

MARCH OF EMPIRE - LECTURES ON THE BOOK OF DANIEL

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CHAPTER 13

Daniel's Mistaken Idea Corrected

LESSON TEXT -- Daniel 8:15-27

The Bible Divides All People into Only Three Classes, i.e., Jews, Gentiles, and Christians -- You Have to Belong to One of These Three Groups -- Daniel Was the Great Prophet to the Gentiles -- To Whom the MARCH OF EMPIRE Was Revealed -- The Gentiles Have Received the Gospel Because the Jews Rejected It -- If the Gentiles Persecute the Jews and Suppress the Gospel They Also Will Be Cut Off -- GOD is Working Out His Plan for the Ages -- The World is Being Prepared During the Present Crisis for the Second Coming of CHRIST -- GOD Will Reject Those Who Reject the Gospel Whether Jews or Gentiles -- Beasts Were Used to Symbolize the Four Successive World Powers to Reveal the True Character of Gentile Governments -- A Prophetic Picture of the Rise and Fall of the Grecian Empire -- A Prophetic Introduction to Antiochus Epiphanes Who Was a Type of the Coming Antichrist -- How the Revelation of Such Truth Affected the Prophet Daniel

THREE CLASSES OF PEOPLE

Let us remember that the Bible views all people in the world as belonging to one of three classes; namely, Jews, Gentiles, or Christians. No matter who you are you belong to one of these three groups. A Jew is a Jew until he becomes a Christian through faith in the Lord JESUS CHRIST, but the moment he becomes a Christian he loses his identity as a Jew. Likewise, a Gentile is a Gentile until he becomes a Christian through faith in CHRIST, and the moment a Gentile gives up his heathen religion or his infidelity and becomes a Christian, he loses his identity as a Gentile.

These things remind us of the fact that the church, which is the body of CHRIST, is now being called out through the preaching of the Gospel, from among both Jews and Gentiles as a people for His name. A Christian, therefore, is a member of the true church, which is the body of CHRIST, whether he was a Jew or a Gentile before he was saved.

THE PROPHECIES OF THIS BOOK INTENDED FOR THE GENTILES

In our study of the Book of Daniel, we should always remember that Daniel was the great prophet to the Gentiles! We who are Christians delight in studying the Book of Daniel because of the information and the light which we receive concerning the Gentiles. But mind you, Daniel's prophecy was not primarily to us, who are Christians, but to the Gentiles who rebelled against the Lord at the tower of Babel, and who, as nations, are still un-Christian, and have not yet repented of their sins nor returned to GOD.

THE MARCH OF EMPIRE REVEALED TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Our last lesson was based upon Daniel 8:1-14.

Let us remember that both, to Nebuchadnezzar and to Daniel, there was given a vision of the march of empire during the times of the Gentiles. The times of the Gentiles, as we know, began with the Babylonian captivity about 606 or 604 B.C. and have continued from then until now, and will continue until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. JESUS Himself said of the Jews in Luke 21:24, **"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."**

NEARING THE END OF THE GENTILE AGE

What is coming to pass these days throughout the world merely indicates that we are nearing the end of the times of the Gentiles. For nearly two thousand years the Gospel of the grace of GOD has been preached to the Gentile nations.

WHY THE GOSPEL WAS TAKEN TO THE GENTILES

Back in the days of the early church, when the Jews would not accept the teaching of Paul and Barnabas concerning the risen CHRIST, in Acts 13:46 it says, **"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."** That, my friends, is exactly what they did.

But, now, after nearly two thousand years, during which the Gospel has been preached to the Gentiles, it seems as if the tables are being turned and that the Gentiles themselves are turning against and away from the Gospel of the grace of the Son of GOD.

A REAL THREAT

I was much impressed by an article in the Saturday Evening Post some time ago, entitled *"The Crisis in Christianity,"* by Will Durant. We quote the opening portion of the article as follows:

"In the year 1888, shortly before his collapse into insanity, Friedrich Nietzsche predicted that the time would come, when history would be divided, not into, Before CHRIST and Anno Domini but into Before and After (Nietzsche.) He was confident that his attacks upon

democracy and Christianity would be fatal to those allied creeds, that the twentieth century would see their disappearance, and that the future would date a new era from his work.

"Fifty years after this made prophecy half of Europe has rejected Christianity -- (explicitly in Germany. Two-thirds of Europe and half of South America have deposed democracy, have established martial law, over law and industry, and have submitted to the rule of 'supermen.' Nearly all of Europe has put aside the ethics of CHRIST as incompatible with military vigor, and has adopted the Nietzschean 'master-morality' of power. In Russia and Germany, and in less degree in Italy, men have accepted these developments not as passing tyrannies but as a new religion capable of stirring their hearts to sacrifice and heroic enterprise. Perhaps Christianity, like democracy, is doomed by the victory of force over persuasion, of efficiency over freedom, of war over peace. The first World War did more harm to Christianity than all the Voltaires in history; the Second World War may complete its destruction. Possibly the Age of Nietzsche has already begun."

Certainly, my friends, this is a striking statement which throws out to us a real challenge and which reveals a desperate situation.

GOD HAS A PLAN FOR THE AGES

Few people know or realize GOD's dispensational plan for the ages as related to the Jews, the Gentiles, and the church. They do not realize that GOD's plan is being carried out on prophetic schedule and that no man or group of men, and that no nation or group of nations can hinder GOD from bringing to pass those things which He has purposed in His heart and which He has revealed in His Word.

WHAT THE CRISIS REALLY MEANS

Indeed, there is a crisis in Christianity, and few people realize that the crisis now impending is the crisis of CHRIST's second coming and that, it is fast approaching because GOD has a controversy with the nations, who more and more are rebelling against Him. Would to GOD that men could realize that the impending crisis, when it is brought to a consummation, will not mean defeat for the hosts of righteousness, but utter defeat for all who are wicked and godless, whether among Jews or Gentiles, for GOD always has ways and means of delivering His saints, and of executing judgment upon the wicked that few men have ever known or dreamed of.

HOW GOD WILL DELIVER THE CHURCH

For instance, at the right time when the church, which is the body of CHRIST, has been completed, **"The Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord,"** as stated in I Thessalonians 4:16-17.

Thus, the work of the church may come abruptly to an end but it will not be a case of defeat or of annihilation, but it will be an event of total and complete victory for those who are saved and are prepared to meet CHRIST when He comes for His saints!

A CRISIS AHEAD FOR PRESENT REJECTORS OF THE GOSPEL

But what will happen to those, who are now rejecting the Gospel and who are prophesying its total destruction? In Revelation 6:14-17 it says, **"And the Heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"**

ULTIMATE VICTORY BELONGS TO THE SAINTS

Yes, indeed, we acknowledge that a crisis in Christianity is now upon us, but we who understand the Scriptures are not ready to acknowledge defeat. We know that a time of tribulation is going to sweep across the nations of the earth, during which time, the work of GOD will suffer, and many of the tribulation is over, there will be the dawning of a new day, during which those who are righteous will set in the seats of authority, and all unrighteousness will be subdued.

PROPHETIC TRUTH HELPS US TO UNDERSTAND

In considering these things, the Book of Daniel comes to our help with a lot of prophetic light and information, which makes it possible to pass a correct judgment upon current events in the light of Scripture prophecy. The Book of Daniel studied in conjunction with the Book of Revelation will help us to know with certainty, the outcome of the present world crisis.

SYMBOLS OF WORLD EMPIRES USED IN DANIEL

Let us remember that the march of empire during the times of the Gentiles was revealed to Daniel under the symbolism of four beasts; namely, a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a nondescript beast. These beasts represented to him, and subsequently to all of us, the world empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.

The nondescript beast which represented the Roman Empire was described as being dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly. It was also described as having ten horns which represented the ten kings of the Revived Roman Empire.

In this vision Daniel saw another little horn come up among the ten horns before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots, and **"Behold, in this horn (it says) were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things."**

DANIEL'S CHIEF INTEREST AND DEEP CONCERN

Daniel seemed to understand about the other symbols and the empires which they represented, but he was greatly concerned to know the interpretation concerning the nondescript beast and the ten horns and the little horn which came up among them. I am constrained to believe, therefore, that most of what is recorded in the last five chapters of Daniel was given to him in response to his desire for an explanation and for a correct interpretation of these things. Since the nondescript beast represented the Roman Empire (which as we know will be the last world empire during the times of the Gentiles,) and since the ten horns represented ten kings who will reign over the Revived Roman Empire, (and the little horn which came up among them represented the coming Antichrist,) Daniel wanted to know more about these things.

THE RAM AND THE GOAT VISION

In our last lesson, which was based upon Daniel 8:1-14, we considered the ram and the goat vision which was given to Daniel and which revealed prophetically to him the rise and downfall of the Medo-Persian Empire, and the rise of the Grecian Empire. He learned also that when the Grecian Empire should become strong, its first king would be overthrown and that the Grecian Empire would be divided into four divisions, and that the coming Antichrist would arise out of one of the four divisions of the Grecian Empire.

LESSON TEXT

All that we said in our last message is confirmed and substantiated in the interpretation of the ram and goat vision as given in the remaining portion of the chapter. In Daniel 8:15-27 it says, **"And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision. Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright. And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be. The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power. And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand. And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision;**

for it shall be for many days. And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it"

Of necessity, we have been compelled to give some of the interpretation of the vision as given here advance, in order to clarify our lesson text as we went along. Therefore, all we will need to do in our present lesson will be to touch upon some of those points that have not been enlarged upon as yet in the passage just read.

DANIEL'S MISTAKEN IDEA CORRECTED

Our attention is drawn especially to verse 17 where Daniel said, **"So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for the time of the end, shall be the vision."**

This is very important for no doubt Daniel thought that the coming of the Son of man as the Messiah of Israel and the establishment of the kingdom would take place at the end of the Babylonian captivity, which Jeremiah had prophesied would be seventy years. The Lord wanted Daniel to be corrected in his thinking of this point however, and therefore, he made known unto him that the interpretation of these things belonged to the future.

In order to further confirm these things unto him, in verse 19 is says, **"And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be."**

THE HISTORICAL APPLICATION

Historically speaking, the end, spoken of here referred to the end of the third or Grecian Empire of Alexander out of which Antiochus Epiphanes, who was the little horn of verse 9, arose. He was a type of the coming Antichrist because he marched into the Holy Land, and into Jerusalem and persecuted the Jewish people and desecrated their sanctuary by offering a swine in the holy place.

THE PROPHETIC APPLICATION

Prophetically speaking, the time of the end spoken of here refers to the last end of the indignation or coming time of tribulation, which, as we know, is yet future, and will come to pass during Daniel's seventieth week, which we will study about in the ninth chapter. In verse 23 of our lesson text it says, **"And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences shall stand up."**

Historically speaking, these words applied to Antiochus Epiphanes whom GOD, in His permissive will, allowed to make their sanctuary desolate because they themselves had sinned against the Lord. Prophetically speaking, they look forward to the end-time (to the latter time of their kingdom) when the transgressors shall have come to the full, at which time

another king of fierce countenance and understanding dark sentences will stand up against them. In verse 24 it says, **"And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people."**

From these words we can discern that this coming wicked person will be none other than the coming Antichrist. This is confirmed in the 25th verse of our lesson text where it says, **"And through his policy also, he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand."**

Thus, in answer to Daniel's inquiry concerning the Revived Roman Empire and the ten kings, and the Antichrist, he was given to see and to understand that these things would not occur in complete fulfillment, until the last end of the indignation or the time of tribulation which is yet future.

HOW SUCH GREAT TRUTH AFFECTED DANIEL

The effect of all these things upon Daniel is suggested in verse 27 of our lesson text where it says, **"And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it."**

~ end of chapter 13 ~
