s ancient people throughout all of the “seventy weeks” of years.

From the time Israel rejected her Messiah and crucified Him on the cruel cross, she has been set aside as a nation; meanwhile the church is being called out from among all peoples, both Jew and Gentile. But “God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew” (Romans 11:2). “And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I take away their sins” (Romans 11:26-27). This wonderful prophecy will be fulfilled when Jesus comes in glory.

Meanwhile, from the Day of Pentecost, when the church had her beginning, until she is translated to be with Christ, there has been and will be this long parenthesis in God’s dealings with Israel as a nation. It is an interval not counted in His calendar for the Jews, according to the vision which He gave to Daniel.

Some years ago I was on a train en route from Chicago to Texas, to see the young woman who later became my wife. For a time we ran on schedule, to the very minute. Then my train was sidetracked for two and one-half hours. It seemed like such a long wait! So I finally asked the conductor why we were sidetracked all that while. He answered me, saying, “We are waiting for the express to go through.”

After a time I heard a shrill whistle, and saw the fast train whizz by. Then my own train was put back on the main line, and on we went, according to schedule.

As I understood the reason for our being sidetracked, later to be put back on the main line, I thought of God’s train for Israel. For sixty-nine sevens of years His people ran according to schedule. Then their train was switched to a sidetrack, as it were, in order that the “heavenly express” might go through! From Pentecost to the rapture, the gospel train of this church age is on the main line.

And thank God! I am on that heavenly express! Are you, my friend? Are you on your way to the New Jerusalem, the city of the King? One of these days the journey will be over, and we shall be ushered into the presence of the Lord! Then the Jewish train will be put back on the main line. The Jewish clock will begin to tick once more!

Now let us turn to the ninth chapter of Daniel to find God’s whole program for Israel, from the time of Daniel even unto the second coming of Christ.

This prophecy was given to Daniel “in the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans” (Daniel 9:1).

In secular history this king was called “Cyaxares II, in whose name Cyrus, his nephew, son-in-law, and successor, took Babylon in 538 B. C. The date of this chapter is, therefore, 537 B. A, a year before Cyrus permitted the Jews to return from exile, and sixty-nine years after Daniel had been carried captive at the beginning of the captivity, 606 B. C.” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown).

DANIEL’S UNDERSTANDING OF THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

Daniel’s faith in the Word of God is seen in his acceptance of the prophecy of Jeremiah, recorded in verse two of our chapter: In the first year of his [“Darius”] reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

Daniel had been but a youth when he was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar. Sixty-nine long years had passed during his exile from Palestine. How often during those years he must have pondered upon God’s prophecy through Jeremiah—first that He would send His people into captivity if they did not turn from their idols; then His promise to restore them to their native land after the seventy years of discipline.

There was no mistaking the meaning of Jeremiah’s prophecy:

“And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years” (Jeremiah 25:11; cf. Jeremiah 27:22; 2 Chronicles 36:20-21).

And in Jeremiah 29:1; Jeremiah 29:10-11 -

Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives . . . to Babylon . . . For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Daniel took God at His Word; it was his concern for his beloved people and land that caused him to pray for wisdom as that period of seventy years’ captivity in Babylon drew near a close. My Christian friend, is your faith in God’s Word like that? You and I have so much more of the inspired record than Daniel had; we have the complete revelation of His will in the whole Bible. Yet how ignorant is the average Christian concerning its message! Let us read it, ponder over it, pray as we use it to lead souls to our Lord, even as Daniel did many centuries ago.

DANIEL’S PRAYER FOR ISRAEL

Doubtless as Daniel prayed for wisdom concerning his people and his land, he was distressed at the sins of those in Israel who did not even want to return to Palestine, for only a faithful remnant went back under Ezra, Nehemiah, and Zerubbabel. Daniel himself was evidently too old to be among the returning remnant. Certainly, as he prayed, he confessed the sins of his nation that had led to their captivity in the first place.

Every child of God who desires to know how to pray effectually would do well to study carefully this prayer of the prophet Daniel. So few know how to pray! It may be that the Holy Spirit has caused this prayer to be recorded in detail, in order that He might teach us to pray.

Many pages might be written about Daniel's prayer; we shall mention only a few of the secrets of its power. With your open Bibles before you, read it over and over, as we call attention to the following thoughts:

1. The Absence of Self-righteousness in Daniel's Prayer.

While there is no recorded failure on the part of Daniel, yet he realized that he, too, had fallen short of the glory of God and of His requirements. Therefore, he prayed, saying:

And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes (in true humility): and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession . . . We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets . . . O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face . . . because we have sinned against thee . . . we have rebelled . . . neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God . . . We have sinned . . . we have done wickedly . . . for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. And these words which we have just quoted are only a part of Daniel's confession of his sin and of the sins of his people!

- There is not a word of complaint on his part. He did not remind God of his own faithfulness when, as a youth, he had "purposed in his heart not to defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank."

- There is not a word of spiritual pride concerning the visions which God had revealed to him.

- There is not a word of his willingness to be torn by the lions rather than deny his God.

There is only confession of sin; there is true humility.

How quick we are to seek to vindicate ourselves when things go wrong! May we learn this lesson from Daniel, that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23); and but for His grace, we could never stand before Him.

As we look about us today, we bemoan the apostasy in professing Christendom, but let us remember that we have contributed toward the failure of the church. Let us not be too ready to condemn others while excusing our own failures to win souls, or to live consistent Christian lives. We dare not take the attitude of the self-righteous Pharisee, who "prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men . . ." (Luke 18:11).

If we search our own hearts in the white light of God's Word, we shall be humbled to the dust, for "all have sinned."

2. Daniel's Acknowledgment of Divine Justice.

Jerusalem had long been in ruins, Israel, in exile! Many would have complained against such a lot, saying that God had been too hard on them. But Daniel was careful to acknowledge that his God always does right. Listen to some of his words:

O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee . . . As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us . . . The Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice . . . O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain.

It was Abraham who said, long before Daniel's time, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25). And yet some who profess to love Him, by their actions, do not manifest such a faith. Have you a controversy with God, my friend? Have you lost your property? Your loved one? Have you had a great sorrow? Then leave it all with His measureless love; He knows the end from the beginning. And He is always right!

3. Daniel's Desire for God's Glory.

It was for God's holy city, Jerusalem, and for His name's sake that Daniel prayed for the reproach upon Israel to be taken away. Here is what he said, in part:

Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake . . . Behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name . . . O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

It is so easy for us to be self-centered in our prayers, as we seek blessing for our loved ones and for ourselves, rather than God's glory. Our Lord wants to save our loved ones; He wants us to receive blessing. But we must be careful to search the motives of our hearts, even as we pray, that His honor and glory may be our chief desire.

4. Daniel's Ground for Approach to God.

This great prophet was redeemed as were all the Old Testament saints, by faith in the promised Saviour; Daniel was born again on the basis of Calvary's sacrifice. It was "about the time of the evening oblation" that the Angel Gabriel "touched" Daniel (Daniel 9:21); and "the evening oblation" was the evening sacrifice. Now Daniel, away from his beloved city, an exile in a heathen land, could not actually offer the sacrifice upon God's altar in Jerusalem, yet he was faithful in prayer at that hour; and his thoughts were turned toward "the evening oblation."

Of what did that sacrifice speak? Of only one thing—the shedding of the blood of the Lamb of God who was to come! And it was on the basis of the atoning work of our Lord Jesus that Daniel approached God. Even a devout, faithful man like Daniel could draw near to God upon no other ground than by the way of the cross!

One of Satan's most subtle delusions is that he succeeds in getting hundreds of thousands of men to trust in prayer, apart from faith in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus. Even the pagan prays!

Often I have asked people if they are saved, only to receive such a reply as this, "I pray to God."

- The Unitarian prays, but he denies the deity of Christ.

- The Christian Scientist prays, but denies Calvary's Cross.
- The Mohammedan prays, but not to the true and living God.

Oh, that men would see that our Father in heaven can hear only the prayer that is offered in the name of His only begotten Son!

Some years ago I had the privilege of leading a saloon-keeper to Christ. While I was visiting him one day after his conversion, he said to me, "Teach me to pray so I may know that God hears me."

His had seemed a hopeless case, humanly speaking. It was one Saturday night, as I sat in my study in Paris, Texas, preparing a sermon for the coming Lord's Day, that I heard a knock at my door.

When I opened it, I saw an elderly woman, poorly clad, standing there before me.

"Come with me," she begged; "my son is dying, and I cannot bear to see him go without being converted."

I accompanied her to the place which she called home, a tumble down shack of a house. There was no electric light in the shanty; only by the dim candle-light could I see a man lying on a bed in one corner of the room. The hour of death had not actually come upon him, but he was in the last stages of tuberculosis-a man about forty-five years old. He would not permit me to talk to him about his soul, but he did agree to let me read the Word of God to him on condition that I make no comment.

That seemed a hard thing to do, but I promised to heed his request-it was the only way; as it turned out, it was a wonderful way!

I made a contract with that dying man to read to him ten minutes each morning without any comment of my own-just the Word of God. This I did every morning for about three months. I read the Gospel according to John through once. I read it twice. I started to read it a third time.

But when I got to John 1:29, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," that dying man put out his hand and touched my arm, saying, "Isn't that wonderful?" I need not tell you that he was born again that morning. And it was after this experience that he asked me to teach him how to pray.

It was one day when I had called to see him. He was sitting in a wheel chair in front of his house, giving out gospel tracts to passers-by. Evidently he had been praying, but he wanted to be reassured-he was such a young Christian! "Show me how to pray," he said, "I want to lead my mother to Christ."

To say that I was surprised is not to express fully my amazement; I had taken it for granted that his old mother was a believer in the Lord Jesus. But she was confused and deceived by Christian Science. Why she had knocked at my church study that Saturday night is still a mystery to me, but for the grace of God. That mother accepted Christ as her Saviour and Lord, and for some years now both she and her son have been with Him in glory. God answered that son's prayer!

My friend, would you like to move the arm of God on behalf of your son who sleeps every Lord's Day morning, indifferent to the things of Christ? Would you like to move the arm of God on behalf of your wayward girl? Then pray as Daniel prayed. And remember that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

"WHILE THEY ARE YET SPEAKING, I WILL HEAR"

It was through the prophet Isaiah that God gave us the precious promise, "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isaiah 65:24). And even while Daniel was talking to God, He sent the Angel Gabriel to answer His servant's prayer (Daniel 9:20-21).

Then Daniel continued:

And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

How it must have encouraged Daniel's heart to hear the angel say that he was "greatly beloved" of God! And God loves you, my friend. You may feel lonely and misunderstood here on earth, but if you seek to please God first and always, then you may depend upon it-you are beloved by Him. He loves all His children. He "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). But how it must make His heart glad to see His devoted servants, seeking above all else His will and His glory!

Surely the Holy Spirit wanted us not to miss the blessing from Daniel's prayer and God's answer; for He devoted most of this wonderful chapter to these things. Only four verses are left to tell about the vision of "the seventy weeks" of years; yet how full they are of rich and marvelous teaching!

"THE SEVENTY WEEKS" OF YEARS-GOD'S CALENDER FOR ISRAEL As we read Daniel 9:24-27, let us refer from time to time to the drawing that faces the first page of this lesson. In it we have tried to outline simply this great prophecy. And as we read, we must bear in mind several fundamental facts:

1. "The Seventy Weeks" Are "Weeks" of Years, Not Days.

The Hebrew word used is "seventy sevens," as we pointed out early in this lesson. Therefore, each of the seventy "weeks" represents a period of seven years. Seventy times seven makes 490 years, the total period of time of God's dealings with Israel-from the close of the Babylonian captivity, even unto the second coming of Christ to set up His kingdom on earth.

2. The Prophecy Concerns Daniel's People and Daniel's City, Jerusalem.

It has nothing to do with the Gentiles, other than that during this period Israel is under Gentile dominion. Nor has it anything to do with the church. We have shown repeatedly from Ephesians and other portions of Scripture that this church age was not revealed to Daniel-indeed, it was not "made known to the sons of men" until the days of Paul.

Note the exact words of the prophecy given to Daniel in Daniel 9:24, the key to the whole vision:

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people [Israel] and upon thy holy city [Jerusalem], to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

3. "The Seventy Weeks" Are Divided into Three Periods.

Let us see this from Daniel 9:25-27 :

(a) "Seven weeks" (7x7, or 49 years) "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem . . . and the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."

(b) "And threescore and two weeks" (62x7, or 434 years). "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off [crucified], but not for himself [literally, 'shall have nothing']: and the people of the prince that shall come [the 'people' of the Antichrist] shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." The "people of the prince" that was to come - not the "prince" himself - destroyed Jerusalem under the Roman emperor Titus in 70 A.D.

(c) "One week!" (1x7, or seven years). The Antichrist "shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate [during the great tribulation], even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate [literally, 'desolator']."

In other words, God has mentioned here three events that were to take place as the "Jewish clock" ticked off seventy sevens of years. The first great event took place at the close of the first seven "weeks"; the second, at the close of the next sixty-two sevens of years; and the third will take place in connection with the seventieth seven of years.

It was forty-nine years between the time when the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem was started and the completion of the work. The city was built again "in troublous times."

Read the wonderful story in Ezra and Nehemiah to see how the enemy opposed the faithful Jewish remnant at every turn-by ridicule, by craft, and by open opposition. But God was with His people; the temple worship was restored; the walls were finished; and God's prophecy was fulfilled.

From the close of this first period of seven sevens; i. e., forty-nine years, "unto the Messiah the Prince," another sixty-two sevens of years were to be reckoned. Adding these first two periods, we have sixty-nine sevens, or 483 years, at the close of which time the Messiah was to be "cut off, but not for himself." That really happened; for Christ was crucified exactly at that time.

Able chronologists, such as Sir Robert Anderson, have shown that the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ occurred immediately after the expiration of 483 prophetic years of 360 days each from the time designated in Daniel 9:25-26.

The Jewish clock had been ticking all those years.

By the time the Son of God was crucified, it had ticked off sixty-nine sevens of years. Then the clock stopped; and for nearly two thousand years now there has not been another tick from it.

After the crucifixion of the Messiah, Daniel's people and Daniel's holy city were set aside-not "cast off" by any means! Christianity fills up the interval, which has already lasted more than nineteen centuries. With these centuries the "seventy weeks" of Daniel's prophecy have nothing to do. They were determined upon Daniel's people and Daniel's holy city. But when the church is complete; when it is translated to be with Christ; when Gentile dominion draws near its close; then the last seven years of Daniel's vision will begin to run their course. Then Jerusalem and the Jews will once more occupy the center of the stage.

You will have no difficulty in understanding the great interval between the sixty-ninth and seventieth "weeks" if you will always bear in mind the fact that God never reckons time with the Jews when He is not dealing with them as a nation. When He ceases to deal with them as a nation, then the Jewish clock stops. This happened when Christ was "cut off," crucified; the Jewish clock stopped, and has not yet begun to tick again.

Israel's Messiah "came unto his own [things], and his own received him not" (John 1:11). He came unto His own created earth, unto His own rightful possession; but His own people, Israel, received Him not. He was "cut off" and "had nothing"-nothing which He rightfully should have possessed in His kingdom.

Instead of being accepted as Israel's King, He was betrayed, arrested, spat upon, scourged, mocked, tried, condemned as a blasphemer, crucified! But it will not always be so. One of these days God will reach down and start the pendulum of the Jewish clock once more. Quickly the seventieth seven of years on His calendar for the nation of Israel will run their course. Then He will return in power and great glory. And Israel will receive her King! Thus the "seventieth week" of Daniel will culminate in the personal, visible, bodily return of the Lord Jesus, completing every detail of this prophecy.

But someone may ask, "How can you be sure that the 'seventieth week' will be a period of seven years?" Because the sixty-nine "weeks" were actual years. To give any other interpretation to the passage would be utterly inconsistent. Consequently, the period between the translation of the church and the return of Christ must be exactly seven years-except that "those days shall be shortened . . . for the elect's sake" in "the time of Jacob's trouble." Otherwise, "there should no flesh be saved." (See Matthew 24:21-22). THE SEVENTIETH SEVEN OF YEARS

1. "The Prince That Shall Come."

When we read Daniel 9:26 we observed that this "prince" will be the Antichrist, ruling over the revived Roman Empire. Daniel did not say that the prince himself would destroy the city of Jerusalem and the sanctuary, but that his "people" would.

And the Romans did destroy Jerusalem, taking away the sacred vessels of the temple, in 70 A.D., under Titus. We repeat this here for the sake of clearness.

"The prince that shall come" is discussed further in Daniel 9:27, a passage which positively identifies him with "the little horn" of chapter seven and the "king of fierce countenance" of chapter eight. He is also described in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 and in Revelation 13:1-18, to say nothing of

the eleventh chapter of Daniel and other portions of the prophetic Scriptures.

2. "He Shall Confirm the Covenant with Many for One Week" (vs. Daniel 9:27).

Here we have "the seventieth week" in view. At the beginning of his reign he will pose as a friend of the Jews. He will promise them protection and religious freedom, in return for their allegiance to him as their sovereign.

3. "In the Midst of the Week" He Will Break the Covenant.

Half of seven years, of course, means three and one-half years. Repeatedly in prophecy we read that the last three and one-half years of this period are called "the Great Tribulation." And what will cause this terrible persecution of Israel? The answer is found in the words of our text: In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate. On other occasions we have pointed out that an "abomination" to a devout Jew is an idol. We have seen that the Antichrist will set up his image in the Holy Place of the temple in Jerusalem. When he does that, Israel will know that he is a false Messiah; will refuse to worship him as God; and he, in turn, will break his covenant with the children of Israel. Not only so; he will hate them bitterly, seeking to wipe out every trace of God's people. We have read together the passages of Scripture that foretell these events so often that we merely give some of the references (Matthew 24:15-26; 1 Thessalonians 2:3-12; Revelation 4:1-11; Revelation 5:1-14; Revelation 6:1-17; Revelation 7:1-17; Revelation 8:1-13; Revelation 9:1-21; Revelation 10:1-11; Revelation 11:1-19; Revelation 12:1-17; Revelation 13:1-18; Revelation 14:1-20; Revelation 15:1-8; Revelation 16:1-21; Revelation 17:1-18; Revelation 18:1-24; Revelation 19:1-21).

4. "The Great Tribulation."

Concerning the "time of Jacob's trouble" we have also had much to say; but just here let us get clearly in mind the different terms used in prophecy to express the extent of this last three and one-half years of the "seventieth week" of Daniel.

The duration of this period is referred to in Daniel 7:25 as "a time" (one year), "times" two years, and "the dividing of time" one-half year; i.e., three and one-half years. It is identical with the "forty and two months" of Revelation 13:5; and with the "thousand two hundred and threescore days" of Revelation 11:3. To put it this way: 42 months of 30 days each equal 1,260 days, or 354 years.

When we come to the study of Daniel 12:7, we shall find this same period described as "a time, times, and a half."

During this latter half of the "seventieth week" of Daniel, the most blasphemous idolatry will be forced upon the whole world; that is, upon all except those who will refuse to "worship the beast."

Thank God! A vast multitude of both Jews and Gentiles will prefer death to a denial of the true and living Lord. They will receive the message of the 144,000 Jews, God's missionaries in that day, who will herald the coming of the King. When Satan seeks worship in the very place where the Lord God's name should be honored, even in the Jewish temple, yea, in the very Holy of Holies, he will seek to annihilate everything and everybody that suggest the name of God. It will be a veritable "overspreading of abominations," making "desolate" the Jewish sanctuary. THE

BRINGING IN OF “EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS” But God has limited Satan’s power, for we read in the closing words of the chapter that the “man of sin” will blaspheme the name of God and persecute His people only “until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

God will pour out His wrath upon all those who set their faces against Him, and especially upon the ruler to whom Satan will give his power; for he shall be “cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Revelation 19:20). Then the prophecy of this ninth chapter of Daniel will be fulfilled in its entirety!

We are living in solemn days! The restoration of Israel as a nation is one of the most striking signs of the nearness of His coming. When He does, that last momentous “week” of seven years will be ticked off. At its “consummation” the smiting Stone of Nebuchadnezzar’s image will fall; the Son of Man portrayed in the seventh chapter of this prophecy will return as “the Ancient of days” to usher in “everlasting righteousness.” “Transgression” shall be “finished” for Daniel’s people and for their holy city (Daniel 9:24). The Most Holy Place, as well as the Most Holy and Righteous King, will be “anointed” (Daniel 9:24). And Christ will be “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Revelation 19:16).

My friend, if you do not know Him, let me urge you to get acquainted with Him now, while you have the opportunity to know Him as your Saviour; for meet Him you must! If you will not meet Him now as your Saviour, you must meet Him in that coming day as your Judge. Everyone who has rejected His gift of salvation will go into outer darkness, where “there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 22:13). For your own sake, for your family’s sake; but most of all, for Christ’s sake, receive Him today while there is yet time. “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

~ end of chapter 9 ~

10-The Conflict in the Heavens

THE CONFLICT IN THE HEAVENLIES

CHAPTER TEN

Foreshadowing the End of “Spiritual Wickedness in High Places” “in the Latter Time” THE LAST vision which God gave to Daniel is recorded in the three closing chapters of the prophecy. To get a comprehensive view of the entire vision, we need to read these chapters, 10-12, as a unit, repeatedly, prayerfully. Perhaps this preliminary reading will be of most help to us in understanding the message as a whole if we keep in mind some such outline as the following:

Chapter 10 records none of the prophetic portion of this last vision; but it tells in detail the circumstances under which the vision was given to Daniel, including a description of the angel and his conversation with the prophet. As we shall see, this strange conversation unfolds to us the conflict that takes place between God’s holy angels and Satan’s evil angels. In verse 14 the heavenly messenger gives Daniel the key to the vision, saying, “Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people [Israel] in the latter days.”

Chapter 11 begins the prophetic portion of this last vision which God gave to Daniel, presenting a foreview of Gentile dominion from the “first year of Darius” unto the battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ in glory. The chapter closes with the prediction that this “wilful king” “shall come to his end, and none shall help him.” And we know that it is the return of the Lord Jesus that will bring this to pass.

The first part of this chapter has to do with what is-to us-now ancient history; the latter half presents a life-sized portrait of the coming Antichrist and his cruel reign.

Chapter 12 completes the vision, adding yet other details about “the Great Tribulation” and the establishment of Christ’s kingdom on earth. It has been called a kind of epilogue to the entire Book of Daniel.

The prophecy of chapters 10-12 covers the same period as that of chapter eight, taking us from the time of the Persian and Grecian empires, even unto the end of the age. Historians have proved that the predictions of Daniel 11:1-35 have already been fulfilled, in the deeds of actual men who lived on earth many centuries ago.

But from 11:36-12:13 the vision takes us on to yet future events, all of which will be literally fulfilled after the church has been translated to be with the Lord.

We have seen in our study of this book that each chapter unfolds to us added details concerning the end of Gentile dominion and the events of “the seventieth week” of God’s prophecy to Daniel concerning Israel. Likewise, in this last vision which God gave to His faithful prophet, we see a detailed description of the events that will take place prior to the time when the Stone “cut out of the mountain without hands” will fall upon the feet of the image and demolish it.

And now let us go back to chapter ten to see what the circumstances were, under which God gave this vision to Daniel.

The devil did everything in his power to prevent the Lord from letting His servant see and understand this prophecy.

He opposed the heavenly messenger in a prolonged and bitter conflict. It seems as if he marshaled the very forces of hell itself to prevent Daniel from receiving the vision of the coming “man of sin,” also called “the little horn,” “the prince that shall come,” “the king of fierce countenance,” “the beast,” “the son of perdition,” “the lawless one,” and “the Antichrist.” To this terrible creature Satan will give “his throne, and great authority.” And without doubt, he would prefer that men did not know of his wiles, of his coming reign in the person of “the beast,” and of his certain doom.

It was “in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia” that this prophecy “was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar” (Daniel 10:1).

In other words, it was two years after the decree of Cyrus had gone forth for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The Jewish clock had begun to tick off “seventy sevens” of years. In order that the first forty-nine of these years might see the fulfillment of God’s prophecy, He had put it into the heart of Cyrus to let the faithful Jewish remnant build again the city and the walls.

But something caused Daniel’s heart to be very heavy, in spite of the fact that his beloved city was being restored. Let us read what he has told us in Daniel 10:2-3 :

DANIEL’S THREE WEEKS OF MOURNING In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

Why did Daniel mourn for “three whole weeks”? Doubtless he was distressed at the worldly-minded attitude of many Israelites in their adopted land. Only about 40,000 went with Nehemiah to the work of restoring Jerusalem. The others were content to remain in the Persian Empire, adopting heathen habits of life, possibly seeking wealth and ease. Daniel himself must have been about ninety years of age, too old to help in the work of rebuilding his beloved city. Doubtless he would have been one of the first to return, had he been a young man.

God’s glory was the ruling passion of his life, and it is little wonder that his heart was heavy as he saw the lack of enthusiasm on the part of his people, in their apathetic state of mind. He could eat “no pleasant bread”; nor did he anoint himself until the end of the three weeks. Possibly he was distressed also because Satan was trying to thwart the rebuilding of Jerusalem. We know that the enemy opposed the Jews at every turn, by craft, by ridicule, by discouragement, and by open opposition. It was no easy task that was set before them. And Daniel’s heart was heavy-whatever the immediate cause.

My Christian friend, have you ever been burdened because of the broken state of the church, as Daniel was burdened for the indifference of his people toward the things of God? Does the lack of zeal for Christ among professing Christians send you to your knees in prayer? The closer we live to the heart of God, the easier it is for us to understand and appreciate the feelings which possessed Daniel. During these three weeks-twenty-one days-he not only fasted and mourned,

but he prayed, yet with no apparent answer to his prayer. Finally his perseverance was rewarded; for, after three weeks, the answer came. THE APPEARANCE OF THE ANGEL

“And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel [‘Hiddekel’ is the ancient name for the ‘Tigris’]; then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz . . .” (Daniel 10:4-5).

Thus Daniel began to describe the angel, which appeared to him in the form of a man, glorious and wonderful to behold. This was not a dream; for Daniel was actually by the side of the River Hiddekel when the angel from heaven appeared unto him. His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude (Daniel 10:6). The heavenly being described here was evidently one of the holy angels, possibly one “of the highest order.” We believe this was not a manifestation of God in angelic form, because in the verses which follow we read that Satan’s evil angel withstood this holy messenger of God for “one and twenty days”- the very period of time, during which Daniel was in mourning and fasting and prayer. If this heavenly being had been God Himself, then Satan’s emissary could not have hindered him; for God is all-powerful. And the holy angel said to Daniel that Michael had gone to “help” him.

Again, when God appeared in angelic form to the Old Testament saints, the Scriptures usually refer to Him as “the angel of the Lord,” not “an angel.” Many times “the angel of the Lord” did appear to men before God was “made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14) in the form of His only begotten Son. Such appearances have been called by Bible students “theophanies” or “Christophanies.”

However, it seems very clear that the holy angel who showed his glorious presence to Daniel was one of God’s ministers, sent to enlighten and encourage His faithful prophet.

Having seen this messenger from God, Daniel wrote further in Daniel 10:7-10, saying: And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness [literally, ‘vigor’] was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. In deep humility Daniel had prostrated himself upon his face. Then at the touch of the angel, he sat upon his knees and upon the palms of his hands. And finally, after words of reassurance and encouragement, he “stood trembling”; for the angel had said unto him (Daniel 10:11)-

O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me,” Daniel continued, “I stood trembling.

It must have been wonderful for Daniel to hear the message from heaven, that he was “greatly beloved.” In our former lessons we have spoken of this God-given term of affection; and again in verse 19 of this chapter the angel addressed the prophet, saying, “O man greatly beloved, fear

not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong.” God loves you, my friend. And if you are seeking to honor Him in your life as Daniel did, you are “greatly beloved” in heaven.

WHY THE ANSWER TO DANIEL’S PRAYER WAS DELAYED From the very day when Daniel set himself to prayer and fasting and mourning, God had sent the angel to give him this vision. We have already seen that the purpose of the angelic ministry was to make Daniel “understand” what should befall his people, “in the latter days” (Daniel 10:14). “For yet,” the angel said, “the vision is for many days”; that is, it was to extend far into the future, from Daniel’s time.

In our reading of the entire vision, even to the end of the book, we have already seen that God was showing Daniel what was to come to pass concerning Israel up to the time when Christ’s kingdom will be established on earth.

But why was the angelic messenger three whole weeks in reaching Daniel’s side? The answer to this question is found in Daniel 10:12-13 :

Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words [i.e., 'because of thy prayers']. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. When God sent His angel in answer to Daniel’s prayer, “the prince of the kingdom of Persia” withstood him “one and twenty days,” the full three weeks of Daniel’s continued prayer, as we have already observed.

Israel was subject to Persia at that time; verse 1 tells us that Cyrus was king when the vision was given to Daniel.

“The prince of the kingdom of Persia” was not Cyrus; he was an evil angel, evidently appointed by Satan to seek to influence Cyrus against the people of God. Had this king not issued a decree, permitting Israel to return to Palestine, and to rebuild the city and the walls? Satan did not like that! He has ever fought against God’s ancient people, as well as against Gentiles who love Him. It is important that we get the meaning of this passage clearly in mind, that this “prince of Persia” was an evil angel.

Later in the chapter we read also of “the prince of Grecia,” another Satan-sent, wicked angel.

In the closing words of this chapter God tells us that Michael is Israel’s “prince.”

We have mentioned this fact before, and shall read again, in Daniel 12:1, of his ministry on behalf of the Jews. It was Michael, whose name means “Who is like God?” who contended with the devil about the body of Moses (Jude 1:9); and Moses was one of the greatest men the nation of Israel ever produced. Doubtless Moses and Elijah will be “the two witnesses” to God before Israel during “the Great Tribulation” period (Revelation 11:3-12); and Satan sought to destroy Moses’ body, in order to thwart this purpose of God in that coming day. But Michael won that conflict with Satan; for we read in Deuteronomy 34:5-6 that God buried Moses! Yet the incident reveals to us something of the power of the devil; for even the archangel Michael dared not rebuke him, but said, “The Lord rebuke thee.”

It is Michael, Israel's "prince," who will lead "his angels" against Satan and "his angels" in the bitter persecution against Israel during "the time of Jacob's trouble." As a result of this "war in heaven," Satan and his hosts will be cast down to earth. They shall not prevail; neither will there be found for them a "place . . . any more in heaven." When "that old dragon . . . which deceiveth the whole world" is "cast out into the earth," he will be filled with fury, "having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Revelation 12:7-12). Then he will no longer be permitted to have access to God to accuse His people; "for the accuser of our brethren . . . which accused them before our God day and night" will be cast out of the heavenlies.

We remember these clear teachings of Scripture, as we remember that Michael, Israel's "prince," contended with Satan over the body of Moses, and will contend for Israel during the darkest hour of her history.

As we keep these things in mind, we can understand why this holy archangel went to the help of the heaven-sent messenger, who was withheld by "the prince of Persia," when on his way to Daniel. THE POWER OF DEMONS From such passages of God's Word, we realize also something of the power of Satan's hosts.

It would seem that, under the leadership of the devil, these fallen creatures are organized into a great army, among whom there are ranks and degrees of power. We know, of course, that it is their business to thwart the plans of God. It seems evident that Satan has his powerful demons delegated to influence the leaders of the nations against God and His Christ, as well as against His believing children.

As we realize how Satan's messengers oppose even God's holy angels, our hearts are solemnized at the thought of our own helplessness against these demons, apart from divine aid. Moreover, this illustration of the power of Satan as he sent "the prince of Persia" to oppose God's messenger should cause every ruler to fly to God for wisdom and strength against these unseen foes.

Cyrus' heart had been turned in favor toward Daniel's people, yet this wicked angel withstood all that had to do with Israel's welfare. Likewise, rulers may be benevolent and wise, as worldly wisdom goes, yet if they do not look to God for help, they unwittingly become tools in the hands of "the rulers of the darkness of this world," whose leader is Satan, "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

"THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD"

Paul tells us plainly, in Ephesians 6:11-17, how the Christian may overcome this enemy of our souls. Note especially Ephesians 6:11-12 :

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

If Satan and his demons were "flesh and blood," we might kill them with implements of human warfare. But we are unequally matched against these forces of evil—"Spiritual wickedness in high places."

That is why we need Jesus. That is why we need His blessed Holy Spirit to fight this wily one for us. We need “the whole armour of God”-our “loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness,” our “feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.” We need “the shield of faith . . . the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

Again, let us note particularly what Paul said here, as he was guided by the Holy Spirit. He told us that these “rulers of the darkness of this world,” these who have to do with “spiritual wickedness,” that is, the wickedness of evil spirits, dwell “in high places.”

From the scriptures which we have already quoted in this lesson; from the record in Daniel of the conflict between “the prince of Persia” and the holy angel, assisted by Michael, we learn that Satan and his hosts dwell in the heavenlies; that Satan has access to God to accuse believers in Christ; that the realm of the air, as well as the earth, must be filled with the presence of these “powers of darkness.”

Indeed, Satan is called “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2). Thank God! It will not always be so! But somehow, in the permissive will of God, Satan and his demons dwell “in high places.”

During “the Great Tribulation” period, as we saw from Revelation 12:7-12, “the great dragon . . . called the Devil, and Satan” will be cast out into the earth, filled with wrath because he will know that “he hath but a short time.”

This tribulation period will not last long;

- Christ will return in glory to deliver His people;
- The beast and the false prophet will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20);
- Satan will be bound a thousand years (Revelation 20:1-3).

After the millennial reign of Christ on earth is past, Satan, too, will be “cast into the lake of fire and brimstone . . . and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:10). No wonder he will be filled with great wrath when he is cast out of the heavenlies! No wonder he tries now to keep men from reading the Word of God, which tells us of these things! He does not want us to know his subtle wiles or his certain doom.

SATAN-OUR ACCUSER BEFORE GOD

It is a solemn thing to know that Satan accuses us before our Lord.

He knows that God is righteous and just, that “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23), and that judgment must be executed upon the guilty sinner. Therefore, he entices the people of God to sin, and then wings his way into His divine presence, and accuses them before Him. Read Zechariah 3:1-2 for an illustration of this fact. Read the story of Job for one of the clearest pictures of this solemn truth. In Job 1:6-7, we read:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan

answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

Then it was that Satan accused Job to God, saying that he was serving the Lord for material gain and earthly pleasure. We know the familiar story, how God permitted Satan to try Job sorely, yet how Job's faith in his Lord did not waver.

Satan has not changed his tactics or his evil ways since the days of Job.

Peter tells us that he is our "adversary . . . as a roaring lion" walking about, "seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

CHRIST, "OUR ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER"

How hopeless and helpless our lot would be if it were not for the fact that we have "an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"! (1 John 2:1). John tells us of His intercessory work for us, saying, My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. The word "advocate" is the same as our word "lawyer."

We all know what a lawyer is. He is a man skilled in the law. He takes a man's case, and appears before the judge to plead for the accused. Now it is impossible for a lawyer to defend his client with any degree of success unless he knows all about the case, and has the assurance that it is absolutely in his hands. But with all the facts before him, he can go before the judge and defend his client.

My friends, more than thirty years ago I put my case in the hands of the Son of God. He became my Advocate. He knows all about me, yet He loves me in spite of my sins. I am sorry to have to admit that, all too often, I have given Satan cause to accuse me before the God of heaven. But my Advocate sits at the right hand of "the Majesty on high." And when Satan accuses me, "Jesus Christ the righteous" puts to rout the enemy of my soul.

To His Father He says, "Yes; the accusations are true." Oh the more shame to us, that we should give cause for such accusations before the God who loves us! "But," my Advocate continues-and we paraphrase the beautiful words- "I was wounded for his transgressions; I was bruised for his iniquities; and by my stripes he is healed." (See Isaiah 53:5.)

Thus the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son and my Saviour, cleanses me from all sin.

May I ask you, my friend, whether or not you have put your case into the hands of the Son of God? Before you can ever know Him as your Advocate, you must know Him as your Saviour, for He intercedes at God's right hand only for those who have been born again by faith in His atoning work on Calvary's Cross. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25). But those who would have Him intercede for them must come unto God by Him!

Would you like to know what kind of prayer our Advocate is offering on our behalf before the Father? Then turn to the seventeenth chapter of John. Read it, and you will love Him more and more. These words were spoken just before our Lord went to the cross.

No wonder Charles Wesley, as he meditated upon the work of his Great High Priest and Advocate with the Father, wrote the words of the hymn we love:

Arise, my soul, arise;

Shake off thy guilty fears;

The bleeding Sacrifice In my behalf appears.

Before the throne my Surety stands; My name is written on His hands.

He ever lives above For me to intercede,

His all-redeeming love His precious blood to plead.

His blood atones for all our race, And sprinkles now the throne of grace.

Five bleeding wounds He bears, Received on Calvary;

They pour effectual prayers;

They strongly plead for me:

“Forgive him, O forgive,” they cry,

“Nor let that ransomed sinner die!” My God is reconciled; His pard’ning voice I hear;

He owns me for His child;

I can no longer fear.

With confidence I now draw nigh, And, “Father, Abba, Father,” cry. Not only do we have our Great High Priest to intercede for us before “the throne of grace,” but His holy angels are also our “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Hebrews 1:14).

Angels are created beings, and not the spirits of our departed loved ones, as many believe.

According to the teaching of the Word of God, we cannot sing that song which says, “I want to be an angel, and with the angels stand.” No human being will ever be an angel, good or bad. Angels are of a different order of creation. Now they have more power than do we; in heaven we shall be in a position higher even than the angels-God’s servants and ours,-for we are “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17).

When the Lord Jesus spoke of the “angels” of little children who “do always behold the face” of His Father in heaven (Matthew 18:10), He taught that, evidently from childhood, possibly from infancy, each of us has one or more guardian angels, especially concerned with the physical well-being of the one entrusted to the care of these “ministering spirits.”

It is impossible for us to know now how often we have been rescued from accidents and dangers of many kinds by these guardian angels, but this we know: “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them” (Psalms 34:7). “For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone” (Psalms 91:11-12).

The angels of God “excel in strength . . . do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word” (Psalms 103:20). They receive the spirits of departing saints (Luke 16:22). “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:10).

Angels often appeared to the Old Testament saints, before the world saw the manifestation of God in human form, in the Person of the Lord Jesus, and before the world had the complete Word of God. But in this church age, since Christ has revealed to us the Father, and since we have the complete revelation of His will in His written Word, we do not need to see the angels of God. Believers are to walk by faith, not by sight.

When the Son of God returns to earth to reign in great glory, He will be accompanied by “all the holy angels” (Matthew 25:31). Then angelic beings will be visible upon the earth once more.

Now when the angel told Daniel of his three weeks’ conflict with “the prince of Persia” and of Michael’s help on behalf of Daniel and his people, God drew aside the veil, as it were, letting us see something of the mystery that surrounds the conflict in the heavenlies over the cause of righteousness. We have paused to consider this passage in some detail, comparing it with related portions of Scripture which add more light upon the subject, because these things have to do with our daily conflict with “the powers of darkness.” To know our danger from Satan and his demons, and to know our Source of strength, even our Advocate, “Jesus Christ the righteous”-to know Him and His provision for our need, is to be able to withstand the evil one in times of temptation.

And just as the heaven-sent messenger, aided by Michael, Israel’s “prince,” won the victory over “the powers of darkness” in Daniel’s day, so also in that yet future time, when the forces of evil will work in the earth as never before, God’s holy angels will defeat Satan and all his demons. For “in the latter time” “spiritual wickedness in high places” must give way to all that is righteous and peaceable and just and holy and true-when Jesus comes again!

DANIEL STRENGTHENED FOR THE MESSAGE GOD WAS ABOUT TO GIVE HIM The closing words of the chapter show us how God strengthened Daniel for the vision which was to follow. Surely he needed divine strength, for he was to hear a message that spoke of untold suffering for his poor, disobedient people. In humility he prostrated himself, his face “toward the ground,” and became dumb. But one “like the similitude of the sons of men touched” his lips, giving him spiritual utterance. Then Daniel spoke (Daniel 10:16-17), saying,

O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. For how can the servant of this my lord talk, with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me.

Again the angel touched Daniel and strengthened him, com-forting him with the reassuring, beautiful words of Daniel 10:19 :

O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong.

Then Daniel, strengthened for the message, heard the angel say that afterwards he would return “to fight with the prince of Persia,” and later with “the prince of Grecia.”

Then the messenger from God said to the prophet in Daniel 10:21 :

I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince. In our next lesson we shall consider that part of the vision recorded in chapter eleven. But before we close this study, let us ask our own hearts if we, like Daniel, have let God speak to us, to prepare us for the message He has for us in His Word.

There is so much activity today, even among Christians; there is so much restlessness; there is so much coming and going, that it is difficult to find time for prayer and seeking the will of God.

Let us lay hold of the promise, "Fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong." Then we shall be ready to "hear what God the Lord will speak" (Psalms 85:8).

~ end of chapter 10 ~

11-The Antichrist's Reign of Terror

THE ANTICHRIST'S "REIGN OF TERROR"

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Climaxing Gentile Dominion from Darius to the Battle of Armageddon

SINCE all of chapter ten is preliminary to the vision recorded in chapters eleven and twelve, we need not tarry longer here to review the circumstances under which this prophecy was given to Daniel.

However, let us bear in mind that it was the last and the most detailed of all the prophecies revealed to this faithful servant of God.

Beginning with "the first year of Darius the Mede" (Daniel 11:1), under whose reign Daniel lived; it takes us on, even to the complete and final downfall of the Antichrist at the hands of the Son of God. And the picture given us in chapter eleven of this coming "man of sin" is one of the most complete in all the prophetic Scriptures.

Chapter eleven falls logically into two main divisions,

- Daniel 11:1-35 recording detailed prophecies that have long ago been literally fulfilled;
- Daniel 11:36-45 presenting to us the graphic portrait of the Antichrist and a foreview of his conflicts, which will end in the battle of Armageddon.

Not only does the latter half of the chapter tell of this coming time of sorrow and great trouble, but much of the first part of the chapter, now ancient history, also foreshadows the bitter suffering yet to come upon Israel and all the world during the "reign of terror" of "the beast."

Therefore, his blasphemous person, his bitter conflicts and swift conquests, ending in the last great world struggle, form the central theme of the portion of this last vision of Daniel which is recorded in chapter eleven.

What a terrible climax to Gentile dominion the reign of the Antichrist will be!

PALESTINE-A BATTLE GROUND OF THE NATIONS

Now let us consider the prophecy of Daniel 11:1-35, which has long ago been fulfilled, as nations fought their wars in and around the land of Palestine. We have often said that only the nations which are directly concerned with Israel are mentioned in these prophecies. We have often observed that Palestine is the geographical and political center of the earth (Deuteronomy 32:8).

Likewise the record of the wars, about which Daniel 11:1-35 of our chapter have to do, is written here because Israel was involved in these struggles. For centuries the Holy Land has been a kind of buffer state, a battle ground of the nations; God's ancient people have been made to suffer from

the conflicts of the warring, Gentile peoples of the earth.

For example, the wars between “the king of the north” and “the king of the south,” described in Daniel 11:5-35, concern Syria on the north and Egypt on the south of Palestine. In the battle of Armageddon, the Holy Land will be the field of carnage such as the world has never seen, for that last war will be fought on the plains of Megiddo in the land of Israel. **THE KINGS OF PERSIA AND OF GREECE** The angel sent from God continued to talk to Daniel in Daniel 11:1-2, showing him the vision, and saying:

Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him [i.e., Michael, mentioned in the closing words of chapter ten]. And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia. In the first verse which we have just read we see that this heaven-sent messenger had confirmed and strengthened Michael, Israel’s “prince,” evidently on behalf of Daniel’s people.

The “three kings in Persia” who were yet to come proved to be Cambyses, Pseudo-Smerdis, and Darius Hystaspes, called by Ezra Ahasuerus, Artaxerxes, and Darius. And the fourth king, who was to be “far richer than they all,” was Xerxes, called Ahasuerus in the Book of Esther.

A proud, self-willed monarch, he invaded Greece with his mighty army when Persian power was at its height. After his defeat, the kings who succeeded him decreased in power. Then Alexander the Great took the center of the world’s stage. Hence the prophecy of Daniel 11:3-4 : And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those. From our study of chapter eight, we have seen that every detail repeated here was literally fulfilled in the Grecian Empire. We have seen that Alexander swiftly conquered a great empire, then died childless; and that his kingdom was divided “not to his posterity,” but among his four leading generals, whose power was not “according to his kingdom,” that is, not so strong.

Therefore, the “mighty king” of Grecia mentioned here is identical with “the he goat” of chapter eight. He is referred to here, as also in chapter eight, because the Antichrist will arise out of the part of the Roman Empire over which Alexander ruled. **THE WARS BETWEEN THE KINGS OF SYRIA AND EGYPT** In Daniel 11:5-35 we have an account of what is known in history as the wars of the Ptolemies, kings of Egypt, against the kings of Syria, a long series of conflicts covering a period of 120 years. Syria on the north and Egypt on the south of Palestine became bitter enemies. They were two of the fragments into which Alexander’s empire had been divided. As they fought their battles, they used the land of Israel as a battle ground. Moreover, Syria was not only a deadly enemy of Egypt; she also hated Daniel’s people with an intense hatred.

Daniel 11:5-21 foretold these wars, now recorded also on the pages of history. We shall not attempt, in these studies, to present all the details of the ancient records of secular history. Any good Bible commentary will give much of this information to the student who cares to delve into the biographies of these men of long ago. We shall try to present here only the bare outline of facts, necessary to the understanding of what the angel told Daniel in the vision, taking as our

secular authority the authentic record of the “Bible Commentary” of Jamieson-Fausset-Brown.

1. Early Intrigues and Wars.

“The king of the south” (Daniel 11:5) was Ptolemy Soter; “one of his princes” (Daniel 11:5) was Seleucus, “to whom Syria was given.” The latter was stronger than the former, and “his dominion” was “a great dominion.”

The “prediction of Daniel 11:6 was fulfilled in the marriage of Berenice; daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus, to Antiochus Theos, third king of Syria, B.C 285-247.”

Thus the ruling houses of Egypt and Syria sought to bring about an alliance of political importance, for the father of Berenice gave her in marriage to the northern king, in order to end his war with the latter. This Antiochus in order to marry Berenice, divorced his wife, Laodice, and disinherited her son. But the marriage of Berenice to Syria’s king failed to bring about peace. Ptolemy, king of Egypt; died, whereupon Antiochus, king of Syria, took back his former wife, Laodice. She, in turn, poisoned him, and put to death Berenice and her son. Laodice then placed her own son, Seleucus Nicator, upon the throne.

Daniel 11:7-9 tell us how the brother of Berenice, “a branch of her roots,” avenged the wrong against his sister. That brother was Ptolemy Euergetes, the next king of Egypt. He invaded Syria, even to the Euphrates, killed Laodice, and returned to Egypt “with 40,000 talents of silver, precious vessels, and 2400 images, including Egyptian idols, which Cambyses had carried from Egypt into Persia. The idolatrous Egyptians were so gratified that they named him Euergetes, or Benefactor.” “Ptolemy survived Seleucus four years,” even as God had foretold in the vision which He gave to Daniel (Daniel 11:8). “So the king of the south” entered into “his kingdom” with great spoils (Daniel 11:9).

2. The Wars of Antiochus the Great, the Father of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Daniel 11:10-19 tell us of the wars of Antiochus the Great, king of Syria, against his enemies, especially against the king of Egypt. This Antiochus was one of the two “sons . . . stirred up” against Egypt’s king (Daniel 11:10).

Upon the death of his father, and later upon the death of his brother, he regained all the land of Syria that had been subjugated by Ptolemy Euergetes. Then “the king of the south,” Ptolemy Philopater, son of Ptolemy Euergetes, “moved with choler” (Daniel 11:11) against Antiochus, slew 10,000 of Syria’s army and took 4,000 captives. This king of Egypt had previously killed his own father, mother, and brother; was licentious; and “his heart” was “lifted up” (Daniel 11:12) through pride. Instead of following up the advantages of his victory over Syria, he settled down in indolence, and was “not strengthened by” his success (Daniel 11:12).

The son of this evil king of Egypt was Ptolemy Epiphanes, a mere child when, fourteen years after his defeat, Antiochus returned to fight against Egypt “with a great army and with much riches” (Daniel 11:13). Among the many that stood up against Egypt’s king at that time (Daniel 11:14) were the rebels in Egypt and Philip, king of Macedon. “The robbers” of Daniel’s people (Daniel 11:14) were “factious Jews” who rebelled against Ptolemy, joining themselves to Antiochus, hoping thereby to gain independence for Palestine. In so doing, they established, or fulfilled, the vision given to Daniel; yet their efforts came to naught (Daniel 11:14).

The war between Syria and Egypt continued, with Palestine as the battle ground; it is “the glorious land” which was “consumed,” made desolate by the invading armies (Daniel 11:15-16). Then Antiochus the Great, king of Syria, “turned from open assault to wile, by his war with the Romans in his endeavor to extend his kingdom” to its former limits.

He gave his daughter, Cleopatra, to Ptolemy Epiphanes, the king of Egypt, against whom he had fought for a long time, promising Judea and other lands as a dowry. By this scheme he hoped to hold a neutral position in the war with Rome, securing also much territory. But his daughter did not “stand on his side”; neither was she “for him” (Daniel 11:17). Instead, she took the part of her husband, king of Egypt. Then Antiochus turned “his face unto the isles” (Daniel 11:18), and took many of the islands of Greece in the Aegean Sea “in his war with the Romans.”

“But a prince for his own behalf” caused “the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach”; that is, “with untarnished reputation,” this prince defeated Antiochus for his own glory.

That prince was Lucius Scipio Asiaticus, a Roman general, who compelled this king of Syria to “relinquish all his territory west of the Taurus, and defray the expenses of the war.” Therefore, Antiochus turned “his face toward the fort of his own land” (Daniel 11:19). “Attempting to plunder the temple of Jupiter at Elymais by night, whether through avarice, or the want of money to pay the tribute imposed by Rome (a thousand talents), he was slain with his soldiers in an insurrection of the inhabitants.” Then were fulfilled the closing words of the prophecy of Daniel 11:19, “. . . but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.”

3. The Evil Rule of a Brother of Antiochus Epiphanes.

The “raiser of taxes” (Daniel 11:20) was the son of Antiochus the Great, who ruled Syria after his father had been slain. His name was Seleucus Philopater; he it was who was compelled by Rome to raise taxes for tribute (Daniel 11:20). He caused the temple in Jerusalem to be plundered; was betrayed and poisoned by the very man whom he had used to perform this sacrilege; and was succeeded to the throne of Syria by his brother, the “vile person” described in Daniel 11:21-35 of our chapter, as well as in chapter eight of Daniel’s prophecy. Thus it came to pass that “within few days” Seleucus was “destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle [i.e., ’not in a popular outbreak, nor in open battle]” (Daniel 11:20). The “few days” were really twelve years, but “few” when “compared with the thirty-seven years” of his father’s reign.

4. The Wars of Antiochus Epiphanes-That “Vile Person.”

From Daniel 11:21-35 the vision describes Syria’s wicked, blasphemous king, of whom we read in chapter eight, in which he was called “a little horn” (Daniel 8:9). There the record is given of his defilement of the Jewish sanctuary when he offered a sow upon the sacred altar and erected a temple to Jupiter. In our study of this earlier chapter we saw that God gave Daniel a detailed description of Antiochus Epiphanes because he is a type of the Antichrist who is to come. “The beast,” too, will defile the sanctuary, setting up his own image to be worshipped, and persecuting to death all who refuse to give him divine honors.

And now, in Daniel 11:21-35, we have another picture of Antiochus Epiphanes, that “vile person,” because God wanted to emphasize the warning concerning “the beast” who is to come, of whom this Antiochus is a graphic type. This terrible creature who was Syria’s king is not an important

personage in secular history; only because he outraged Daniel's people and defiled the sacred temple, is he given this prominent place in these two prophetic chapters of the Word of God. Let us bear in mind the fact that these prophecies of Gentile rulers are given here only because they do concern Daniel's people and Daniel's land. Syria and Egypt were the two parts of Alexander's empire which had to do with this ancient people of Israel.

We are told that Antiochus Epiphanes was not only called "the madman," but that "he would carouse with the lowest of people, bathe with them in the public baths, and foolishly jest and throw stones at the passers-by."

By craft he had taken the throne from the son of his deceased brother, who was the rightful heir.

The nation of Syria did not give to him "the honour of the kingdom" (Daniel 11:21); that is, by legal procedure; but he obtained "the kingdom by flatteries" (Daniel 11:21).

(a) His Majesty over the King of Egypt.

Beginning with Daniel 11:22, we have a description of the deceitful craft of this wicked king of Syria. . . He went down to Egypt with "overwhelming forces," gaining the mastery over "the prince of the covenant" (Daniel 11:22).

This prince was Ptolemy Philometer, the son of his own sister, Cleopatra. "After the league made with him," Antiochus worked "deceitfully," taking with him "a small people" at first, in order to escape suspicion (Daniel 11:23). He entered "peaceably" (literally, 'unexpectedly') "even upon the fattest places of the province," doing that which his fathers had not done, "nor his fathers' fathers" (Daniel 11:24). In other words, he took possession of Memphis and all Egypt as far as Alexandria, something which the former kings of Syria had sought to do in vain. Then were fulfilled, in part, the words of the latter portion of Daniel 11:24 : "He shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time."

(b) His Subjugation of Jerusalem.

Later he went into Judea, "where, in revenge for the joy shown by the Jews at the (false) report of his death, which led them to a revolt, he subdued Jerusalem by storm and stratagem." But this was only "for a time."

(c) His Further Conquests in Egypt.

In Daniel 11:25 we read of the expedition of Antiochus into Egypt, against "the king of the south," or Ptolemy Philometer. In this Antiochus was the victor, partly because of the betrayal of Egypt's king by those who should have helped him (Daniel 11:26). And still the treachery and "lies" continued (Daniel 11:27).

(d) His Defilement of the Jewish Sanctuary.

It was on the return of Antiochus to Syria that the words of Daniel 11:28 were fulfilled, for it was then that he offered the sow on the sacred altar in Jerusalem.

Of this the prophecy tells us,

Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land.

At this time that "vile person" "attacked Jerusalem . . . slew 80,000, took 40,000 prisoners, and sold 40,000 as slaves . . . entered the sanctuary with blasphemies, took away the gold and silver vessels, sacrificed swine on the altar, and sprinkled broth of the flesh through the temple" (II Maccabees 5:15-21).

(e) His Expulsion from Egypt by the Romans.

Daniel 11:29 tells of the next expedition of Antiochus into Egypt, but it was "not as the former, or as the latter. For the ships of Chittim" came "against him"; therefore, he was "grieved," and returned, and had "indignation against the holy covenant" (Daniel 11:29-30). "The ships of Chittim" were "Macedonian Grecian vessels."

The term "Chittim," "properly 'Cyprian,' so called from a Phoenician colony in Cyprus," was later applied to the "islands and coasts of the Mediterranean in general." In these ships the Romans came against Antiochus, and brought his expedition into Egypt to a close.

(f) His Vengeance upon the Jews and His Decree Demanding the Worship of Jupiter.

In his wrath, he turned once more against the Jews, for he was "indignant that meantime God's worship had been restored at Jerusalem." Apostate Israelites helped him, for he had "intelligence with them that" forsook "the holy covenant" (Daniel 11:30).

In his rage, both against Rome and against the Jews, he sent an army of 22,000 men to destroy Jerusalem "two years after its capture by himself." Multitudes were slain; the city was pillaged; and all the Jews were told to worship the heathen god, Jupiter, on pain of death if they refused obedience. "Identifying himself with that god, with fanatical haughtiness he wished to make his own worship universal." What a picture of the coming "man of sin"! No wonder Daniel wrote, as he saw the vision, the words of Daniel 11:31-32! And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. And such as do wickedly against the covenant [apostate Jews] shall he corrupt by flatteries.

(g) The Brave Resistance of the Maccabees, the Faithful Jewish Remnant.

There is always a faithful remnant in Israel; and the days of Antiochus Epiphanes were no exception. The Maccabees were true to the God of their fathers; of them the prophet wrote in Daniel 11:32-33 saying,

But the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.

What sorrow has followed God's people, Israel! And what sorrow lies ahead for them even yet in the "time of Jacob's trouble"! Our hearts can only pray for the salvation of many of these persecuted people, and for the coming again of our Lord and their Messiah, to end their bitter trials!

As Daniel continued to behold the vision, he saw that when Antiochus should persecute his people, they would be “holpen” or “helped” with “a little help.” That is, “the liberty obtained by the Maccabean heroes for the Jews was of but short duration. They soon fell under the Romans and Herodians; and ever since, every attempt to free them from Gentile rule has only aggravated their sad lot.” When the faithful remnant was successful in opposing Antiochus, as under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus, when the sanctuary was cleansed (cf. Daniel 8:13-14), many fickle ones did “cleave unto them with flatteries” (Daniel 11:34). For selfish purposes, not for God’s glory, these apostate Jews wanted to be on the winning side in any event. They are like apostates and hypocrites in any age.

Again Daniel’s attention was turned toward the faithful remnant who would die rather than obey the blasphemous Antiochus; and as he saw these in the vision, he realized that God makes even “the wrath of man” to praise Him (Psalms 76:10). Daniel saw that out of this suffering God was bringing a purged and a consecrated people. In Daniel 11:35 the prophet gave expression to this, God’s great purpose for His own, as He permitted trials and sorrows to purify their lives and hearts:

And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.

God has set a limit upon Israel’s afflictions, even as He sets a limit to our sorrows. Yet through many trials He often burns up the dross, refining the souls of His children as silver. May we let Him have His way with us!

(h) Antiochus Epiphanes-A Type of the Antichrist at “the Time of the End”

Daniel 11:35 brings to a close the dark picture of that “vile person,” known in history as Antiochus Epiphanes. As his horrible portrait is finished, the Holy Spirit leads us on, in anticipation, “even to the time of the end” (Daniel 11:35). It seems as though He would have us realize how definitely this terrible king of Syria foreshadowed the Antichrist who is to come, whose picture is given in the remaining verses of the chapter.

It is difficult for us to imagine greater persecution of Israel than that perpetrated by this wicked king of Syria. Yet our Lord Himself, prophesying concerning “the Great Tribulation,” said that it would be a time of suffering “such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21). As we enter upon the study of the closing verses of our chapter, as we view the life-sized portrait on that coming “man of sin,” may the Lord show us how to win many of these “people of the wandering feet” to Him before that terrible time of tribulation comes upon them and all the world!

“THE WONDERFUL WORD” OF OUR LONG-SUFFERING GOD

We cannot read the minute details of the prophecy which we have just been considering in Daniel 11:1-35, marvelously fulfilled and recorded in the annals of secular history, without a feeling of awe at the wonders of the Word of God.

The skeptic may scoff; the infidel may sneer. But the God who can predict such definite, detailed events, long before they come to pass, knows the end of all things from the beginning. As believers in Him, we do not need fulfilled prophecy to convince us of His omniscience. What a testimony these things are to His all-wise deity!

How great is His patience! The revolting acts and cruel deeds of some of these kings, about which we have been reading, appall us. We wonder how a human being could conceive of such wickedness, even as we wonder in our day at the atrocities of certain leaders in Europe.

Yet even as we marvel at the long-suffering of our God, we know that He will surely bring to an end Gentile misrule. We know that, in His patience, He is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). And we know that one day He Himself shall reign in righteousness and peace; that He “shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth” (Psalms 72:8). THE WILLFUL KING

We have already observed that the Spirit of God took Daniel, in the part of the vision which we have already considered, from the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, even “to the time of the end” (Daniel 11:35).

Looking down the centuries, God saw the Antichrist, of whom Antiochus was a type; in the remaining verses of chapter eleven He gave to Daniel the graphic portrait of this “wilful king” which we are now ready to study.

If we could put together, in one printed volume, all that God has said of this terrible personage who is to come; if we could put in one place all that we have already found to be true concerning him, in the preceding chapters of Daniel’s prophecy, even then we could hardly conceive of all the satanic powers and diabolical miracles which this masterpiece of the devil will wield in that yet future day.

God has not left us without warning, however, concerning this cruel monster; and in the verses before us we have one of the most complete portraits of this coming world dictator to be found in all the Word of God.

Let us consider it, verse by verse, line by line:

1. “And the King Shall Do according to His Will” (Daniel 11:36).

In other words, he will be an absolute monarch, a self-willed dictator. He will not be held in check by a parliament or congress or council of any kind whatsoever. Not even the ten subordinate kings, who will be associated with him, will dare to interfere with his wishes.

Many of us living today can well remember the time when the skeptical world scoffed at such a possibility. Even as recently as World War I men actually believed that the world was being made “safe for democracy.” But conditions changed!

Now after World War II the world is completely disillusioned.

In this present hour millions in Russia dare not listen to a radio program without the consent of a dictator! And to declare one’s conviction about politics or religion, is for many to face imprisonment or torture or death-or perhaps all three!

Surely it should not be difficult for this generation to visualize, in some measure, the willful king who is to appear upon the earth after the church has been translated to be with the Lord!

2. “And He Shall Exalt Himself . . . above Every God” (Daniel 11:36).

Let us read all of the remainder of this verse, which tells of the blasphemies of this “son of perdition”:

And he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.

We have referred repeatedly in this series of studies to what the Holy Spirit has told us about this coming blasphemy, when He spoke through Paul and the aged apostle, John.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 we have read how the Antichrist will oppose and exalt himself “above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”

We have read from the thirteenth chapter of Revelation how he will set up his image to be worshipped; how he will persecute to death all who refuse him divine honors. We have read also the warning of our Lord Jesus, which He gave to His disciples before He went to the cross, when He told them of this “abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet,” which is to “stand in the holy place” of the temple in Jerusalem (Matthew 24:15).

Not only will this willful king be unchristian, but he will also be violently and bitterly anti-Christian, anti-God, anti-Jewish-opposed to everything and everyone that reminds him of the Lord. The Lord will permit this awful blasphemy, in order to accomplish His purpose-to show to all mankind that, without faith in Him, godless men fall into the snares of Satan; to prove to the world that Gentile dominion, which leaves God out of its program, can only come to shame and sin and woe; to fulfill all His purpose for Israel, even until she acknowledges Him as her Messiah and Lord and King. “For that that is determined shall be done!”

3. “Neither Shall He Regard the God of His Father.” (Daniel 11:37).

Many Bible students think that these words mean that the Antichrist will be a Jew, not regarding “the God of his fathers.” That may be so; yet the more I study prophecy, the more it seems to me that this last dictator may be a Gentile. Certainly he will be the last of the Caesars, whether Jew or Gentile. Now we know that his henchman, “the false prophet,” of Revelation 13:11-18; Revelation 19:20; Revelation 20:10, must of necessity be a Jew. He will come imitating Jesus, “the Lamb of God”; for John saw that he had “two horns like a lamb” (Revelation 13:11); yet “he spake as a dragon.”

The Jews would hardly accept as their Messiah-though he will be false-one who is not a Jew.

This representative of “the beast” in Palestine will, therefore, in all probability be an apostate Israelite. He will receive his power from Satan, and be subject to the world dictator. He will be the religious leader of this Satan-inspired regime.

In times past I have held that Daniel 11:37 teaches that the Antichrist himself will be a Jew; upon further study, it seems to me that he may not be, and that we cannot be dogmatic upon this point-though, to repeat for emphasis, the false prophet doubtless will be a Jew.

4. “Neither Shall He Regard . . . the Desire of Women” (Daniel 11:37).

This expression has been interpreted as describing the cruelty and licentiousness of “the beast.” However, it seems best to me to interpret it in line with the Messianic hope. What was the desire of the Jewish woman? Was it not her supreme desire to be selected to become the mother of the Messiah who was to be born? But this desire will be utterly ignored by this willful king. Certainly he shall not regard the Lord Jesus who is the fulfillment of Israel’s Messianic hope! His only regard for Him will be one of bitter hatred and antagonism!

Yet another interpretation of this passage holds that, because the Antichrist will not regard any God, seeking rather to be worshipped as God himself, he will overrule every desire of pious women to train their children to love the God of their fathers. And there will be some born-again souls who will turn to Christ in that time of blasphemy, because they will heed the message of the 144,000 Israelites who will proclaim the “gospel of the kingdom” in that coming day.

No doubt many of these things will be true of the Antichrist, for he will oppose everything that speaks of the true and living God.

5. “In His Estate Shall He Honour the God of Forces” (Daniel 11:38).

Let us read Daniel 11:38-39 :

But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.

The God of force indeed! “Might will make right,” as far as he is concerned. There will be no round-table discussions to arbitrate the problems of the world.

We would not dare to set approximate dates for the Lord’s return. Moreover, “the man of sin” will not be manifested to the world until the Holy Spirit, working in and through the church, has been “taken out of the way” (2 Thessalonians 2:7). Yet “coming events cast their shadows before,” and the Holy Spirit gives us wisdom to discern the signs of the times.

6. “A God Whom His Fathers Knew Not Shall He Honour” (Daniel 11:38).

Like all infidels, he will have a god after all! That god will be “the god of this world,” even Satan himself; for John saw that “the dragon gave him his power, and his seat [throne], and great authority . . . and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast” (Revelation 13:2-4).

Satan fell from heaven because he wanted to be worshipped as God. He tempted Eve, saying, “Ye shall be as gods.” He tried to make the sinless Saviour worship him, offering Him “all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them” (Matthew 4:8); but the holy Son of Man could not sin, and Satan failed to receive worship from our Lord! But the day will come when, for a little time, the Devil will receive worship from a godless, rebellious world; the god of the Antichrist will be Satan himself, who will be worshipped through this “son of perdition.”

Then the earth will see devil-worship and demon-possession as never before. It will be a terrible time in which to live. Men will accept the “strong delusion” and “believe a lie” (2 Thessalonians

2:11)!

7. “And He . . . Shall Divide the Land for Gain” (Daniel 11:39).

“The land,” of course, is Palestine. The Antichrist will give special honor to those who meet his requirements, just as he will plunder and harass the Jewish remnant who will refuse him allegiance. The land of Palestine, we know, is a coveted spot today because of the great mineral wealth stored in the Dead Sea. The nations will want it for its strategic value, too; and the unscrupulous world dictator will do with it as he pleases, yet for a limited time.

Daniel 11:39 completes this part of the picture of the coming world dictator, which God gave Daniel in this last vision of his prophecy. We have seen from our study of earlier chapters that his rule will cover only the last seven years of Gentile dominion, and that even this seven-year period will be shortened “for the elect’s sake.”

The events immediately preceding the doom of this willful king are described in the remaining verses of our chapter. They have to do with the battle of Armageddon, the last conflict between the nations just prior to the return of Christ in glory. And those nations will be aligned according to three great confederacies, mentioned in Daniel 11:40-44. **THE THREE GREAT CONFEDERACIES IN “THE TIME OF THE END”** The Antichrist will subdue “the king of the south.” “The king of the north” will be his great antagonist. And just as “the beast” and his armies are coming to grips with the northern hordes in the land of Palestine, the “kings of the sunrising” will march to that last scene of Gentile world conflict. Thus there will be three great confederacies taking part in the battle of Armageddon: that of the Revived Roman Empire, with the Antichrist as its leader; that of the northern kingdoms, including Russia and Germany; and that of the kings of the East, possibly under the leadership of Japan.

We have learned from the second and seventh chapters of Daniel that this last Caesar in Rome will be the head of the Revived Roman Empire.

We learn from Ezekiel 38:1-23; Ezekiel 39:1-29 that “the chief prince [Rosh]” will lead the northern army, and that with him will be “Gomer,” which is Germany; Persia; Ethiopia; Libya; and “many people” with him. Just how Ethiopia and Libya are to be linked with “the chief prince” (or Russia) and his allied peoples, we do not know; of this we shall have more to say, however, a little later.

The third confederacy is described in Revelation 9:16 as the army of “two hundred thousand thousand,” or two hundred million, coming from the Far East, across the Euphrates (Revelation 9:14). Again, in Revelation 16:12, this army is referred to as that of “the kings of the east (literally ‘the kings of the sunrising’),” for whom the waters of “the great river Euphrates” are “dried up.” Comparing these references with Daniel 11:44, we find that, just as the Antichrist will be fighting a terrific battle in the west, “tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.”

Now, having these three confederacies clearly in mind, let us go back to Daniel 11:40 of our chapter to follow the details in the order listed here: And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him . . .

“The king of the south” is Egypt; for again, we must bear in mind that all these directions are mentioned here in their relation to Palestine. If we are living near the end of the age, as we fully

believe we are, then it would hardly be speculation to say that possibly Egypt will be supported by England when “the king of the south” (i.e. Egypt’s king) will “push at” the Antichrist.

It may be that “the king of the south” will be one of the three of the ten kings in the Revived Roman Empire who will be subdued by the beast. We saw from our study of chapter seven that this last Caesar will, indeed, conquer three of these ten kings, represented by the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s vision and by the “ten horns” of Daniel’s beast vision. For Daniel beheld and saw that “three of the first horns” were “plucked up by the roots” and that this signified that the beast should “subdue three kings” (Daniel 7:8; Daniel 7:24).

We do know definitely that somehow Egypt and Libya will be conquered by the Antichrist; for they will be “at his steps” (Daniel 11:42-43).

He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps.

Now a few moments ago we read from Ezekiel 38:5 that Ethiopia and Libya will be in the northern confederacy, allied with Russia and Germany “at the time of the end.”

According to present world affairs, it would seem more likely to us that these two countries should be a part of the Revived Roman Empire, and so they will be-after the beast has subdued them. Just how they will ally themselves with “the king of the north,” we do not know. Events are taking place with lightning rapidity in our day; and it seems that almost anything can happen to the nations of the world!

This we do know-God’s Word will be literally, definitely fulfilled. Is it too much to suppose that possibly the fury of “the king of the north,” which will be hurled against the Antichrist at the time when “the king of the south” shall “push at him,” may be the result of some alliance between Egypt, Ethiopia and Libya with the Russian confederacy? We need not-and should not-try to speculate; but we know that God’s Word will be fulfilled. THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

Chapter 11 closes with these words- And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land [i.e., Palestine], and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. This will be the most terrible war and bloodshed the world has ever seen, as these three great confederacies meet on the plains of Palestine for this last world war. Poor Israel will suffer as never before in all her tragic history. With all the nations making her land the battle ground, seeking her wealth and one another’s destruction, her people will go through “the time of Jacob’s trouble.” But God will deliver Israel before that seven-year period fully runs its course. When the

Antichrist “shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas [i.e., between the Mediterranean and the Dead Seas] in the glorious holy mountain” of Jerusalem, then will his bold blasphemies reach their climax. Having set his image up to be worshipped “in the glorious holy mountain,” he will demand that all men bow down to him. “Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him” when the Lord Jesus comes in power and great glory. Then “the beast” and “the false prophet” will be “cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Revelation 19:20).

ISRAEL’S DELIVERANCE WHEN JESUS COMES AGAIN This will be the time of Israel’s great deliverance. A remnant will be saved “out of Great Tribulation”; and then the Messiah and King will rule over His people in righteousness and peace.

A moment ago we read in Daniel 11:41 of our chapter that the lands of Edom, and Moab, and “the chief children of Ammon” “shall escape” out of the Antichrist’s hand.

Doubtless the Jews who will “flee into the mountains” (Matthew 24:16) in that day will find in these countries a place of refuge. Our Lord Jesus gave warning to His disciples concerning this “Great Tribulation,” when He spoke the words we have just quoted. Then He added in the verses that follow:

Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.

In an earlier lesson we spoke of the ancient rock cities of Petra that have been discovered in the land of Moab. Since that country shall escape out of the Antichrist’s hand, and since these prepared cities are there, does it not seem likely that they will be the refuge for persecuted Israel in that coming day?

Two verses from Isaiah seem to bear out this thought: “Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler” (Isaiah 16:4). “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast” (Isaiah 26:20).

Somehow God will preserve His people through this terrible time of sorrow and persecution and carnage. Then He will return to earth as their promised King. The whole earth will be filled with His glory. Then “they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isaiah 35:10).

As we look about us in the world, we cannot keep from wondering if “the time of the end” may not be drawing near.

There are definite “signs of the times,” which point to Christ’s return: Israel’s re-establishment as a nation; apostasy in professing Christendom; “wars and rumours of wars”; increased lawlessness-these are all very much in evidence in the world today.

Yet we must be very careful not to be dogmatic about some of these details concerning the nations, which have to do with “the time of the end” of Gentile dominion. God has told us so much about “the signs of the times” that we can surely leave the results with Him as to how He will bring these things to pass.

What we do need to do is to go into all the world, preaching the gospel to every creature, winning men and women to the Lord Jesus before the “reign of terror” of the Antichrist comes upon the world. Before he is revealed, the bride of Christ, which is His church, will be translated, forever to be with Him. If the “time of the end” of Gentile dominion seems to be at hand, how much nearer our Lord’s coming for His own! Then let us be diligent and zealous in our witness for Him now, while there is yet time in this day of grace.

The struggles, the privations, the tragedies and sorrows of this present day weigh heavily on our hearts. Yet we need not be disturbed. Let us remember the words of Daniel’s vision to perplexed Israel in her time of sorrow (Daniel 11:32): The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.

And before the storm breaks upon this war-torn, suffering world, we who love the Lord shall be with Him above the clouds!

~ end of chapter 11 ~

12-The End of "The Times of the Gentiles"

THE END OF "THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES"

CHAPTER TWELVE

From "The Great Tribulation" to the Kingdom of Christ on Earth AS CHAPTER twelve is a continuation of this last vision which God gave to Daniel, let us go right on with our study of it, just as if there were no new chapter division. Continuing the prophecy concerning "the Great Tribulation" in the closing days of the rule of the Antichrist, God revealed to Daniel the very end of "the times of the Gentiles," even to the establishment of Christ's kingdom on earth. While the Holy Spirit does not give us a description of that kingdom in the Book of Daniel, yet He does tell us in much detail how it will be established.

In this prophecy, which tells us of the commencement, the character, the course, and the consummation of "the times of the Gentiles," we are taken from the days of Nebuchadnezzar, the first Gentile world monarch, even unto the millennial reign of Christ over a purified earth.

Now, continuing the prophecy of "the time of Jacob's trouble" and Israel's deliverance therefrom in the end of the age, let us see what the angel said to Daniel in Daniel 12:1 of this twelfth chapter.

ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE DURING "THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE"

Just when the Antichrist is persecuting Israel, even unto death, then Michael, her "prince," will stand up to defend her against Satan's wicked forces (Daniel 12:1):

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people (Daniel's people, Israel): and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

"At that time shall Michael stand up . . ." At what time? At the time referred to in the verse just preceding these words; that is, at the time when the Antichrist "shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas [i.e., the Mediterranean and the Dead Seas] in the glorious holy mountain [i.e., in Jerusalem]" (Daniel 11:45).

"At that time," when his blasphemies shall have reached their climax; "shall Michael stand up" to defend Israel in her greatest hour of trial.

By that time "the beast" will be a world dictator. Then the prophecy which God gave to John, in Revelation 13:3, will be fulfilled, ". . . and all the world wondered after the beast."

The standing up of Michael in heaven at this time evidently refers to the same event mentioned in the twelfth chapter of Revelation; for there he marshals the heavenly host on behalf of persecuted Israel. We read about that future "war in heaven" when we studied the tenth chapter of Daniel. We saw that Michael and his angels will fight against the devil and his angels, and that Satan and his

hosts will be cast out of the heavenlies, into the earth during that time of great tribulation.

When he is defeated in this conflict with Michael, the devil will be filled with great wrath; and will turn in his fury to destroy Israel, on whose behalf Michael ever contends. Indeed, the entire twelfth chapter of Revelation has to do with Satan's continued attacks upon the nation that gave to the world the Saviour.

The "woman clothed with the sun" (Revelation 12:1) is none other than Israel.

She is not the Virgin Mary, as the Roman Catholics would have us believe. She is symbolic of the nation which "brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron" (Revelation 12:5). Just as the dragon tried "to devour her child as soon as it was born" (Revelation 12:4), so also he will persecute the nation which gave Him to the world.

But John beheld, and "the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (Revelation 12:6).

Could that "place prepared of God" not be the cities of Petra? Surely the time of her taking refuge in that "place prepared" coincides exactly with the three and one-half years of "the Great Tribulation" period, the latter half of "the seventieth week" of Daniel!

Again, in Revelation 12:14 God tells us that the woman [Israel] will "fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." We have already seen that this is another way of designating three and one-half years-the identical period always referred to in prophecy as "the time of Jacob's trouble."

Satan, working through "the beast," will do his best to destroy God's ancient people; but they "shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (Daniel 12:1). All those who accept the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour from sin, and as their coming King, will have their names written in "the Lamb's book of life." They will be the ones who will listen to the message of the 144,000 Jews who will herald the coming of the King in that time of trouble. And they shall be delivered!

Zechariah (Zechariah 14:1-4; Zechariah 14:9) describes this time of sorrow, the battle of Armageddon, and the return of Christ in glory in unmistakable words of prophecy:

Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. . . . And the Lord shall be king over all the earth.

In that day Israel shall look upon Him "whom they have pierced," and they will receive their glorious King! The Son of God will bring to an abrupt end "the times of the Gentiles." The smiting Stone will fall upon the toes of the image. The Antichrist's cruel reign will be forever ended. And "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9).
THE NATIONAL RESURRECTION OF ISRAEL The angel continued to show Daniel the vision;

and these are the words that follow in Daniel 12:2,

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

While it is true that there will be two resurrections-the first, the resurrection of the redeemed; and the second, the resurrection of the wicked (John 5:29; Revelation 20:4-6; Revelation 20:11-15); and while these words of Daniel 12:2 might well apply to these two resurrections; yet it seems to me that possibly they refer to the national resurrection of Israel. We must not be dogmatic about it; but both interpretations could well be true. However, as Daniel was greatly concerned about his people, Israel; and as the angel had been talking to him about Israel's deliverance from tribulation in that future time; it seems not too much to say that the prophecy continues to tell of Daniel's people at the end of this age.

Throughout the prophetic Scriptures Israel is likened to one that has been buried. The vision which God gave to Ezekiel in the thirty-seventh chapter of his prophecy compares the apostate nation to a "valley of dry bones," from which "an exceeding great army" arises to new life. The nation has long been buried among the Gentile nations of the earth. But to the prophet God said, "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel" (Ezekiel 37:1-14).

This, it seems, must be the meaning of the prophecy of Daniel 12:2. God will restore His people to their own land, "some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Those who are among the faithful remnant will "awake . . . to everlasting life." But evidently some of the Jews who return to Palestine in unbelief-as many will-shall accept the claims of the Antichrist, meeting the demands he makes upon them. If they do, then there is no alternative; they will "awake . . . to shame and everlasting contempt."

"THEY THAT BE WISE SHALL SHINE . . . AS THE STARS"

In Daniel 12:3 we read-

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

These are beautiful words, and they have encouraged the hearts of soul-winners throughout the centuries! Often when I want to inspire the members of my congregation to renewed zeal in seeking the lost, I let God speak to them through the text. But primarily, this passage seems to fit into the whole vision which God gave to Daniel; and, therefore, refers to the faithful Jewish remnant who will be the missionaries of their soon-coming King during the time of "Great Tribulation" that will come upon the earth.

We have referred to the prophecy concerning them in the seventh chapter of Revelation so often that we need not even quote from it again here. We know that God will seal 12,000 Jews from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, sending them forth to proclaim the coming of the King. And because of their ministry, "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" will stand before the throne of God, having their garments washed white in "the blood of the Lamb."

There are dozens of cults in this nation today, all of which claim to be the 144,000! But these misguided people fail to read their Bibles aright. All of these witnesses will be Jews. And they will not be “sealed” until after the church has been translated.

Many of the saved in that awful day will be martyrs. They will seal their faith with their blood! But they will refuse to worship “the beast.” They will be looking for their King! And they will be “wise”! Therefore, they “shall shine as the brightness of the firmament.” As the soul winners of that coming day, turning “many to righteousness,” they shall shine “as the stars for ever and ever.”

While this seems to be the interpretation of this passage, in view of the context, yet we would not fail to get the personal, practical message. There is no joy greater than that of leading a never-dying soul to the Lord Jesus Christ! The “fishers of men” will surely receive their reward!

I shall never forget an experience I had in Paris, Texas, many years ago. As a young minister, I had zeal, often without knowledge. God taught me something that I shall remember as long as I live. I believe it holds the secret of how to win lost souls to the Saviour.

Someone had told me of an invalid woman who for twenty-five years had been crippled with what must have been arthritis, as well as paralysis. We called her “Miss Perkins.” She could move only one hand and one side of her mouth, and her body was twisted and stiff. She could not do anything but lie on her back, yet her mind was clear. But saddest of all, her heart was bitter, for she was unsaved. Her mother, too, was resentful, refusing to allow anyone to talk to her daughter about the things of Christ.

However, in my zeal, I called at the home. As tactfully as I could, I asked her how long she had been crippled. I tried to be kind. I did pray for her soul. But the mother ordered me out of the house. The invalid was still unsaved.

Disheartened, I returned to my study and told the incident to my co-pastor, a dear Hebrew Christian, who has since gone to be with Christ. His name was Joseph Flacks. He had given up home and loved ones for his Saviour. We had been students together in the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago; then we worked together in the little church in Texas.

I told Mr. Flacks my story. He made no reply, but he picked up his hat and left. Directly to the home of the invalid he went. He asked her the same question that I had asked. He inquired of her how long she had been crippled. But as he spoke, a tear ran down his face. “I wish I could change places with you,” he said; he meant it! The cold heart was broken; that afternoon Mr. Flacks led Miss Perkins to the Lord Jesus.

However, he did not mention his experience to me that afternoon. I was to preach that evening in the little church.

Into the pulpit I went, not knowing what had happened. Then as I looked, I could hardly believe my eyes! The ushers rolled in a wheel chair; in it was Miss Perkins, her face shining with a new light!

Mr. Flacks knew the secret of soul-winning—a deep love for his Messiah and Lord and a yearning for lost souls. Today both Miss Perkins and Mr. Flacks are in heaven and I know that even now they are shining as “the brightness of the firmament . . . as the stars for ever and ever.”

For that stalwart Hebrew Christian was “wise”!

Miss Perkins was but one of literally scores whom he led to Christ, and of whom he must be saying even now: “What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy” (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20).

TWO SIGNS OF “THE TIME OF THE END” In Daniel 12:4 the angel gave Daniel two signs of “the time of the end”; that is, the end of the “Great Tribulation” period, not the end of the world, as misguided souls often say. After the “seventieth week” of Daniel, Christ will rule over the earth for a thousand years. Then this old world will be purified by fire; and there will be “a new heaven and a new earth.” Therefore, it is altogether unscriptural to speak of Christ’s return to earth as “the end of the world.” Daniel had been witnessing the vision of that titanic struggle of the nations in the yet future battle of Armageddon; he had been seeing the untold suffering of his beloved people, Israel, during the reign of “the beast.” And the angel gave him these two signs whereby men might know when “the time of the end” of these things is at hand. Let us read verse 4 together:

But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Even in our own generation we can see the rapid fulfillment of this twofold prophecy:

(1) “Many shall run to and fro”;

(2) “knowledge shall be increased.”

Often I have thought of this verse as I have driven along the streets of our great cities. On every side there is a mass of humanity. Many are in automobiles, many in streetcars, many on foot, and many in large transport planes overhead. Doubtless you, too, have asked yourself, “Where are all these people going?” When you sit in a railroad station, waiting for your train, you see countless multitudes, rushing in and out. Where are they going? They are running “to and fro.”

“And knowledge shall be increased.” Think of the millions of young people leaving our high schools and colleges every year! Think of the increased means of communication—the telegraph, the telephone, the radio, and television! Think of the scientific inventions that have come within our own generation, revolutionizing practically every walk of life!

When I was a lad in Sydney, Australia, we lived near a shop where table legs were made. I loved to watch the man as he took a piece of wood, put it between two clasps, worked on it, planed it, getting it ready to fit into its place. It took him twenty-five minutes to plane it on one side, then another twenty-five minutes to make a groove. But table legs are not made in that way now. A plank is pushed through a machine. Before one has time to realize what is taking place, out comes the finished product, all planed and grooved! Machines are doing the work of millions of men—and millions are thus unemployed.

One day I went to the bank to get my statement. I took it home with me, added up the figures, and was sure that I should have had one hundred dollars more credited to my account. Back to the teller I went and told him that I knew the bookkeeper must have made a mistake.

He smiled and said, “Let us see.”

The clerk punched first a red button, then a yellow button; presently out came the statement. Of course, my arithmetic had been wrong, for the machines in that bank could add, subtract, multiply, and count money. We are living in a wonderful day!

“And knowledge shall increase” even more as the age draws to a close, I fully believe.

We are told that “the beast” will come in the power of Satan, working “lying wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:9); that he will perform satanic miracles (Revelation 13:13-15); and that “if it were possible,” the false Christs should “deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24).

It will be largely a Satan-controlled knowledge that “shall increase” as the age comes to a close.

“HOW LONG SHALL IT BE TO THE END OF THESE WONDERS?”

Daniel, beholding the vision, heard a conversation between the heavenly messengers, in Daniel 12:5-7 :

Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

The question raised by the angel must have been also in the mind of Daniel, “How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?”

- How long must Israel suffer?
- How long will the Gentile nations fight one another in deadly combat?
- How long will this Satan-controlled regime continue on the earth?

Surely Daniel’s heart must have been heavy as he saw this vision of unspeakable woe to come!

Then “the man clothed in linen” (cf. Daniel 10:5), the angel who showed to the prophet all of this vision, answered the question, saying that these things should continue for “a time” (one year), and “times” (two years), “and an half” (one-half year). Thus once more the prophetic Scriptures dovetail concerning the length of time to be covered by “the Great Tribulation”; that is, the latter half of “the seventieth week” of Daniel’s prophecy of chapter nine. When the Antichrist shall have scattered “the power of the holy people (the faithful remnant in Israel), all these things shall be finished.”

“THE WISE SHALL UNDERSTAND”

Continuing to read Daniel 12:8-10 :

And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of

the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

The minds and hearts of those who worship “the beast” will be closed to the message of the 144,000 Jews who will herald the coming of the King; but “the wise shall understand.”

Possibly “the wise” shall study diligently the very pages of Daniel and Revelation and other prophetic portions of the Word of God in that day. Surely they will “look up,” knowing that their “redemption draweth nigh.”

It is so in every age with those who are wise in the things of Christ.

Disaster and persecution and sorrow and trial may distress and perplex; but those who trust in the living God can see beyond the troubles of this present life, even to eternity and heaven and the presence of the Lord forevermore. TO WHAT DO THE 1,290 DAYS AND THE 1,335 DAYS REFER? In Daniel 12:11-12 we read-

And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

To what do the 1,290 days refer? They cover the same period as that of the 1,260 days, or three and one-half years, of the tribulation, with an added thirty days. They begin with “the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up.”

In other words, they begin with the demand of the Antichrist for universal worship.

He will break his covenant with Israel, refuse to allow them to offer their daily sacrifice in the temple in Jerusalem, and bitterly persecute all who do not give him divine honors.

But why the added thirty days of Daniel 12:11?

Since the 1,260 days cover the tribulation period, even unto the return of Christ to deliver His people, then the added thirty days must extend to the time required for the judgment of the nations, the cleansing of the sanctuary, and the purifying of the earth for the millennial reign of Christ.

In our former lessons we have seen that, when our Lord returns in glory, He shall gather before Him all nations, separating them one from another, “as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (Matthew 25:31-46). He will purge everything that will offend; for His kingdom will be pure. This judgment of the nations, to determine which ones shall enter into Christ’s millennial kingdom, will probably be finished during this period of 1,290 days from the beginning of the tribulation.

To what do the 1,335 days refer?

Why will “he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days” be blessed? Because at that time the earth will be purified, and the glorious reign of Christ will have begun.

The Lord Jesus will have taken the reins of government; and the man who lives on earth to see that day will be blessed; that is, 1,335 days from the beginning of the tribulation period, even unto the time when Christ’s kingdom is fully established, and men are living in peace and righteousness

on the earth. THE ANGEL'S FINAL MESSAGE TO DANIEL The heavenly messenger gave Daniel a last word of comfort, precious in its import (Daniel 12:13): But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

We do not know how long Daniel lived after this marvelous revelation was ended, but here was God's promise that he should "rest from his labours," at home with his Saviour. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalms 116:15); and Daniel, "beloved of God," slept with his fathers. His "lot" is his heavenly inheritance, one that "fadeth not away."

He must have been about ninety-five or ninety-six when he received this last vision. He had seen the seventy years' captivity of his people come and go. He had lived throughout the reigns of several Babylonian and Persian kings. He had seen many of the prophecies which God gave to him fulfilled, yet there are still some that have not come to pass-after more than two thousand years. Daniel was among that long list of Old Testament saints who, "having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:39-40).

Now, as we bring this series of studies to a close, may I ask you once more, my friend, "Do you know the God of Daniel? Have you been washed 'whiter than snow' in His precious blood?"

The "times of the Gentiles" are rapidly drawing to a close. This age of grace will soon be over. Look to Jesus, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) before the church is caught up to be with Christ. Be one of that number which is His bride. Then you will not only escape the awful judgments that are to come upon the world during the reign of the Antichrist; you will not only be forever delivered from Satan's clutches; but you will also spend all the endless ages with Him who is Daniel's God, the One who loves you, the One who bore your sins in His own body on the tree. His name is Jesus. He wants to save you today. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

My Christian friend, in these trying days we may look up. Our Lord's promise is sure: "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12).

Surely our prayer is that of the apostle as he closed the final revelation from God concerning future events, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

~ end of chapter 12 ~

13-Conclusion

CONCLUSION CHAPTER THIRTEEN

IN RESPONSE to many questions on selected passages from the Book of Daniel, sent in by members of the radio audience who heard these messages first over the air, the following have been treated separately here, for the sake of clearness and for emphasis:

QUESTION: An objector to the genuineness of Daniel's authorship of this book states that the presence of Greek words in chapter three and the names of musical instruments distinctly Grecian indicate that the book was written long after the Babylonian Empire had passed away. What is the answer to such an argument?

ANSWER: That is no argument at all. We must remember that long before Greece attained universal sway, there was certainly a great deal of commercial intercourse between Greece and Babylon, even centuries before Nebuchadnezzar ascended the throne. There was nothing to hinder Greek instruments from being in actual use in the great empire. Moreover, there may well have been Grecian representatives at Babylon's court for political reasons. Therefore, Grecian words were most naturally adopted by Daniel and the Babylonians.

QUESTION: Are Nebuchadnezzar and Nebuchadrezzar the same person?

ANSWER: Yes. Daniel uses the first spelling; Jeremiah usually writes the name "Nebuchadrezzar," though in Jeremiah 34:1, for example, we find the more common "Nebuchadnezzar."

QUESTION: Why does God call the heathen monarch, Nebuchadnezzar, His "servant" in Jeremiah 27:6?

ANSWER: For the same reason that a ruler is called "the minister of God" in Romans 13:4. "The powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1); and rulers are God's "ministers" in the sense of administering government.

Consequently God will hold them responsible. God called Nebuchadnezzar His "servant" because He was going to use him as a rod of correction wherewith to chasten disobedient Israel.

QUESTION: Does the clay in the feet of the image of chapter two represent Christianity? I have heard such an interpretation.

ANSWER: NO; for Christ, the smiting Stone, strikes the feet, and the whole image, including the clay, becomes like chaff and is driven away. The clay speaks of the will of the people, which will not "cleave" to the iron of dictatorship, both of which will go to make up the last form of Gentile world power. If the clay represented Christianity, why would the judgment of God fall upon it?

QUESTION: IS there any Scripture reference to corroborate the claim of secular history that Evil-merodach or Nabonidus, son of Nebuchadnezzar, ruled over Babylon following the reign of

Nebuchadnezzar?

ANSWER: Yes; in two separate verses Jeremiah makes this fact very plain. Here is what he says in Jeremiah 52:31 : And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, in the five and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon in the first year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison. And again, in Jeremiah 27:6-7, we read an unmistakable reference to Nabonidus and Belshazzar: And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon . . . And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son . . . and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him.

QUESTION: Why did Belshazzar make Daniel “the third ruler in the kingdom” (Daniel 5:29), when Nebuchadnezzar had made him second, “chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon” (Daniel 2:48)?

ANSWER: Archaeologists have found that the ancient monuments throw light upon this matter, for according to these old inscriptions, Nabonidus was the first ruler in the kingdom in the days of Belshazzar; Belshazzar was second; and Daniel, third. Belshazzar was a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar.

In other words, “Belshazzar was joint-king with his father, Evil-merodach or Nabonidus (called ‘Minus’ in the inscriptions), to whom he was subordinate . . . Evil-merodach, son of Nebuchadnezzar (according to Berosus), reigned but a short time (one or two years), having, in consequence of his bad government, been dethroned by a plot of Neriglissar, his sister’s husband.

Therefore, Daniel does not mention him . . . Belshazzar shut himself up in Babylon, whilst the other king (Nabonidus) took refuge elsewhere; viz., in Borsippa . . . and had an honorable abode in Carmania assigned to him. . . Berosus gives the Chaldean account, which suppresses all about Belshazzar, as being to the national dishonor” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown).

QUESTION: DO the discoveries of archaeology show that Belshazzar’s name was ever mentioned in the monuments?

ANSWER: Until recent years Belshazzar’s name was not found by archaeologists, but now they have discovered a cylinder bearing the inscription of a prayer of Nabonidus, invoking the protection and guidance of his heathen god, Marduk, upon his son, Belshazzar.

QUESTION: Why is “PERES” substituted for “UPHARSIN” (Daniel 5:25; Daniel 5:28)?

ANSWER: These are different forms of the same word, the latter used by Daniel to explain the former. “Upharsin” means “dividers”; “Peres,” “divided”; that is, “divided among the Medes and Persians”; or “severed from” Belshazzar. “The word ‘Peres’ alludes to the similar word ‘Persia.’” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown) .

QUESTION: DO not the words, “He shall . . . think to change times and laws” (Daniel 7:25), refer to the pope, who changed the Sabbath Day from the seventh to the first day of the week?

ANSWER: There is no reference to the pope here. Nor did he change the Sabbath. The Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Lord’s Day are two different days. Constantine made the first day of the

week a day of rest, but believers worshipped on that day long before Constantine's time. This false position is held by the Seventh-day Adventists, and is a wretched perversion of Scripture. (See 1 Corinthians 16:1 and related passages).

Daniel 7:25 refers to the Antichrist and his broken covenant with Israel, when he will try to compel them to substitute worship of his image for the worship of the Lord God.

QUESTION: Why is it that prominence is given to the fourth beast in chapter seven, while the first three beasts are almost passed over, with very little comment?

ANSWER: Because Babylon had already run its course, and Medo-Persia and Greece were soon to come and go. The fourth beast, however, was to be in power both at the first coming of Christ and at His second coming. The fourth beast will take the form of a ten-kingdom confederacy, possibly a "United States of Europe," with the Antichrist as the supreme dictator. It was this part of the prophecy that Daniel emphasized here.

QUESTION: YOU speak of the Antichrist's "making a covenant with the Jew for one week," but this is not the language of the text. Daniel 9:27 reads: "He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." It seems that the covenant will already be in existence when "the wilful king" confirms it. What is the covenant he is to confirm?

ANSWER: The making and the confirming of the covenant are one and the same. In making the covenant, thus giving the land of Palestine to the Jews and guaranteeing their national integrity, he will only be confirming the covenant God made with Abraham. Doubtless he will not be conscious of the fact that he is confirming what God promised Abraham, for he certainly will not do it to honor God. Later he will set the covenant aside.

QUESTION: Some teach that the first three and one-half years of Daniel's seventieth week were fulfilled in the three and one-half years' ministry of Christ. Is that correct?

ANSWER: Many hold that view, but personally I do not. Such an interpretation gives fulfillment to the seventieth week before the fulfillment of the sixty-ninth week. The sixty-ninth week ended at the cross, with the "cutting off" of the Messiah. A careful reading of Daniel 9:26-27 makes clear that the whole seventieth week lies in the future.

QUESTION: IS the "little horn" of chapter seven distinct from the "little horn" of chapter eight?

ANSWER: The "little horn" of Daniel 7:8 and the "king of fierce countenance" of Daniel 8:23-25 refer to the Antichrist. "The little horn" of Daniel 8:9-14 describes Antiochus Epiphanes, who was a shadow or type of the Antichrist. His desecration of the sanctuary is explained fully in our study of chapter eight.

Let us keep in mind the fact that the book of Daniel unfolds detailed information as it progresses. For instance, chapter two speaks of the ten kings represented by the ten toes of the image; however, there is nothing recorded in chapter two concerning the confederacy these kings will set up. We must go on to chapter seven for that information. Chapter eight gives more details not recorded in chapter seven. In chapter seven we read that "the little horn" is to arise out of the Roman Empire; in chapter eight we have set forth the part of the Roman Empire out of which he will arise—that part which formed the kingdom of Alexander the Great.

QUESTION: Why do the Seventh-day Adventists teach that the cleansing of the sanctuary, referred to in Daniel 8:13-14, took Place in 1844?

ANSWER: This cult has created this fanciful theory out of the imaginations of men's minds. To begin with, the Millerites, followers of William Miller, prophesied that Christ would come again October 22, 1844, to "cleanse the sanctuary."

They arrived at this date by computing 2,300 years, not days, as in Daniel 8:14, from the time when Cyrus issued the decree for the rebuilding of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, even unto October 22, 1844. In setting any dates whatsoever for our Lord's return; they were going contrary to His express command.

When Christ did not come on that date in 1844, as Mr. Miller had predicted, then the Adventists, led by Mrs. Ellen G. White, said that the "sanctuary" referred to the "heavenly sanctuary," not to an earthly sanctuary. They said that Christ did enter the "holy of holies," even heaven itself, on October 22, 1844, to cleanse it from Satan's defilement. What blasphemy! And what a perversion of the Word of God! We know that nearly two thousand years ago, following His death and resurrection, our Lord Jesus "entered into the holiest of all," even heaven, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, there to intercede for His own. And there He is today, our Great High Priest, our Advocate with the Father.

What, then, does Daniel 8:14 mean-about the cleansing of the sanctuary after 2,300 days? Simply this: That exactly 2,300 days, of twenty-four hours each, following the defilement of the Jewish temple by Antiochus Epiphanes, a devout Israelite named Judas Maccabeus cleansed the temple. Antiochus Epiphanes had offered a sow on the Jewish altar, and had set up a statue of Jupiter to be worshipped-an insult to God and to every devout Jew. But exactly 2,300 days after that defilement of the Jewish sanctuary it was cleansed. Therefore while Daniel 8:14 was a prophecy when God gave it to Daniel, it has long been a fact of history.

QUESTION: DO you think the seventieth week of Daniel will be seven years as we count years of 365 days each? Dr. Seiss makes the seventieth week seventy-seven years.

ANSWER: The sixty-nine "weeks" were, literally translated, "sevens" of years; and the seventieth "week" will be a week of years (or seven years). One-half of that seven-year period will be "the Great Tribulation," exactly 1260 days, or forty-two months (Revelation 11:2-3). Forty-two months of thirty days each make exactly 1260 days, or three and one-half years. Daniel 7:25 refers to this same period: "A time" (one year), "times" (two years), and "the dividing of time" (one-half year)-three and one-half years. So also does Daniel 12:7 : "A time, times and a half." And so also does Revelation 13:5, where we read again of the same "forty and two months."

QUESTION: What is meant by the "thousand three hundred and five and thirty days" of Daniel 12:12?

ANSWER: There are three time periods in Daniel 12:1-13 :

The first is in Daniel 12:7, where the length of the tribulation period is given: "a time (one year), times (two years), and an half (one-half year)." This represents three and one-half years, and is the length of the tribulation period, equivalent to 1260 days.

The second period is in Daniel 12:11 : “And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.” Here we find thirty days added to the 1260 of the tribulation period. During those extra 30 days, certain events will take place after the return of Christ to the earth, such as the judgment of the living nations, and the binding of Satan.

The third period is in Daniel 12:12 : “Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days” (1335). Here is a still longer period, concerning which God says, “Blessed is he that . . . cometh” thereunto. Why? Because he will then be in the millennium, with all tribulation past.

QUESTION: I have always understood Daniel 9:23-27 and Matthew 24:15 to refer to the pollution of the temple by the Romans in 70 A.D.-“The abomination of desolation.” Is not this correct?

ANSWER: These references have to do with the worship of the image of the beast in Jerusalem during “the Great Tribulation,” as the context clearly sets forth. What took place in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, 175 B.C, and in the days of Titus, 70 A.D., are shadows of the yet future desecration of the temple in the days of the Antichrist. But the actual fulfillment of this prophecy will not take place until after the translation of the church.

QUESTION: What did Christ mean by “the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet” (Matthew 24:15)?

ANSWER: Both Daniel and our Lord referred to the image of the beast, which he will set up “in the holy place” during the “seventieth week of Daniel.” It will be an idol, an image of himself, and he will require all the world to worship him, or be martyred. An idol, to a devout Hebrew, is an abomination, and certainly it is to God. When Israel realizes by this act of the Antichrist that he is a false Messiah, the believing part of the nation will refuse him recognition. He in turn will persecute Israel, and this will be the beginning of “the Great Tribulation,” to which our Lord referred in Matthew 24:1-51.

QUESTION: Is Michael, mentioned in Daniel 10:21, the Lord Jesus?

ANSWER: NO. Russellism teaches that Michael and the Lord Jesus are one and the same. Russellism is one of the worst heresies in the world today. In Jude 1:9 Michael is called “the archangel.” Moreover, in this verse we read that, “When contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses,” even the Archangel Michael, realizing Satan’s great power, “durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.” Michael knew that the Lord was more powerful than Satan!

This verse alone would prove conclusively that Michael cannot be the Lord. But what we read does not depend on this verse alone! All Scripture teaches that Christ was always eternal God, and the Creator of angels (See Hebrews 1:1-14; Hebrews 2:1-18).

QUESTION: Please explain the words in Daniel 10:21, “Michael your prince.”

ANSWER: These words mean that Michael is designated by God as a protector of Israel. Daniel 12:1 explains this fact even more clearly:

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people [i. e., Daniel's people, Israel]: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

QUESTION: Some say that the church will be translated at the end of the first three and one-half years of the seventieth week of Daniel, which is just before the tribulation period. Others say that the church will not be translated until after the tribulation, but will go through it. Please explain.

ANSWER: The church will be raptured before the seventieth week of Daniel begins. 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 is one of the clearest passages that proves this fact. The Antichrist will not be revealed until the Holy Spirit's restraining influence in the church is taken "out of the way." And, of course, the Antichrist is to be the ruling personage of the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy. The church began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47), and is now in the process of being formed. One day, perhaps sooner than men realize, the last member will be added to the body of Christ, which is His church. This is called by Paul in Romans 11:25 "the fulness of the Gentiles," which expression may be freely translated, "the full number of the Gentiles." When the church is complete, then God will call her home to heaven. Not until then will the seventieth week of Daniel begin to run its course.

QUESTION: Will the unsaved living on earth know when Christ translates the church?

ANSWER: There is nothing in the Scriptures to indicate that they will know what has taken place.

Certainly they will miss loved ones and friends. To the godless world, the translation of the church will doubtless be as a "seven-days' wonder." Then the Antichrist will be revealed; his actions will so occupy the minds of unregenerate men that many will soon forget what shall have transpired in the rapture of the church-so blinded will they be by Satan.

However, let it be remembered that there will be the martyred remnant of believers during the tribulation period, both Jew and Gentile, who will accept the message of the 144,000 Jews, God's witnesses on earth during this dark time.

QUESTION: Are there prophecies that must be fulfilled before the Lord can come?

ANSWER: Not for the church! A number of things must transpire before He returns visibly, gloriously, appearing to all the world. For example, after the church has been translated, the Antichrist will be revealed; then he must rule for a time before "the Great Tribulation" runs its course.

To end this "time of Jacob's trouble," Christ will return in glory, putting an end also to the battle of Armageddon.

QUESTION: IS "the church" synonymous with "the kingdom of heaven"?

ANSWER: Never! "The kingdom of heaven;" or "the rule of the heavens" is synonymous with the millennium, and refers to Christ's earthly rule. The members of the true church form a heavenly body, destined to be "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17). The church is "the bride" of the Lamb (Ephesians 5:22-32; Revelation 19:7-9).

QUESTION: When the church is translated and the Holy Spirit is withdrawn, how will the faithful Jewish remnant be empowered? Will it be by the personal ministry of Christ?

ANSWER: The Holy Spirit will be withdrawn at the rapture of the church only in a dispensational sense-in this age of grace He indwells the church. Doubtless He will continue to operate in the world as He did in Old Testament times, through individuals.

QUESTION: Will all human government cease during the reign of Christ?

ANSWER: Yes, except that which is subsidiary to Him. He will be King, but His saints will reign with Him.

QUESTION : In what place on the earth will Jesus be during the millennium?

ANSWER: Jerusalem will be the metropolis of the earth and the capital of His earthly kingdom. However, in His resurrection body, He is not limited by location or distance.

QUESTION: Please explain Daniel 12:2 : "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." What resurrection is referred to in these verses?

ANSWER: These words could well be applied to the two resurrections: The first resurrection, to take place before the thousand years' reign of Christ, when the believers will be raised; and the second resurrection, to take place after the reign of Christ on earth, when the wicked dead shall stand before the great white throne. (See Revelation 20:4-6; Revelation 20:11-15; cf. John 5:29).

But my understanding is that this verse in Daniel 12:2 refers to the national resurrection of Israel, for the prophet is addressing Israel in the preceding verse, speaking of the great tribulation period, also referred to by our Lord in Matthew 24:1-51. If so, then Daniel here refers to Israel's national resurrection, not to the physical resurrection from the dead.

Israel was long buried, nationally, among the nations of the earth. But now she is restored to full national status-is awake. Some will awake spiritually in the last days to everlasting life, because they will repudiate the claims of the Antichrist. Some will awaken to shame and everlasting contempt, because they will become a part of the apostasy, worshipping the Antichrist.

QUESTION: What relation do little children have to the return of Christ?

ANSWER: My understanding of Scripture is that all children, including those of ungodly parents, are Christ's by virtue of what He accomplished on the cross. Children are sinners by nature; but until they reach the age of responsibility, this sinful nature is covered by the blood of Christ ~ end of book ~

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