

The Coming Kingdom of Christ, Part 2

Scripture: Daniel 7:1-7

Code: 27-16

We have the great and glorious privilege of hearing the voice of the Lord speak to us tonight from the seventh chapter of Daniel. It could be no more the voice of God if God Himself were to utter audibly from heaven, for this is His inerrant, authoritative, personal Word to us. And in Daniel chapter 7, it comes in the form of a vision given to this most unique man, Daniel, the prophet of God in a pagan land, the land of Babylon. Now, in our last study, we had begun to examine the seventh chapter, and we wanna continue to do that tonight for a brief time and see how far the Lord takes us in our study. Let me give you an introduction that, perhaps, will help you get in the context a little bit.

The chapter begins with a very overt indication that this is prophecy. This is divine revelation. Verse 1 tell us that, "In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed. And he wrote the dream and told the sum of the matters." Now, the indication there is that God spoke to Daniel through a vision or through a dream. From the very first chapter of Daniel, we know that God gave Daniel the capability to receive prophetic revelation through dreams and visions. There are many ways in the Old Testament in which God communicated His Word. One of them was in this manner of dreams or visions. And in this case, that is precisely how God speaks.

Actually, the second half of the Book of Daniel, from the seventh chapter on through the twelfth, is a series of these visions through which God speaks. For example, in chapter 8 verse 1, we read, "In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar, a vision appeared unto me, even unto me, Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first." In other words, I had another vision.

In the tenth chapter of Daniel, in the first verse, "In the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, a thing was revealed unto Daniel." And so the...the...the last portion of the book is a series of revelations...of prophetic revelations given to this, the prophet of God. This, then, is a book of prediction. This is a book of prophecy. And I would just add a footnote at the beginning that prophecies were given to confirm the validity of the Bible as God's Word.

There were many voices. There were many religious writers. There were many religious speakers. There were many people, even as there are today, trying to draw people to them and convince them that they speak for God. That was very common in those times. God had to have some method of confirming who was a genuine prophet. God had to have some means by which He could single out the true prophet. And one way that he did that was by predictive prophecy. You could tell a true prophet, because everything that he predicted would come to pass. He would be 100 percent

accurate, or he was not a true prophet.

So prophecy not only was given by God to reveal truth to us, but rather in addition to that to confirm the word of the prophet as being from God. And so not only to give us the message, but to give it to us in advance so that when it came to pass we would know, indeed, that it was the message of God.

In Isaiah 45, for example, verse 21, it says, "Tell ye, and bring them near. Yea, let them take counsel together." Talking about the nations. "Who hath declared this from ancient time? Who hath told it from that time? Have not I, the Lord? And there is no God else beside Me, a just God and a Savior. There is none beside Me. Look unto Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." Why? Because who else has told you that this would happen before it came to pass? So prophecy is a confirmation of the voice of God predicting that which has not yet occurred in order that the people who hear might be convinced that God is the source.

In 46 of Isaiah verse 9, "Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else. I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, and saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure. If I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass. If I have purposed it, I will also do it.'"

So God gives predictive revelation, not only so that we may know what's coming in advance. That wouldn't be the most necessary thing at all, because we don't necessarily need to know everything coming in advance. But mostly so that God can confirm the truth as spoken by His prophet. Man cannot predict the future, you see, because he's not omniscient, so he doesn't know what's coming. And he's not omnipotent, so he cannot control what's coming. The ability to predict the future involves omniscience, knowing everything, and omnipotence, controlling everything. And God, alone, can do that. And the fact that in the Bible you have time and time again predictions of the future is indicative of the authorship of God Himself...

In the 41st chapter of Isaiah, two other verses. "Let them bring them forth and show us what shall happen; let them show the former things, what they are, that we may consider them and know the latter end of them; or declare us things to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods." In other words, all of these supposed pagan gods, all of the idols to which he speaks in Isaiah 41, God simply says, "Let them predict the future, and then we'll know they're gods; because we'll know they have omniscience, which can know in advance, and omnipotence, which controls." Who can accept that challenge? Nobody. Not anybody at all.

"Behold...He says in the same chapter...you are nothing. Your work is of naught." Verse 28, "I beheld, and there was no man, even among them; and there was no counselor that, when I asked of them, could answer a word. Behold, they are all nothing. Their works are nothing; their melted and cast images are wind and confusion." And so God sets Himself up against all of the other idols by His

ability to predict the future.

Now, as foreign and impossible as this is to man, he nonetheless attempts to do it. And throughout all of human history, you have your wizards and magicians and soothsayers and necromancers and clairvoyants and witches and swamis and mediums and oracles and fortunetellers and seers and astrologers and on and on. You have all of these people, even today, who are trying to push themselves off on society as those who can predict the future. And, frankly, many people fall prey to their influence. Probably the leading one in our society today is a woman named Jeanne Dixon. Now, Jeanne Dixon says she can predict the future, and she primarily does it two ways, she claims. One is through the use of cards, and the other is...and the more dominant one, through a crystal ball. She believes she is an agent of God who, through her crystal ball, can read the future.

Now, the question that people often ask me is, "Can she really read the future?" Well, let me just give you a little idea. In 1964, she assured her readers that the war in Vietnam would be over in 1965. Later, she amended that to 1966. Then she gave up. In 1972, the war was still going on. In 1958, she predicted that in the year...in that year...1958, Red China and the United States would declare war against each other. That hasn't happened yet 22 years later. In 1959, she predicted that, in that year, Red China would be admitted to the United Nations. China was not admitted for 12 years longer, till 1971. She predicted in 1964 that Walter Reuther would be a candidate for president. He didn't even propose to run. In February of 1968, she predicted that the Democratic nominee for president would be Lyndon Johnson. It was Hubert Humphrey. In 1968, she predicted that, before the election, Dean Rusk would resign as secretary of state. He didn't. In 1968, on the 20th of October, she predicted that the men on the captured ship Pueblo would not be released by the North Koreans, but they would be released after a long period of time through the negotiations with Russia. Actually, the crew of the Pueblo was liberated by the North Koreans, not the Russians. In fact, two months after Jeanne Dixon predicted they wouldn't be.

In 1968, she predicted that Russia would be the first nation to put a man on the moon and would do it in three years. We all know they weren't. The newspaper syndicate that distributes her column printed her prediction about Jackie Kennedy on October 20th, the day of her surprise wedding to Aristotle Onassis. It threw the hocus-pocus industry into a dither. Why? Because Mrs. Dixon says this writer had written in her column that very day, "I stand on my New Year's prediction that Jackie will never be married."...In 1967, she predicted that that would be the year for a cure for cancer, giving false hope to uncounted thousands of sufferers.

Frankly, folks, just how wrong can someone be and still survive as a reader of the future? Reminds me of my dear friend, Dr. Kyper, who said once time he went into the largest drugstore in Pennsylvania in the city Philadelphia, and there was a fortuneteller there. The fortune teller was telling fortunes, and you would walk up and plunk down \$5.00, and she would tell your future...And she was spinning off all these yarns, and a crowd was gathered around her. He doesn't see too well,

and so he thought is my moment. And he could just about go anywhere and do anything, because people kinda move away for him because of handicap. And so he pushed his way through the crowd, and his little...he's a little, tiny fellow, and he got up to the front, and he looked up at this lady through the one little eye with which he can perceive 10 percent vision, and he said, "Ma'am, do you know where the Kleenex is?"...She was absolutely indignant. She looked down at him, and she said, "Sir, I do not work for this drugstore. I do not know where the Kleenex is." He said, "Ma'am, how come you know so much about the future, but you don't know where the Kleenex is?"...I'm afraid Jeanne Dixon and a lot of her ilk know a whole lot about the future, but they don't know where the Kleenex is...If they were so smart, they oughta know some other things...

Listen, in Deuteronomy chapter 18, there is an interesting text. Deuteronomy 18 verse 10. God says, "When you enter into the land...to the people of Israel...there shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or daughter pass through the fire." That was a rite of those who worshipped the God of Molach. "Or who uses divination, or who is an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter of mediums, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord, and because of these abominations, the Lord, thy God, doth drive them out from before thee." They are to have no part.

In Numbers chapter 23 verse 19, the Bible says, "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent. He said, and shall He not do it? He has spoken, and shall He not make it good?" In other words, in the Old Testament, God says there's only person who can tell the future, and don't ever believe that anybody else can, because they can't. Oh, now and then, they might be right like the clock that doesn't work. It's right twice a day, but that's about the extent of it...

A Hebrew execution was an ugly thing...Hebrews, when they executed somebody, stoned them. First of all, they would strip the person relatively naked. They would bind the hands of the person behind them. They would parade the victim out of town. And if they didn't have a precipice of at least ten feet or so over which they could push the person to a flat space below, they would build a scaffold nine feet high, and they would climb the person up the stairs to the scaffold, and then shove the person off the scaffold. The first official witness against the crime committed by the individual would do the pushing. And the person who's hands were bound would hit the ground with a great thud...And then the second witness would take the large boulder and drop that boulder...on the head and the chest. And then all the rest of the witnesses would join in, and the whole community, until the person was pummeled to death. The corpse of a person who had been stoned was then taken to an infamous place to be buried. It was buried with only the stone that was dropped on the body as a marker. And no ceremony was permitted...

You say, "Who did they do that to?" False prophets. Anybody who said they predicted the future, but missed. That's what happened to them. In Deuteronomy chapter 13 in verse 5, "And that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he's spoken to turn you away from the Lord

your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of bondage." Verse 10, "And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die, because he hath sought to trust...thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage." Anytime somebody comes along and claims to tell the future and claims to speak predictively and misses, they are to be stoned - 100 percent accuracy is the standard.

Now you show me a modern prophet who would be likely to stake his ability to predict the future against his life in that kind of circumstance. A 100 percent accuracy. Well, there was such a man in ancient times. There were many. But one particular was Daniel. Daniel unequivocally, unhesitatingly gave prophecies without a fear in his mind or a fear in his heart of reprisals. Without a fear for his life. Why? Because, when he spoke, he spoke as a legitimate prophet of God, and his prophecy was not a good guess. It was not partially true. It was 100 percent accurate. And so were all the other Biblical prophets. And, beloved, their accuracy is literally a staggering reality. Staggering reality.

Lemme give you an illustration. If you take a coin, say a dime, and flip it twice...there are four possible results. It could land heads both times, tails both times, or heads, then tails or tails, then heads. The chance of its landing heads both times is one out of four. Or to put it another way, if four people each flipped a dime two times, one of them could be expected by the laws of chance to come with two heads in a row. I only say that to introduce you to this whole idea of probability. The chance of getting heads three times out of three flips is, of course, greatly reduced. If eight people each flipped a dime three times, one of them could be expected to come up with three heads. One person in 16 could expect four heads in an uninterrupted sequence and so on. And it just goes from there.

Now, if slightly more than a thousand people were all flipping dimes a thousand times, chances are that one of them would drop their dime, right. Chances are that one of them...chances are that one of them would turn up heads ten times in a row without any tails breaking the sequence. To get 20 heads in an unbroken sequence would require more than a million people. An uninterrupted run of 30 heads, more than a billion people.

What am I saying? I'm saying that to take the prophecies of the Word of God and say that they happened by chance is an astronomical impossibility. Just to get 30 heads in a row, you'd have to have 1 billion people flipping dimes. A run of 40 heads in 40 flips could happen by chance less than once in 1 trillion times. Now, if there were 4 billion people on each of 250 earths like ours, and all of them were flipping dimes...and it goes on from there. The probabilities get to, if you wanted a hundred heads in a row...you'd have to have one and 72 zeros people...

And listen, astronomers tell us there are something like 200 billion stars in the Milky Way. Imagine that on each of the 200 billion stars live 4 billion people...The population of all the stars in the Milky Way would add to 20 zeroes, that's all. Just 20 zeros. But to get 30 prophecies to be fulfilled by

chance, you'd have to have 72 zeroes worth of people. Can't happen by accident. There's no chance. It has to be the Word of God.

And so when Daniel speaks in concert with all the other prophets, you better listen. The chances alone of the specificity of Daniel's prophecy in chapter 7 coming to pass by chance is absolute, utter impossibility. It is God who speaks.

Now, let's look at the text. We have seen three particular themes in the seventh chapter. The coronation of the king, the character of the kingdom, and the chronology of the kingdom. The coronation, the character, and the chronology. In our last study, we saw that the theme of the chapter is the coronation. That answers the question who. And then there is the character of the kingdom. That answers the question what. And tonight we're gonna look at the chronology. That answers the question when. Who, what, when.

Now, remember, the coronation answered the question who. And we said that the theme of the seventh chapter of Daniel is to point out that Christ is going to come and take over as king of the earth. Look at verse 9, and, "I beheld till the thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days did sit." And we...we studied that in our last study. Thrones were set. Now what happened at that particular point, go to verse 13. "I saw in the night vision, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days...who was sitting on the throne...and they brought Him near. And there was given Him dominion and glory and a Kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

So the coronation took place there in verses 9 and 13. The Father sits on the throne. The Son comes in verse 13 and, in 14, receives the Kingdom. That is the coronation. And we discussed it in detail. Now, what is the character of the Kingdom He receives? Well, we mentioned that there are five features to the Kingdom. First, the Kingdom is a Kingdom of authority. In verse 14, "There was given Him dominion." And we said the word means authority. He rules with a rod of iron in His Kingdom. He is an absolute monarch.

The second thing we said is the Kingdom is not only characterized by authority, but by honor. For He was given dominion and glory. And glory means honor. He not only rules as an absolute monarch, but He has the right response from the people He rules. Not only is the structure proper as He rules, but even the attitude of the people is proper. Their hearts are toward Him.

The third thing we saw was the extent. The word Kingdom is mentioned in verse 14. It is mentioned again in verse 18. It is mentioned again in verse 27. And we saw that the extent of this as a monarchy, a structured monarchy, a Kingdom in which Christ literally ruled the earth. Then we saw that this Kingdom had scope. That all people, all nations, and all language would serve Him. It's

stretched to encompass everything. And that it had duration. "It shall not pass away. An everlasting dominion, a Kingdom which cannot be destroyed." And verse 27 says that essentially, as well.

So we have seen, then, something about the character of the Kingdom. It is a Kingdom of authority, of honor. Its extent is that it is a structured Kingdom in which Christ rules, encompassing the globe. Its scope - it touches all people. Its duration is that it is forever. It begins with a 1,000-year millennial period and then moves on into eternity.

Now, one question remains. The who - Christ, the Son of Man crowned King. The what - His Kingdom, which is eternal in which He rules in absolute monarchy. The only remaining question is when is it gonna happen? And that takes up the rest of the chapter. When is it going to happen?

In Acts 1, the disciple said, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time bring the Kingdom?" That's always been the gnawing question. We've sung songs tonight. Jesus is coming again. Clayton mentioned that Christ could come at any moment, at any time. We all have that anticipation of John who said, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." Of the disciples who stood on the mount as Jesus ascended into heaven and heard the angels say, "The same Jesus who is taken up from you shall so come in like manner as you've seen Him go." We all understand the hope and the heart of John and Peter and Paul as they wrote their epistles with a longing anticipation, and even Jude, that Christ would return.

And I suppose that Christians in every generation have wondered when. When? When? Daniel gives us the answer in this chapter. It is an incredible insight, and I wanna take my time to unfold it to you, because I believe that every word that God has put here, He wanted us to understand. And I want you to see what He says. Now, in Daniel's vision, the sequence, mark it now, the sequence of the Kingdom of Christ is unfolded in a series of five great truths. And these are chronological, sequential truths.

Now, number one, mark this in your mind. The Kingdom of Christ follows the kingdoms of the nations. That's point number one. I want you to get that down. The Kingdom of Christ follows the kingdoms of the nations. When is it going to happen? It's going to happen after the course of man's history. It will follow the kingdoms of the nations. Now, this is a major thrust in this vision. Now, let's begin as we see this first point in the beginning of the chapter, verses 1 to 3. Now mark it.

"In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed. Then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters." We went into that in detail last time. Just mark it that he had a vision. "Daniel spoke and said...here's the sum of it...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, diverse one from another."

Now, within the particular vision, mark this in your thinking, in chapter 7. Chapter 7 is one long vision. But within that vision, there are three segments...three segments. Number one, the four beasts that rise out of the sea. Number two, the vision of the Ancient of Days on the throne. And, number three, Christ being given His Kingdom as He comes in glory. Those three are visions in themselves, part of a larger vision which encompasses the whole chapter.

Now, here Daniel first in his vision beholds the great sea. Verse 2 says, "The heavens, the winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea." Now what is the great sea? Well, Daniel, of course, lived in the Mediterranean area, and the Bible only mentions basically four seas. They are these: the Galilean Sea...the Dead Sea...the Red Sea, and what's the other one? The Mediterranean Sea. And the great sea was the Mediterranean Sea. It was called often the great sea. So in Daniel's vision, he stands on the shore of the largest sea he has ever beheld. The Sea of Galilee is really nothing more, frankly, than a lake. A small lake, at that. The Dead Sea is nothing more than a larger lake. And the Red Sea is just a narrow strip of water. The great sea would be the sea that would be the largest one that Daniel ever beheld in his life, and that would be the Mediterranean.

And so he stands in vision on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea at the heart of human history and human civilization, which was born in the Mediterranean area. And he sees the sea in turbulence, in violence, in turmoil, being torn up. And what is doing it is four winds of the heaven...Now, basically, four is a number that's associated with the earth. There are four seasons. We talk about the four corners of the earth. Four seems to be identified with the numbers of the earth. The wind comes from the four areas, north, south, east, west. And so what you see then is the earth in turmoil. The sea representing humanity, and this is very common in the Bible.

For example, in Revelation 17:15, it says, "The waters which Thou sawest, are people and multitudes and nations and tongues." The sea seems to be representative of people. And the winds are just another part of the earth and its system. And the earth is in boiling, convulsing, raging, disturbed turmoil, upheaval, distress. And so Daniel stands and sees all of human history in turmoil. He sees the upheaval of the day of man. He sees humanity shaken at its very ebb because of the turbulent impact of its sinfulness. The winds, you see, are the various elements of human sin that play upon the nations that stir up the strife and the turmoil. And so there is general confusion in the world as Daniel looks.

And, frankly, I believe this is how God views the nations. God sees the nations in chaos. God sees the nations of the world, the peoples of the world in ultimate turmoil. And we see it, don't we today? We can understand how Daniel feels. Because of media and because of all that we know about human society, we, too, could stand on the edge of the...the brink of human history, and we could see nothing but utter chaos and turmoil all around the globe throughout the history of man. And that is precisely what Daniel perceives.

As I said in Revelation, you have many parallels to Daniel. And the sea there is identified as the nations. Now, in the midst of this, look at verse 3. Something amazing happens. "Four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another." The word "great" literally means very great. Huge, massive, monsters. Listen, they are not an animal, but they are like some animals. They can only be described in terms that we would understand, so they're described like certain animals, and yet they are distinct. They are monsters, and each is diverse or unique.

So out of the raging, boiling, troubled sea of humanity rise four superpowers. Four monstrosities, four great empires who are bloody and fearful. Now what do they pose for the future of the world? Well, just give you a note. This is very similar, isn't it, to the vision of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel chapter 2. Do you remember that? Where Nebuchadnezzar saw this colossal image of gold and silver and bronze and then iron and iron and clay. And we saw there were four great world empires: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Well, this is the same thing again, only in a different perspective. It is the same four world empires. But mark it. Nebuchadnezzar was a pagan, and so Nebuchadnezzar's vision viewed it from man's vantage. In other words, when Nebuchadnezzar saw these superpowers that would control history, Nebuchadnezzar saw them as a colossal, glorious, gold-headed, massive, monumental image because that's the way he perceived 'em.

But when Daniel sees them, because he sees with the eye of God, he does not see any beauty. He does not see any wonder. He does not see the shining brilliance of metal. He sees ugly monstrosities. He sees wild, uncontrolled beasts, because that's God's perception. Man, you see, sees his kingdoms as something marvelous and thrilling and colossal. And God sees man's kingdoms as something ugly and wild and murderous and bloody. And so that's why the difference. Man doesn't see things the way God sees them. To man, his great day is colossal, impressive, triumphant, powerful, strong. To God, man's day is wild and bloody, and that's the difference. Man looks on his empires as achievements. God looks on them as out of control.

Now, let's look at each of the four beasts, verse 4. The first one is Babylon. This is fascinating. "The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I beheld till its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it." Now, wait, this is very unique. "The first was like a lion." It wasn't a lion. But Daniel couldn't describe it any better than that it was like a lion. Now, lions were symbolic of the Babylonian Empire. They were symbolic of Nebuchadnezzar's day. The lion was the king of beasts, still is. The lion, as the king of beasts, corresponds to the head of gold, Nebuchadnezzar, the monarchy of Babylon. But notice, it had eagle's wings. Eagles are the king of birds. And so this was the pinnacle of a monarchy, and I believe the eagle's wings speak of the swiftness of Nebuchadnezzar's conquering. After the battle of Carchemish in 605 BC, he just swept across that known world and conquered it all.

Now, another interesting thing. In archeological discoveries in the Middle East, in digging around the ancient ruins of Babylon, you'd be amazed to find what they have discovered. They have discovered that, at the gates of the city of Babylon, the gates particularly entering into the royal palace, there were guarding the gates lions with wings. That was the Babylonians' own symbol for their kingdom and their government. Daniel's contemporaries, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and even Habakkuk, speak of the lion and the eagle in reference to Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar. So we know it's Babylon. Archeology affirms that. And so he says, "There's coming a world empire, Babylon." And we know that came to pass. But what happened to it? And he says, "I beheld...verse 4...I kept looking intently till its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it."

It's wings were plucked? What is that? Most commentators say, and I agree, that this is Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation. Do you remember in chapter 4 that in the midst of his rule, he'd said, "I have built this great city." And God said, "That's enough outta you, Nebuchadnezzar." And God struck him with insanity. You remember that? And God sent him out of the city to eat grass like an ox, and his fingernails became like bird's claws, and hair covered his body, and he was a beast. And he had the mind of an animal. You remember that? That's the plucking of the wings.

And, later on, you remember, he was lifted up from the earth, verse 4. God restored his sanity to him. He was lifted up. He was made to stand upon his feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to him in exchange for the heart of a beast, which he had had for seven years. And so we find in that very statement, that unique reference to the history of Babylon, its power, the plucking of the wings in the insanity of Nebuchadnezzar, and his restoration...

Let's look at the second beast, verse 5. Following the Babylonian Empire came the Medo-Persians, and we've studied that already in the historical section of Daniel. By the way, keep in mind now, the first six chapters cover the sweep of history. From 7 to 12, you backtrack into that historical period and pick up the visions that occurred there. So this is not happening after all of this, but rather before it happens. And so then the prophecy came that there would be another beast that comes up out of the sea like a bear. Not a bear, but like a bear. "And it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between its teeth; and they said thus unto it, 'Arise, devour much flesh.'"

Now, Daniel sees in the vision, and a second beast rises. Second in sequence. The first rises, and then the second rises. And it is like a bear. And this has to be the Medo-Persian Empire. Strong as a bear, known for its strength and its fierceness in battle. Indicated to us in Isaiah chapter 13. And so he sees, then, the Medo-Persian Empire. Now notice that it says, "It raised up itself on one side. It raised up itself on one side." The bear apparently is seen in Daniel's vision as if it had one foot up in the air. As if it were beginning to take one of its ponderous steps forward. But raising it up on one side, speaks of the fact that in the Medo-Persian Empire, the Persians dominated the Medes. And they were the ones that had the greater importance, and the great power, and the greater dominance.

And so the Persian part of the bear is lifted up as the bear starts to take one forward, ponderous step in conquest.

Now notice also that three ribs were in the bear's mouth. These, obviously, are the remains of some nations that the Medo-Persian Empire conquered, and I guess we would be best to assume that this refers to Babylon, for they conquered the Babylonian Empire, Egypt, and the nation of Lydia. For all of them were defeated by the Persians. Then, all of a sudden, "They said thus unto it"...and we don't know who they are. They, whoever that is, perhaps some angelic beings who appear on and off again in the Book of Daniel. "They said thus unto it, 'Arise and devour much flesh.'" And you will note the Medo-Persian Empire extended far beyond the boundaries of Babylon. They did that. It was ferocious, powerful, and it spread far beyond any prior kingdom. It continued to 200 years, and it was succeeded by another kingdom.

Verse 6, "After this, I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard...or you could translate the word panther...which had upon the back four wings of a fowl...or a bird...The beast also had four heads; and dominion was given to it." This is fabulous. This is made prophecy hundreds of years before it ever came to pass, and its detail is utterly incredible. It says there will be third nation like a leopard or a panther. The swiftest of all. The leopard and the panther is agility and speed, and an insatiable thirst for blood. A beast of prey. This is clearly the nation Greece, which followed the Medo-Persian Empire. "Upon its back are four wings." Now a leopard or a panther is fast enough, and you add the wings to the back, and you have incredible speed and action. And, of course, the great monarch of the Grecian period was Alexander the Great, who conquered the world faster than anyone in history, with remarkable swiftness, like a leopard with wings rapaciously sweeping across the world, extending his kingdom. Frankly, he ruled everything from Europe to India, just swept it all. By the time he was 33 years of age, he had conquered the whole world. The lightning character of his conquest was without equal in the ancient world.

Now, notice this fascinating thing. "And the beast also had four heads." Now why that? Who could predict that? What does that mean?...Well, the final phase of Alexander's Greek world empire was divided among his four generals. This isn't what the Bible says. This is what history tells us, to confirm the Word of God. Alexander died. He died having four great generals. Their names were Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy. And the kingdom of Greece was divided among them. Cassander had the area of Greece and Macedonia. Lysimachus was given Thrace and Asia Minor, which is a little east of that. Seleucus took Syria and the Middle East, from where we got the Seleucids. And Ptolemy was given what? Egypt. The kingdom was divided among four generals, and dominion was given to it. And so, again, does Daniel indicate Greek power.

The fourth beast, verse 7. This is a tremendous, tremendous vision. "I saw in the night vision, and behold, a fourth beast." And he doesn't say it's like anything. He just says, "Dreadful and terrible and exceedingly strong, and it had great iron teeth." And the iron is a dead giveaway that we're back to

Rome again. "It devoured and broke in pieces. It stamped the residue with its feet. It was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had...what?...ten horns."

Now, this doesn't look like any animal. It's just a consummate beast. We don't have any idea what it looked like. But I believe, in a sense, it probably embodied all of the elements of the other beasts. It's very much like the beast of Revelation 13, which refers there to the...the revived Roman Empire and the antichrist who comes out of it. But I believe this beast is a composite leopard, bear, and lion. It's the sum of all the past. This incredible Roman Empire.

Keep in mind, people, that the Roman Empire lasted much longer than the others. The others lasted a maximum of 200 years. The Roman Empire went on for nearly 1500 years. Tremendously powerful empire. But let's look at the things it says. First it says it was dreadful and terrible. Those are just synonyms, speaking of the fearful character, inspiring dread and fear. Then it says it was exceedingly strong. It immensely was - it had immense size and strength. It had great iron teeth. That speaks of its ability to crush and devour and smash and shred. And it stamped the residue with its feet. It was fierce and dreadful, ripping and tearing with its teeth and crushing everything underneath it.

If ever there was anything that symbolized Rome, it was its crushing legions that tramped their way through the world conquering. It was different from all the beasts that were before it. And then this remarkable statement, "It had ten horns." Now, listen, history tells us this is the Roman Empire. We know that. The Romans conquered the Greeks. The dominion of Rome began with the occupation of Sicily in 241 BC as a result of victory in the Mediterranean. And then the Mediterranean, as I told you weeks ago, became a Roman lake. And the Roman Empire grew and grew. And do you know that the Roman Empire was not finally put aside until 1450 AD. For over 1500 years, that powerful empire ruled.

So we see the first four empires. Now, listen. My first point was this: Christ will come after the last of the great Gentile empires. You say, "Well, Rome is dead. Rome is gone. Rome is dead." No, you'll note at the end of verse 7, it had ten horns. That has not yet been fulfilled. No empire has taken the place of Rome. There is yet coming a time when there will be a revived Roman Empire. This is very clear in the Book of Revelation, and we saw it in Daniel 2. I don't wanna go into it all again. Just to remind you that that's what he's saying. And in that final form of the Roman Empire, there will be ten horns. Now, in Scripture, a horn refers to authority or power or a king. Final phase of the fourth empire is a ten-kingdom monarchy.

Now, let's look over at verse 15, and I think we'll see some more about this. "I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by...literally a stander, an angel...and I asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made me know the interpretation of the things: 'These great beasts, which are four, are four

kings who shall arise out of the earth."

So Daniel says, "Now, what does this mean?" And the angel says, "These are four kings that will rise out of the earth." Daniel, you see, is telling us the future. There will be four world empires: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome. And he was right on schedule, and every detail was fulfilled...All of them have come and gone. I think of Shelley's *Ozymandias*, in which he writes, "I met a traveler from an antique land who said, 'Two vast and trunkless legs of stone stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand, half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown, and wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command, tell that its sculptor well those passions read. My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings: Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!' Nothing beside remains. Round the decay of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare the lone and level sands stretch far away."

And what Shelley is saying is that carved somewhere on a useless, crushed, destroyed statue, is a claim to be the King of Kings. That's what Nebuchadnezzar said. That's what Cyrus said. That's what Alexander said. That's what the Caesars said, and they equally lie in the dust...But there is that haunting at the end of verse 7 - ten horns. The final ten-nation form of the Roman Empire, and Revelation tells us that there will be a revival of the Roman Empire. Revelation chapter 17 verses 11 and 12. And there will be ten nations coming together that constitute a revival of that empire. I've told you this before. That's already happened in Europe. The European Economic Community, EEC, the Common Market now has ten member nations. They are territorial occupying what was once the Roman Empire. One of their leading men said, "The world has seen a revival of the old Roman Empire." And I really believe, people, that this unification of Europe is gonna happen very fast.

Recently, I received a letter from a man who's connected with Naval Intelligence, and he said, "I wanna write...I wanna let you know, because I listen to you teach the Word of God. I wanna let you know what we perceive as happening around the world, politically and in terms of the movement of nations." He started out by saying, "It's my personal conviction that, within a brief amount of time, Russia will attack Israel. In fact...he said...it could happen this April or any time after." And he said, "I say this because of how we have marked the movement of Russian troops and fleet. We believe that Russia must immediately attack Israel for this reason: Russia wants the Middle East. Russia knows that to gain the Middle East, you must seal it off and choke it out. So Russia has already moved down the backside and taken Afghanistan, sealing off the east. And Iran, for all intents and purposes, is already theirs. They have moved to Yemen in the south to seal off the Indian Ocean. They now control the north, because they are the north. The only possible outlet, very soon, for Arab oil to the world is gonna be through the west. Thus, the antagonism of the Arabs to Israel. They want that."...And it is at least the conviction of this individual that Russia must move down and drop a steel curtain across the Mediterranean where Israel is, and having sealed off the back, sealed off the south, and sealed off the west, they have locked the Arab world in, and if they can't export their oil, they can be strangled.

Russia is also attempting, they believe, to do the same thing to Europe. By dropping a curtain across Eastern Europe, by sealing off the Mediterranean, by controlling North Africa, and they're moving rapidly to do that, they will create an isolated island of Europe. And Europe knows this, and I believe, consequently, Europe is moving fast to consolidate for free Europe is gonna have to do that, or they'll never be able to withstand what's gonna come.

Daniel said there would be a revival of those nations that once were the territory of Rome in the final phase of the Roman Empire. I believe we're living in a time when that is coming to pass. When...when does the Kingdom of Christ come? When is it going to take place? When is it going to happen?

First point, the Kingdom of Christ follows the final form of the final kingdom of the nations. Did you get that? The Kingdom of Christ will follow the final form...of the final kingdom of the nations. That is the ten-nation confederacy revival of the Roman Empire. People, we're right on the threshold of that today. Today. This Naval officer said they believe Russia, he said, "Will attack Israel in April." He said, "I could be wrong, but they will, if not in April, soon after." That is a shocking truth, incredible to conceive that they are that close to that kind of activity. The Kingdom of Christ follows the final form of the final kingdom of the nations.

Now, I've really given you two points then tonight. The Kingdom of Christ, number one, follows the kingdoms of the nations. Point number two, it follows the final form of the kingdom of the nations. Get those both. It follows the kingdom of the nations, but you have to wait till the final form. Otherwise, the Kingdom would've been here in 1450 when the last Roman ruler was put aside. But we haven't yet had the final form, which is yet to come.

A third point, I'm gonna introduce it, and I'm gonna talk about it next week. Listen to it. The Kingdom of Christ not only follows the final form of the final kingdom of the nations, but, listen, the Kingdom of Christ follows the final ruler of the final form of the final kingdom. Did you get that? The Kingdom follows the final kingdom of men. It follows the final form of that final kingdom, and it follows the final ruler of that final form of the final kingdom.

Why? Listen. There will be ten kings in the ten nation confederacy. Now watch this. But out of those ten will rise one who will subdue the rest and be the final king in the final form of the Gentile kingdoms. Christ will follow him. We call him antichrist. And next Lord's day evening, we'll continue our study and see who he is, what he's like, and come all the way to the Kingdom of Christ that follows.

Let's pray. Father, again tonight, we have been instructed out of Your Word. For many of us, these are not particularly new...truths. We've been through them. But, oh, Lord, how thrilling they are.

Sometimes we think we can hear the footsteps of the coming King who is so near. May we learn, Father. May we learn the lesson of Peter, who said, "Seeing that all these things come to pass, what manner of persons ought you to be?" Save us from the kind of indifference that says, "I've heard that before." For if this kind of knowledge doesn't change the way we live, then something's wrong. Help us to hear what John said, when he said, "He that hath this hope in him, purifies himself."...

If You're coming so soon, Lord, if all of this is so near on the horizon, and You're gonna take us out before it happens, it must be near. It must be near. And if it's near, then we better get our lives in shape. We better start talking to those people we haven't talked to yet. We better begin to exercise our spiritual gifts. We better begin to lay up some treasure in heaven...to set aside crowns to receive at Your hand and cast at Your feet. Lord, if You're coming so soon, we better take stock of our lives and what our priorities are. We better begin to invest in eternity and not in this passing world.

For any who might be in our midst, Lord, who do not know Christ, we pray that they might come to Him before it's forever too late, that their hearts might be open and responsive to the Gospel of Christ, who will come as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and set up an eternal Kingdom, but only for those who love Him and know Him through faith.

So touch us all, Father. Those who don't know Christ, may their hearts be open to receive Him. Those who do, may we again recommit ourselves to the urgency of this hour. We don't know how long we have. Help us to be ready. We'll thank You for what You'll accomplish in Christ's name. Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2015 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright>).