

The Times of the Gentiles: The character and doom of the great Gentile powers.

Daniel 7.

Lecture 7 of 'Eight Lectures on Prophecy' from shorthand notes.

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This history of the four great Gentile empires, which are set before us here as *four great beasts*, is the history of the *times of the Gentiles*. The times of the Gentiles transpire during an interruption of, or interval as to, the *times of the Jews*. That interval began with Nebuchadnezzar, the first monarch of the kingdom of Babylon, and it will terminate with the last monarch of the empire of Rome. The *times of the Jews* closed, or were interrupted, by their being carried away captive into Babylon; they will recommence when Jerusalem shall cease to be trodden down of the Gentiles, and when the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled. Thus the expression, "times of the Gentiles," denotes the times of Gentile dominion over the Jews. This Gentile lordship is exercised during the whole period of the existence in power of the four great beasts, which Daniel saw in his vision.

This vision furnishes us with a complete outline of the whole subject of this evening's lecture. It also furnishes us with the completion of our previous lecture: — with *the final result* of the apostacy and corruption of Christianity. The fourth of these great beasts will prove to be the "ten-horned beast," on which, in Revelation 17, the mystic Babylonish woman was seen sitting. The character and doom of that "woman" occupied us at our last meeting; we saw that, as an organized system of power, she was to be thrown down, and destroyed, and to disappear from the stage. The very beast which carried her would ultimately destroy her. But this evening we shall see the doom of the beast itself. We shall see in outline the whole career of that beast, and that though it existed before there was any "woman" to aspire to mount its back and ride thereon, and will exist after the destruction of its rider, yet even *its* so called "eternal" course shall close at last — shall close in judgment, and "destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." The doom of this fourth great beast is indeed the final result of the apostacy of Christendom. The beast, having thrown off its spurious support and profession of Christianity, will openly rebel against the divine authority, and by thus filling up the cup of its transgression, will bring on its final and total overthrow. So that it is one and the same solemn and decisive crisis, which brings to a full end both the ecclesiastical and the secular apostacy. The battle of the great day of God Almighty will terminate them both — will consummate the whole.

Such, then, is the subject of this evening's lecture. We have a vast field of prophetic truth before us, and a rapid and elementary survey of it is all that we may hope on this occasion to accomplish.

1. In Daniel 7 we have, as we have seen, a vision of four great beasts; the first like a lion, the second like a bear, the third like a leopard, and the fourth a "beast dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and having ten horns." Read verses 3-7. Moreover, among the ten horns of the fourth beast there came up 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." Then follows in the vision a solemn session of judgment, which effects the destruction both of this little horn, and of the beast itself; then the Son of Man is seen coming with the clouds of heaven, and the whole dominion under heaven is given to him, and to his saints. The narration of the vision ends in plain and literal terms, which tell their own manifest and undoubted meaning.

2. But what is meant by these four symbolic "beasts"? The answer is furnished in verse 17: "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings which shall arise out of the earth." But by the term "kings," we are to understand *kingdoms*, for this is the interpretation in the 23rd verse. "Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be *the fourth kingdom* upon earth, which shall be diverse from all *kingdoms*." And in the second chapter of this prophet we likewise learn that there should be *four great kingdoms* — manifestly *the same kingdoms* — which are set before us here. There was seen a great image, as is well known to most of you. It was composed of a golden head, silver breast and arms, brazen belly and thighs, iron legs, and feet part of iron and part of clay. Daniel was enabled to explain the meaning of all this to the king Nebuchadnezzar. He said to the king, "Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise *another kingdom* inferior to thee, and *another third kingdom* of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And *the fourth kingdom* shall be strong as iron," etc. Now the fourth iron kingdom in this case is represented as having ten toes, whilst in Dan. 7 the fourth beast had ten horns. Besides, in this chapter, as well as in the seventh, a solemn crisis destroys the fourth kingdom, and introduces a fifth and heavenly one. *Here*, a mystic "stone" smites the image on its feet, and grinds the whole to powder (see ver. 44 and 45); and *there* the judgment sits, and the Son of Man comes with the clouds of heaven. The millennium in both cases is the grand result. Manifestly, then, the four great beasts, in the vision of the seventh chapter, set forth the same four great *kingdoms* that are seen in this symbolic image of the second. In both chapters the rise of four grand, universal empires is presented. Let us now return to Dan. 7.

3. Can we ascertain anything further as to these four empires? Certainly. We can ascertain what empires they are which are typified by these four great beasts. We desire to show this on Scripture authority alone. We have proof, in the first place, that the first and lion-like beast meant the Babylonian or Chaldean empire. We have seen that Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar expressly, "Thou art this head of gold." He said to him, "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.*" This golden head was the first of the four kingdoms. The sovereignty of the kingdom was concentrated in the person of Nebuchadnezzar. He was monarch over the empire of Babylon. (See Dan. 1: 1) So that

we have the plainest proof as to what is meant by the lion, or lion-like beast, the first of the four beasts in the vision before us.

Now, here began "the times of the Gentiles." In ch. 1 of this prophetic book we read, that "Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came unto Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into his hand. In 2 Kings 24 and 25 we have special record of no less than three several successful expeditions against Jerusalem by this same Nebuchadnezzar. The last was the complete and decisive one. Since then Israel has been subject to Gentile sway. Its kings have been but vassals. The nation has been tributary to, and dependent on, the will of successive Gentile powers. These times of Gentile dominion, we repeat it, are the times of the Gentiles."

4. But what kingdom does the second or bear-like beast symbolize? The fifth chapter of this book supplies an answer. Belshazzar succeeded Nebuchadnezzar in the kingdom of Babylon. He made a sacrilegious and impious feast to a thousand of his lords. A mysterious hand appeared, and wrote upon the wall those solemn words, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin." Now the interpretation of one of these words contains the very information we require. The meaning of the concluding word was thus given to Belshazzar by Daniel: "Peres; *Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.*" The *Medo-Persian* kingdom, then, was to succeed that of the Chaldeans. And so the event proved; for we read, in verses 30, 31, that "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. *And Darius the Median took the kingdom.*" This is most plain and conclusive. We are not left to conjectures, — nor even to the testimony of profane history. The second great Gentile empire was that of the Medes and Persians.

To this Gentile power also Israel was subject and tributary. Darius appointed Daniel to be chief governor in the kingdom. From the Book of Esther, too, we know that on one occasion King Ahasuerus was induced to decree the destruction of the whole Jewish people. He too was a Medo-Persian monarch, as the last chapter of Esther, as well as other portions of the book, distinctly shows. Then in Ezra 1, etc., we read much both of "Cyrus king of Persia," and of "Artaxerxes king of Persia," and we learn how thoroughly subject to their power, for good or evil, the Jewish nation continued. The "times of the Gentiles" were still fulfilling their slow and — to the Jews — most dreary course.

5. But what is the third kingdom — the leopard-like one? The eighth of Daniel solves this question also. The prophet saw a vision of a ram having two horns, which was at last destroyed by a he-goat, having on its head a "notable horn." The he-goat then "waxed very great; and when he was strong the great horn was broken, and for it came up four notable ones towards the four winds of heaven." The meaning of these two symbols is stated in verses 20, 21: "The ram which thou sawest, having two horns, are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king." So that it was the *Grecian* he-goat which destroyed and seized upon the power of the Medo-Persian ram. The Grecian, then, is manifestly the third or leopard-like kingdom. This also we are thus enabled to assert, on the express testimony of Scripture itself.

We may notice also here, that this third beast had four heads: "The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given unto it." (ver. 6.) We have seen in Dan. 8 that this beast is

Grecia, set forth in that chapter as a he-goat, having first a great and notable horn, which represented the first king, and that then, "for it came up four notable ones, towards the four winds of heaven." The explanation of this is given in verse 22, as follows: "Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power." The fulfilment of this prophecy is a well-known historic fact. The "first king" here mentioned is evidently Alexander the Great. He founded the mighty but short-lived empire of Greece. On his death, the empire was seized upon, and divided into four kingdoms, by those who are known as "the four successors of Alexander." Much information is given us as to all this in Dan. 11. We have there, on the prophetic page, a minute history of those Grecian times — a striking proof, we may observe of its Divine inspiration.

But during the days of this empire also, the Jewish nation was subject and tributary. The times of the Gentiles were still in progress. There were, indeed, seasons of partial mitigation of their sufferings vouchsafed ever and anon, but even the circumstances connected with such temporary and partial relief prove the enslaved state in which the Jews continued. Fresh and successful attacks upon their country and their capital generally resulted. In Dan. 11 we have mention of more than one such devastation. In ver. 16, we read of one of the successors of Alexander, "He shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed." This "glorious land" was, doubtless, Palestine. Then in verses 28-33 we have reference to another invasion. It is said, they should "pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and place the abomination that maketh desolate." Whether this should be understood of Antiochus, or of the Romans, I will not seek now to determine. The character of the transaction predicted is plain. Both Antiochus and the Romans so acted. The Apocryphal Books of the Maccabees, which we may receive as authentic history, describe at length the Jewish sufferings under Antiochus. Though Alexander the Great was no more, and though his empire had been divided, still the Jews were a degraded and suffering people. They at last sought the alliance of the Romans, purposely to strengthen themselves against those who successively held the reins of power after Alexander. This alliance with the Romans doubtless prepared the way for that subjugation to the Roman yoke under which we find them when our blessed Lord appeared. Thus, from age to age, they fell under Gentile power, fulfilling the prophetic word, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him."

6. What empire the fourth symbolic beast denotes has been anticipated. It was the *Roman* empire. The Chaldean, or Babylonian, was succeeded by the Medo-Persian, the Medo-Persian by the Grecian, and the Grecian by the Roman. These are the four great Gentile powers. I believe no author worthy of any regard has doubted that *Rome* is intended by the fourth beast. There were to be *only four such* empires, and the three first we have ascertained from the Scripture itself. The fourth was to be brought to a full end only by the judgment which would establish the universal and everlasting kingdom of Messiah. Rome has so far fulfilled the predicted course of the fourth beast — fulfilled it with marvellous distinctness — and no other empire has done so. The whole description of this beast "with great iron teeth," and of the "iron legs" of the great image, points unmistakably to the proverbially "iron rule" and "iron yoke" of the Romans. Further, this beast, as described by John, in Rev. 13 and 17, had "seven heads," as well as the ten horns that are mentioned here. These seven heads were explained as denoting "seven kings," or governments; of which it was said, "five are fallen, one is, and the other is not yet come." This seems

manifestly to allude to the seven successive forms of Roman government, the first five of which even heathen historians have enumerated as having taken place, even specifying their distinctive characters. Those seven heads are said in Rev. 17: 9 to have also denoted "seven mountains on which the woman sitteth." This, too, points to Rome. Rome has been known for ages as "the seven-hilled city." Besides, in Luke 2, the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus, is acknowledged by an inspired pen as being the, head of the empire of the world: "There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." This should be decisive. There were to be *but four such* empires: three of them have been previously identified, and here a fourth is recognised of God as being in that supreme position. The Roman empire, therefore, is the fourth and last.

7. We know that it may be objected, that this empire has long since passed away, whereas the one seen by Daniel is to exist in power at the period of the still future judgment. But this apparent difficulty actually increases the amount of evidence that it is the empire of Rome which is meant. Both Daniel and John gave information, as to the fourth empire, of this precise nature. Daniel says, "And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay and part of iron, *the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron*, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay." Now this is just what has taken place as to the once compactly united Roman empire. It has been "divided," but still "there is in it of the strength of the iron." In this sense, the Roman empire still exists: no longer indeed as one undivided whole, but in broken and fragmentary parts. Most of the strong nations of Europe are but broken portions of the old Roman empire. These fragments will, at the time of the end, we believe, be reunited under a revived, or *eighth* headship. In this way will the prediction of Rome's final doom have its full accomplishment.

There is, however, a further feature of this "divided" state pointed out by Daniel. "And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the day of these things shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom," etc. (See Dan. 2: 40-45.) What is meant by the words, "They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men, but they shall not cleave one to another"? Is it not this — that all the attempts that are being made to blend, and fuse, and harmonize the conflicting parties that are occupied with political affairs, will fail? — that the absolute and the popular wills will not concur? — that the "reactionary," and "revolutionary," elements will not really and permanently unite? — any more than one can fuse or weld together the iron and the miry clay. Does not this singular and yet striking imagery teach us, that under the kingdom of the God of heaven alone will jarring elements and conflicting passions wage war no more? Indeed, already many despotic European powers seemed resolved to make no further trial of the mixed, or "constitutional," mode of government. *They* at least seem resolved not to mingle with the miry clay. Though politics be not our sphere, as certainly, dear friends, they are not; yet we may look on, and endeavour to view all surrounding things in the light that this sure word of prophecy throws upon them. And such I deem to be the lesson specially needful to be learnt by Christians with reference to the political character of our own times. We seem to have lived in the special period when the despotic powers have been considering how they might "mingle themselves with the seed of men," and in many cases they have attempted it. All possible schemes to settle and give quietness to that which judgment must

shortly end are, or have been, attempted. The *mixing* and *mingling* system has recently been specially resorted to. But even it will fail. The end will be, "In the days of these kings, the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom." That is what Daniel goes on immediately to declare.

In the Revelation too, the present state of the Roman empire is, we believe, pointed out. "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition." (See Rev. 18: 8.) The Roman empire "was," but now "it is not;" yet it "shall ascend" once more. it was one powerful whole, but now it is divided — as an empire it "is not;" yet the *materials* still exist, and they apparently shall be reunited in the crisis which hastens on — re-united only to be judged. Again, we read, "The beast which thou sawest, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." (See ver. 11) When ascended, he will be the "eighth," that is, under his eighth "head," or form of government. Still he "is of the seven," for though newly ascended to power, it is only an old and previous form of power revived. As to the special form of power, it is one of the seven brought into re-existence; but as to its actual appearance, it is an "eighth," or new headship over the empire.

8. This brings us to the concluding portion of the prophetic history of this fourth beast. The ten toes of the image, we have said, are ten kings. This interpretation is certified by Dan. 7: 24, "The ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise." And further, by Rev. 17: 12, "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." Now these kings seem to receive power just for "one hour," or "one day," (see next chapter ver. 8,) at the time of the end. They arise just at the period when Babylon is to fall. They receive power, in the providential dispensations of God, for that special purpose, to destroy Babylon. Here comes in the event we were considering when last together. The mystic woman, called also Babylon, had ruled the empire during its broken and disorganized state. Rome, Papal and ecclesiastical, arose out of the ruins of Rome Pagan and Secular. When Rome Secular is to revive, Rome Papal and Ecclesiastical shall disappear. When the beast has thrown the woman from off its back, then shall it arise once more, and stand upon its brazen feet, in more than human — in Satanic power. But the ten kings will be the agents of Babylon's destruction. The ten kings, we believe, do not yet exist. They are still future. We do not believe that ten broken divisions of the empire — ten kingdoms said to have been in existence for many centuries — were intended by these "ten horns." They grew *on one of the heads* - the eighth we believe — of the beast; they were not portions of its divided *body*. Besides, they have power for "one hour" only, that is, for a very short period — and that just at the period of the final crisis.

9. But another "horn" still, an eleventh horn, is to arise "after" the ten. And very solemn and specific is the information given as to this eleventh horn. "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." We submit that this eleventh horn

denotes a person, a single individual, *a king*. A variety of reasons conspire to prove that the common notion, a notion of modern days only, cannot be the correct one. This little horn "prevailed against the saints till 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." Now Popery, specially presented to us in the symbol of Babylon the Great, *will not continue till then*. The ten horns will destroy the woman. But, this blasphemous horn falls only when the judgment sits, and the books are opened. Again, the horn we are now contemplating arose "after" the ten. Now the ten did not arise till Babylon the Great had well nigh finished her long career of crime and blood. How, then, can the horn that came up *after them* be Babylon? Further, this eleventh horn is to subdue three of the ten; it is indeed to destroy them, for it is said, that "before it were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots." Now Babylon was destroyed before this; for in Rev. 17 we find that *the ten* horns were to destroy her; consequently, these three had not then fallen. Further still; is there not a manifest difference of *character* between *a woman* on the back of the beast, and *a horn* growing out of its head? We submit, therefore, that this horn is not Popery, but a political potentate of most blasphemous pretensions, and of Satanic energy. He is, in fact, THE ANTICHRIST. It is of him, we believe, that this same prophet Daniel speaks in ch. 11. (Read Dan. 11: 36-45.) Then compare with both 2 Thess. 2: 3-12. In Dan. 11: 36, we read of him thus: "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished; for that that is determined shall be done." This "king," then, shall "prosper till the indignation" of God against Daniel's people, the Jews, "shall be accomplished," which will be only when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, and when "Jacob shall be delivered out of" the last and unequalled "time of trouble." That time of trouble is predicted, indeed, in this very prophecy, in the plainest terms: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people, and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." See the first verse of the twelfth chapter. Now, in the verses that occur between the passages we have now quoted, we read, that this blasphemous king "shall enter into the glorious land," that is, into Palestine, and that then "he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."* This "glorious holy mountain" is manifestly Mount Zion in Palestine, on which the earthly, literal city of Jerusalem is erected. Jerusalem is the city "between the two seas;" that is, between the Mediterranean, or "Great" Sea on the west, and the "Dead Sea" on the east. The map of Palestine will make this plain. Now there, after a course of military conquests over "many countries," will this wicked king "plant the tabernacles of his palace;" and there will "he come to his end; and none shall help him." This is all quite distinct and different from the end of Popery — of Babylon the Great. Of this king we further read in this same prophecy, "And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him; and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries; and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go forth with great

fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many." Then immediately follows the verse already quoted as to the place where he will plant the tabernacles of his palace, and where he will meet his doom. Now all this narration of military expedition and progress is something completely different from an unchaste female sitting on the beast, and from the intoxications of her luxuriant cup. Here it is plainly an individual commander, whose single will is absolute, and whose armies rush on from country to country, till they reach their final rendezvous, and their end overtakes them there.

*[This is *not* said of the wilful king of verse 36, but of the king of the north, the Assyrian of prophecy, who comes against the Antichrist that reigns in Judea, and whose description follows from verses 40-45. The lecturer confounds with the apostate king of Jerusalem his great northern foe. — ED.]

It is of this very "king" that Paul speaks in 2 Thessalonians 2: 4. He seems to quote from Daniel almost *verbatim*. Daniel here says, "The king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods;" and then that, having "entered into the glorious land" of Palestine, "he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain." And Paul says, "And that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; *who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*" In both these places we have the two great marks, opposition against all that is called God, and the planting of his throne on the scene of the Jewish temple, in the glorious holy mountain. Paul's expression is, "*That man who opposeth and exalteth,*" etc. What man is it who acts so? Plainly the king that Daniel had spoken of, who would so exalt and oppose himself. The reference to Daniel seems beyond doubt.

Now Paul gives us the following order of events. The "mystery of iniquity," or, as we believe, the "mystery, Babylon the Great," is to work until the time when the man of sin shall be revealed. Then comes a permitted judicial delusion, upon all those who "believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness;" and thus they fall under the power of this wicked one. Then the personal advent of the Lord closes the whole.

Now, let us observe, my brethren, how all this bears upon the revelation given us as to the "little horn," in the chapter specially before us this evening. (Dan. 7) "In this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." (See ver. 8.) Then in ver. 11, "I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake; I beheld even till the beast was slain." Again in verse 20, "even that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows." And finally, and specially, verse 25, "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," etc. This is all of the same blasphemous character that both Dan. 11 and 2 Thess. 2 describe. The judgment of the great day here also winds up the whole.

10. We must say a few words as to two or three other particulars connected with this man of sin, before we pass on to the concluding scene.

First, there will be an awful, general delusion, judicially permitted of God to come upon the nations that compose the body of the "beast." In 2 Thess. 2 this is put most solemnly: "For this cause shall God send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Heretofore God has sent them the message of strong consolation and of richest grace, that they all might be saved; but *then* — oh, dreadful, appalling prospect for all obstinate rejecters of the *Gospel!* — then will He "send them strong delusion to believe a lie, that they all might be damned." Oh, dreadful doom! Oh, terrific declaration of God's sure unerring word! Sinners, what mean you? Will you continue to rush onwards to destruction? Will you continue to slight God's message of love, regardless of your own salvation? Now is God beseeching you to be saved; but if you make light of the invitations of His grace, you know not how soon you may be permitted to fall under "strong delusion," which ends in utter perdition.

We must give one other scripture as to this judicial "strong delusion." In Rev. 16 we have, connected with the same crisis to which reference has been already frequently made, the following passage: "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together unto a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Now here is plainly predicted a dread, and, apparently, almost universal delusion. It issues forth specially from three sources; from the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. What mean these symbols? In Rev. 12 and 20 the "dragon" is expressly said to be "the Devil and Satan." The first delusion therefore is *diabolical*. The "beast" is the same "fourth beast" that has already been described. The second delusion, then, would appear to be *political*. The "false prophet" is certainly the second, or two-horned beast of Rev. 13. Compare Rev. 13: 14, with Rev. 19: 20, and no doubt will remain. Whatever may be denoted by this two-horned beast of Rev. 13 as seen there, it seems clear that, at the time of the crisis and decisive battle, this "false prophet" will be the religious agency of the beast, in its last state. So that the third delusion appertains specially to religion. It is an agency that "causes the world to worship" the beast. (See Rev. 13: 12.) Here then is a threefold delusion; diabolical, political, and religious. How much of the *spirit* of these three delusions may be perceived working around us even in the present day! The prime actors themselves may not as yet have come upon the stage, but how much is there of their nature already in the world! They will surely come, ere long, and gather the deceived, deluded nations together, to the battle of the great day of God Almighty!

We must not omit to notice the solemn warning that is inserted abruptly in the middle of this prophetic scene: "Behold, I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." This warning actually breaks out in the midst of the narration. The Spirit says, "Watch! Be ready specially, when such a time shall come. Be ready then for him who shall appear in flaming fire!"

A second particular is this: The time of the full power of the antichrist is said to be "a time, times, and half a time." This is expressed both in Dan. 7: 25, and Dan. 12: 7. We have it, I believe, in other terms in several other places. By "a time, times, and half a time," is meant, I

apprehend, three and a half literal years. This period is yet future. It is a short and tremendous crisis, or the "time of trouble," the days of which shall be shortened for the elect's sake. "Times" always denotes literal years, I believe. In Dan. 4: 3 2, "*seven times* shall pass over thee," and in Dan. 11: 13 (margin), "at the *end of times, even years*" — in these cases, the term certainly means, not "prophetic" years, but literal years. In the cases before us also, we believe, the meaning is similar. If the little horn represents an individual person, it must be so; for no one will contend that an individual man will exist throughout three and a half "prophetic years," that is, years of years, or twelve hundred and sixty common years. Besides, those who profess to find so long a period in "a time, times, and a half," are compelled to make a double figure of the expression. They first say, "a *time* means a year," and then, "a *year* means a prophetic year." But, as we have seen, "times" does *not* mean "prophetic" years. So that this *doubling* of the figure is wholly unwarrantable, not to say absurd. The period of antichrist's full power, then, will be very short, and at the time of the final crisis. How soon may it not arrive!

Is it not at this period that Rev. 11: 1-13 has its fulfilment? The witnesses will be slain in "the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom, and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." This seems plainly to be Jerusalem. Jerusalem is spiritually called Sodom. (Isa. 1: 10) There, too, our Lord was crucified. For "three days and a half" these witnesses are to lie dead. May not this be the very period of the "time, times, and a half?" But this I will not seek to determine now.

Thirdly: The grand and special act of decisive judgment will take place around Jerusalem. The man of sin and the beast, the false prophet and the infatuated nations, will be gathered thither to the final conflict. This is a very important portion of prophetic testimony. Many scriptures tell of this last gathering of the nations of the earth around Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be the scene of the special act of the judgment of the great day. We repeat it, this gathering of the nations of the earth is matter of most prominent prophetic notice. Indeed, a whole host of events crowd together in connection with this great gathering of the nations.

We have already seen in Dan. 11 that the man of sin "enters into the glorious land," and seeks to establish himself and his forces "between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain."* We have seen, too, that the frog-like delusion gathers the nations together, "unto a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon." Now, there is quite reason to believe, that this Hebrew word means "mountain of Megiddo;" and *Megiddo* was a place a short distance northward of Jerusalem. The *mustering* then is to that place, but the final scene is around Jerusalem. In Joel we have this set forth in the most simple and express terms. "Behold, in those days and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there," etc. (Joel. 3: 1, 2. Read specially, also, ver. 9-17 of this chapter.) We must give a portion of the passage: "Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision." The valley of Jehoshaphat is said to be at the foot of the Mount of Olives, close to Jerusalem. This gathering of the nations is into that valley. And it is at the time when God "shall bring again the captivity of

Judah, and Jerusalem," not when that captivity commenced. The "day of the Lord" ends this grand and infatuated confederacy, and the millennium ensues.

*[It has been already seen that, while "the King" reigns in Jerusalem, the great leader of the north eastern confederation of nations will "enter into the glorious land," each perishing by like divine judgment. — Ed.]

Zephaniah, too, makes solemn reference to this gathering together of the nations, though he does not specify the locality to which they are gathered. In chap. 3: 8, 9, we read as follows: "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." Mark this scripture well. It is said, "THEN will I turn to the people a pure language," etc. WHEN? When will this general turning or conversion be? Plainly when this great gathering and judgment of the nations has taken place. THEN will the millennium commence, and not until then.

Zechariah speaks with exceeding clearness as to this gathering of the nations, which he expressly says shall be gathered "against Jerusalem to battle." Read Zech. 14 as a whole. It commences thus: "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee; for I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle," etc. But your attention has been called to this chapter in a previous lecture.

The crisis of the nations, then, will certainly take place around Jerusalem. The "beast" will perish there. Rome will perish at Jerusalem. Man's centre of unity and of metropolitan power will close its doings in presence of that city which God has ever pointed out as *his* elect centre of unity, and *his* sphere of metropolitan supremacy. Man has chosen Rome, but God hath chosen Jerusalem. Man's scheme will come to nought, but "the counsel of the Lord, it shall stand" for ever!

11. We may now see the character of these four great Gentile powers. They hold delegated power, but they use it as a wild beast uses its power, — they make a selfish and rapacious use of it, even unto the end. Unregenerate human nature will ever do so. God permitted, by providential arrangements, this power over the world to fall into the hands of these successive monarchies or empires. They all pervert and abuse it. As Israel had done with its power, so do the Gentiles with theirs. God will provide for himself a king, who shall rule in righteousness; and all the kingdoms of the earth, with all their glory, shall be brought beneath his sway.

12. We must notice here, however, a progressive deterioration in the character of this delegated power. This is indicated by the character of the metals enumerated, commencing with gold, and descending by gradations of silver, brass, iron, and even to the commixture of iron and clay.

We do not mean to give any opinion as to what is the best and most advantageous form of political power. This is entirely outside our province. Politics — worldly, secular politics — we

have not to meddle with. We have to thank God for the protection which *Caesar* affords us, and to render unto him quietly and submissively what he demands of us. We sojourn in Caesar's country, but we are not citizens of earth. Our citizenship is in heaven. We seek a country. Our home is the skies. All we have to do, therefore, is to provide things honest in the sight of all men, to thank God for the protection to life and property which the provision of secular government affords, to pay tribute as demanded, and to pray for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. Vengeance belongs to God. Power belongs to him. He giveth it to whomsoever he will. God's *secular servants* are responsible to him. But God's *sons* have a nobler calling than that of striving with the "potsherds of earth." Earthly turmoil befits not their high vocation. No; services of love and mercy, and non-resistance of evil, become the pardoned, washed, and freely adopted *sons* of God.

Still, we look at all that is around us, and judge of it according to God's revealed light. Nebuchadnezzar's power, then, whether best for the earth or not, was the highest and most complete form of power. His will was law, and he did whatsoever he pleased: he was "the head of gold." But the power of the Medo-Persian monarchs was plainly inferior — in degree, at least. When they had made a law, to it, while it remained a law, they themselves must submit; for "the law of the Medes and Persians altered not." Grecian power was still lower, as to its character. The silver was succeeded by *brass*. Then came the *iron*; and then *iron and clay*. But we must leave this subject for your investigation at leisure. We have just hinted at the spirit and meaning of these types, and must pass on quickly to the concluding scene.

13. And now, behold the issue of the whole! The great day of God Almighty is the consummation of the history of the four great Gentile powers. There is a sense in which even literal Babylon, and Persia, and Greece, are still existing. In connection with the judgment of the fourth beast, in this seventh of Daniel, we have the following parenthetic allusion to these three empires: "As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time." Chaldea, Persia, and Greece, were to exist after their power over the surrounding nations had been wrested from them. Thus *Persia* exists to this day. So does *Greece*. This, I believe, explains Dan. 2: 35: "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken in pieces together." The four kingdoms are included here as sharing in a common doom. Indeed, as has been observed, all the nations that descended from the posterity of Noah, as specially mentioned in the tenth of Genesis, are mentioned again, in either one scripture or another, as appearing on the scene at the period of the great judgment of the nations, and as meeting with judgment then. God knows how the nations have descended through all their generations. He knows the pedigree of all, however we may feel puzzled and entangled even by a casual glance thereat.

Behold, then, the end of all these things. Psalm. 2 thus shows. it: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron: thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Dan. 2 as we have seen, speaks of it thus: "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 And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." This is the stone that was set at nought by the builders. It will become the head stone of the corner. But alas for those on whom this stone shall fall! It will grind them to powder. The stone does not roll along, converting the image into its own substance. The stone is not *the Gospel*. The Gospel tells us that

this mystic stone *now*, while the day of salvation lasts, is a *foundation stone*, and that thereon poor sinners may safely build for eternity. But this stone has been raised to heaven, and will descend thence like the destructive thunderbolt, and awful will be the end of those on whom it falls. It will fall specially, however, upon the "feet and toes" of this great image. Then succeeds the kingdom of the God of heaven.

In the chapter specially before us, the judgment of the fourth beast is set forth in most solemn terms. The scene described is *like* that of the post-millennial judgment of the wicked described in Rev. 20, and by many it is supposed to be identical; but however common this misconception may be, it is obviously the execution of judgment *upon earth* that is described, and the transference of power from the hand of man to that of Christ. "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose 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; 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." What is the result here declared? It is the destruction of the horn, and of the beast; and the transference of the "kingdom, dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom *under the whole heaven*," into the hands of the Son of man, with all his saints. The judgment of his enemies is succeeded by the millennial kingdom of our Lord. Read carefully verses 13, 14, and 27. The millennium *cannot* have taken place before this judgment, for Antichrist is not destroyed till its session takes place. The kingdom succeeds the judgment, as is twice expressly declared in plainest terms.

Lastly, in Rev. 19: 11-21, this tremendous scene is set forth at length. Read the whole passage. Heaven is opened, and the King of kings and Lord of lords comes forth. He whose enemies once shed *his* blood, now "treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." The apostle proceeds to say, "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." Here, again, is the great gathering of the nations. The beast is there, and the false prophet which wrought miracles before him. They are both cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. The exact meaning of these terrible expressions I do not attempt to determine. The character of them is solemnly plain. It is judgment and destruction. So ends "eternal Rome." The devil is then bound, and his delusive power is restrained for a thousand years. A millennium of blessing ensues. Read the very next verses of the Revelation.

This crisis is the hour of Israel's deliverance. In other lectures this has been seen. The Gentile powers having run their course, and the times of the Gentiles being thus fulfilled, the times of Jewish restoration, or, to use the language of the third of Acts, "of the restitution of all things," will come.

Such is the character, and such the doom of the great Gentile powers. Such the consummation of the times of the Gentiles. We have not been able to look fully at particulars. An outline only — perhaps even more imperfect than I am aware of — has been presented.

But the principles and elements which will produce the crisis, and which are even now at work, have been set before you. I commend the subject to your most serious attention. We need the light of the "word of prophecy" to keep us; for delusions are around us, resembling those of the three unclean spirits, who in the crisis shall gather the kings of the earth to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. The warning is now emphatic. "Behold, I come as a thief: blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." T. S.