

Daniel

Part 3

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[00:00:00] Now will you turn please to Daniel chapter 2 and we're going to commence reading from verse 17.

It's a fairly long passage to read but bear with me in the reading of it. Daniel chapter 2 verse 17. Then Daniel went to his house and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning the secret that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said, blessed be the name of God forever and ever for wisdom and might of his. And he changeth the times and the seasons, he removeth kings and setteth up kings. [00:01:02] 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 has given me wisdom and might and has made known unto me now what we desired of thee, for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter. Therefore Daniel went in unto Ariokh, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus unto him, destroy not the wise men of Babylon, bring me in before the king and I will show unto the king the interpretation. Then Ariokh brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah that will make known unto the king the interpretation. The king answered and said to [00:02:02] Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen and the interpretation thereof? Daniel answered in the presence of the king and said, the secret which the king had demanded, can it the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king? But there is a God in heaven that reveals secrets and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream and the visions of thy head upon thy bed are these. As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed. What should come to pass hereafter? And he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. But as for me, the secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the [00:03:04] interpretation to the king and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart. 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. The 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 break 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 threshing floors. And the wind carried them away that no place was found for them, and the stone that smote the image became a great

mountain [00:04:02] and filled the whole earth. This is the dream, and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. 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 given into thine hand and hath made thee rule over them all. Thou art this head of gold, and after thee shall rise 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, for as much as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things, and as iron breaketh all these shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes part of potter's clay and part of iron, [00:05:08] the kingdom shall be divided. But there shall be in it 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. And in the days of these kings 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 forever. For as much as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it break in pieces the iron, the brass, [00:06:07] 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. Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet orders unto him. 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. 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. Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and [00:07:02] Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel sat in the gate of the king. Now then, we have enough here tonight to keep us going for two free nights, but we'll do what we can to get through this marvelous chapter. First of all, let us say that chapter two is mainly dealing with the Gentile nations, and tomorrow night, if the Lord will, we'll be dealing with chapter nine, which has to do with the nation of Israel. But these two chapters are extremely important in the unlocking of the understanding of prophecy. And without understanding their dispensational bearing, then we'll very, very easily get mixed up. And we must keep clean in our minds, as we said in a previous evening, that when we are dealing [00:08:01] with these things in the book of Daniel, we're referring to matters that pertain to earth. There is a tremendous parenthesis found, especially in chapter nine, as we shall see, and this makes way for the present period, the dispensation of the church, the dispensation of the unfolding of the truth of the mystery, Christ and the church, totally distinct from anything that belongs to earth, heavenly in origin, heavenly in character, and heavenly in destiny. But what we're dealing here with is earth and the greatness of God in relation to the nations.

And I want to say a few words first, before we go on to the interpretation of this chapter, that if we're only concerned about seeing these great monarchies coming and then disappearing, and eventually to make way for the kingdom of our Lord Jesus, if we're only concerned about [00:09:03] the events, then I think we'll miss the cream of this chapter. And I believe the great truth of the chapter is the absolute supremacy of God. And you will notice that throughout the chapter, again and again, we find it mentioned, the God of the heavens. There's a very interesting psalm, you can look it up when you get home, Psalm 115, where the psalmist says, our God is in the heavens and he does whatever he pleases. And then on goes the psalmist to describe the gods of men. They can't see, they can't hear, they can't smell, they can't speak, they can't do anything. And so when we read about the God of the

heavens, it's in direct contrast to the gods that are upon earth. And they're absolutely useless because they're man's handiwork, but the God of the heavens is the eternal living God. And then the next great [00:10:07] feature that we find is the revelation that comes from God, and that's of the utmost importance to understand. Where would we be as believers if we did not have in our hands a direct revelation from God? Whether it has to do with what has gone in the past, or whether it has to do with the future or the present time, the revelation that we have from God covers all these things and we can understand them and enjoy them. So it's of the utmost importance to know, to understand, and to claim that we do have a revelation from God. Mr. Darby wrote many, many interesting things, and I commend to you one of his articles, Have We a Revelation from God? Well worth reading, [00:11:06] because we do have a revelation from God. And then when we come to Daniel, we find a man who's marked by the greatest possible dependence upon God. When he hears about this evil decree passed by the king that all the wise men are to be killed, he and his companions among them, he gets to the king about it, gets a grant of time, and then gets his companions together and they pray. And this shows the dependence that they had in the God of the heavens. And I believe that these two things are linked very, very closely for our spiritual progress. First of all, an understanding that there is a revelation. Secondly, prayer on our part, that we might [00:12:01] understand and enjoy it. And very often before I go to a prayer, to a Bible reading, I use the prayer of Paul in Ephesians 1, where you remember Paul says that he prayed for the saints that they might have the spirit of knowledge and revelation. I'm not quoting it correctly. Spirit of wisdom and knowledge in the revelation of God, God himself, that the eyes might be enlightened and that we might know. Now, I know I'm using the prayer out of context, but the spirit of it is there, that you know that you don't know. You know that you don't know everything. It'd be foolish to think that. And so you realize that you have to learn and you have to know what the best things to ask. If we lack wisdom, let us ask. That's what James says. Very, very wise. And so we need to learn what the revelation of God means, what its import is, how it will end, what glory it [00:13:03] will bring to God, what blessing it will bring to men. Wonderful thing to have a revelation from God. And if we look closely into the New Testament, we'll find that each person in the Godhead is active in this matter of revelation. Matthew 11, the son reveals the father. Matthew 16, the father reveals the son. First Corinthians 2, God reveals things to us by his spirit. And so we can see clearly that all the persons of the Godhead are active in this great matter of revelation, outside completely the realm of man's knowledge. When we come to man's philosophy and man's ideas, oh, what a confusion there is. This one thinks one thing, another thinks another thing. But we've got 66 books in the Bible, all dealing with different periods in God's dealings with men, what we call dispensations, and they're all unified together [00:14:07] and they all present the glory of God. No deviation in any of them, they're all together in harmony because they're all inspired. Wonderful thing. And so we need to ask, we need to pray, we need to be concerned that we understand this revelation. So that was the first thing, and Daniel said he was a dependent man. And he was a very humble man. That can be seen from the fact that he says to Nebuchadnezzar, now, don't think for a moment that there's anything special about me. There isn't anything special about me. I've cried to God. It's God who has given me the interpretation of the dream. God who has done this, not me. And then you remember at the end of the chapter, as we read, when he received honor from Nebuchadnezzar, he didn't forget his three companions and made a request to the king that they too should be honored along with him. [00:15:08] Modest, humble, unselfish man. These are moral features that we might well adopt in our Christian living. First of all, an enhanced appreciation of the greatness of God. Without that, then we'll become very fearful indeed. An enhanced appreciation of the revelation of God, covering all God's dealings with mankind in whatever dispensation. And two, these features of humility and modesty and dependence that well become us as Christians. Now we'll try and go over very, very briefly, it must be briefly, some of the features in this remarkable chapter. There has been a saying that's been used often, and it's well worth using, that prophecy is simply

[00:16:03] history declared beforehand. And you'll find in, I think it's about between 44, 47 chapters of Isaiah, statements where God says, I declare the things that are coming beforehand. That's not the exact quotation, but that's the gist of it. The coming things, I can relate them. I can see what's going to happen. And he says, whatever I purpose happens. And so this is one of the great features that we see when God makes a prophetic utterance, it's just as well as done. May take a long time to happen. And of course, in relation to Israel and the nations, yes, it will be a wee while before it happens, but it will come because God has decreed it. I have purposed it, it will come to pass. So prophecy is simply history being written beforehand. Now, this great king was lying in [00:17:06] his bed one night, he couldn't sleep. Or if he did sleep, he had a dream. And that dream troubled him.

Different opinions about this. Some say that he knew his dream, but he wanted to test his wise men to see if they were able to tell him. He didn't understand the interpretation of it, but he knew his dream. Well, whether that's so or no, I don't know. But anyway, he had a dream and he couldn't understand what it meant. And the dream, as Daniel interprets to him, was to tell him what was going to take place, not in his simply in his own lifetime, but in the latter days, the hereafter. So this dream of Nebuchadnezzar stretches right over [00:18:05] the centuries, covering what is called the times of the Gentiles, right on to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power and glory to set up his kingdom. Now that's a long, long period of time. But this dream covers that completely. Well, then he sends for his wise men. We said this in a previous evening, that when the Jew is faithful to God and trusts in God, he is infinitely superior to the Gentile. And here again, we see this picture where the wise men of Babylon, the Chaldees, these are the priestly caste and the astrologers and the sorcerers and the scribes, all different classes of the clever men of Babylon. And they're all hopeless. They don't know a thing [00:19:01] about this dream. And I think we will have a certain amount of sympathy for them when they say, well, nobody has ever been asked such a thing as this, to tell the king his dream and also to tell him the interpretation. You tell us the dream and we will give you the interpretation. And the king knew that if he did tell them a dream, the dream, then they would concoct up some interpretation. And so he wanted to test them. Well, we already said that Daniel and his companions were in danger because the king said, if nobody can tell me my dream and his interpretation, all the wise men have to be killed. And from that point, we started to read. So Daniel and his three friends, they have a prayer meeting. There's another thing. Here they are, four young men, captives in Babylon faced with this terrible decree, faced with this terrible problem. What can they do? [00:20:05] And they did the very best thing. They got down on their knees and they prayed. Fellowship in prayer, even in the most difficult circumstances, when apparently there was nothing could be done. What a lesson for us. How often we get despondent, how often we feel, is there any use going on? Yes, there is. Praise God, there is. God listens to prayer, heartfelt, earnest prayer. Heartfelt, earnest prayer. God is concerned about those who express their dependence on him. And so there was a revelation from God to Daniel. He says to me first, and then he says to us, he doesn't forget his companions. And I think this remarkable outpouring of praise ought to be considered by us. [00:21:04] Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are his. Now, there's an excellent beginning. Many great rulers have been in this world with very, very great powers, absolute monarchs as far as power was concerned.

Many of them, if not all of them, were sadly lacking in wisdom. But here is a God possessed with omnipotent power, illimitable power, and he has wisdom along with it. That is, not only has he the power, but he can use it wisely. Oh, what a wonderful combination that is. Wisdom and power. Things that will be seen in the exercise of the kingdom by our Lord Jesus, as we find in Revelation chapter 5. He goes on to say, he changes the times and the seasons. Now, [00:22:04] that ought to be considered by us. As far as I'm aware, this expression only occurs three times in scripture, times and

seasons. Here in Daniel chapter 2, and in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, you remember the disciple says, will it be at this time that you'll set up the kingdom? And the Lord says, that's in the Father's hands. Times and seasons are in his hands. And then we find in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, Paul says, I've already spoken to you about times and seasons. And if we understand it correctly, the term times and seasons has to do with God's government upon earth. The rapture that's spoken about in chapter 4 of 1 Thessalonians is the rapture of the saints caught up out of this world to be with Christ. Immediately after that, [00:23:06] God will resume his dealings in a direct way with earth. The times and seasons will commence. Now, times, the very expression indicates to us, I believe, the duration of the period when God is working with men, whatever dispensation. Seasons would describe the character of his workings. And so in those two things, we find God in his time, ways, and also in his character, the character of his dealing. In this matter of dispensations, there's a simple guide for us and nobody can possibly mistake it. When we come to the end of the book of Malachi, we read about the law and its curse. When we come to the New Testament, we read about grace and its blessing. Clear as daylight, two distinct ways of God's dealing with men. [00:24:08] And when we turn to the time of the law, it says plainly as plain can be, God will not justify the ungodly, but will punish the ungodly. When we come to the day of grace, God justifies the ungodly. Why does he do this? Because of the death of our Lord Jesus. Two distinct dispensations, as clear as possible, no one could possibly misunderstand the difference. So times and seasons belong to God. He arranges them. He directs them. And as we learn, and we believe from the understanding of the word dispensation, a household arrangement by God. How he arranges his affairs with men at any given moment, and he is arbitrary in that. It's his [00:25:02] will that does it, and nobody can call it in question. Times and seasons, he removed kings and set it up kings. I believe this operates today. I believe this with all my heart that the most high God, he rules in the kingdoms of men, sets kings up for his own ways, pulls them down again for his own ways. He has that power to do that. And he does it according to his own will. 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 light dwelleth with him. We're having time to go into all these different features of the greatness of God. There's a beautiful verse at the end of Deuteronomy 29, I think it is, where Moses says, the secret things belong to our God, but the revealed things belong to us and our children forever and ever. [00:26:06] Remarkable verse. There are things in the heart and mind of God that I believe are beyond the creature's understanding. He wills to reveal certain things, and as we've said already, that's a wonderful, wonderful blessing to be in the realm of revelation, to get what God has in mind for us at any given moment. So Daniel says, I thank thee and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who has given me wisdom and might, and has made known unto me now what we desired of thee, for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter. The God of my fathers, we've spoken about the God of the heavens. Daniel speaks about the God of our fathers, and I believe he's talking about the God of Abram, Isaac, and Jacob. He's talking about the God of promise, the God of [00:27:07] purpose, the God who has made a covenant with his people without any strings attaching to it. There are covenants, the Mosaic covenant, when God put his people under covenant, and they said, all this will we do, we will obey, and they committed themselves to doing the will of God. And we know, of course, that they failed miserably and, of course, forfeited the blessing. But the covenant that God made with Abraham had no strings attaching to it whatsoever. It was not dependent upon the nation's faithfulness, it was dependent upon God. We read about this in the epistle to the Hebrews, that by two things in which it was impossible for God to lie, his word and his oath, impossible that God could break that. This is the covenant [00:28:06] that has no strings attaching to it. And in the book of Jeremiah, we read about the new covenant that God makes with Israel. Marvelous covenant indeed. He'll write the law in their hearts, and they'll all respond to him accordingly. And so the God of my fathers, I believe, is Daniel recalling, in his own mind at least, that this wonderful God, the God of

promise, the God of power, the God of covenant, the God of purpose, was on their side, even though they were in captivity. And then we find again, he makes another expression, the great God. Oh, what that brings home to our hearts, the great God, the God of tremendous power and resource who is able to implement everything that he presents to his people. All right then, in verse 28, Daniel says, there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets.

[00:29:09] So we go on to the dream. Nebuchadnezzar sees a great image, and how often it has been said, and rightly said, that the times of the Gentiles begins with idolatry and will end in idolatry.

And down through the years, this has marked Gentile domination of Israel. Perhaps in the enlightened countries, there hasn't been the bound down to stocks and stones, but idolatry has been rampant in many of the Gentile nations. And idolatry can be practiced in different ways. For instance, as Samuel said to Saul, self-will. And oh, how the Gentile nations have been marked by self-will. No thought of God. [00:30:06] We've seen a large, large empire, the Russian empire, marked by ceaseless propaganda against God, throwing overboard everything that belonged to God. Atheistic propaganda in the schools, children from their young age, permeating that great empire. Self-will. And this has marked this great time of the Gentiles, self-will, idolatry, departure from God. It began that way. It has continued that way, and it will end that way. For we find in Revelation 13, the true final story of the end of the times of the Gentiles. When the beast, the head of the revived Roman empire, the last representative of the Gentile nations in power, will set up this great image, or rather, [00:31:04] the false prophet will set up the great image and tell everyone that they must bow down to this image of the beast. And then the false prophet himself sets himself up in the temple under use of him and desires to be worshiped as God. Sad, sad end to man's course of departure from God.

Impiety, blasphemy of the worst possible kind. And it began with this great king, Nebuchadnezzar, and I say has continued ever since, and will continue until the end, until it's finally dealt with and will never raise its head anymore. Various accusations have been made against this book of Daniel, saying that the person who wrote it had full understanding of all the events that would happen. Well, various competent teachers have shown what folly this is. For instance, Sir Robert [00:32:06] Anderson's book, *Daniel in the Critics' Den*, well worth reading. And many others, able teachers of the world, have shown clearly from history and also on the basis of inspiration that such accusations are false. And so here we find an outlining of the course of man's world. The Babylonian empire set forth in Nebuchadnezzar himself, thou art this head of gold.

Let me come to the verse 37. Thou, O king, art the king of kings, for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. If you turn to Revelation 5 and see all the things that are ascribed to the Lord Jesus, which I believe are the things that will be expressed when we read [00:33:07] when he rules as king over the earth, you'll find that he is the only one to whom those things are ascribed. Here, this great king has a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. You'll find that other kings in the Old Testament, like Solomon, for instance, he had great power, great wisdom, and so on. But no king, no person was able to have all the things that were ascribed to the Lord Jesus, because no one could possibly administer them as he will. And so we're very, very thankful for the unique place that the Lord Jesus has in the counsels of God and his purpose in relation to earth. Read these things carefully, and I believe they will all be fulfilled in perfection in the world to come. That's why they're ascribed to the Lord. I know that they [00:34:06] are direct contrasts to all the things that he suffered on the cross, and that can be considered too. But I believe the main import is that these things that are ascribed to him will be put into effect in the world to come. Well then, the time came for Nebuchadnezzar to move off the scene. Why? God has always a moral reason for what he

does. And if you turn to one of the chapters in Isaiah, I'm not quite sure, maybe chapter 44 or 45, you'll find God's judgment on Nebuchadnezzar.

He says, you didn't show mercy to the poor. You didn't care for the widows. You were merciless. You were an exactor. And you'll find too in the judgment of Babylon, in the early chapters of Isaiah, the reasons why God brought judgment upon this great king. It wasn't simply God saying, [00:35:08] well, we'll get rid of this king to make way for the next nation. There was a reason for it. And you'll find later on in one of the chapters, chapter four, Daniel gives Nebuchadnezzar very, very good advice, which apparently he never paid any attention to. Daniel said to him, show kindness to the poor, break off your iniquities. He's telling the king to have moral features about him, not to have those absolute features. Whom he would, he slew. Whom he would, he kept alive. His word was law and he acted in a very proud way. This is great Babylon, the Babylon that I've built. Oh God. I shouldn't say God delights to humble those who are proud, but God does. He does humble those who are proud. He desires to exalt those [00:36:03] who humble themselves. It's a divine principle. And so this proud, proud king was deposed to make way for the next great empire, the empire of the Medes and the Persians, which I think in extent and territory was much larger than the Babylonians, but it was inferior because there were certain forms of government that didn't apply to Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar was an absolute monarch. He didn't ask parliament what to do. He had no consultation with those who were beneath him. He did his will, but according to the Medes and the Persians, that was another matter. As we see with Darius later on, he's bound by the laws that he makes and he can't revoke them. And so that was an inferior kind of kingdom. And then we find that kingdom has to make way for Alexander the Great, the Grecian kingdom. And his kingdom after his death is divided between his [00:37:05] four generals. So we find some more weakness in government. And then comes this last unnatural form of government, iron and clay, strength of the iron, the weakness of the clay.

And if we want to understand a little of the moral features of these kingdoms, we have to turn to chapter 7, where they're portrayed as beasts, powerful, fierce, ravaging beasts. And there we find their true character. And this last one is a beast that's not found in the natural world. We have the lion in Babylon, bear in Medes and the Persians. We have the leopard in the Grecian empire. But we have a beast that has no correspondence to anything in the world. [00:38:03] Absolutely ferocious heads and horns and tremendous power and cruel power. That's the kind of thing that we find in the last representative of the Gentile nations as set out in this image.

Now, if you read anything of history, a short time ago, I completed reading the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. And I can assure you, it wasn't edifying reading. It may have given me a little insight into the kingdoms of men and the way they operated, the evil, the corruption, the cruelty, and when the Roman Empire is depicted in that book, it's certainly not delightful reading. [00:39:01] The cruelty, absolutely awful. And that's the kind of empire that is brought here at the very, very end, the Roman Empire. In history, it's abundantly proved that this is the course that the times of the Gentiles took. But this is the great point. That it's at that particular period when we've reached the last form of the times of the Gentiles, that the stone cut out without hands strikes the image and the whole thing comes crumbling down, becomes like the chaff of the threshing floor, and it's completely obliterated, completely wiped away, and it doesn't exist anymore. At the time of those kings, oh, but you say, you've explained that step by step, different kingdoms, empires are removed. How can you say at the time of these kings? Well, now, you have to turn to Revelation chapter 13. [00:40:06] Now, just let me read it for you, because I think it's important. Revelation chapter 13, and I think it's verse one. And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and I 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. Now look, this is what it says about the beast. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard. That's Greece. And his feet were as the feet of a bear. That's the Medes and the Persians. And his mouth as the mouth of a lion. That's Babylon. And the dragon gave him his power and his seat and his authority. This great beast has all the features of those great empires [00:41:05] that we've been speaking about in Nebuchadnezzar's image. And at the time when the Lord Jesus comes to set up his kingdom, this will be in vogue. There will be a tremendous set up under the beast, great power, great confederacy of nations under his rule, tremendous worldwide influence, and it's when this is reigning in power that the Lord Jesus Christ will come. One great feature of these things is that all those kings reigned when Jerusalem was strutting down. Whether it was Babylon or the Medes and the Persians or Alexander or the Romans, Jerusalem was trodden down. Now we believe the Lord Jesus can come at any moment [00:42:03] for the church. Praise God for that. The sooner the better. Also, we believe in comparatively short time of seven years, he will come to set up his kingdom. Well then, how will this take place?

We believe we can see in the formation of the European community what can very, very well be the foundation of the beast and his power. We're not saying it is because after the church is gone, events will take place rapidly and then it will become evident where this great conglomeration of nations is. And the beast will be identified at the present moment. His number is 666. Nobody knows what that number means. Various attempts have been made and it's ridiculous. It's ludicrous. It's hopeless because nobody understands. But when the beast is in power [00:43:03] and active, then it will be known, this number and what it means 666. And of course, it's just the acme of power of man and his independence of God and it will all come down. Now, this matter, the stone cut out without hands. There are various references to the Lord Jesus Christ as the stone. We're not going to refer to them. We want to refer to the statement cut out without hands. Now, there are a few references in the Bible to things that are cut out without hands. And they all mean divine operation as distinct from what man does.

In the epistle to the Hebrews, we read about the tabernacle system approach to God, not made with hands as distinct from the tabernacle, which was reared by Bezalel and [00:44:05] Aholiab and the united efforts of the nation of Israel. There we find a new approach to God, a spiritual approach to God. That's why we as brethren don't believe investments and incense and music and that kind of thing, because it's a spiritual approach, an approach and the power of the spirit that doesn't need any human embellishment. Cut out without hands is a reference to what God does in his power and in his wisdom. Then we find in 2 Corinthians 5, we read of our building of God without hands as distinct from what we have here in our mortal bodies that are subject to death. Here is a body that's prepared for us, a glorious body, not made with hands, something that God himself provides for us in his power. This was one of [00:45:05] the accusations that they made against the Lord Jesus, that he would destroy the temple and rear another one without hands. This is one of the accusations they made against him. And then in connection with circumcision in its spiritual sense, in the epistle to the Colossians, Paul says a circumcision not made with hands. And all these references refer to what God provides in his power and wisdom and blessing. Now then, a stone cut out without hands, the Lord Jesus Christ coming in power and glory to set up his kingdom, a kingdom that will fill the whole earth and will never deteriorate, will never be overthrown. After a thousand years will be handed over perfect to God, that God may be all in all. Wonderful, wonderful thing. Marvelous.

[00:46:05] God has revealed this to us in his word. It's plain for us there to see. God may be all in all, but for a thousand years, there will be a kingdom that will cover the whole earth. No kingdom has

ever done that. Not all the great kingdoms that we mentioned are set out in Nebuchadnezzar's image. Not one of them control the whole earth, but the kingdom of Christ will. It will fill the whole earth. There will be righteousness reigning. A king shall reign in righteousness. Oh, what a wonderful picture we find in the book of Isaiah. Wonderful to read about it. All the blessing that will accrue to mankind. Israel will be in its proper place. The nations will be in their proper place. The church will be there with Christ reigning over the earth and God will be glorified and Christ will be glorified. The stone cut out without hands, [00:47:05] a reference to our Lord Jesus Christ. He's indispensable to every thought of God.

He's indispensable to us for every blessing. Without Christ, there is no hope for the world, for any of us. But we find all through the scripture, Christ is God's man. Christ is the one whom God is going to use for the blessing of mankind, whether it be the present day of grace or the day of judgment or the day of blessing for the earth. Christ will be at the center of it all and bring it to pass for God's glory. Now, just one little word. We come to the end. I like what Daniel says, the dream is certain and interpretation thereof sure. Now, that's the [00:48:01] language of a man who has the mind of God. There's no doubting. There's no saying, well, it might be, I'm not quite sure. No, that's not the language of Daniel. The dream is certain and the interpretation thereof sure. Now, look at this remarkable thing. Then the King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and worshiped Daniel and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet orders unto him. Just a short time before, this man Daniel was under sentence of death with all the rest of the wise men. And here's the great monarch, the great man Nebuchadnezzar, and he's actually bowing down before Daniel. I believe this is a picture of how the Gentile nations will bow down before Israel when God restores them. In one of the books of Isaiah, it speaks about kings, [00:49:06] princes. They'll be the persons who look after you. They'll come and bow at your feet, he says to Israel. They'll carry you along. They'll provide all that's necessary, a complete reversal. Oh, what a sad story has been the persecution of the Jews after they said his blood be upon us and upon our children. Oh, what sad government, what solemn government that nation has experienced through their own folly in rejecting their Messiah. I've read a book recently, The Star of David. There's not so much to read in it, but there's plenty of pictures to see. And the authors are German, and all the pictures were taken from German soldiers. And the author says, you can be sure that every picture that you see portraying people, [00:50:05] all those people are dead. And the pictures are too awful. In fact, it's not the best kind of book to read. But that's going to be reversed. That will all be done away. They'll never sorrow or sigh anymore, never experience all the persecution that they have done through the ages. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah will be supreme, and he'll look after his beloved people. And I believe Nebuchadnezzar bowing down before Daniel is just a little picture telling us what the Gentile nations will do to the nation of Israel. It is on history I understand that Alexander, the great conqueror of Greece, he actually bowed down before the high priest of Israel. Now, we understand that he wasn't worshipping the high priest, but through bowing down before the high priest, he was in measure worshipping the high priest God. So there may be [00:51:05] something of that too in Nebuchadnezzar. But anyway, I believe again, as I've said, this is a picture of what will happen in the future. Then there's a statement that he makes in verse 47. Your God is a God of gods. And you might say, well, that's an exaggerated kind of statement coming from a Gentile monarch. He can't possibly be in the knowledge of that. It's a perfectly true statement. If you turn to Deuteronomy chapter 10, you'll find Moses making exactly the same statement. God, a God of gods, which indicates that amongst all the gods that exist, and of course, there are gods many, Paul says, there is one God, one true living God. And that God is the one who orders the affairs of the universe. And that's what we see in Daniel chapter two. And so we find [00:52:06] Daniel sat sitting in the gate of the king. He's now promoted. He's in the administration of the king of Babylon, and his companions too are promoted. Good

rewards for a man of faith and dependence. Dear friends, that has been a hasty covering of the chapter. There's much more in it, and it bears careful scrutiny. An hour's not enough to go into all the depths that are in it. However, we trust there's enough to encourage, to help, and also we trust to whet our appetite, to learn a little more, and to have our faith strengthened in our God. May it be so, for his name's sake.