

The Destruction of the Nations, Part 1

Selected Scriptures

1330

Tonight we're gonna look at the destruction of the nations in the brief time that we have. In I Corinthians 10:32, the Bible indicates to us that our age, the people of our age, are divided into three groups: the Jews, the Church of God, and the nations.

Now, in our study of prophecy we have already dealt with the Jews. Last Sunday night we dealt in great detail with what God has planned for Israel in the Tribulation. Prior to that, we studied the subject of the Church of God in the future plan of God and we recognized that the Lord is gonna take us out. We reviewed the catching away of the Church before the time of the Tribulation. We reviewed God's dealing with Israel during the Tribulation and that leaves only the other group: the nations. That's everybody other than Israel and the Church and that's a lot of people.

Now, tonight we're gonna begin to look at God's plan for the nations as it appears in eschatology or as it appears in prophecy for the future. And it's not very...it's not a very bright future, believe me, for the world. What we're going to see in our study is the downhill slide of the world to destruction. In fact, we could well call it the fall of the world.

I suppose the question that's kicked around politically as much as any question, if not more, is what's wrong with the world. And that's a loaded question. Why is there so much turmoil? Why is there so much strife in the world? Why is there so much unrest in the world? Why are there revolutions as we heard about tonight? Why is there an incapability on the part of man to live with himself? What's wrong with this world?

There's political unrest. We read about conflict that is caused by capitalism as over against communism. We read about the continual conflict between nationalism and imperialism. And then there is racial unrest. We read about color crisis and culture crisis...a running conflict in almost every country of the world. We read about social unrest...crime on the increase, the inability of peoples to get along within the framework of their own government and to handle those who want to do their own thing at the cost of the security and the safety of others. We read about economic unrest. We're constantly made aware of the conflict between labor and capital, between union and management. We read about religious unrest. We live in a world of moral revolution. The mores are changing all the time. We read about theological unrest and even in our own country we've seen the growing tide of liberalism shifting and changing what was a static faith based on the Word of God. And all of these things are, all the time, thrown in our face.

But these are not the problem; these are the symptoms of the problem. You say, what's the problem? The problem is stated very simply and very concisely in Psalms 2. Listen to it. It even poses the question. Verse 1: "Why do the nations rage and the people imagine a vain thing?" Why is life such a turmoil and such vanity? "The kings of the earth,"...and here comes the answer..."set

themselves, and the rulers take counsel together,"...what?..."against the Lord." That's the reason, because the world is living in rebellion against God. We are a world of not only ideological atheists, but practical atheists. We not only, some of us, think there's no God, most of us live as if there were no God. Men live in a world apart from the standards that God has set.

If you were sitting in a position of leadership, say, you were the President of the United States, and you saw your entire country completely sweep into anarchy where nobody obeyed any laws, but everybody in the country was in rebellion, and then you sent certain people into that society to maintain order and all of those people rebelled, if you were sitting at the top of the pile watching that, you would have a small feeling like God has when He looks at the world. For the whole population of the world is in rebellion against God and God sent, quote, spiritual men into the world to keep spiritual order and they have rebelled. And so when God looks at this world, He sees unbelievable chaos.

In rejecting God, the nations, then, have rejected the Word of God. And when the nations rejected the Word of God, the ship of humanity cut off its anchor. The rejection of Scripture, you see, is the rejection of all God's solutions to all the problems. If you reject the solution, it's obvious; what is the result? You get nothing but the free run of Satan all over the world.

In fact, Isaiah perhaps describes it in words that are as illustrative as any. Listen to this. Isaiah 57:19: "I create the fruit of the lips." Listen. "Peace, peace to him that is far off and to him that is near, saith the Lord, and I will heal him." Here's God offering salvation. "But the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters churn up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Man lives in rebellion against God, consequently, he rejects the Word of God, consequently, he rejects all of God's solutions, which are the only solutions. And then you get unrest.

Well, I think the turmoil, as we see it in our day, seems to be coming to a boiling point as sort of signifying the end of everything. The nations reject God. They reject Christ. They reject the Bible and the result is chaos everywhere. And you know something? It is all setting the stage. The world, in all of its turmoil, in all of its unrest and in all of its chaos is getting ready for a one-world government that is going to end the chaos temporarily. There is coming a great worldwide government that is going to unify the world and bring about a superficial peace. And the world is crying for this right now. There's coming a man who will rule every nation. As we shall see, the Bible says, he will devour the whole earth under his rule. There will be unification, believe me. And there will be a superficial peace. And the world, in all of its turmoil, is begging for it. And that is only an inkling of the fact that we're close to the end.

But let me tell you something, friends; it won't last long. The Bible says that all of this unification and all of this peace is gonna last a few years and it's gonna end up in a world war called Armageddon. And all of those nations, which for a little while existed in peace, are gonna tear into each other in a war like no other war in the history of the world. And that war is gonna be ended by the return of Jesus Christ. And at that time, He will destroy the nations and judge the nations for their sin.

Now, in just a little nutshell, that's the panorama of the future for the nations. Turmoil solved by the world government and its ruler then deteriorates into a world war like no war, ended by the return of Jesus Christ who finally sets up true and everlasting union and peace in His Kingdom.

Now, we want to follow the sequence of these events as we study the nations in the Tribulation. And there are many features to this and it'll take us several weeks. But I want us to look at the times of the nations, the ruler of the nations, the alignment of the nations, the religion of the nations, the war of the nations and the judgment of the nations, starting to begin with, with the times of the nations. Now, this is a tremendously important subject and if we just get through this tonight, we'll have done well.

In Luke 21:24...just write it down; don't look it up...Luke 21:24, Jesus coined a phrase, "the times of the Gentiles." Now, the word "Gentile" means nations. And since that's what we're talking about, we'll use it that way. Jesus said there is such a thing, quote, as "the times of the nations," or the history of the nations. There is a segment of time cut out of eternity that belongs to the nations. In fact, Jesus further defined it in these terms. It is the time when Jerusalem is trodden down by the nations. The times of the nations or the history of the nations, as it's called by Jesus, is the time that Jerusalem is under...and by Jerusalem, we mean the land of Israel, all that Jerusalem should encompass...is trodden down by Gentiles.

Now, friends, this began about the year 600 B.C. Up until that time, you remember that God had led the children of Israel out of Egypt and He had brought them to the Promised Land. It was not easy, but He did it. He got them in the Promised Land. It was their land. They remained in the land until such a time as their sin rose to the nostrils of God to the extent that He couldn't tolerate it. And He said that's all I can take; that's all I can stand...and you remember Jeremiah was the one who was doing most of the announcing that God had had it...and I'm coming down and I'm gonna sweep you out of that land. I'm gonna turn it over to Gentiles. And what occurred was the captivity known as the Babylonian captivity around the year 600 B.C.

Now, that began the times of the nations. Now, I want you to notice something in Psalms 2 if you're still there. The nations will continue to rage against God. They've been raging against God since that time began and they're gonna keep it up. But in the end, God is going to take back the rule of Jerusalem and the world. Verse 4...oh, these people are, you know, fighting God and all this and it says, "He who sits in the heavens shall,"...what?... laugh. Their puny efforts are foolish. "The Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath and vex them in His great displeasure." God's gonna move in in terrible judgment on the nations followed by 6: "Yet have I set my king upon the holy hill of Zion." Who's that? That's Christ. So they're gonna keep raging until God sets His King on the throne. Therefore, the times of the nations began about 600 and will go until Jesus returns. We are living in the midst of the times of the nations. It started, as I said, about around 600 B.C. for around a rough figure. And that was when the nations took the dominion of Israel.

Now, as we look at this, we're going to need to look at the book of Daniel because there are so very many important prophecies there. Daniel is probably a political science document second to none. And Daniel presents to us the times of the nations.

Now, as I said, it began with the Babylonian captivity. And you remember the name of the king at that time? His name was Nebuchadnezzar. He was the king that really was the first monarch of the times of the nations. That is, after Israel had become a land and were removed and Gentiles took over, he was the first king. And you remember the sequence of what happens? You need to go back to the book of Ezekiel in your mind and you might jot this down. In chapter 10 and 11, the glory of God left Israel. Remember that? God had had it with Israel's sin. There were idols scribbled all over the walls of the temple. It was a blasphemous situation and God said I will not tolerate it; I'm leaving. And in

Ezekiel 10 and 11, the glory of God departs and the glory of God represents His presence. God just leaves Israel. God says I'm getting out. And that was the beginning of the end. God left and then God allowed Gentiles to sweep in and remove Israel and the Gentile history began.

In Ezekiel 21, verse 22, it says, "At his right...was the divination for Jerusalem, to appoint captains, to open the mouth in the slaughter, to lift up the voice with shouting, to appoint battering rams against the gates, to cast a siege mound and build a fort. And it shall be unto them like a false divination in their sight, to them that have sworn oaths. But He will call to remembrance the iniquity, that they may be taken." In other words, Jerusalem is going to fortify. They're gonna stockpile. They're gonna really build up. But it isn't gonna do them any good at all. Verse 24: "Because you have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are uncovered, so that in all your doings your sins do appear, because I say you are come to remembrance, you shall be taken with the hand." In other words, God says because of your sin, you can fortify all you want, we're gonna move you right out. Israel's day had ended. And Israel's day will begin again when Jesus comes. In the meantime, it's not the history of Israel; it's the history of the Gentiles. Up until that time Jerusalem had been supreme. Assyria tried to knock it off, Egypt tried to knock it off, Babylon tried to knock it off and none of them were successful until God said, your sins have caused this fall. When the measure of the wickedness of Jerusalem was full, God said, Nebuchadnezzar is to be the first monarch of the times of the Gentiles. It was punishment for Israel.

Now, as we enter the book of Daniel...this is a fabulous book...as we enter the book of Daniel, we find that Israel is already captive in Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar is the king. They have been taken out of the land. Daniel, one of the young Jewish lads, has been taken with them captive, and he is now serving in the courts of Nebuchadnezzar, the court of the king of Babylon. Now, God is about to use Daniel for prophecy. And what God wants Daniel to do, and listen to this, He wants Daniel to reveal the course of the history of the Gentile takeover. You say, why? Well, you see, immediately, when God allowed all these Jews to be taken into captivity, the question that would come in their minds is this: Has God copped out on His covenant?...right? Has God forsaken us? We're out of our land, our beloved land, the Promised Land that God promised Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. We've been removed from our land. Is this the end? Is God finished with us? Has God violated His promises? And so immediately, at the very beginning, God calls out Daniel and Daniel spells out in detail that the times of the Gentiles is only temporary. It's long...already it's been almost 2,600 years...but it's temporary. It's temporary. God has not forsaken His covenant. In the end, He will restore Israel. He will bring the Messiah. He will fulfill every promise He ever made. And that's why the prophecy of Daniel was written, to show that there were limits to the times of the nations. You know, I ask myself the question and you do, too. Why does God let nations go like they go? Why does God let them do what they did those Christians in Burundi? Why does He do that? This is the times of the nations. This is the time that God has prescribed in history for them to have their day.

Now, look at chapter 2 and let's see the course of the times of the nations. And we're gonna go quick so hang onto your seat. "In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams and his spirit was troubled and his sleep went from him"...couldn't sleep; he was having too many nightmares. "Then the king commanded to summon the magicians and the astrologers and the sorcerers and the Chaldeans"...and the Chaldeans were supposed to be the wisest of everybody..."to show the king his dreams." He calls in all the demonic people and the wise men and everybody else. "So they came and stood before the king." Now, this king really was, he really took his authority seriously. "And the king said unto them, 'I have dreamed a dream and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.'" What is this dream that I'm dreaming? All you wise people

tell me. "Then spoke the Chaldeans to the people in Aramaic, 'O king, live forever.'" Oh, they start softening him up a little bit. Oh, you wonderful old king, you (laughter). See. You just tell us your dream and we'll show you the interpretation, which is easy to do. They could just get in a circle and agree that they tell him what it was even if it wasn't. "The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, 'The thing is gone from me.'" I can't remember the dream. Can you imagine being bugged by the interpretation of a dream that you forgot? (Laughter) Then, listen to this. "If you will not make known unto me the dream with the interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces." The last part is strictly superfluous, "and your house shall be made a refuse heap." Having been cut in pieces, you wouldn't care a whole lot about your house (laughter). But he says, you better tell me what it was and what it means or I'll chop you all up. That's a little tough. Well, they were in no position to know that, obviously. Go to verse 10. And the Chaldeans were pretty wise. "The Chaldeans answered before the king and said, 'There is not a man on the earth that can reveal the king's matter. Therefore, there is no king, lord nor ruler that asked such things of any magician or astrologer or Chaldean.'" What are you doing? Nobody can read minds. What are you asking us? No king ever did that. Don't you know you're breaking historical precedent? "And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is no other that can reveal it before the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh." You're fooling around with the supernatural. "For this cause, the king was angry and very furious and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon." Boy! "And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain." Daniel was one of them, the smart guys in Babylon. Kill 'em all! "Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard who was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon. And he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, 'Why is the decree so hasty from the king?' Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel"...told him about it. "Then Daniel went in and desired of the king that he would give him time and that he would show the king the interpretation." Daniel goes in and says, now king, relax, and I'll show you the answer. "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 this secret, that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon." So they want to have a prayer meeting, the four of them. Lord, now is the time for you to reveal this to us (laughter). Well, God did. "Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. And Daniel blessed the God of heaven." God told Daniel...listen to me...do you know something wonderful? Do you know who made that king forget that dream? God did! God made him have the dream, made him forget the dream. Why? So he could get Daniel in the right spot to reveal the whole deal to him, which sets up Daniel, God's prophet, in the right place. And Daniel is gonna reveal the dream. And he does that. He sought God and God revealed to him what it was and Daniel revealed the dream to the king.

Now, you'll remember the dream had to do with an image. And we're gonna consider that. Look down at verse 31. This was the dream. In verse 24 it tells us that he was brought into the king so that he could reveal it and this is what he says to the king. Verse 31: "Thou, O king, sawest, and behold, a great image"...big statue..."This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee, and the form of it was terrible." Now, he says, oh, yes, he says, you saw this huge idol, this huge statue, and it was a fierce looking thing. "This image's head was of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet part iron and part clay." Now, that's quite an interesting thing. It was a huge thing, a large image, and it had this fourfold characteristic, well, actually five, the feet being iron and clay mixed. Then he said, "Thou sawest until"... he was looking at his image, you know, in his dream..."and he saw a stone was cut out without hands." There he sees a stone cut out without hands. "Which smote the image upon its feet that were of iron and clay and broke them to pieces. Then were the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold broken to pieces together and become like chaff of the summer threshingfloor and the wind carried

them away that no place was found for them. And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

Now that was his dream. That's a rough one. That is a very, very interesting dream. He saw this massive, huge man. His head was gold and his arms and shoulders and chest were silver and his thighs and mid-section were brass and his legs were iron and his feet iron and clay mixed. And here comes this stone out of nowhere and smashes the thing. It all crumbles and blows away with the wind and the stone grows up and fills the whole earth. You say, what is that? That, beloved, is the panorama of the history of the world. You say, what do you mean? Let me show you. And you'll have to follow these verses carefully beginning in verse 36.

"This is the dream, and we will tell its interpretation 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 wherever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art" ...what?... "the head of gold." The first great world empire was Babylon. And Daniel said, you are the gold in that image. You represent the first great world power, and the gold, because it was the purest power. It was the most, oh, I should say, with the least deterioration; it lasted 43...well, Nebuchadnezzar ruled for 43 years. He was a king among kings. And the kingdom of Babylon was the purest monarchy. And so he says, you are that image. You see, that image pictures the history of the times of the Gentiles and it began with that great Babylonian empire. Then the deterioration began. It's interesting if you happen to be post-millennial to try to explain, if we're getting better and better to go into the kingdom, how come the image keeps getting worse and worse in terms of inferior metals? That's another subject.

Alright, the second feature that he sees is in verse 39. "And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee." Now, we'll stop there. There is coming a shoulders and chest and arms kingdom. Who was that? Medo-Persia. The Medes and the Persians conquered the Babylonian Empire. They came together in a common government. Isn't that interesting that on the idol there are two arms, two shoulders and two sides to the chest and that represents the two-fold unity between the Medes and the Persians that we know as the Medo-Persian Empire. That was a great world government. In fact, over in Daniel, chapter 5...one of the most fabulous accounts of how the Medes and the Persians took over the Babylonian government...the Babylonians were having a drunken brawl and it was being led by the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar whose name was Belshazzar. And while they were in there really hooping it up at this big orgy, remember, the handwriting appeared on the wall: Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin. And the interpretation of it in verse 26, "Mene: God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. Tekel: Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting. Peres: Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." And there they are sitting in this big banquet hall, just really hooping it up and the writing right on the wall is announcing the end of the kingdom. And at the same time that that's going on, the Medes and the Persians have rerouted the Euphrates River and while the whole city is walled and slammed shut, they simply rerouted the Euphrates River and walked under the wall in the riverbed and took over the city while all these people were in a drunken stupor. And the Medes and the Persians took over. And verse 30: "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius, the Mede, took the kingdom." And you have the second great world empire, the empire of the Medes and the Persians. And this was a great one, although it wasn't as great as the first one...it was silver, not gold...it was still great.

But you come to a third part of the image. Go back to chapter 2 again. It says the third kingdom is a kingdom of bronze. And here you have the thighs of bronze "which shall bear the rule" or "bear rule

over all the earth." The third great world kingdom was the kingdom of...what?...Greece. And you remember the man who was instrumental in founding that kingdom was a man by the name of Alexander the Great who was killed when he was only 32 years old. Now there's an interesting record in Daniel, chapter 8. In chapter 8 and verse 5, it tells how he took this kingdom, how Alexander moved in on Medo-Persia. And there's another vision. It's the vision of a ram and a he goat. "As I was considering," Daniel 8:5, "behold a he goat came from the west over the face of the whole earth and touched not the ground." Isn't that beautiful? Here comes a he goat just whooof, see, just flying across. "And the goat had a notable horn between his eyes"...one horn, just sticking out between his eyes. Here comes this goat flying across the land, the swift, speeding Alexander the Great, one horn, a single kingdom. "And he came to the ram that had two horns." _____ all rams have two horns. What was the two-horned kingdom?...Medo-Persia. "And he ran into him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram and he was moved with anger against him and smote the ram and broke his two horns. And there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground and stamped on him and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. Therefore, the he goat grew very great. And when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and for it, came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven." Fantastic prophecy! He had this super horn and it smashed Medo-Persia, but soon it was broken and four other horns came out. You remember what happened at the end of Alexander's life? He died and gave over his kingdom to how many generals?...four generals. The Bible is exactly accurate at least 200 years before Alexander was even born. Now, you say, oh, MacArthur, you just made all that interpretation up. No, I didn't. Look at verse 20 (laughter). "The ram"...this is chapter 8..."the ram which you saw having two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Greece. And the great horn that is between his eyes is that first king"...Alexander. See? He was the first king. And then he goes on, "Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nations, but not in his power." Isn't that a fabulous statement? Do you know those four divisions were weaker than Alexander's...not in his power? And so, there was to be a third and that was represented by the bronze.

Now, go back to Daniel 2 again. Verse 40: "And the fourth kingdom"...all right, we come to the fourth..."shall be strong as iron." Notice the metal is deteriorating. These kingdoms are not as great as the predecessor. "Forasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and subdues 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 potters' clay and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided." Now, the fourth great world kingdom that followed the kingdom of Alexander was...what?...Rome. And was Rome divided? It says right there "the kingdom shall be divided." Absolutely...divided between the east and the west. "But there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men, but they shall not adhere one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." Fantastic! Do you know what the Romans did? They put their iron men in with the clay that they conquered. Remember that? They spotted their soldiers all over the place, but they never could really mingle and adhere. They were always hassling with little revolutions here and little revolutions here and little ones over there. Again, the Scripture is accurate to the very letter. The fourth great world kingdom, then, is Rome.

Now, watch. Oh, this is a shocker, let me tell you. "In the days of these kings shall"...verse 44..."shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom." Now, hold onto your seat because it says there that the kingdom is gonna follow what great rule?...Rome. You say, ooh, I think we blew it. That ended long ago. Did it? When God sets up his kingdom, verse 44, it "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 stand forever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountains without hands"...and that speaks, I believe, of the virgin birth of Christ, no human instrumentation..."and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, 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, the interpretation of it sure." You know what that stone is? It's Jesus Christ and He smashes the Gentile world and fills the earth with His own glory and His own kingdom. You know what? That king didn't have any idea what he was having in his dreams. And Daniel told him.

Now, I want to pinpoint something for you. You will notice that there is much made in verse 42 of the toes. The indication is this, friends, that there are in normal circumstances, ten toes. Some of you could, perhaps, give testimony to varying figures, but that's the normal one (laughter). The indication is that the final form, then, of this image, the feet that are smashed, are going to be in a ten-fold kind of unity. A ten-nation confederacy is indicated. Now, I want to say this at the very beginning. Rome has never had that. Some people have tried to wiggle around and get that into Rome's history in the past. Rome has never, ever had a ten-nation confederacy. You say, well, you're speculating because it doesn't mention how many toes there were there. Well, let's be reasonable. And in case you want more, Daniel 7:7 says...and this is another vision that was the same thing, only this time it wasn't a big statue, it was a bunch of animals...it says, "After this I saw in the night vision, and...a fourth beast"...and here's the picture of the Roman kingdom under the term of a "beast"..."terrible, strong exceedingly great...iron teeth. It devoured, broke in pieces, stamped the residue with its feet...was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had..." 13 horns (laughter). Is that what it says?...ten. And here you have again, an emphasis on a ten-fold kind of unity within the Roman Empire. Incidentally, go to verse 24 of Daniel 7. "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise." There is going to be a ten-fold confederacy under Rome. And in Revelation, chapter 17 and verse 12...I'm just going to read that to you quickly...it says this: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet." There is ten future kings coming in the final form of this Roman world rule. You say, oh, there's...the Roman Empire is long ago conquered. No, you know, the Roman Empire was never conquered, was it? It fell into dormancy and abeyance because of its own internal decay. Oh, it was speeded on its way. The western half, you remember, was finally buried by the invasion of the barbarians; you know, the invasions of the Goths and the Vandals and the Moors and the Huns, Attila, particularly. And you remember that the eastern empire was kind of finally buried with the sweep of Mohammedanism and then the Turks came along spelling the final blow. But, basically, it just kind of deteriorated and no other empire ever conquered Rome.

Now, you know, people who've studied the Bible for many years have been looking for the fact that there needed to come in the end times, a revival of the old Roman confederacy with ten nations involved in it. Now, let me tell you something. If you want to read prophecy carefully, how does this fourth kingdom end?...gradually, gradually deteriorating? How does it end?...smash! It gets splattered by a stone cut out without hands. That could never refer to the gradual fading away of the Roman Empire. It's going to be momentary when it comes. So there must then be a final form of the Roman government. And it must, then, have a ten-nation confederacy. That's never happened. That has never happened. And, beloved, it says in 2:44 that the kingdom will follow this immediately, verse 45, that the return of Christ is that which destroys this fourth phase.

Now, I want you to look and we're just gonna go another step and then we'll be done. I want you to look at chapter 7 of Daniel. Verse 1: "In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, Daniel had a

dream." Now, Nebuchadnezzar had one, so Daniel had one to go along with it. "And the visions of his head he had in his bed. And he wrote the dream and told the sum of the matters." So he wouldn't forget it, he wrote it down. "Daniel spoke and said, 'I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea.'" The sea in Scripture, very frequently, in prophetic language is used to refer to the nations...to the nations. Four great beasts, all different, rising out of the nations. One, beast one: "The first was like a lion"...that's the king of beasts..."and had eagle's wings"...that's the king of birds. This was the kingdom of kingdoms...Babylon. "I beheld till its wings were"...what?..."plucked." "And it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand upon the feet as a man and a man's heart was given to it." It deteriorated and showed its humanness. It was conquered. And if you read Daniel 4 and 5, you can read about the humiliation of the Babylonians when they were conquered. And it was followed by another kingdom.

"Behold another beast, a second, like a bear. It raised up itself on one side." Isn't that fantastic?...the Medo-Persian dual kingdom. Watch this. In that kingdom, Persia was the strength of the union and the conquering was done on the strength of Persia. The bear literally raised up on one side. Amazing accuracy of Scripture! Amazing! Alright, let's go on. "It had three ribs in the mouth of it between its teeth." That's hard to know what that is. Some say it refers to Persia, Media and Babylonia. "And they said thus unto it, 'Arise, devour much flesh.'" What it means is, expand, and it did. Medo-Persia just went west, just expanded west. "And I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard which had upon its back four wings"...and the leopard is swift and fierce..."four wings of a fowl"...this is the speed and it also, perhaps, refers to the four-fold generals that followed Alexander. "And the beast also had four heads and dominion was given to it." Here you have the sweeping leopard, Alexander, followed by his four who took over his kingdom. That's the kingdom of Greece. And in chapter 8 there's more detail on that as you read, as we read earlier, about the notable horn. All right, and then there was a fourth beast in verse 7 and this is the Roman Empire and it had ten horns at the end of verse 7.

Now, let me say something, friends. You cannot read that kind of prophecy and be an intelligent skeptic...can't be done. God was exactly accurate. Now watch. If God said, this is what Babylon is like and here are the characteristics and He was right on; this is what Medo-Persia was like and He was exactly accurate; this is what Greece will be like and to the very letter, He was accurate, then when God says the final phase of the world and of Gentile nations will be a ten-nation confederacy of what was once Rome, and it will be smashed by Christ, believe me, that's exactly what's gonna happen. You believe that?

Now, it's gonna come in three phases. First of all, the ten-nation confederacy is gonna be formed. That's the first step. Then you know what's gonna happen? Look at verse 24 of chapter 7. The second phase: "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise." Okay, that's the first phase, a ten-nation confederacy. And when I say it's gonna be a revived Roman Empire, I mean it will be territorially where ancient Rome was and ancient Rome occupied south Europe, north Africa and west Asia. And that will be the territory of this final ten-nation confederacy. There's the first phase, ten kings. But watch. Out of these ten horns or ten kings...and a horn represents power..."another shall rise after them." Here comes another horn. You know what the second phase of this confederacy is? The rise of the strong man in that confederacy who's gonna rule the world, commonly called Antichrist. And he's gonna...it's interesting...he will be diverse and subdue three kings. He's gonna have to fight against three kings. Apparently, the other guys succumb willingly after they see what he does to the other three. And he takes over. "And he speaks great words against the most High" and wears out the saints and thinks to change the times and the laws. This is

some kind of guy...gonna change everything, morals and everything. "They shall be given into his hand"...aaah..."a time, times and half the time." How long is that?...three and a half years...second half of the Tribulation. "But the judgment shall sit and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it in the end. And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom..." Three phases: One, the ten-nation confederacy; two, the ruler rises; three, it's destroyed and smashed and God sets up His kingdom.

Now, beloved, oh, it's exciting to be alive today. You know why? Have you been watching what's going on in Europe? Of course you have. People used to say, oh, all that ridiculous talk about our confederated Europe. Even in World War II they were saying that was idiotic. Right now we have in Europe what is known as the Common Market and they're dickering right at the level of ten, aren't they. Now, I'm not saying that's it. I'm simply saying that the spirit of Europe is such that can bring about this for the first time in history. I'm saying that what we are seeing now is certainly, at least, the birth pangs of this. It may change...don't say, oh, they've got 14 in, oh, oh, oh, my Bible, you know (laughter). Wait till the time of the Tribulation. That's the time...and you won't be around anyway, so don't worry about it. Don't want to stick around just to check it out (laughter)...no point in that. But we're seeing the right kind of attitude. A common currency in Europe, that's the next thing. December 27, 1971, KFWB radio reported these words, quote, "The biggest event to look for in 1972 is the rise of the European Common Market, which will become the greatest single economic power in the world." L.A. Examiner, October 29, 1971, quote, "The British decision to join the Common Market has brought Europe to the threshold of its strongest alliance since the nations involved were tied together as a part of the Roman Empire 15 centuries ago." That's the L.A. Examiner. And, supposedly, there are 10 nations involved...seven in and three applications. Now, when that thing comes, it's gonna be powerful, believe me. Verse 23 of Daniel 7...the fourth beast is gonna be so strong that it will "devour the whole earth, tread it down and break it in pieces." And you compare Revelation 13 and verse 7 and 8 and you find, again, the same indication that when this system gets rolling, it is really going to be powerful. Revelation 13:7,8 says this: "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints"...sounds like Daniel, doesn't it?...and to overcome them. And power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations." This ten-nation confederacy will again rule the world. Now, isn't it interesting that secular newspapers are saying, we're seeing something we haven't seen since the Roman Empire? You say, how is that nation ever gonna get its power? How's it ever gonna rise to the place of power? The Bible doesn't say, but I got a good idea. You say, what's your idea? You remember Ezekiel 38 and 39...and this is just a footnote...you remember Ezekiel 38 and 39, Israel is dwelling in the land during the tribulation and the king of the north...who's that?...likely a Russian alliance. The king of the north comes down against Israel...right? But what happens to him?...wipe out. God wipes out the whole Russian army. You know what that means? That means that there's no other great world power left and I think it's at that moment that the western Roman confederated empire then realizes that it is in a position to dominate the world and it moves in and takes over. And the reason I believe that, is not only because it fits conveniently there, but because I believe that happens in the center of the Tribulation somewhere and I know that it's only in the last three and a half years that this system really gets going. So the time fits. The fact that the world empire begins at the mid-point in Daniel's last seven years is supported by the fact that the beast only has power for 42 months according to Revelation 13:5. So, sometime in the middle, he'll see the demise of Russia and that northern empire, and this system will then take over the world.

Well, that's only the beginning, beloved. Out of that system is gonna rise a man and that's gonna be Satan's man, the counterfeit Christ. What he is and what he does will be the topic of our next discussion. Let's pray.

Our Father, tonight, again, our hearts have been brought to the attention of the Word of God. And our Father, we have seen, again, the marvelous accuracy of Scripture. Lord, God, we are so aware of the tragic future of the world. And Lord, tonight, in our fellowship together we have talked about evangelism and missions. God, when we look at the doom of the world, give us the vision that Paul had when he said, "knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." God, help us even as we sung, to really love to tell the story. Help us to tell the untold. Help us to tell another and another and another until the chain is never broken. Whether it's here or Africa, help us to know that what the nations are in for is a hellish existence until such a time as God moves in in terrible judgment. And God, may we be able to realize that we're not just talking about large nations; we're talking about the individuals that make them up. God, give us a love for the lost. Give us such an overwhelming love for the honor of the name of Jesus Christ that we speak it and stand for it everywhere we go to the saving of souls. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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