

The Coming Kingdom of Christ, Part 3

Daniel 7:8-28

27-17

Let's share together in a word of prayer as we come to our study tonight. Father, it's with great desire in my heart that I approach Your Word, that we might clearly understand the power and the urgency of this message. We've been sharing together the principles of the Book of Daniel for several weeks. Even in this very chapter. And, yet, we feel, no matter how long we linger here, we cannot exhaust the great treasures that are in this place. We pray, Father, that You would bring to our minds a new and a fresh things already known, that You would lead us into truth that we have not yet seen. That most of all, we might commit ourselves to being like You, living in obedience to Your will. Thank You for Your love to us. For this incomparable treasure of Your Word. Help us to just, in a small way, understand what it means to know the future of the world and how rich we are, when the rest of the world is groping to find answers for the future. How rich we are to have those answers in Your Word. And may we live in the light of them, and we'll praise You in Christ's name. Amen...

If you've been with us for the last few weeks, you know that we have been studying the seventh chapter of Daniel. I'd invite you to look with me to that chapter, if you will, and see what the Spirit of God has for us again tonight. We're moving our way through this thrilling Book of Daniel. Our hearts have been blessed and challenged all the way through. No less as we have reached chapter 7, which is, perhaps, the greatest prophetic panorama in all of the Bible. It causes us to have to stop, pay careful attention to everything that the Lord says here, for none of it is wasted words. And so we have profited so much in the study of this chapter.

It culminates, you will notice, in verses 13 and 14, where Daniel says, "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion and glory and a Kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Now, in those two verses, you have the granting by the Father to the Son of the Kingdom. The eternal Kingdom given from the Father, who is the Ancient of Days, to the Son, who is the Son of Man. We have seen in our study that the Bible teaches very clearly that history culminates in Christ receiving His Kingdom. That Kingdom is an eternal Kingdom. It has a millennial phase. That's phase one. It has a thousand-year earthly phase, and then it moves into the eternal Kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. But it is an eternal Kingdom.

So the seventh chapter of Daniel presents to us all of the history of man, from the time of Daniel to the time when the Lord Jesus Christ receives and establishes His own eternal Kingdom. It is a monumental sweep of prophetic history from Daniel's day forward.

Now, we believe that the Bible tells us that everything in history is moving toward the cataclysmic

event of the Kingdom of Christ. And I'm convinced, as I study my Bible, that the Kingdom of Christ is not something that sneaks up on us gradually. It is not something that is going to be almost imperceptible, and we'll wake up sometime and find it already here. The Kingdom of Christ is not just a matter of some quiet flow of history. I believe that the Kingdom of Christ is a cataclysmic, violent, furious, momentary thing that is established and then flows on forever.

The Bible tells us that, when the Kingdom is granted to the Son, the Son will appear in blazing glory in the sky. There will be fiery judgment. There will be a bloodbath in the earth. We know that this will be a cataclysmic event. It is described for us by the Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 verse 7. He says, "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels...in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. When He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe."

In other words, Paul is saying there's going to come a moment of fury, a moment of divine revelation, a moment of utter devastation when Christ returns. Jude says, "He will come with 10,000s of His saints to execute judgment upon all." In Revelation chapter 19, we find a picture of the coming of Christ. "I saw Heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge...listen to this...and make war. His eyes are like a flame of fire. On His head were many crowns; and He had a name written that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and His name is called, The Word of God. And the armies that were in Heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword that with it He should smite the nations, and He shall rule them with a rod of iron; and He treadeth the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written: 'King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.' And I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, 'Come and gather yourselves together to the supper of the great God, that ye may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of them that sit on them, the flesh of all men, both free and enslaved, both small and great.' And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, which he had deceived that that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat on the horse, whose sword proceeded out of His mouth. And all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

Needless to say, that's a shocking, fearful, horrifying scene. John is showing us what happens when Christ takes His throne. When Christ establishes Himself as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We do not mildly, quietly, subtly move to the Kingdom. It is a holocaust of fiery judgment. It is a moment when Christ takes over the earth as its ruler.

Look with me for a moment at Revelation chapter 5. As we prepare to understand Daniel a little better, we need to look to look at some passages in Revelation. In Revelation chapter 5, it says, "I saw Him...verse 1...that sat on the throne, and in His right hand was a scroll written within and on the back and sealed with seven seals." Now, John sees a vision of the future, a vision of the time when Christ comes to establish His Kingdom. It is preceded by this terrible holocaust known as The

Tribulation. But he sees in chapter 4 God sitting on the throne, preparing to give the Kingdom to Christ. And in God's hand is a scroll, and the scroll is sealed seven times. They would roll it, and then they put a seal. They would roll it further, and seal it again. Roll it further, and seal it again. Sometimes they would do it on the edges. Roll it a little ways and seal it there. The Roman law required that a will or a testament be sealed seven times so that it could not be broken.

What the Father holds in His hand is His will, His testament, His inheritance. It is, if you will, the title deed to the earth. It is the right to rule..."And a strong angel...in verse 2...proclaimed with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll and loose its seals?' And no man in Heaven, nor on earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the scroll, neither to look on it. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and read the book, neither to look on it." Nobody was worthy. "And one of the elders saith unto me, 'Weep not. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.' And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, or the sevenfold Spirit of God, sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the scroll out of the right of Him that sat upon the throne. And when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures...who are angels...the four and twenty elders...who may be angels or possibly representatives of the church...fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, 'Thou art worthy to take the scroll and to open it's seals, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God a kingdom of priests; and we shall reign on the earth.'"

Now, the point is this: they could anticipate their reign on earth. They could anticipate the Kingdom, because the One whose right it was to take the Kingdom, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the One who had the right to take the scepter, Shiloh. The Root of David, as well as the seed of David. The Lamb slain from the foundation of the earth. The One who had redeemed us to God, Christ Himself, ascended and took the scroll and had the right to open its seals and to establish His reign on earth. And then they sing with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength, and honor and glory and blessing." The scene is the same. The Father giving to the Son the right to reign.

By the way, that's the way it commonly was done. A sealed scroll was the title deed. If you read the 32nd chapter of Jeremiah, you will find that there was such a scroll used there as the title deed to certain land which was purchased, to be recuperated after the Babylonian captivity. So the scroll represents, then, the title deed to the earth. Revelation chapter 5 indicating to us that the earth is occupied presently by usurpers. Satan, of course, the master usurper, controls the earth. He is the god of this age, the prince of this world, the monarch of this system. But the time is coming when he has to forfeit that to the One who has the right to rule. The One whose right it is, Shiloh, the One who deserves the scepter. The One who earns the crown and shall receive it from the Father. And we see, in chapter 5, the taking of that right.

Then in chapter 6, He begins to unroll the scroll, and you have immediately a series of devastating judgments. They are the breaking of the seals. And out of the seals flow the trumpet judgments, and out of the trumpet flow the vial or the bowl judgments. And in a rapid-fire staccato session of judgments, man's day is ended in an incredible holocaust which takes the life of far and away the vast majority of the earth. And Christ then establishes His eternal Kingdom.

There is coming, then, beloved, a day when Christ will take back the right to rule in this world. You see, when God created man in the Garden, He gave him dominion over the earth, but Satan usurped that dominion in the Fall, and it will not be until Christ comes back, the second Adam, that that dominion is restored to man, and then we will reign with Jesus Christ. That's our great and glorious hope.

Now, the message of the Second Coming of Christ dominates the Bible. The message of Christ coming to establish His Kingdom is replete in Scripture. Just to give you an idea, prophecy occupies approximately one-fifth of Scripture, and the Second Coming prophecies occupy approximately one-third of that...There are 660 general prophecies, 333 of them are about Christ. Or about half of them. Of the 333 that are about Christ, 109 were fulfilled in His First Coming, and 224 are yet to be fulfilled in His Second Coming. So there are at least 224 prophecies related to the return of Christ.

Put it another way. There are 7,959 verses in the New Testament; 330 of them are about the Second Coming. That's one out of every 25. Next to the subject of faith, no subject is more discussed than the Second Coming of Christ. For every time His First Coming is mentioned, His Second Coming is mentioned eight times. Each time the Atonement is mentioned, the Second Coming is mentioned twice. The Lord Himself personally referred to His return 21 times. Over 50 times, we are told to be ready for it...

Some time ago, there was a convocation of church delegates from around the world, and they met in Evanston, Illinois. Sponsored by the World Council of Churches, and it was reported from that meeting that only 10 percent of the American Protestant clergymen questioned at that conference found any significance at all in the doctrine of the Second Coming...Scoffers have always said, "Where is the promise of His coming?" They've always wanted to deny it, but that denial doesn't change the reality. History peaks out at the return of Christ.

Now, Daniel was given this amazing vision at least 2500 years before this time. Amazing. He could perceive this by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, and people who have lived through all of that history and have it here in the Word of God deny it. Now, look back at Daniel 7. As we look at the chapter, we find three themes that I mentioned to you in our last two studies. Number one, the coronation. The coronation. We saw that, didn't we, in verse 9 when we looked at the thrones and the Ancient of Days. And then in verses 13 and 14, where the Ancient of Days presents the Kingdom to the Son of Man. We saw the coronation.

The second thing that we see in the chapter is not only the coronation of the King, but the character of His Kingdom. The character of His Kingdom is described in verse 14. It was a dominion, a glory, a Kingdom "that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him." And it is an everlasting Kingdom. It is an indestructible Kingdom. Verse 27 also tells us that it is a great Kingdom. It is "given also to the people of the saints of the Most High." Whose is also an everlasting Kingdom, "and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." We went into that in great detail, discussing all those terms and the meaning of the character of His Kingdom.

So we see the coronation of the King and the character. Now that takes care of who: the coronation. And that takes care of what: the character of the Kingdom. The third point is the chronology of the Kingdom, and that takes care of when. When is this gonna happen? We see who: the Son of Man. We

see what: an everlasting dominion and glory and Kingdom and so forth. But when? And in our last study, we began to examine this, didn't we? And I'm trying to give you a sequential perspective, so you'll see. I don't wanna confuse you with this, so just kinda screw your brain down tight and see if you can get it.

Several key statements show us the sequence of the Kingdom. The disciples asked the question, "Is this the time You're gonna reveal to us the Kingdom?" It's always been on the hearts of believers to wonder when is it gonna be. Throughout all the history of the church, there have always been people who said, "Oh, I believe it's very soon," and there are people who set dates, and there's always those groups that climb on a mountain in their pajamas and look up and figure it'll happen any moment. We always have that.

I believe Paul lived in the immanency of the return of Christ. I believe John lived in it and Peter and James. They all did. And we do, too. But when is it gonna happen? When is Christ gonna come down and establish His Kingdom? When does the times of the Gentiles end? When is man's day over?

Principle number one we learned in this chapter, the Kingdom of Christ follows the kingdoms of the nations. That's principle number one. Mark it down. The Kingdom of Christ follows the kingdoms of the nations. In the first seven verses of the chapter, which we went into detail on last time, we noted that there are four great world empires. In verse 4, there is Babylon. In verse 5, Medo-Persia. In verse 6, Greece. In verse 7, Rome. And we saw that these four kingdoms will precede the Kingdom of Christ. So the Kingdom of Christ follows the kingdoms of the nations. We noted also, in verses 15 to 17, that Daniel saw this amazing vision of these four beasts, and he sought the interpretation. And, of course, it was given to him.

Now, a second principle that I want you to hang onto. Very important one. The Kingdom of Christ follows the kingdoms of the nations. That's principle number one. Principle number two is the Kingdom of Christ follows the final form of the final kingdom of the nations. Okay? It follows the final kingdom of the nations, but also the final form of that final kingdom. And what is that? Well, the final kingdom was the kingdom of what? Rome...You say, "Rome died a long time ago." Well, not really. We still have vestiges of the Roman system with us, because our law is basically Roman law. Our culture is basically a Roman culture. Our language even has its derivatives, at least in Western culture, from Roman sources to some extent. Is there coming again, then, a rebirth of that Roman Empire so it can be the last? Yes, we saw that last time at the end of verse 7. The final form has how many horns? Ten horns. That is the final form...of the final kingdom. The Kingdom of Christ, then, follows the final kingdom, but the final form of the final kingdom. And so we looked also at verse 24. We saw ten horns in this kingdom representing ten kings.

Now, listen, what did we say last time? The final form of the Roman Empire would be a ten-king confederacy occupying substantially the territory once dominated by Rome. And we suggested to you last time that there is a very important and significant event in our world today, the coming together of Europe under the European economic community called the Common Market, which, as I said last time, has ten member nations right now. And some of you came to me and said, "No, it only has nine." So I called the Swedish embassy this week...and I said, "Are you in the Common Market?" And there was a sheepish, "Uhhhhh, yes, we are." There are ten member nations in the European Common Market. You say, "What happens if there get to be 11?" That's no problem. If there got to be 26, it wouldn't be a problem, because by the time the final form comes, there'll be ten. But it is

interesting that there are ten now...Just exactly where that's gonna go, I don't know. The Lord may shuffle it a little bit. That's fine.

There is a final kingdom, Rome. But there is a final form of that kingdom. And if you go into Revelation 13 and following, you will find that the Bible says the final kingdom was dead and came alive again. It had a fatal wound, but it rose again. And that is precisely exactly what Daniel is pointing to. Revelation says that final kingdom will die, but it'll rise again. That is exactly what's happening. In fact, as I told you some months back when we studied Daniel 2, one of the key men in the European Common Market made a statement that I read in the *LA Times*. He said this, "In the European economic community, the world is seeing the revival of the old Roman Empire." They said it, not me...And they are identifying themselves, and they are coming together in order to preserve themselves from the power to the north and the Islamic power to the east, as we saw last time. A unified Europe is very, very imminent.

There's a third principle. Now mark it. The Kingdom of Christ follows the final ruler of the final form of the final kingdom of the nations. So you have the final kingdom in its final form, but even in its final form, there is a final ruler, and the Kingdom of Christ will follow him. Now, let's meet him. Verse 8, Daniel 7, "I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before which there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots. And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things."

Verse 20, "And of the ten horns that were in its head, and of the other which came up and before whom three fell, even of that horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke very great things, whose look was more...stout says the authorized...than its fellows." Again commenting on this little horn that rises. Verse 24, "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are the ten kings that shall arise." That's the final form of the final kingdom. "But out of that final form shall arise after them another, diverse from the first, and subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change the times and the laws; and they shall be given unto his hand until a time, and times, and the dividing of time."

Now, in those four verses that I've read to you, there is a constant comment that there's going to rise a king out of the ten. He will subdue three others. He will take over and rule, and he will do various and sundry things. Now, this is a prediction of what we call in Daniel 7 "the little horn." But he is none other than the antichrist...In fact, the Apostle John, writing in the first general epistle, made a remarkable statement. He said to the Christians to whom he wrote, "Little children, listen. Little children, you have heard that antichrist shall come." That's what he said. Where did they hear that? Where did they hear that? Somebody must have been teaching them Book of Daniel, for one thing. Paul certainly taught it. In a Thessalonian letter chapter 2 verse 3, he talked about the son of perdition or the man of sin who was going to come and bring a great delusion on the world. But I believe the primary source, even of apostolic teaching about antichrist was Daniel. And they had done their job. And John can say in a very general way, "You have heard that antichrist shall come." And you've already seen previews, because, even now, there are many antichrists. This final ruler is discussed in the Book of Daniel in several ways. In chapter 7, he is called the little horn. In chapter 8, he is called the king of fierce countenance. In chapter 9, he is called a prince that shall come. In chapter 11, he is called the willful king. But it all refers to the same individual. He is the final ruler of the final form of the final kingdom of the Gentiles. And Christ's Kingdom doesn't come till after that.

Now, let's look more specifically. It says in verse 24, "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are the

ten kings that shall arise." That's the final form of that Roman revival. "And another shall rise after them." And this is the antichrist. "And he is diverse from the rest." That is, he is unique. I believe he embodies all the power and all of the treachery of all of those that precede him. "And he shall subdue three kings." Now, it says that also in verse 20, "Before whom three fell." And in verse 8, it says the same thing, "Before which there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots."

Now, I don't understand that, but somehow in this conglomerate of members to the final form of the Roman Empire, there's gonna be some kind of an interplay. And in the middle of that interplay, there will probably be some kind of a triumvirate. Some kind of a dominance. Some of the elements of it will be dominant. But out of the mix of that, he will rise, and he will overthrow those three leading nations or leading elements. Three rivals will be set aside as he surges and rises to the place of prominence and power.

Now, frankly, folks, we can't really interpret that. We just don't know what that means. We don't know how that's gonna work, but we do know that's what Daniel said. But let's face it. Fifty years ago, people didn't understand the ten horns did they? So there's a little more for us to look forward to. Look at verse 8. It says that he started out small. He was called a little horn. He starts out small. Apparently becoming larger as you go to verse 20, "His look is more stout," says the authorized. It means abundant in size, rank. It can mean a captain or a chief or a lord. In other words, he ranked higher. He started little, and he moved to the place where he dominates. Apparently this...this formation has a triumvirate of ruling powers. He rises above them and dominates the whole scene.

Now, how can he do this? Lemme tell you how. First of all, he's a political genius. He is literally a political genius. Go back to verse 8. "I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn...watch...before which there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots." Now, the language here sounds violent in the authorized. But in the original text, it is not nearly so violent. It expresses, rather, a pushing out, as if three are growing, and as one comes up, it just gradually squeezes its way through until it becomes prominent. It actually refers to a gradual replacement as the new pushes out the old, and the old gradually fades away. It is not a catastrophe. It is progressive.

Now, what does that mean? That means, to me, that somehow this individual is so subtle in his genius politically that without an upheaval, and without a revolution, he subtly moves himself up the political ladder to dominance. Revelation chapter 6, for example, says that he comes riding on a horse with a bow to conquer. It's always fascinated me that he had a bow, but no arrows. Apparently, he can do more with a threat than he needs to do with a war. In his subtlety, he conquers without fighting. Look, for example, at Daniel 11:21..."And in his estate...talking again about the antichrist...shall stand up a vile person to whom they shall not give the honor of the kingdom; but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by...what?...flatteries." That's politics, folks. The art of flattery. He's a political genius. That's the first thing about him.

So when you look to think of one who would be the antichrist, he will be a political mastermind. He is even able to make peace in the Middle East, according to Daniel 9. He even makes a covenant with Israel. Perhaps there is gonna be some protection by this European community of Israel and Israel's resources, protecting them against invasion from the north of Russia, from the east, the Middle East, and even beyond.

So he's politically very astute. Secondly, he's not only a political genius, he's an intellectual genius.

Brilliant. It says in verse 8, "He has eyes like the eyes of a man." In verse 20, he had eyes. And the eyes refer to insight. They refer to intelligence, mental ability. He will be clever. He will be shrewd. He will be knowledgeable. He will be able to give advice. He will be able to solve problems. Oh, for someone like that today who could solve problems. The world is so set up for somebody who could come in. America can't even solve the problem we've got with Iran. And there are multiple problems. Imagine a man who arrives on the scene who could solve the problems of the world.

Thirdly, he will be an oratorical genius. Not only will he be politically powerful and subtle. Not only will he be a mind perhaps greater than any other. But he will be able to articulate in marvelous ways. At the end of verse 8, it says, "He has a mouth speaking great things." Verse 20, "He has a mouth that spoke very great things." And some of them, verse 25, are "great words against the Most High God." But he has some kind of oratorical ability. In Revelation 13:5, it says, John says the same thing. "He had a mouth speaking great things."

Fourthly, he'll be a military genius...Verse 23, it says at the end of the verse, "He'll devour the whole earth and tread it down and break it in pieces." Once he rises to his place peaceably, once he obtains his kingdom by flattery, then the holocaust begins. For a while, listen to this, according to Revelation 17, when the church is taken out, I believe the church will be Raptured before all this comes fully to pass. When the church is taken out, the false church flourishes. Right? Revelation 17, called the harlot, the prostitute, mystery, Babylon, the great whore. Once the true bride is gone, all that's left is the prostitute. And the false church will flourish. And this antichrist will accommodate the false church.

Revelation 17, the false church will linked to him, and he'll waltz the church along a while, and then all of a sudden, the Bible says, "He will consume that false system and demand the whole world worship him." So for a while, by flattery and peace, he attains his ends, and then he becomes a military power who devours the earth and smashes it into pieces. So that in Revelation 13:4, they say, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" He is invincible. Revelation 13:7 says he "Makes war and overcomes." Political, intellectual, oratorical, and military genius.

Number five, he is a commercial genius. He can pull off economic coups. It may be that he'll solve inflation in the world. Can you imagine that? A guy can do all of this and solve inflation. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he'll solve some of his problems by lying. He will be cunning. He will be deceitful. And if you read Revelation 18, you will find that he devises a worldwide economic system, which, incidentally, comes crashing down when Christ establishes His Kingdom. But he can pull it off. Worldwide economics.

Finally, he'll be a religious genius. He'll have charisma. He'll pull himself off as an antichrist. That is a pseudochristos as well as an antichristos. He will be a phony Christ. He will come off as a great religious leader. He will want the whole, entire world to worship him, it says in Revelation 13:8. "He will speak great words...verse 25...against the Most High." In other words, he will boast of superiority or of equality with God. In the 11th chapter of Daniel, it says that he wants to set himself as equal with God. Credible thought.

By the way, it says that he will speak against the Most High. The original text says, "At the side of. He will seek to set himself at the side of the Most High." To be equal. He will try, for example, verse 25, this is fascinating, "To change...you see it there?...the times and the laws." What? What is he referring to here?

Well, some people think the times would be the normal religious observances. Some people think he will try to throw over the normal religious observances. Others think he will try to destroy the Sabbath worship or the sacredness of Sunday. Or he will try to twist the times of working and so forth around. Somehow, he will try to obliterate the God-ordained pattern. I don't know how. But changing the laws, that's pretty clear. He'll try to change God's moral laws. Try to wipe them out. I guess I lean to the fact that he will probably try to change God's moral laws, and he will try to change the times of worship and the times of religious observance in the society that he's in. He'll do everything he can to overturn everything God has established.

Now, look at the end of verse 25. Fortunately, his time will be limited. He shall be given a time and times, and a half a time. Now, that's kind of interesting. What is that? A time, times, and half a time. A time, one. Times would be two. Half a time would be a half. That's three-and-a-half. He will have three-and-a-half years. Now, that is a very important note prophetically, because that's all the time he'll have. In fact, if you look at chapter 12 of Daniel verse 7, it says it there. "There'll be a time, times, and half a time." In verse 11, it draws it down to days, "A thousand two hundred and ninety days." Or "a thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." Somewhere around that period of three-and-a-half years is all the time he'll have.

Now, we'll see more about that when we get into Daniel chapter 9. He makes a seven-year covenant with Israel, breaks it in the middle, and for the last three-and-a-half years, he literally devastates the earth, along with the judgment of God. Then comes his horrible end. What have I said there? Now, listen. I said this: Principle number one, the Kingdom of Christ follows the kingdoms of the nations. Principle number two, the Kingdom of Christ follows the final form of the kingdoms of the nations. Principle number three, the Kingdom of Christ follows the final ruler of that final form of the kingdoms of the nations.

Now, principle number four. Are you still with me? Here we go. The Kingdom of Christ--I don't know if I can say it. The Kingdom of Christ follows the final ruler, and the final form, and the final kingdom, only after the final persecution by that final ruler. You're doing so well, class...

All right? In other words, the kingdom, it's final form, it's final ruler, and it's final ruler's final persecution. At the very culmination of this, there will be a bloodletting of all the saints...Verse 21, Daniel 7, "And I beheld and the same horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them." War with the saints. And you can read in the Book of Revelation in the 13th chapter the very same thing. I'll just read a verse or two, chapter 13. I'm reminded of verse 7, I think it is. "It was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindred, and tongues, and nations." The peace ends. The pact is broken in the middle of the week, and he makes a terrible war. And I tell you, it's effective. Lemme tell you how effective it is. He kills two-thirds of the Jews...Now if you wanna know where that is in Scripture, Zachariah 13:8-9. He kills two-thirds of the Jews. He literally conquers the city of Jerusalem, Zachariah 14:1-2. He slaughters myriad number of Gentiles, according to Revelation 13:7-10. And verse 25 of Daniel 7 says, "He wears out the saints of the Most High." And the word there is referring to a worn-out garment. He makes them into wretchedness. He shreds them.

Now how's he gonna do it? I think by injustice, by seizure of their property, by physical punishment, failure to comply in the first place. Revelation 13 says this, if a believer is living in that time, everybody in the human society is gonna have to take a mark, right? A mark of the beast on their

hand or forehead. If you don't take the mark, you can't buy or sell. If you don't take the mark, you identify yourself as revolutionary and reactionary. The second phase would be you wouldn't bow down to the beast and his image. If you fail that...to do that, you lose your life. There will be a slaughter across the earth...of those who are the saints of the Most High.

And, you know, I...I get the feeling in the society in which we live, that that kinda thing could become a reality. I've never seen in my lifetime, and I just live in one little tiny slice of time, but I've never seen in my lifetime any such concerted, wholesale effort to put the church out of existence as I see today. From every angle. They wanna shut the church down every way you slice it. They wanna shut us down by zoning us out of existence if they can. By taxing us. It's gonna come to the place, and I think this push will come, where they're gonna want, because there's so many religious nuts around, and there's so many problems in religion today, that the government is gonna wanna license preachers and ministers, just like they license doctors and other people. Once they do that, they'll have control of everything. They're already moving rapidly right now to license all Christian school teachers. Once they do that, they'll control 'em...

We have to be careful about that. We can see what's happening. We can see the encroachment of humanism on the church of Christ, and I can see the day where they can make life wretched for us. Where we can't comply with anything. They're trying to put churches out of existence just on fire codes alone. There are all kinds of things happening in our society that can close in on the church. There's coming a terrible, terrible persecution. I believe we'll be removed, and then the wonderful group of saints that are redeemed out of the Tribulation are gonna feel this in their neck. But, oh, they'll be honored by God. They'll be lifted up and exalted if they die for His cause.

That leads me to the final point. The Kingdom of Christ follows a divine judgment for the great persecution by the final ruler of the final phase of the final kingdom of the nations. What have we said then? First the kingdoms of the nations. Then the final form. Then the final ruler. Then his final persecution. Then the final judgment. Then the Kingdom of Christ. What a scene. Verse 9, here comes the judgment of that final ruler. "I beheld till the thrones were placed." In the Orient, when they place a throne, they throw it on the ground. It's just a pile of pillows. The throne was thrown down, "The Ancient of Days sat. His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him, and ten thousand times then thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. And I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spoke. I beheld even till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. And, as for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time."

Now, what is it saying? First verse 9. The Ancient of Days is God, the Father. We've seen that verse. He sits on the throne of His majesty. Isaiah calls Him, "Him who sits in judgment." Psalm 9 pictures God sitting in judgment. And there God takes His seat, and the great Judge is described as one "whose garment was white as snow." That is an emphasis on purity. "Whose hair was like pure wool." That's an emphasis on wisdom. The white hairs, the hoary heads. And it says, "Proceeding from Him was a fiery flame." Says, "His throne was like a fiery flame, and His wheel as burning fire." That speaks of His authority. On the one, His purity. On the second, His wisdom. On the third, His authority.

And fire, by the way, is often associated with God as He speaks in flaming judgment. Psalm 97:3

says, "A fire goeth before Him and burneth up His enemies round about." Whenever you see fire, people, it's judgment. "His wheels are burning fire." Now that sounds like Ezekiel chapter 1. Ezekiel described God as wheels of flaming fire. And I see the picture as the throne of God just spinning off fire. This is judgment. This is judgment.

There's one other description in the Bible that's similar to this. And, interestingly enough, it's found in Revelation chapter 1. You don't need to look at it. Just remind yourself. And it is a description, not of God the Father, but of God the Son. And it's almost identical, which wonderfully, to me, speaks of the fact that the Father and the Son, though distinct, are one. They are equal in deity, and that is why in John 5, the Father who sits in judgment says, "I have committed all judgment unto...whom?...the Son." Now I don't understand the mystery of the inner working of the Trinity. But in one place in Daniel, the Father is thus described. In another place, in Revelation, the Son is thus described, and They are equally described in this flaming, fiery, judgmental way. One time in judgment on antichrist. One time in a chastening purification of the church. But, nonetheless, there is a commonness in how They are described, because Their essence is the same.

And that is why the Father can say in John 5 that He has committed all judgment to the Son. Verse 10 says, "That fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him." It is a river of fire now. It is a consuming, devastating, destroying, flaming judgment fire, pouring forth as wheels spinning out of the throne of God. What a scene. And standing around God are a thousand thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, and what are these? These are angels. Same terms that John uses for them, although he speaks in the Greek rather than the Hebrew or Aramaic.

And the angels are there. By the way, angels are always associated with serving God, and particularly we find them when He is in judgment, as we saw in 2 Thessalonians. He returns in fiery judgment with His angels, and as Jude said. Then it says, "The judgment was set." This is a court. And it literally means the court sat. The judge took His place. "Judgment was set, and the books were opened." Sometime we'll do a Bible study just on the thought of the books were opened. You know, that God keeps books on everybody? God has the record of every life, and that when judgment comes, and it's the same thing in Revelation chapter 20, God opens the books. You know what He's looking for? He's looking for a big cancelled stripe down the middle of the page. Cancelled by the blood of Christ. And if it isn't there, the evidence is in to damn man to hell. God keeps records in His books. He doesn't judge whimsically. He is a judge who judges righteous judgment.

Verse 11, in one of the acts of judgment, "I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spoke; I beheld even till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame." In Daniel's vision, he sees this antichrist, this little horn who has risen to become a composite beast of all the rest of the nations that were involved. He sees this beast utterly devastated, and I believe verse 12, "The rest of the beasts," which are still alive in a sense, embodied in Him, who had a little bit of time to last beyond their own boundaries, are ultimately devastated and destroyed, as well...

Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, all sort of continued in part in their successors, because all Gentile pattern followed, power rather, followed the same pattern. Finally, all embodied in the final beast, and he is utterly consumed. Now listen. After the final kings of the Gentiles in their final form, and the revelation of the final ruler and the final persecution, comes the destruction of that individual. The nations are judged. That judgment is recorded in Matthew 25. The judgment of the nations. Verse 26 in this text gives us a little insight into it. "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his

dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end."

Beloved, that is the utter cessation of man's day, and then comes the key, verse 27. "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, and all dominion shall serve and obey Him." That's it, folks. Christ's Kingdom follows that final issue of judgment. That's quite a vision, isn't it? Incredible.

Wanna see Daniel's reaction? Verse 28, "Here is the end of the matter. Here is the end of the matter." That's it, folks. I see that at the end of cartoons sometime. That's all, folks. It's frivolous there, but it isn't frivolous here. That's it. "As for me...you wanna know how I feel about this?...Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me; but I kept the matter in my heart." He said, "It just devastated me. My thinking was all mixed up. I was troubled. My whole physical form began to change; but I kept it in my heart."

You know, when I think about these things, I have the same reaction. You know what John's reaction was? He said, "I saw myself in the vision, and I saw the Son of Man take that scroll and begin to unroll the title deed to the earth, and I took the scroll and the vision, and I ate it, and I found that it was sweet in my mouth, but it was bitter in my stomach. It was sweet at first, because I thought, 'Oh, Christ shall reign. Christ shall rule at last.' But it was bitter because I realized that, when He set up His Kingdom, it would be the damnation of everyone who rejected Him forever without hope. So it's sweet and bitter."

And I think Daniel is caught in that same tension, and he's troubled, and he's changed, and he ponders in his heart. How does history end? It ends with the coming of Christ. The sum of the story of Easter is this, "He who wept above the grave, He who stilled the raging wave, meek to suffer strong to save, He shall come in glory. He who sorrow's pathway trod, He that every good bestowed, Son of Man and Son of God, He shall come in glory. He who bled with scourging sore, thorns and scarlet meekly wore. He who every sorrow bore, He shall come in glory. Monarch of the smitten cheek, scorn of Jew and scorn of Greek, priest and king divinely meek, He shall come in glory. He who died to set us free, He who rose and lives for me, He who comes Whom I shall see, Jesus only, only He. He shall reign in glory."

That's our great hope, isn't it? Can you say amen to that? Let's pray...

Father, thank You for these precious people here tonight. Thank You for the great encouragement they are to my own heart. Thank You for these last several wonderful days. Days of joy to be here on Friday to share in the bread and the cup and remember Your death. This morning, Your resurrection. Tonight, Your soon return. Thank You for the hope in my heart, because...I know You through faith. I thank You for the fellowship of this church that enriches me. I thank You for my precious family, my children and my wife, my dear friends who make life so rich and full. I thank You, but I can enjoy every bit of it because I know it's forever. And we shall be together in divine presence throughout all of eternity. Father, I thank You for that day yet coming when You shall split the heavens, come to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. I thank You that I'll be there coming with You, for we shall appear with Christ in glory...Father, in the meantime, may we hear the word of dear, blessed Peter who said, "Seeing you know all these are come to pass, what manner of persons ought you to be?" And then went to say we should be characterized by holy living and godliness. May we remember the words of John who said, "He that hath this hope in him, purifies himself." And may we, knowing

that You shall come, live for that day, a pure life that we may enter into Your presence to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Enter into the joy of our Lord. Bless every life here. We thank You for this time together in Christ's name. Amen.

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