



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Divine Purpose in History and Prophecy

Part XV Daniel 2:1-49

Eschatology Doctrinal Studies “The Course of World Empire II”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] ...of the purpose of God, or at least a statement concerning the purpose of God by J. Gresham Machen made some years ago. And I'd like to read it again because, I think, it's very appropriate for what we are studying. He says, “The doctrine of an eternal purpose of God is the foundation upon which all the teaching of the Bible is really based. Back of all the events of human history, back of all the changes in the inconceivable vastness of the universe, back of space itself, and time, there lies one mysterious purpose of him to whom there is no before or after, no here or yonder, to whom all things are naked and open, the living and holy God.” Very good statement, I think, of the eternal purpose, and we're studying “The Divine Purpose in History and Prophecy”.

And in case you didn't know it, today is the day of our Lord's Second Coming. Perhaps you didn't know that, but I was coming up on the airplane from New Orleans today, and they had the Times Picayune. And there's an article of four columns, not large columns, but it's an account of the fact that there is a great deal of discussion of the Lord's coming, particularly among some of the Koreans. And I, particularly, like this, one of the

men whose been arrested, a leader of this movement, that’s talking about the Lord’s coming. Today was the day, but the final reckoning is Saturday, so there’s some time in there for error. But this is the paragraph I liked, “South Korean authorities last month arrested Lee Yon Rem, a leader of the movement, charging him with swindling his followers of up to four million dollars. Prosecutors said he had three hundred and eighty thousand dollars worth of bonds with maturities as late as next May.” So if we don’t get anything out of that, that’s an evidence of faith without works. He should have gotten his money and spent it by now then somebody may have believed him.

Well, let’s bow together in a moment of prayer before we begin our study tonight.

[Prayer] Father, we are again expressing our thanks to Thee for the things that Thou hast given to us in the Scriptures; an insight into the future, an insight into the divine purpose. We thank Thee for the assurance that we have of a certainty of the fulfilling of the things of Thy word. Thou hast assured us in Daniel 2 that the things which the prophet was told are things that are sure. They come from the mouth of our great God in heaven. We ask, Lord, Thy blessing upon us as we continue our study of Daniel chapter 2 tonight.

In Jesus’ name. Amen.

[Message] I was asked to announce by Mr. Prier, that [name redacted] had arrived safely in Iran, so the word is. If you want any further details, you might see Mr. Prier afterwards. He may have some. He just gave me that brief word.

Well, this is the second of our series of studies in Daniel chapter 2, and the topic that we gave for these two studies was, “The Course of World Empire.” As a matter of fact, I intended to do it in one time but was unable to do it because we just took longer than I anticipated. So let me sum up what we said last time and complete what we were

talking about. In case there are some who were not here last Wednesday night, you would need a bit of review of what we sought to show from Daniel chapter 2.

First of all, that this was one of the most important of the prophecies in the Bible. I made the statement of “Revelation as the XYZ of Bible prophecy; this could be called the ABC” because so much of biblical prophecy gathers around what is referred to in this particular chapter. The story of the chapter is very simple. Nebuchadnezzar, the great king, had a dream and, evidently, it was such a startling dream to him that he wanted to be sure to have the interpretation of it if he possibly could. So he called his wise men, his sorcerers, his interpreters of dreams, his magicians, his astrologers, and the Chaldeans, and he asked them to interpret the dream. They, of course, said, “Tell us the dream, and we will interpret it.” He said, “No, I want you to tell me the interpretation of the dream.” And then they began to seek to gain some time. They said, “No one’s ever requested anything like that. Only the gods could give a man the power to interpret such a dream as that. And, furthermore, there’s not a man on earth who could do what the king is demanding.”

Evidently, the king knew that they didn’t know what the dream was and didn’t know, of course, therefore, the interpretation of it. It made him very angry, that they were taking the position that they took, and so he sent out a command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon, and they began killing the wise men, according to the text I’m reading. In verse 13, “So the decree went out and they began killing the wise men, and they began to seek Daniel and his companions to kill them.” And Daniel asked for time and gathered his friends together and had a prayer meeting. We read in verse 18 of chapter 2 of Daniel, “That they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret.” And as a result of their prayer, God did reveal the dream to Daniel. Daniel then went to Arioch, one of the king’s men, and told him that he was able to interpret the dream, and he was quickly brought before the king. The king was told by Arioch that he had found a man of the captives of Judah who would make known the interpretation.

And the king asked Daniel who was before him, and you'll remember his name was Belshazzar to the king, “Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen and its interpretation?” And Daniel went out of his way to not say, “Yes, I'm able to do it” but he went out of his way to give credit to God. He first of all said, “The secret which the king has demanded the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers cannot declare to the king.” So he gave those soothsayers a proper downgrading and made it very definite and plain to the king that they were unable to do what God is able to do. But then he said that it is God who reveals secrets. He says, “As for you O king, thoughts came into your mind. Oh, but I should read verse 28, “But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and he has made known to Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.” And then he went on to tell Nebuchadnezzar what the dream was, and I'd like to read again the dream, beginning at verse 29. “As for you O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed about what would come to pass after this, and he who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be.”

I made the comment and, I think, it's important that this expression that is translated “things that would come to pass after this” is an expression. This is, of course, in Aramaic, but the parallel Hebrew expression, is an expression that refers to the “last days before the winding up of this present age” or in other words, the last days just preceding the second coming of our Lord. Daniel then says, “But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, that you may know the thoughts of your heart.” And then in verse 31, he gives the contents of the dream to the king, who I'm sure, must have been astonished beyond anything that one could imagine. “You O king were watching and behold a great image.”

Someone has pointed out, there is a note in the Bible that I have that this is a striking fact because it's interesting that the Gentile world dominion, which we said begins with the times of the Gentiles, begins with the destruction of Jerusalem by

Nebuchadnezzar; that this present period of time, known as the times of the Gentiles, begins with a great image, and then ends with a great image described in Revelation chapter 13, verses 14 and 15. Striking thing, that in this period of time, six hundred and five BC to the time of our Lord's coming, when Jerusalem is delivered from Gentile bondage, that we have an image, a great image, and then a great image, and in between, the times of the Gentiles.

“A great image”, he says in verse 31. “This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you and its form was awesome. The image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors. The wind carried them away, so that no trace of them was found, and the stone that struck the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream,” Daniel says, “Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. You O king, are a king of kings, for the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength and glory, and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, he has given them into your hand, and has made you rule over them all.” And now the important statement, “You are this head of gold.” And that, of course, gives us an important clue.

Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon, so the beginning of the times of the Gentiles which we have here, remember the statement in Luke 21:24, “Jerusalem shall be trodden of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Nebuchadnezzar's responsible for the treading down. “You are this head of gold.” So the times of the Gentiles, that biblical expression, begins with the overthrow of Jerusalem by the Gentile King Nebuchadnezzar. “You.” So we begin there, with the identification of the meaning of the vision. He says in verse 39, “But after you shall arise another kingdom, inferior to

yours, then another, a third kingdom of bronze which shall rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, for as much as iron breaks in pieces and shatters, shatters everything, and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay, and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided, yet the strength of the iron shall be in it just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. And as its toes, as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men, but they shall not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.”

Now, we pointed out last time, I say, that Babylon was the first kingdom, so that the kingdom of gold is the kingdom of Babylon. The next kingdom, we are told, is “one with chest and arms of silver” is identifying the kingdom of silver. And we pointed out that in the flow of history following the Babylonian kingdom, Medo-Persia overcame Babylonia, and the times, if you're interested in the times, the Babylonian kingdom's dates are six hundred and five BC to five hundred and thirty-nine BC, and then the Medo-Persian kingdom from five hundred and thirty-nine BC to three hundred and thirty-one BC. These kingdoms have very close similarity to the vision that Daniel sees, because the first kingdom was a true monarchy, and the gold is very suggestive of Nebuchadnezzar.

The second kingdom, the Medo-Persian, kingdom is an autocracy, and the fact of the two arms of the image suggests the two-fold character of the second kingdom, Medo-Persia. And then the third kingdom is a kingdom of bronze; evidently, a reference to the Grecian kingdom, and the dates somewhat difficult to set definitely, but three hundred and thirty-one to one hundred and forty-six BC, has been offered as a probable date. The Grecian kingdom was a stratocracy; that is, it was a kingdom of an army of force, and Alexander, the outstanding king, of course, is the one who was probably greater in strength than that, that preceding him. And the final kingdom, in the image, “Its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay” is a reference to the Roman Empire. Now in

a moment, we'll try to point out that, this image and the way it's described, not only refers to Rome as we know it in the past, but also Rome as it has continued down through the centuries since then.

I think, we were closing the lesson last time around the statements that Rome itself was a kingdom that, while Rome appears in the eyes of many to have passed off the scene that, in fact, the principles that are characteristic of the Roman Empire exist still with us. I illustrated by just pointing out that, the first capital of the United States was New Amsterdam or New York, and we imagined in our minds that, suppose a foreign power should have come to the United States, and should have attacked the United States, and should have driven the capital, whether in New Amsterdam or in Washington, should have driven the forces of the nations all the way inland as far as Kansas City, which would be farther than the original thirteen colonies. We still would speak of the United States of America, even though its government was now located in Kansas City, for the simple reason that government is not conditioned upon locality always, but it's distinguished by the type of administration, the institutions, the culture, the civilization, and so on. We've had illustration of this in modern times with the Free French Empire in existence but no longer in control of France because the Germans had overrun it. We have also illustrations in the case of China and Formosa and no doubt in history one could find many other illustrations that would be comparable to it.

So what Daniel appears then to be seeing is a vision of the progress of Gentile world dominion and the kingdoms that make it up are these four kingdoms. You'll notice there're only four kingdoms. He does not say a fifth, and so we may presume that, the times of the Gentiles, the time when Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles from six hundred and five BC until the time of the eternal kingdom, now over twenty-six hundred years, this period of time is a time in which four world rulers ruled. Not more than four; not less than four, but four world rulers. And we're taking the last, as we'll seek to show

in the remainder of Daniel does show, that we speak of Rome, and we also speak of revived Rome.

Now, there are some important features about this, and I want to look at some of them now for the remainder of our time, and finish up the story of Daniel chapter 2. I think one of the important things that appears first, is that the important kingdom is this last kingdom; that is, the Roman Empire. In verse 44 we read, “And in the days of these kings.” Now, those kings are a form, as we shall see, of the revived Roman Empire, and so it’s in these days that our Lord will come and destroy it, and establish his own eternal kingdom. The characteristic of the fourth empire is not so much its grandeur as it is its strength. It is an empire. It is also the opinion of some that because we have this final form of it with the “ten toes” stressed, which we are told here in this passage incidentally, but then in much detail later on in Daniel, refers to ten kingdoms; ten kingdoms that will exist in the last days, that perhaps we have something that might suggest democratic rule, but there is no real certain evidence of that. That’s speculation.

Now, thinking about this fourth image, and notice again in verse 32, “The image’s head was of gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thigh parts of bronze, now its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.” So we have here, the legs of the fourth empire suggesting a form of division within it. Two legs suggests a division. Now, we know in the history of the Roman Empire division did occur under Diocletian, for example, around the beginning of the 4th Century so, so far it agrees with what we know of the Roman Empire. But one other thing of the image, as you think about it, “the image’s head, gold; its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thigh parts of bronze, its legs of iron”, and as you look at the image and reflect upon it, you surely are impressed with the fact that the legs are the longest part of the image, with reference to a particular kingdom. In other words, the head, if we eliminate the head and the breast and the arms, and then the belly and thigh parts; well, this fourth kingdom is one that is to exist for a considerably longer period of time. That of course, we know is true of the Roman

Empire. So the legs, the longest part, suggests an unusual length of the fourth kingdom. Now remember, we have only four kingdoms, and all of this then, would seem to fit with what we are reading and seeking to understand here.

It's unfortunate we don't have time to look at Daniel chapter 7 and Daniel chapter 8, because other details clarify what I'm saying to you, and you'll just have to take my word for it. But since you're so confident of my teaching, why I'm sure you can do that. But, anyway, what I'm saying to you, I think I can show more fully in the remaining chapters of the book. We don't have time to do that in our series, in this particular series at least. But now, one thing occurs to me right here at this point. You know, we have here pictured a magnificent image. If you looked at it, it must have been a majestic thing for Nebuchadnezzar. No doubt that's why it was so significant for him, and why so much he wanted an interpretation of it. To see a gigantic image; gold, silver, bronze, and then the legs and the toes all making up surely, something very spectacular, and something of which he was sure had immense significance, and that's why he called in his men, and ultimately of course, Daniel's giving him the interpretation. And I'm sure he's listening very, very carefully to it.

What's striking about this is that this is heaven's picture of what we think of world empire. Now later on in Daniel chapter 7, when God tells us what he thinks of human world empire, what do we have? You who've read Daniel, you know. We have four wild beasts. This is what Nebuchadnezzar thought of world empire and the vision is suited for him. He thought it was great. God thinks of world empire as being four wild beasts, and the last, the worst of all, the Roman Empire, and the empire as it has continued in form and will; the revived. So if we were looking at this, and thinking about world empire, we Christians, well, we tend to think that the picture in Daniel 7 is more accurate than the picture here, but let's remember that this is Nebuchadnezzar's vision, which God gave to him.

Another thing that I think you can see as you think about this because what ultimately happens is the destruction of Gentile world dominion, is that the problem with world dominion is the problem of sin. The reason men cannot get along with one another is because of their sin. They talk a great deal about unity. They talk about getting together. They make constant plans so they tell us in order that there may be peace and unity among the nations. We have organizations like the League of Nations, the United Nations, and if we're on this earth long enough, there'll probably be a third and a fourth and a fifth attempt on the part of human beings to unite, because they think it's great, and it's their way of patting themselves on the back. But why is it that the nations of the earth cannot get together? Well, they cannot get together because they're sinners. In other words, let me put it this way, very strikingly. The one thing in which these nations are united, their sin, is the thing that keeps them from being united in anything else. Isn't that striking? What a lesson.

Take the Communists. Now, I am told I wasn't living at this time, I should have taken Reagan's position and said, "When Marx issued his manifesto, I want to tell you, I knew Marx and he was a bad fellow." I cannot say it, but in 1848 when he issued his manifesto, "Workers of the world unite," I'm told that many of the workers all over Europe cheered that; not simply in Marx's own little domain, but it was a big thing at that time. What happened to the first international? Well, the first international couldn't get along, because the leaders couldn't get along. What happened to the second international? It couldn't survive because the leaders couldn't get along. What happened to the third international? It couldn't survive because the leaders could not get along. Marx himself was one of the big problems. Marx and Bechunin and LaSalle, and the others involved, fighting with one another, dueling with one another. The international could not get along, because its leaders were not united. "Workers of the world unite" but they weren't united, and the result is we've seen the collapse of Communism. Why?

Because the one thing in which they're united is the thing that keeps them from being united in anything else; characteristic of human nature. Remarkable, isn't it?

Well now, I want to talk about verses 41, 42, and 43, because you'll notice, the toes are not mentioned in the vision. We read in verse 33, “Its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.” And then we read in verse 41, “Whereas you saw the feet and toes.” Now, this is the first mention of the toes. “Partly of potter's clay and partly of iron.” It's very hard for me to say “iron” without stopping and saying it with emphasis. You understand. I've been over in Mississippi for about four days, and they don't say it like it's supposed to be said, any more than I do. They say it “iron”, so I'm saying “iron”. Mississippi. Straight from Mississippi. “Iron”. That doesn't sound right, does it? Anyway, “partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided, yet the strength of iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.” Now, notice verse 42, “And as the toes.” Well, he's already mentioned the toes, but he's mentioning it again, and giving further exposition, which is a clue that this is another stage in the interpretation of that vision. “And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay.” So the first mention of the toes in verse 41, incidentally, when he says, “the kingdom was divided” that's a word that means something like “composite”; not of the feet only, but not of one part from another, but of a disillusion within, is referred to. “The kingdom shall be divided.” The iron is strong, the clay is brittle, and in a later period, there is a deterioration in the moral fiber of the Roman Empire. We know that from history that, that is true. It's suggested by this image. When you read Edward Gibbon and others, who analyze the history of the Roman Empire, that's one of the reasons that they single out for its failure; its failure in its moral fiber.

But now verse 42 and verse 43 have to do with restored Rome, for we're dealing with the toes. What do the toes represent in this? If, for example, the gold represents Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom, and if the chest and arms represent the Medo-Persian empire, those two arms suggestive of the two-fold aspect of Medo-Persia. If the thigh

parts, the belly and the thigh parts of the strong bronze suggest Alexander, and the legs of iron, the long legs of iron, suggest the next empire, for each one of these empires conquered the preceding one; that is, the Medo-Persian conquered the Babylonian, the Grecian conquered the Medo-Persian, and the Roman conquered the Grecian, now what is indicated by the toes? Well I suggest to you, based on two things, that the toes are a reference to the kingdoms that will appear in the last days. In other words, we look forward to the time when ten kingdoms exist upon the earth.

Two reasons. Notice in verse 42 we read, and this incidentally, you should put in your notes. Put it in pencil, not in ink; that there is a long gap of time between verse 41 and verse 42. Now, we have to have a gap of time in here, because when the fourth empire is destroyed, the kingdom of our Lord on the earth follows it, so we move on into what is for us, in the distant future – at least, in the future. Not today, so far. Three hours and fifty-five minutes now, for our Lord to come according to the prophecies that have been made. “And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron,” so the toe we put long gap of time between 41 and 42, and now we are going to have information about the toes, further information. But just drop down to verse 44, “And in the days of these kings.”

What kings? No reference has been made to “kings” in the immediately preceding verse, and the kings referred to over here, Nebuchadnezzar, they’re off the scene. “These kings.” What are “these kings”? Well, we look at the immediately preceding context, and we read about “ten toes” and so it appears from just looking at the context that the “toes” has to do with “kings”. Ten kings. But to seal it as definitely true, we would have to go on to Daniel 7 and 8, where this is specifically set forth; that in the revived Roman Empire, there will be ten kingdoms over the face of this earth that are significant. So “and as the toes of the feet,” verse 42, “were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men, and they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.” Difficulty of people getting along. And now finally in verse 44,

“And in the days of these kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.”

Now, let me point out something, and I hope you get this point. What kinds of kingdoms have we had to this point? The Babylonian kingdom. A world empire. Physical. Material, is it not? An empire on this earth. An earthly empire. Is that not right? The Grecian empire. An earthly empire. Physical. Material. Maybe we could describe it another ways, but certainly we couldn't describe it as spiritual. Earthly. Material. One on this earth. Medo-Persian, Grecian, Roman, and the fourth empire? Well, the fourth empire; we've had Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, Roman. All four of them. Physical. Material. Isn't that reasonable to expect that the world-wide eternal kingdom will be also physical, material? Isn't that reasonable? What do we read in the Bible? We read in the Bible of a kingdom of God upon the earth, do we not? Of course we do. Some of you are looking with eyes glazed. We do read that. As a matter of fact, we're told in the Book of Revelation about a kingdom that will exist for one thousand years, ultimately merged into an eternal kingdom. I'm just suggesting, that the fact that the four kingdoms are earthly kingdoms, would lead anyone reading this, to surely believe, and with reason, that this kingdom “which will never be destroyed, the kingdom that shall not be left to other people, that shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and shall stand forever” is a kingdom like those other kingdoms, except that this one has been established by God in heaven.

So verse 44 and verse 45 tells us about the installation of this kingdom. “In the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people. It shall break in pieces, consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands.” What does that suggest to you? Well, that suggests to me, the supernatural origin of the stone. Now, I don't think that any of you here would have any doubt in questioning my statement if I should say to you, “It

seems plain that the stone is the Lord Jesus Christ in his coming.” Let me show you some hints along the way. In Isaiah chapter 28 in verse 16 we read, “Therefore, thus says the Lord God; behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation; a tried stone, a precious cornerstone; a sure foundation. Whosoever believes will not act hastily.” More than once in the New Testament that text, Isaiah 26:18, is cited and referred to our Lord Jesus Christ, so I don’t think we’re going far wrong. Later on, I say Daniel will make a lot of this much plainer, but here, broadly speaking, we’re referring to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The days of these kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. The stone will break in pieces the kingdoms, and Daniel finally tells Nebuchadnezzar the dream is certain, and the interpretation is sure. He says, “The great God has made known to the king what shall come to pass after this.” That’s what Nebuchadnezzar had been concerned about on his bed, thinking about the future, and now Daniel says, “The image that you have seen is God’s answer to your concern about the future.” And God brings in the kingdom. We’re told elsewhere in the word of God, through Jesus Christ, at the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus.

Some years ago at Dallas Theological Seminary, on one of the occasions of the graduation of a number of the students, in fact, it was I believe, at the commencement exercises, Hudson Taylor Armerding, Dr. Carl Armerding’s son, was the speaker that night. And in the course of his message, Dr. Armerding was at that time, the president of Wheaton College. He had been the provost and became president. He’s no longer the president, but nevertheless, he spoke that night. It was over twenty-five years ago. I was so impressed by what he said, I wrote it down on a piece of paper, sitting on the platform with the faculty listening to him give the commencement address.

He spoke of a discussion he had in the Navy during the war, over the apparent hopelessness of the international situation. He and some other of the officers were talking about, “Why is it and how is it, that the nations cannot seem to get together, and

they resolve their disputes with wars that don't really settle anything ultimately?” He said that they discussed this, they discussed possible solutions, and finally one man, not at all a Christian, he said, said these words, “Perhaps an impartial, benevolent dictator might do.” “An impartial, benevolent dictator might do.” I suggest to you, that's precisely what our Lord is. Impartial. Guided by truth and justice. Benevolent. Benevolent as God in heaven is benevolent. Good. Loving. Filled with loving kindness, and yet at the same time, just and righteous. And certainly one who will do completely, his will. The will of God. That's what David was talking about when, near the end of his life remember, he's lying on his death bed, I believe. In 2 Samuel 23, he talks about a “ruler over men.” He's talking about the promises made to him. He says, “A ruler over men; just, a ruler in the fear of God.” Just. Impartial. Benevolent.

Well now, we've just kind of surveyed this, and I'd like to finish it, and then perhaps there's some questions you might have. This is a glorious panorama of world history, and what our Lord is told, or I should say, what our Lord tells the prophet to tell us; the dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure. The key issue, obviously, is the condition of Jerusalem and the Jews, because remember our text in Luke chapter 21 and verse 24 that we've been citing a number of times, our Lord is the one who said, “They shall fall by the edge of the sword, be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” Now, it was well over six hundred years when our Lord made that statement, with reference to the times of the Gentiles. This is a vision given to the Gentile Nebuchadnezzar; great king, so it pictures world-wide Gentile dominion. In other words, this world shall be under Gentile dominion until Jerusalem is not trodden down by the Gentiles. They're trodden down by the Gentiles today. Israel cannot have its Temple. They wouldn't dare at this moment, evidently, set up their own Temple in the Temple area. They don't do it. Of course, that tells us how close we might be, but nevertheless, Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles tonight.

So the key issue then, is Jerusalem. But what a difference since when I was converted. When I was converted in nineteen forty-one, the idea of a nation “Israel” was only a dream. Prophetic students rarely talked about it, except to say, “In the future some time, there may be something like that.” Some of the men in the earlier part of the nineteenth century speculated about it, Samuel Kellogg among them. He speculated, he even suggested how Israel might become a nation again, and remarkably, he was fairly close to the way in which it did. But now toady, we have an Israel, and Israel is on the front pages of our newspapers, on our television screens, always, it almost seems. So they are back in the land, and thus to that extent, the end of Gentile dominion is that much closer.

Bismarck said a statement I’ve referred to a number of times. You’ve heard me say it. Bismarck once said, “The statesman must try and reach for the hem when he hears the garment of God rustling through events.” That’s a magnificent statement for a German to make. The great Bismarck. “The statesman must try and reach for the hem when he hears the garments of God rustling through events.” It would be wonderful if statesmen would really do that.

Bishop Ryall, a number of years ago, made this statement. “While the nations of Europe, this was before World War II. In fact, it was before World War I also. “While the nations of Europe are absorbed in political conflicts and worldly business, the sands in their hourglass are ebbing away.” Now, if he could say that over a hundred years ago, how much sand is left in their hourglass? “While governments are disputing about secular things and parliaments can hardly descend to find a place for religion in their discussions, their days are numbered in the sight of God, yet a few years, and the times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled. Their day of visitation will be passed and gone. Their misused privileges will be taken away. The judgments of God shall fall on them. They shall be cast aside as vessels, in which God has no pleasure. Their dominion shall crumble away, and their vaunted institutions shall fall to pieces. The Jews shall be restored. The Lord Jesus shall

come again in power and great glory. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and his Messiah, and the times of Gentiles shall come to an end.”

In 1917, the year in which Europe was approaching the end of its first war of self-destruction, someone else said, it was the year incidentally, that Oswald Spangler completed his work entitled, “The Decline of the West”. The same year, the British government issued the “Balfour Declaration” in which it solemnly promised to help the Jewish people to re-establish themselves in Palestine. What an interesting thing. A man writes “The Decline of the West”, and at the same time, the “Balfour Declaration” is a declaration to help the Jewish people re-establish themselves in Palestine. The reappearance of the state of Israel thus coincides in time with the decline of Gentile civilization. The more we see Gentile civilization declining, the sooner we shall see Israel and Jerusalem again, as a result of the second coming of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

So what’s the key personal issue for us? Well, the key personal issue is that statement in Isaiah chapter 28 in verse 16. “The stone.” Do we believe in him? Is he our personal Savior? Is it that we really know him as our personal Savior? Can we honestly say deep down in our hearts, “I believe in Jesus Christ. I have given myself to him for time and for eternity.” Our Lord talks about a stone elsewhere too. You’ll remember in Matthew chapter 21 and verse 44 he says, “And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.” The relationship to the stone is of ultimate significance.

Well, I’m not going to talk any more about this course of world empire. The reason that I changed my subject, and talked about this, was because I wanted to, as we study the divine purpose, to get a broad picture of the present age. We had talked about the present age and the details of it. I’d like to get a broader picture of the whole age, and then next week, the Lord willing, I want to go back to the prophecy of the seventy-sevens in Daniel chapter 9, verse 24 and through verse 27, which has to do primarily with

the last week of years of this period of world empire. It's a very important prophecy, and I hope you'll read it ahead of time before we come together again.

Now, we have a few moments for questions, and I'll be glad to try to answer a question or two if you'll raise your hand, speak loudly. There may be somebody here whose hearing is not real good, and so what are you laughing about? [Laughter] I heard that laughing. So if you have a question, speak I know I was not that clear. Yes sir. There are a number of statements in here that are very difficult to interpret. In fact, all interpreters will say, “It's very difficult to be absolutely certain of some of the things that are stated here.” Later on, some of the things in Daniel help out, but you're talking specifically about, “But they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.” “They'll mingle with the seed of man” and so forth, I think, most of the commentators have stated that what that refers to, is the tendency of the individuals to be at odds with one another.

In other words, there is little union that exists in those who are involved, but it's very difficult to be absolutely certain. I don't know of anybody – and I've read a lot of commentaries on Daniel that really says, “We understand this.” It's not altogether clear. I'm sorry. I can't give you any more help than that, but I haven't found any myself on some of these points. Are there other questions? Yes. The question is, “Is there such a thing as a Roman Empire now at all?” I think that what we have in world empire today, particularly in the west, where we do have the strongest of all world empire in the western world, we have the Roman institutions still with us, and so, consequently, in that sense. The institutions, the culture, the civilization of Rome still exists, so in that sense, “Yes.” Do what in Rome? I heard “in Rome” but what did you say before “in Rome?” Yeah. You mean, am I talking about Rome, Italy? But I'm not talking about the empire being in Rome.

Well, the Roman Empire extended over the whole of the earth, of the known earth at that time. The Roman Empire extended as far east as Palestine, and so on, where they

conquered, and then as far as Great Britain in the north and west. So the Roman Empire was a worldwide empire. And when I say the Roman Empire, when Bible interpreters say, “the Roman Empire revived” or “the Roman Empire still with us,” they mean the western world and part of the eastern world, where the values, the institutions, the culture, the law, in fact our law you know, is largely derived from Roman law. Still persists.

What do I mean by the western world? Well, you know what, you know what Western Europe is? And the United States? And the countries of Western Europe and the United States; that’s the Western world.

From the standpoint of the land of Palestine, the west would include even more than that, but from our standpoint, we normally mean the western world would be Germany, France, Italy, Great Britain, United States; the countries to the west.

Catholicism? No. Does not. The Roman Empire existed as a worldwide empire before Catholicism ever existed. Catholicism arose long after our Lord had come and, of course, was crucified; long after the Caesars. And so Catholicism was a religious movement, not related to political dominion, and we’re talking about political things. We’re talking because we’re talking about World Empire in that sense.

Well, those are good questions. Oh, all right. At what point does what appear? The ten kings appear before our Lord’s second coming, but shortly before, evidently. Now, Daniel chapter 7 and Daniel chapter 8 will help out, because Daniel chapter 7 and Daniel chapter 8 deal in further details with those aspects particularly.

All right, Jerry. You said something. I heard your voice. Okay. As a matter of fact, you probably, if you read any prophetic literature, you know it’s characteristic of people who studied prophecy to speculate a bit, and what I’m saying to you is, of course, what I have read and what has impressed me. Some people have speculated a lot. Some even have gone so far as to say, “Yes, this is that,” and so we’ve had prophetic students making statements like, “The big three of the first three of the ten toes.” We have

individuals talking about the Common Market, and the nations of the Common Market, and the fact that, at one time, not too many years ago, there were ten nations in it. Prophetic students went around preaching a great deal on the fact that prophecy appeared to be fulfilled.

One must be careful about that, because now of course, that doesn't appear, and those who made statements like that are burning those old notes, and hoping -- and hoping others who heard them have forgotten them, and probably they have forgotten a good bit of it. So we've had the big three, the big four, the big five, the big seven, and the big ten. And we've even had ten in the economic sphere, the ten nations that have met from time to time having to do with things like that. You find some of those things listed in *Wall Street Journal* a few years back. So speculation is permitted. We just need to distinguish between speculation and what we may have reason to believe, on the ground of some good exegesis of the word of God.

It's one minute after 8:30, so let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee for the privilege of studying some of these things that are not easy to interpret. We thank Thee for the overall message, however, that the Gentile world kingdom of the various nations will come to an end in the future with the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the purposes of God shall find their fulfillment in the fulfillment of the covenants made to the nation Israel, issuing in a worldwide empire that shall, ultimately, extend into the eternity that lies before us. We especially thank Thee for him who shall bring it all to pass, the stone cut out without hands, the supernatural, infinite, eternal, Son of God, our Lord and Savior who died for sinners.

We pray in his name. Amen.