

Ministry on Daniel

Part 5

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[00:00:00] Three basic scriptures which I read last night and I wish to read again, partly as a reminder for those who were able to get, partly as a connecting link for those who were unable to be present. And David, have you the sheets there for tonight? Perhaps, without being too much of a distraction and to save time, David will give, I think there's sufficient for each couple anyway, where there are couples, 25 to 27.

And thou profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God, remove the diadem and take off the crown. This shall not be the same, [00:01:07] exalt him that is low and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more until he come whose right it is and I will give it him. Luke's Gospel, chapter 20, 21 sorry, Luke 21 verses 20 to 24.

When ye shall see Jerusalem come past with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let them which are in the midst of it depart out, and let not them that are in the countries enter therein too. For these be [00:02:03] the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days. For there shall be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people, and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. Lastly for the moment, Acts chapter 17.

Verse 31.

God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, [00:03:11] whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead. Thank you, David. I think I have it. Thank you.

In our introductory studies to the book of Daniel, to establish for all of us a framework for future detailed study, we began last night [00:04:09] a look at what the Lord Jesus himself called, in what we have as Luke 21, 24, a phrase, the times of the Gentiles. A period of time at least in part prophetic future when Daniel was speaking and historic to us for the most part. And we use the term freely because they are the words of scripture. And we began last night in comparing Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, because the times of the Gentiles, we learned from the text, cover an extended period of many hundreds of years [00:05:09] where because of the disobedience of the nation of Israel, and in particular the disobedience of the southern kingdom of Judah, it was necessary for God to discipline

his earthly people. And that to their horror, the people of Judah found that God was using a Gentile power to vanquish them, take them into captivity, which was the supreme insult for the people of God upon earth. And we looked first at that scripture in Ezekiel, written in the days of the first of the four successive Gentile empires, [00:06:04] when the kingdom of Babylon held sway and where there was a puppet king, Zedekiah, installed on the throne of the kingdom of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar. And Zedekiah was acting in such an evil way that God, through the prophet Ezekiel, says, this can continue no longer. It shall be no more. I will deal with this nation of Babylon and bring in further kingdoms who will do what my disciplinary work on my behalf. And we learned from the text that this would eventually include four successive Gentile kingdoms, and we read the words.

[00:07:02] Now, last night, for revision for those who were here, and for a connecting link for those who couldn't come, if you refer to the diagram, we compared Daniel 2 and Daniel 7. Daniel 2, giving us man's view of these kingdoms in all their apparent significance. The left-hand side of the page, that representation of the image that Nebuchadnezzar was given to see. On the right-hand side, we see a representation of what Daniel chapter 7 describes as these four world empires in their viciousness, in their selfishness, in their cruelty to the people of God. The image then, man's view of these kingdoms, these beasts, beasts of prey.

[00:08:12] On the right-hand side, God's view of the same kingdom. Now, in the center, we have a heading as to what we would nowadays call Gentile superpowers. And in particular, we've looked at the comparison between Daniel 2 and Daniel 7. As far as the kingdom of Babylon was concerned, we compared, as scripture does, the head of gold in chapter 2 with the lion with eagle's wings in chapter 7. And we saw how well those features represented the kingdom of Babylon, succeeded by the kingdom, the joint kingdom of the Medes and the Persians, seen in the [00:09:08] breastplate of silver in Nebuchadnezzar's image in chapter 2, but seen as what we would call simply a hunchback bear in chapter 7. One shoulder, and how strong the shoulders are, one shoulder beginning to grow after the other one, eventually becoming higher and stronger, indicating that the kingdom of the Medes, first of all, was powerful, particularly in the hands of Darius the Mede, and then eventually in that joint kingdom, the amalgamation, Cyrus the Persian becoming supreme. And we looked at that comparison and the features in chapters 2 and 7. We then [00:10:02] followed by looking at the loins of brass in chapter 2, and the four-headed, uh, four-winged leopard in chapter 7. And again, not by fancy, not by interpretation, but by plain straightforward statement of the word of God, we were told that this third world empire was the kingdom of Greece. We are not given the name of the first king. History records that as Alexander the Great. And after his sudden demise at the age of 32, the number of generals who then, after a little bit of confusion, settled down in number four to wield the former power of the [00:11:01] kingdom of Greece. And that's as far as we got last night, in fairly quick succession. As the kingdoms went on, we noticed that each kingdom was greater in mechanical strength, mostly wider in domain and territory, but of decreasing worth and value as far as the materials of the image were concerned. And tonight, we are going to look at the fourth empire. Now, as before, we cannot do better than trace longhand, through scripture, what we are told. So would you turn back, please, to chapter 2 of Daniel. And we look, first of all, at verse 31, as we did before. [00:12:03] Chapter 2, verse 31. Speaking to Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel said, 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. Impressive, indeed, to the eyes of men. This image's head was of fine gold. We've looked at that, the kingdom of Babylon. His breast and his arms of silver. Scripture has defined for us that as the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians. His belly and his thighs of brass, the kingdom of Greece. Those who couldn't come last night, check up in chapter 7 and 8, and the kingdoms are stated as by their name. [00:13:07] And so we had these kingdoms. And now, in verse

33, we come to something we have not considered before. 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 break them to pieces. Now, putting 33 and 34 together, we have a representation of the fourth kingdom, as yet unnamed, but we are told that there were two major parts to it. A major dual structure signified in the legs, and then at the end. And because we're going in time chronologically [00:14:07] from the tip of the head, and we have been going through time, it is reasonable to assume, even before it's defined, that because the kingdom of Babylon was first in time, then the kingdom of Mede and Persia, then the kingdom of Greece, we are now moving on to a fourth kingdom, and that we have a representation of part of the features of the kingdom in the two legs, and then another representation of something connected with the kingdom in the feet, partly of iron and partly of clay. Now, verse 35. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, [00:15:04] and no place was found for them. And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. Now, before we go any further, we've learned this. We know from history, from the Bible, it was true of the kingdom of Babylon. It didn't last forever. It was ultimately judged by God, and removed from power. It was also true of the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians. It did not last forever. It was superseded by the kingdom, the empire of Greece. And we've learned from scripture that the kingdom of Greece did not last forever. And now, as we continue our study, we have a prophetic statement that this fourth kingdom, [00:16:04] when it came in, it would not last forever. That it would meet its destruction from this rather mysterious representation, a stone cut out without hands, which would smite the image upon the feet. Now, here we have the first, second, and third kingdoms were superseded by the use of normal national military power by the kingdom that followed. But we have an early indication here that the fourth empire would come to its ultimate end because of supernatural means, supernatural power, this stone cut out without hands. Now, we can only leave that there for [00:17:04] the moment, and we can move over to verse 40. We come to the interpretation, the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron. Iron would be prominent in the materials in common use in this kingdom and would be a feature of the kind of strength that this fourth kingdom exerted. For as much as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things, and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of pot as clay, part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided. We are to look for a kingdom which is under one emperor, but where there should be two major [00:18:09] divisions. The kingdom shall be divided, and there shall be in it of the strength of the iron for as much 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. So again, without giving a name, we are learning that there will be a material strength about the kingdom, but that the rulers should mingle their executive power with those who came from the lower ranks of [00:19:15] the population, and that this would result in an undermining of the executive efficiency. And again, I'm being as general as possible to be fair to what the scripture says. I'm trying not to fly to an interpretation that's not offered by the scriptures that we've read so far. Now that's in chapter two. As before, let us look at the diagram. And yes, we've got a representation of two legs, ten toes, and then if we compare this with the right-hand side, we'll find a description of a monster, an aggressive monster, [00:20:08] whose description we are going to look at now in chapter seven. And we look at chapter seven and verse seven. 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 break 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

[00:21:04] by the roots, and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man and a mouth speaking great things. So, in the interpretation in scripture of this fourth kingdom, this fourth empire, we are told that the power would become more and more diffused. Two, and here we have ten horns corresponding to the ten toes. No split as to time, nothing said about the point in history when this should occur, and we have to wait till other scriptures to look at that. Now then, let us look at verse 15, chapter 7, verse 15.

I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head [00:22:11] troubled me, and well they might. Just imagine, most of you have been looking on and off at the book of Daniel for many years, and if you're anywhere near like me, every time you look at it, you can remember the general outline, but because our minds are finite, the detail goes, and we have to refresh our memory, and every time we look at it again, we feel like Daniel. We feel that the visions of our head trouble us, and verse 16 goes on to say, I came near unto one of them that stood by and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made me know the interpretation [00:23:05] of the things. These great beasts, the beasts of prayer, chapter 7, which are four, are four kings which shall arise out of the earth. Yes, we'll leave that for a moment. Four kingdoms, and then verse 19, how persistent Daniel was. Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, his nails of brass, which devoured, break 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 [00:24:09] look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them. Now again, we come to one of the marks of kingdoms that are referred to in scripture. Where they become worthy of God's notice is where their activities affect God's earthly people, and we are told that this fourth world empire would come to a point in its history where they treated God's earthly people in a terrible way, persecuting them in a terrible way, at the time that the power of the kingdom is represented by ten horns. Again, let us reserve [00:25:11] our judgment as to which of the kingdoms of the world this is. Now, would you turn over, please, and for the first time we'll have a little excursion into the book of Revelation. Chapter 4, verse 1. Note the order of these scriptures. Revelation, chapter 4, verse 1.

After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard was, as it were, of a trumpet talking with me, which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the Spirit. And behold, a throne was set in heaven, [00:26:10] and one sat on the throne. Chapter 13. Notice the similarity between the verses 1 to 10, which I'm going to read, and the verses we've been looking at in Daniel 2 and 7. Chapter 13, verse 1. I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his [00:27:08] heads, as it were, wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast, and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who was like unto the beast? Who was able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them. And power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, [00:28:04] and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world. If

any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leaveth into captivity shall go into captivity. He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and faith of the saints. Chapter 17, verse 8. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, [00:29:03] and is not, and yet is. Chapter 19, verses 11 to 16. I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called faithful and true, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns, and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called the word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth [00:30:01] goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written king of kings and lord of lords.

It is well said that we cannot understand the book of revelation without first studying the book of Daniel, and you cannot rightly understand the book of Daniel without a knowledge of the framework of Ezekiel. We've looked a little at Ezekiel, we are spending more time in Daniel, but to consider in parallel with what Daniel says about the fourth kingdom, [00:31:02] we've read these verses in chapter 17 of Revelation. There will be a time, again to be fair not yet defined, there will be a time when it is right to say that this fourth world empire, characterized by iron teeth and great cruelty and great power, there would be a time when it was right to say it used to be great, it's relatively unimportant at the moment, and the time will come in the future when it will be great again. It was, it is not, and shall be present. Revelation 17 verse 8. But note where that is said.

[00:32:10] It is said after chapter 4 verse 1 and before chapter 19. When we look at the introduction to the book of Revelation, and John is instructed to record certain things, he is recorded to, he is asked to record the things that thou hast seen. That's his vision in chapter 1. The things which are, the things which are current at the present time when he wrote, and the things which shall be hereafter. Chapter 2 and 3, he gives what is clearly an account of the responsible career and history of the Christian church from Pentecost to the rapture. [00:33:05] And then, in this pictorial way, at the beginning of chapter 4, as a symbol of what will happen at the end of the church period on earth, John is invited to come up to heaven. He leaves earth as a scene and he moves up into heaven. A picture of that momentous event which will bring to an end the responsible history of the church on earth. The catching away of those who are Christ's. 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. So this period when we are told that this fourth kingdom used to be great and is not now, but it's about to [00:34:06] become prominent again, is speaking of a time after the rapture. Chapter 19, the words we read, speak very clearly of the appearing in power and great glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Chapter 4 verse 1, the blessed hope, the rapture. Chapter 19, the appearing of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. And so, we are narrowing down the period that this fourth kingdom, which used to be great, relatively insignificant, now going to become prominent again. We've narrowed it down to a period after the rapture has occurred, but before the personal appearing of the Lord Jesus [00:35:05] Christ, when he will deal in a public way with his enemies. If you like, we are speaking of a period between the private coming of Jesus for his own and the public appearing of Jesus with his own in bible terms. Now let us go back, that's all we can do for the moment there, but it will be laying a basis for what we shall, if the Lord will, be looking at in the next two evenings in Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy. We look at the small print of that time between the rapture and the appearing as the Lord permits. But let us go back now to Daniel chapter 2, still thinking about the truth [00:36:01] of this fourth kingdom. By the way, if you

look at the diagram, against Babylon, it says Nebuchadnezzar. We are on good ground there, that's what the bible says. Medo-Persia, Darius the Mede, Cyrus the Persian. We are on good ground there, scripture says so. Greece, the great horn, Alexander the Great, and four generals. There's no reason to dispute that the great leader, the first emperor of Greece, Alexander the Great, is indicated there. Against the representation for Rome, there are four letters, S P Q R.

Canst thou speak Greek? Not at all. Canst thou speak Latin? No more. A Latin scholar tells me [00:37:08] that there has been a kingdom on earth whose motto has always been, I'm relying on others for the approximate pronunciation, Senatus Populusque Romanus, being interpreted the senate and people of Rome.

There's no doubt, when we think of the way history worked out, when we think of the empire which held sway, which vanquished Alexander the Great and his successors, that is, when that four-fold empire, which was split north, east, south, and west, as we shall see [00:38:02] tomorrow night, that kingdom eventually gave way to the empire of Rome. And indeed, they did have two major legs, two major portions to that Roman empire, one based on Rome, one based on Constantinople, the two legs. But we shall, if the Lord will, tomorrow night, see that ultimately, that empire of Rome, which was in that balanced, two-legged stance, straddling Europe and part of Asia, which is less than prominent at the present time, that the time will come, because God says so, when it will be revived to prominence, and that ultimately it will be a conglomerate of at least [00:39:07] ten units. And if the Lord will, we'll look at that. But we are going to look further ahead again tonight, and we're going to look at chapter 2 and end as scripture ends. Chapter 2, verse 34. 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 break them to pieces. Forty-four and forty-five. In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom which shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. For as much [00:40:08] as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it break 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. An indication that after these four world empires, each coming to the end of their allotted span of power, that they would be superseded by a kingdom which would never be superseded. Remember Ezekiel 21? That this overturning, overturning, overturning would go on until he [00:41:03] come whose right it is, and I will give the kingdom to him. God speaking. Now we're going to look at chapter 7 where we see the detail of that working out. God in all his glory passing on to the true king the kingdom that shall never be superseded. Chapter 7 verses 9 and 10. I beheld till the thrones were cast down, all these four kingdoms now gone, 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. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him. Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. [00:42:08] The judgment was set, and the books were opened. Here we have a picture of God in all his glory and honor and majesty. Notice in passing that the same attributes are listed of the Lord Jesus Christ himself in Revelation chapter 1. But here it's God as such. Verse 13 and 14.

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 nations and languages should serve him. His [00:43:03] dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Here we have it. That term which speaks of the Lord Jesus in his lowliness,

humility, and humiliation taken up here as identifying the one to whom all power shall ultimately accrue, and the one whose kingdom shall never give way to another. I understand that's the literal sense of these terms forever and everlasting in speaking of kingdoms. Again the use of the term everlasting in the book of Hebrews. Again written with a Jewish [00:44:01] mind in view. Speaking of things which shall never pass away, which shall never be superseded again, and not necessarily being eternal in duration as we would speak of it, but not excluding it, but the emphasis being primarily that while other kingdoms were superseded when they'd had their day, here is a kingdom to be introduced which would never go away. Here is a king who would never be superseded by another. And lastly, verse 27, the character of the kingdom. 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 [00:45:01] dominions shall serve and obey him. This strongest of man's kingdoms, the fourth kingdom, very strong in its early days, iron chariots, iron roads, very strong in everything that they tackled. Some of their roads even here are still visible to be seen, but ultimately diminishing in strength and passing off the scene as a world force, never from the perhaps the fourth century AD up to now to be reckoned as a world superpower. Diminishing, getting less, losing even that which had been its force and its power. Another [00:46:02] indication of that which always comes in when man is left to responsibility. How happy we are to be able to end on this high note that the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ will never diminish, will never degenerate, will never deteriorate, will never be superseded by another. And some of his personal activities bringing in that kingdom and inaugurated it in power and great glory, we shall hope to look to see from tomorrow evening, if the Lord will, when we look at the prophecy of the 70 weeks.