

Lecture 3 — The Times of the Gentiles.

Daniel 2 - 7.

Behold the Bridegroom!

Ten lectures on the second coming and kingdom of the Lord Jesus.

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What are we to understand by the expression, "the times of the Gentiles"? Turn to the scripture where the phrase occurs. It is found in the 21st chapter of Luke (Luke 21: 24), where the Lord Jesus is describing to His disciples the imminent destruction of Jerusalem. It is the last day of His public life. When I say that, I mean the last day of His public ministry. If you have never gone over the last week of the Lord's life, I recommend you all to do it, and you will be wonderfully struck with the amazing amount of ministry which took place during that time. On the first day of the week He was anointed in Bethany (John 12: 1-11). He is made much of — and that is what we have the privilege of doing now — the first day of the week. The Jew gave Him the last day of the week, the Christian gives Him the first. The next day (Monday) He comes into Jerusalem in triumph, riding upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass (Mark 11: 1-11). The next day (Tuesday) He curses the fig-tree, and cleanses the temple (Mark 11: 12-19). The next day (Wednesday) occupies from Mark 11: 20 to verse 11 of chapter 14 (see also Matt. 22 to 25, and Luke 20, 21). The ministry that took place that day is simply enormous. Into it I cannot go now; you must trace it out for yourselves; but from early morn to dewy eve, that day, the blessed Lord seems to have been pouring out His marvellous ministry.

What took place on the Thursday is given us in Mark 14: 12-72. It is most noticeable that nothing is recorded, save what relates to the Passover being prepared — no ministry. He spent that day apparently with God alone till eventide. Then on Friday (Mark 15) He died, — thank God, for me! In the grave He lay all the Sabbath day, and He rose, the triumphant Saviour, on the first day of the new week. It is on the Wednesday that He is telling His disciples what is coming on Jerusalem, and, as we get down towards the end of the discourse, we read, "These be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES be fulfilled" (Luke 21: 22-24). I need not stay to tell you how absolutely this solemn prediction was fulfilled. Jerusalem was soon after overthrown. God, in patient grace, waited a little, He did not destroy it the day after the death of His Son. Nay, for sixty years He waited on His rebellious people, who first rejected their Messiah, and then resisted the Holy Ghost (Acts 7: 51, 52). At length He sent forth His edict; and, if I may so say, the scavenger

came upon the scene, and swept the carcass away. Judaism, as a system of religion, came to an end before God, when Christ was nailed to the cross (Col. 2: 14); but the Jews clung fast to their city and their religion, until the Romans, like the scavenger with the broom, came, and swept it and them away.

"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," was the Lord's statement, and every one knows what a bone of contention that city, and Palestine have been from that day to this. Almost all the fighting in Europe, and Asia, has been connected, in some way or other, with Jerusalem, and it has all along been trodden down, and will be till "the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

What, however, are we to learn from the expression "the times of the Gentiles"? Go back to the book of Daniel, because the prophecies of Daniel are a simple and distinct answer to that question. They unfold to us, in a remarkable way, what the Lord calls "the times of the Gentiles." Observe that Daniel opens with an account of Nebuchadnezzar destroying Jerusalem the first time. It was in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, King of Judah, that Nebuchadnezzar besieged it, and took it: — "And the king spake unto Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; children in whom was no blemish, but well-favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans" (Dan. 1: 3, 4).

I read these verses, because we have thus absolutely fulfilled the solemn prediction which, you will remember, God sent by the lips of Isaiah to King Hezekiah, as recorded in the 39th chapter. Hezekiah had been sick, and when he recovered, the King of Babylon sent up letters and a present, and congratulated him upon his recovery, — a little bit of courtesy on the part of the world. It is ever a dangerous thing to a saint of God when the world begins to be courteous to him. What does Hezekiah do? He opens his house and shows the ambassadors the "precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures." Then Isaiah comes to Hezekiah and says, "Hear the word of the Lord of hosts; behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon" (Isa. 39: 5, 6).

"The times of the Gentiles," let me then repeat, begin with that which Daniel describes here, when Nebuchadnezzar, as the servant of God, went up and took the city, — where the throne of the Lord God had been, where the temple of God was, and where the worship of God was still nominally offered, — took it, and razed it to the ground, because of the sin, and iniquity of its inhabitants. God had forsaken His people. Ezekiel describes how the glory of the Lord gradually forsook the place (Ezek. 10: 4, 18, 19); and then the next thing, in God's righteous government was, that He passed His earthly people, the Jews, into the hands of the enemy, and "the times of the Gentiles" began. That is why all through the book of Daniel you find God called "the God of heaven." He has given up the earth, and while I do not at all, for a moment, deny that there is a providence of God working now, as a matter of fact, God has left the earth alone, and the potsherds of the earth are striving with the potsherds thereof.

In Daniel 2 it is to be noticed that, at the 18th verse, Daniel desires "mercies of the God of *heaven*;" 19th verse, "blesses the God of *heaven*;" 28th verse, declares "there is a God in *heaven* that revealeth secrets;" 37th verse, informs Nebuchadnezzar "the God of *heaven* hath given thee a kingdom;" and, 44th verse, prophesies, "In the days of these kings shall the God of *heaven* set up a kingdom." The reason of this is that Daniel, by the Spirit of God, is bringing out, for the instruction of God's people, the wonderfully solemn truth, that, for the time being, God's kingdom upon earth is in abeyance. He has retired — given up the earth. Well, but you say, Afterwards He sent His Son — Jesus came by-and-by. True, but what did man do? Sent Him back again, by the way of the cross. As far as the world is concerned, God has got no place in it. I quite admit that some people would be, and are, what is called religious, but if you go to the world, and talk about God, what will they do? They will very soon let you know what they think; "Not this man, but Barabbas," was the world's choice eighteen centuries ago, nor are things really different now. "Crucify him, crucify him!" That is the world expressing its heart — what it would like — viz., Get rid of Jesus. And I tell you more, what Scripture unfolds is this, that the day is drawing near, when apparently, they will get rid of every bit of testimony for God and His Son, and they will then delight in the thought, We have got rid of Him altogether; and that is just the moment when the storm bursts, and the God of heaven re-enters the scene.

Now here, then, we learn in Daniel that "the times of the Gentiles" begin in this way, by God retiring, and Jerusalem being captured; and when you come to chapter 2, you find Nebuchadnezzar commencing the history of the Gentile empire. I do not mean, of course, that there were not Gentile kingdoms before; but, to inaugurate "the times of the Gentiles," Nebuchadnezzar is suffered — yea, helped of God — to get into a place of absolute supremacy, and earthly power. That comes out distinctly in the 2nd chapter of Daniel.

I may say, for those who would like to study the book of Daniel a little carefully, that it is divided into two great parts — the first six chapters, and the last six. The first part gives us all Nebuchadnezzar's visions, what he saw, and Daniel's interpretation. God begins in the 7th chapter, and thenceforward we get what Daniel sees. It is what God reveals, and makes known to His servant. The reason seems to be this, — the first six chapters are occupied in showing what I may call the moral features of the Gentile empires, what they really were, and what they did. Beginning with Daniel 7, God shows us the circumstantial appearance of these powers, how He looks upon them, what He sees in them, and thinks about them. Chapters 2 to 6 show what the kings think about themselves, and the 7th and succeeding chapters, what God thinks of them.

In Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, and then forgot them, like many another person; but, being a tyrant, he calls in his wise men, and says, Tell me my dream. They say, "Tell thy servants the dream, and we will show thee the interpretation." The king replies, "The thing is gone from me; if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces." Then they say they were never asked before to interpret a dream which they had not heard, and thereon the furious autocrat "commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon" (ver. 12). The news of this harsh decree gets abroad, and Daniel, being involved in it, goes to God in prayer. The Lord makes known to him what Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed. And what is the next thing he does? Runs away and tells the king? Oh, no! "Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven," and said, "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he

giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding; he revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter" (verses 19-23).

Daniel's course is beautiful. He first of all got hold of his brethren, and had a prayer-meeting. "He made the thing known to his companions" (ver. 17). But his resource was God. Then, instead of going straight off and telling all abroad what he had learned, he has, what I may venture to call, a worship meeting; he comes and thanks the Lord. Very fine this. There is a great moral lesson here. First he thanks the Lord, saying, "Blessed be the name of the Lord for ever and ever." His heart runs over in thankfulness to the Lord first, and then he goes in to the king and says, I can tell you your dream.

"Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee, and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass. His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay" (verses 31-33). It was deteriorating as it came down, and as to the figure there was no doubt as to its meaning, because he tells us what it is. He goes on, "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold" (verses 34-38).

Mark, God did not give Nebuchadnezzar the fish of the sea. Why? Because the Man of Psalm 8 had not yet come, who had the power over the fish of the sea. You must go to the 17th chapter of Matthew for that, where Peter was troubled, and wanted money for tribute. And the Lord said to him, "Go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee" (Matt. 17: 27). It was only the Lord Jesus, the Son of Man, who had power over the fish of the sea. Nebuchadnezzar's power and dominion was in that sense limited; but as regards the children of men, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, he is told, "God hath made thee ruler over them all." It is very simple. God unfolds to Nebuchadnezzar the fact that, in His sovereignty, He would allow him to raise the Babylonian empire, in his own person, to universal supremacy, and we know as a matter of history it was so.

But Nebuchadnezzar is further informed, "After thee shall rise another kingdom inferior to thee "the Medo-Persian; "and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth;" clearly Greece, as every schoolboy knows. "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise" (verses 39, 40). Here we have the last empire, the

Roman, under which the Lord Jesus died, — because of course it was Pilate, as the official representative of Caesar, who authorised the death of the Son of God, when His own people, the Jews, had delivered Him into his hands. Therefore the utmost importance, all the way through, is attached to the last kingdom, the last empire, and so we find, at the close, that the stone, cut out without hands, falls on the feet of the image. It is upon the last empire that the stone falls, and then becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth. Without doubt that is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, plainly foretold in the 44th verse, where we read, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure" (verses 44, 45).

Thus quickly, and startlingly, will be introduced the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom man has despised and cast out; He will yet come into this world, and come in a way that will mark the fact that God has sent Him. Though the Roman empire be the one He may first deal with, it is to be observed that all the other kingdoms will come under His solemn, and crushing judgment. In the gospels the Lord Jesus speaks of Himself as "the stone which the builders rejected" become "the head of the corner." He then adds, "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matt. 21: 42, 44). The Jewish nation fell over Jesus, whom they could not receive in His humiliation, and lowliness, and was thus broken; but it is the proud Gentile powers upon whom the crushing stone, the now rejected Christ Jesus, will fall by-and-by. It is the proud infidel Gentile, that will not receive the gospel of a heavenly Saviour, upon whom that stone will fall, and grind him to powder. No figure of utter judgment could be more apt.

Nebuchadnezzar's first vision gives, then, in consecutive history, the four empires, terminating in the Roman; and the end is the introduction of the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, as King of kings, and Lord of lords. Thus, what I may call the general view of Gentile imperial power, or "the times of the Gentiles," you have developed before you in the 2nd chapter of Daniel.

Glance now, for one moment, at the four following chapters, because they give us, in detail, what we may call the moral features of these Gentile kingdoms. What marks them — what marks man when he gets earthly power away from God? In Daniel 3, you will find that Nebuchadnezzar, elated with the position of supremacy which God had given him, makes an image of gold, and demands that every one shall worship that image. In plain language, idolatry is the great salient point of that chapter. That is what is coming in again by-and-by. What will really bring down the crushing judgment of God upon antichrist, and Christendom, will be the solemn fact, that idolatry will spring up, once more, among those who profess to be the earthly people of God. In the 12th chapter of Matthew this is foretold by the Lord Jesus. He says, — "When the unclean spirit [idolatry] is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the

last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation" (Matt. 12: 43-45). Idolatry was repudiated by the Jews, when Jesus was here; but, as they refused to own Him (see Matt. 12) who was their real God, as well as their Messiah, He shows that they would yet fall into the old trap of the enemy — idolatry — as Daniel (Dan. 9 and Dan. 12) also informs us. You may get rid of idolatry, but unless you really have the truth, though you have your house swept and garnished, it is empty, and Satan will bring in what is false to fill it; and therefore the Lord says, "the last state of that man is worse than the first." The point is this, idolatry will yet be revived in Israel.

Daniel 3 shows the fact of compulsory idolatry; and you will find, in Revelation 13: 15, that antichrist will "cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." The day is coming when the civil power in the world will compel idolatry. History simply repeats itself. Nebuchadnezzar gives us a prophetic picture of it. Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego will not bow down; they are faithful to God. They are cast into the fiery furnace; but it only burned off their bonds, set them free, and put them in the company of the Son of God. Faithfulness toward God always leads to the deepest blessing to the soul,

In Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar, conceited and full of his own thoughts, has visions of a great tree. Daniel alone is able to tell him what the meaning is. I do not now unfold it; but we read that what takes place is this: — "At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee," etc. (verses 27-31). In the same hour he was driven from men, and became as a beast. It was a remarkable thing, but it was God's solemn way of dealing with the pride, and self-exaltation of man. When man gets into power, he exalts himself. There is only one Man that can really be trusted with power — the Lord Jesus Christ; and that is why, in Revelation 5, the song of the universe by-and-by is this: — "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Give any other man power, and what will he do with it? Give any other man riches, and what will he do with them? I love to think that the song in glory is this, that the only One worthy of what men are rushing after here — the only One worthy of all — is the Lord Jesus Christ. Here Nebuchadnezzar has power to exalt himself, and God abases him.

Now the next chapter goes a step further, we have there the grossest impiety and sacrilege. It is Belshazzar's banquet, and the solemn judgment in connection therewith. In that night Belshazzar dies, — God casts him down.

In Daniel 6, we get apostasy. At the death of Belshazzar, Darius the Mede gets the kingdom, and they come up and say in terms to Darius, Now we want you to make an edict that nobody shall pray but to you; and I have no doubt Darius was flattered, and he puts out the edict, that no prayer shall be made to any god, or man, but to himself, for thirty days. It will be exactly the same in the day that is coming. God has, so to speak, sketched the history in this book. In the 3rd chapter we have the idolatry that will come in compelled by civil power; in the 4th, self-exaltation; in the 5th, impiety; and in the 6th, what I may call apostasy — that is, giving up first

estate, and departing from all dependence upon God. That is the general view of "the times of the Gentiles," — what man does when he possesses power given him by God.

In the 7th chapter — which I read this evening — we get God's view of these four empires. There you will see that these four consecutive kingdoms are brought before us again, in a different way. In the first vision of Daniel 7 we have the three earlier kingdoms, the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, and the Grecian, under the figures of the three beasts. The fourth kingdom is the subject of a separate vision: verse 7, "After this I saw in the night-visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." This fourth beast, I have no doubt at all, is the Roman empire, — not as it is now, but as it will be revived in the day that is very near at hand. You may turn and say, Where is the Roman empire now? It is at present non-existent; but it is a striking thing that in the 12th verse it says, "As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time." I can show you the kingdom of Greece just now; I can show you the Shah of Persia; and I suppose in a certain sense there is that which might possibly be the vestige of the Babylonian kingdom. But where is the Roman? I will tell you what you can see, — you can discover the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided. It broke up, as you know, into that number. Daniel sees the ten horns — always in Scripture a symbol of kingly power; and now, if you read a little lower down in the chapter, you will see that it is in connection with this beast that Daniel sees the "thrones set up" (for this is the true reading, not "cast down ") in the 9th verse. "I beheld till the thrones were set, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the 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: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake. I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (Dan. 7: 9-11).

I repeat, for the sake of clearness, the Roman empire does not exist at this moment. [1891-5] The ten kingdoms into which that empire was divided are existing, though difficult, perhaps, to exactly identify and delimit; but we see in the book of Revelation that they will all have a separate existence, as kings (Rev. 17: 12), while, at the same time, the empire will be revived, and reconstituted. Daniel sees the beast having ten horns; he saw it in its original character, and what it was going later to become; but in the book of Revelation, you will find that John sees it possessing imperial unity, while separate kingly power existed in the ten horns. It is revived and re-energised entirely by Satanic power. What is very striking in the 7th of Daniel is, that it is because of "the little horn" (ver. 8) that the judgment comes. He wields the beast. In Revelation 13 you will see that there are two beasts coming, the one having ten horns (ver. 1), and the other two horns like a lamb (ver. 11). I have no doubt that the one having two horns is really antichrist. While there are two systems of wickedness, one political, the other ecclesiastical, they play into each other's hands. This "little horn" that Daniel sees, is the leader or head of the revived Roman empire, who works in conjunction with his tool, antichrist, to "change times and laws" (ver. 25),

and practically speaking, he dominates the beast. It is all the doings of the little horn, and it is because of the wickedness of the little horn that the judgment falls upon the beast. "I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (Dan. 7: 11). There you have the same thing as we find in Revelation 19: 20, where the beast, and the false prophet, are cast into the lake of fire.

Coming again to the latter part of the 7th of Daniel, you will find that we get more light upon the subject. You always find in Scripture, that, whether it be a parable, or a direct statement of God, if He goes on to expound or explain, there is always something added; and this you will observe, when you come down to the 17th verse, where the interpretation is made known to Daniel. "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the Saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (Dan. 7: 17-22).

Notice the words "brake in pieces." This feature is that which has marked the history of the Roman empire from first to last. By the "saints" here, we must not understand the saints that belong to the Church, — not the Christians of the present moment; because we shall all be carried out of the scene, we shall be with Jesus, in glory, before this scripture can be fulfilled; but in that day God will have some earthly saints. The Spirit of God will work again amongst the Jews, and it is against them that all the hatred and energy of this horn is expressed. We shall have to look at Scripture another night to see the great tribulation, and those who pass through it. They are the saints, I have no doubt, named here: — "judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." How remarkable is the language of Scripture! We all thought that by-and-by we were going to be judged; but even the book of Daniel says, that so far from the saints being judged, they are going to be the judges. "judgment was given to the saints, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (ver. 22).

Then he says, "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall 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 times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Hitherto

is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart" (verses 23-28).

There are three things that this horn does. (1.) He "shall speak great words against the most High," that is, he blasphemes God. (2.) He "shall wear out the saints of the most High." (3.) He shall "think to change times and laws," that is, the revived feasts, which the Jews will have, when they are gathered back into their own land, the Passover, etc. Now observe, "They shall be given into his hand," — not the saints, thank God, no, — but God will let him have dominance for the time being, and he will delight to persecute the godly, and he will be able to change their "times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time."

You have here what Daniel speaks about in connection with his seventieth week (see Dan. 9: 27), where there is a sudden, and unlooked-for break of the covenant, and for three and a half years there is tribulation and distress. For the space of three and a half years — forty-two months (Rev. 11: 2), or twelve hundred and sixty days (Rev. 11: 3), or "a time, and times, and half a time" (Rev. 12: 14) — this "prince that shall come" will persecute the saints of God, and then "the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end" (Dan. 7: 26).

Thereupon you behold the introduction of the kingdom of Christ, "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 dominions shall serve and obey him." That is, there is a setting aside of all earthly power, by the introduction of the blessed kingdom — wonderful moment! — of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

What Daniel gives us briefly, and prophetically, the Spirit of God recounts in the book of Revelation in much detail. Look at chapter 13: "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the names of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads, as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints" (Rev. 13: 1-10).

"The dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." The same empire is seen by John that Daniel saw, only a new feature is observable in the source of power — the dragon, Satan. In the 5th verse: — "There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things,

and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." Forty-two months is the same time as three and a half years. Now, in the 7th verse, "It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." That will be an awfully solemn day, "for all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him," — idolatry again, — "whose names are not written in the book of life, of the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear."

Then in the 11th verse, John says, "I beheld another beast." That is antichrist. In various ways God presents him: — "He exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six" (Rev. 13: 12-18). If you are alive on the earth in that day, my unconverted hearer, there is one of two things before you. You will either have to bow down, and worship the image of the beast, or you will pay the penalty of your hardihood with your life; and I do not believe an unconverted man will do that — not a bit of it.

The "strong delusion" has gone out, and so great will be the glamour, and so wonderful will be the power, and so magnificent will be the display, that men will be caught, trapped, and carried away by that which appeals to the senses, and to the eye. There will be no Gospel then. You will have what people are aiming at now. You will have your continental Sunday; there will be no kirks, and no meetings; and you will have your fill of what the world wants, and what the devil will furnish; and you will have to do that which is most awful in the history of a man, viz., bow down, and worship before the image of another man, as sinful as yourself.

Now let us look at Revelation 17, which shows the sequel of all this frightful condition of matters in that day. The 7th verse: — "And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not. and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world), when they behold the beast that was, and is not — ("*Was*," when John wrote, "*is not*" now) — but shall be present." That empire is non-existent, as I speak, but it will arise out of the bottomless pit. It will be revived; the Roman empire will be re-gathered again. You know, that Charlemagne strove for it; and it was the supreme object of the first Napoleon's life to get the Roman empire together again, and he very nearly did it. People told the late Napoleon that he was the "beast," and he was flattered. There is, however, coming a man, who will gather the Roman empire together again, in the sense of the Scripture here. It "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition

(true brother, and companion of Judas), and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder." Of course they will, when "they behold the beast who was, and is not, and shall be present." The "yet is" of verse 8 should be, "*shall be present.*"

This fallen empire will come up again, and look what follows:" And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast" (ver. 12). That is, God, by-and-by, will so work, that I have no doubt that these kings, who will be the leaders of the ten parts of the Roman empire, will all be made to bow down, and one of the ten will be exalted to imperial power, and that will be the moment when things will be headed up. The early part of this chapter shows, that upon the back of this beast, there was sitting a woman, and I have no doubt that you have there the false Church. Is that awful thing what we call the Church of God? Yes, and she is carried on by the world's power, till it turns and rends her. The fact is, beloved friends, men will get tired of priestcraft, and they will be tired by-and-by of everything except the energy of their own will. And what will be the result? They will hate the whore, and rob her first, and then eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. Already they are taking away as much as they can of church land. The stream has set in. Already the thing has begun; but by-and-by man will become utterly infidel, and say, No, no, away to the winds with everything that has even the semblance of God, or that bears the name of Christ upon it. The result will be that everything will be swept aside, and the apostasy become fullblown. The 18th chapter of Revelation shows you the fall of Babylon; and the 19th, the destruction of the beast, and the false prophet, — that is the Roman empire, and the antichrist. Then the Lord will come. Of that we will speak a little more fully another night.

I trust you have been able to see, from the Word of God, what is the meaning of "the times of the Gentiles." It is the period during which God puts earthly power into the hands of the Gentiles; and Scripture has shown us how man uses that earthly power, viz., to exalt himself, persecute the saints of God, blaspheme God Himself, and at length he falls completely into the power of Satan. The revived Latin empire, energised by Satan, is the full-blown expression of daring revolt against God, and His Christ.