

World Dominion - Whose Will it Be?

The Times of the Gentiles

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There are two worldwide kingdoms ahead of us, and we may be closer to them than we think we are. The first will be the kingdom of Antichrist, set up by man's philosophy and man's psychology. It will deify human beings and attempt to prove that they can unite and bring about a world of order, peace, and equality without God.

Because God instituted moral absolutes to govern man, man claims that Utopia can come only through the rejection of these absolutes. It is this kingdom that the Lord Jesus will destroy at His coming. All of man's supposed superiority will lie in the ashes and dust of the fallen empires which will be leveled by the Stone that smashes the image and grinds it to powder.

Gentiles have not done a very good job of running the world. We can see the beginning of this in the book of Daniel, dating way back to around 600 B.C. You and I have moved down pretty close to the end of Gentile rule, to a day when the Lord Jesus Christ will come forward and take the scepter of world dominion back into His own hands. The story of the "times of the Gentiles" is remarkably told in the chapter before us.

And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to show the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack [Aramaic], O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation. The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me.... (Daniel 2:1-5)

Because of this translation, the impression has been given that the king had forgotten his dream and could not recall it. That, of course, is not true. He did know what his dream was. What he said is better translated "The word is gone forth from me," or putting it another way, "The word from me is sure." The king recognized that his wise men were hedging, they were stalling for time. He said in effect, "I want you to know that the thing that I've said is *sure*, my decision is firm. I do not intend to tell you the dream; I intend for you to tell *me* the dream and its meaning." Of course he knew what his dream was.

... If ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. But if ye show the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore show me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation of it. The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can show me the interpretation thereof. (Daniel 2:5-9)

You will recall the story of how Daniel now intervenes and God gives to him the dream and the interpretation of it. I think that Daniel asked God to let him dream the dream so he would know

exactly what it was and that God actually caused him to dream the dream. Then he gets an audience with King Nebuchadnezzar, and here is his interpretation:

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. 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 threshingfloors; 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. 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: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. 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. (Daniel 2:31-45)

May I say at the outset that the subject before us about “the times of the Gentiles” is not an invention of a propagandist or a monger of sensationalism. The subject may sound sensational, but it is actually that which our Lord Himself gave. In the Gospel of Luke our Lord used that expression in language like this:

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 21:24)

The “times of the Gentiles” happens to be a period of time that you can pinpoint. You can identify the beginning of it, and you can project the ending of it – which is still yonder in the future. There are other expressions used in Scripture that are not synonymous to this at all, and we need to be very careful.

For instance, Paul spoke to the Roman Christians about the *fullness* of the Gentiles.

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. (Romans 11:25)

Now the *fullness* of the Gentiles is that period when God is calling out from among the Gentiles a people to His name. In Acts 15 we read that James got up before the early church which was one hundred percent Jewish, and in substance he said to them, “Men and brethren, the prophets speak of the fact that God is going to take out of the Gentiles a people to His name. And after that, He will return and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down. Then all the Gentiles will call upon Him.”

Now that time which is labeled here “the fulness of the Gentiles” is the period in which you and I are now living. It will end with the Rapture of the church.

Now you can see that the *fullness* of the Gentiles differs from the *times* of the Gentiles, although they run concurrently part of the way. The *fullness* of the Gentiles ends at the Rapture; the *times* of the Gentiles continues on until Christ returns to the earth to establish His kingdom.

You will notice that our Lord linked the *times* of the Gentiles with the city of Jerusalem. He said,

... And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. (Luke 21:24)

In other words, the period that is labeled the times of the Gentiles is the period in which Jerusalem is trampled underfoot by the Gentiles.

The beginning of the times of the Gentiles is something you can pinpoint in history. Actually, I do not think this is even a debatable point anymore in the study of prophecy. It began with Nebuchadnezzar. He is the first one to lay siege to Jerusalem and to destroy it after David had become king.

Nebuchadnezzar’s invasion was several hundred years after David’s reign, but you’ll notice that Egypt is not included in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar as one of the world empires, and yet Egypt had been a great world empire.

Neither was the Assyrian empire included, though Assyria did lay siege to Jerusalem around 700 B.C. Isaiah 37 records God’s deliverance of Judah, not permitting even one arrow of the Assyrian army to be shot into the city. God would not allow Assyria to take Jerusalem – He was holding them out to give His people a full opportunity to return to Him.

You see, when David had been king over Israel, God had said to him, “I’m going to give you an *everlasting* kingdom.” He also said to David, “It will be a *worldwide* kingdom, not just over Palestine but over this entire earth.” And you will find that the psalmists picked up this promise and that the prophets repeatedly spoke of it. For instance, let me direct your attention to only one Scripture, Isaiah 2:1-3, so you may see that this kingdom which the prophets talked about was not just confined to Palestine but that it was to be worldwide.

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills....

The kingdom shall be established in the top of the “mountains,” meaning earthly kingdoms, and shall be exalted above the “hills,” referring to the little nations.

... and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways....

Now that prophecy can be multiplied, not only once, twice, or three times, but I believe that I could give you five hundred prophecies from the Old Testament concerning that kingdom which is yet to be established upon this earth – universal and everlasting. That kingdom was represented by the scepter of David, and God kept telling those who followed in David’s line that if they continued in sin He would take that scepter away from them, away from them temporarily until the times of the Gentiles would be fulfilled. However, they did not listen to the prophets whom God sent to them, and our Lord Jesus reminded the Jews of His day of that fact. And so the day came when God took the scepter out of the hands of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and He placed it into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He took the scepter of worldwide rulership and put it into Gentile hands. My friend, that was well over twenty-five hundred years ago, and that scepter today is still in the hands of the Gentiles.

The scepter represents world rulership, if you please. And this man Nebuchadnezzar found himself, overnight, a world ruler. He had defeated Necho, king of Egypt, and then was warring yonder in the delta of the Nile and was overcoming it – everything fell before him – when news came to him of the death of his father, Nabopolassar, which made this man Nebuchadnezzar the undisputed ruler of the world. Since he had overcome everything, a little tribal deity up in Judah by the name of Jehovah didn’t amount to very much, he thought, so he could overcome there also. Who was to stand in his way?

When Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon, he could look over that great city that boasted a civilization second to none. To this day we have not presented to the world a civilization any greater than the Babylonian. And there came a question into his mind and to his heart about the future: *Here all of a sudden I find myself a world ruler. In my hand has been placed a scepter. It has come from somewhere. Who will it go to and what will happen to it? What will be the final outcome?* Do you know that after about twenty-five hundred or three thousand years of human history since Nebuchadnezzar, the world is still wondering about that? Well, we have the answer in this image.

So God spoke to this king through a dream one night. He answered his questions to let him know the future and also to let him know that these despised people whom he had brought into captivity were still His *chosen* people. It would be one of them who would be the instrument to reveal to the king the vision and the interpretation of it.

Now the man had a dream. It was a dream that he could certainly recall. Don’t ever think for one moment that Nebuchadnezzar would have forgotten *this* dream! He saw an image, tremendous and awesome. God spoke to him in the kind of language he understood – Babylon was the very fountainhead of all idolatry. I suppose that Babylon had as many idolatrous images

as Memphis in Egypt had. In fact, all idolatry can be traced back to the Tower of Babel and this city of Babylon. You can see that God communicated to him by way of an image, a language he understood.

Nebuchadnezzar wondered about this great image that did nothing but just stand before him. There was no movement at all. It just stood there in its brightness – multicolored, polychrome, a multi-metallic image. He'd seen nothing like it. It was stupendous and awe inspiring. It was *fierce* in its countenance. It was that which would incite terror!

The king wondered about it and was so troubled he summoned his cabinet – but he wanted to make sure he would get accurate information. I think he said to himself, *I've been suspecting these wise men of getting free board here; they're just hangers on; they've just been giving me a lot of malarkey. I'm going to find out whether they're genuine or not.* When they came and stood before him, he said, “I had a dream, and I want you to know it's an important dream – you can be sure of that! I want you to tell me what the dream is, and then I want you to give me the interpretation of it.” These wise men were the brain trust of Babylon. Because they couldn't come up with the answer, do not think that these men did not represent the best brains of the day, for they did. They said, “We can tell you the interpretation if you'll tell us the dream, but we don't know what the dream is.”

And Nebuchadnezzar said, “You'll have to tell me the dream. Because I'm tremendously concerned about it, I'll not know that your interpretation is valid unless you can tell me the dream.”

For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. (Daniel 2:12)

This was Satan's effort, of course, to destroy Daniel because he had already become a conspicuous man, a man of purpose in that court. Daniel had been faithful to God, and the devil wanted to destroy him.

When word is brought to Daniel that all of the wise men are to be destroyed unless the dream can be given, this man Daniel with real confidence and faith in God asks for an audience with the king. When he is ushered into Nebuchadnezzar's presence, he says, “Just give me time and we'll give you the interpretation.” The king says, “All right, if you think you can do it, young man, I'll give you the opportunity. I admire your spunk. If you feel that you can bring forth the dream, I'll be willing to wait.” So Daniel goes and calls his three friends together, and they have a prayer meeting. I'll bet you this is the greatest prayer meeting ever to be held in the city of Babylon. They pray fervently that night. They lay hold of God that night, and God gives to Daniel in a night vision the dream and the interpretation of it. Then Daniel asks for another audience with Nebuchadnezzar, and the captain of the guard quickly ushers him in to the king. Daniel says in substance to the king, “I'm going to give you the dream and I'm going to give you the interpretation. But I want you to understand one thing: It's not because of anything in me. Don't give me credit for it. I want you to know that there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets.”

By the way, I personally think that Nebuchadnezzar came to know that there is a God in heaven and became a converted man through this experience. I expect some day to meet him on Hallelujah Boulevard in heaven.

Now Daniel describes the dream, “You saw in your dream a great image.” The minute he says that, I think Nebuchadnezzar's eyes light up. He might have been skeptical at first as he looked down on this young man: *He's rather presumptuous to think he can do a thing like this!*

But the minute Daniel said to him, “You saw in your dream a great *image*,” I think Nebuchadnezzar moved to the edge of his throne and said, “Go on, young man. You’re on the right track.”

Then Daniel continues, “You saw a great image of splendor. It was frightful to look upon. That image just stood there. It had a head of gold. It had chest and arms of silver. It had an abdomen and thighs of brass. It had legs of iron and feet of iron and miry clay.”

Nebuchadnezzar says, “You’re right. That’s what I saw. That was my dream.”

“And then you saw a *stone* cut out without hands. You saw it smite the image on the feet, and it pulverized it.”

“That’s right. That’s what happened.”

“Now I’ll give you the interpretation of it.” Daniel said first to him, “Thou, O king ... thou art this head of gold.” Then in substance he said, “What you have just seen, Nebuchadnezzar, is what God is going to do in the latter days, and God has given you the entire briefing of future rule. He set before you the course of Gentile domination down to the very end of Gentile world history.”

Our Lord said, “... Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24). For twenty-five hundred years the armies of these nations mentioned here, and others, have marched through Jerusalem. To me, one of the most thrilling things is this: When the United Nations made the Jewish population of Israel a nation, the Jews wanted above everything else the ancient city of Jerusalem. I held my breath when the United Nations was making that decision, and up to that time Russia and the United States hadn’t agreed on anything in the United Nations, but they agreed they’d keep Jerusalem an *international* city. Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. Over there today Jerusalem is not in the hands of the little nation of Israel. They have only the new city; the old city is in the hands of the Arabs. Interesting, isn’t it, my beloved, when you have the Word of God before you which has made this so crystal clear.

Now the kingdoms represented by the metals of the image are clearly identified. We do not have to speculate. Before we finish reading the book of Daniel we find that God actually names the first three kingdoms: Babylon; Media-Persia; Greece; and He so well describes the fourth kingdom as to leave no doubt that it is the Roman Empire.

Now I’m not going into details concerning these empires other than to say that historically each empire has followed the other exactly as God said it would, each one becoming a little stronger and a little larger than the other, but also each becoming a little inferior to the one that preceded it.

This man Nebuchadnezzar was an *absolute* monarch in the Babylonian Empire. He never asked anybody, not even his wife, about anything. He never shared rulership with anyone. When this man said, “Peace,” there was peace in the world because he said it. A little bird didn’t even chirp without his permission. (But do you want that kind of peace?)

After him came that oriental empire that dazzled the world, the Media-Persian Empire with all of its riches and oriental splendor. When Xerxes, lusting for power, moved toward the West, God stopped him at Thermopylae. The Greeks said the “gods” helped them there. But it wasn’t gods (plural), it was singular – God did help the Greeks, in that He stopped the invading Media-Persian Empire. Three hundred ships were destroyed, and Xerxes lost a million men in that expedition.

Then God took the scepter of world dominion out of the hand of oriental rulers and passed it to Greece, placing it in the hands of the young man, Alexander the Great, who in just a brief span

of eleven years conquered the world. But Greece couldn't hold it. There was a division after the death of Alexander at the age of thirty-two, and the empire was divided among his four generals. Then the scepter was passed to Rome, and Rome ruled.

The Media-Persian Empire had ruled from the Hellespont to the coral strands of India, from the top of the Euphrates down to the Persian Gulf, but now Rome comes on the scene and conquers the then-known world. All the way from the rockbound coast of Scotland to the burning sands of the Sahara Desert, all the way from the Rock of Gibraltar to the Euphrates River, the great Roman Empire ruled. It is the fourth and the last.

Now, my friend, although the boundaries widened, as you move down in history you see there is deterioration from one empire to the next empire. How different it is from man's outline of history! H. G. Wells wrote a book years ago entitled *The Outline of History*. He traced the history of man all the way up from the very beginning, from the Paleozoic to the Paleolithic to the Neolithic ages and up. It is onward and upward forever, bigger and better. That's the story of man according to H. G. Wells. But the interesting thing is, this man lived to see World War II, and before he died he said this: "The world has come to the end of its tether, and civilization has come to an end. We're standing on the brink, and we'll fall over one of these days." It doesn't sound like we're getting bigger and better. God said there would be no improvement.

God said there would be deterioration, and there is deterioration in four different aspects, as graphically depicted by the image. First of all, there's deterioration in the *worth* of the metals. Gold is certainly more valuable than iron, and it's gold to silver to brass to iron and then to clay.

Then there's deterioration in *position*. Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold, and certainly the head occupies a more honored position than the foot occupies. There is deterioration here according to the clear-cut statement of Scripture: "After thee shall arise another kingdom *inferior* to thee." God makes it clear that each one in succession was to be inferior to the other.

Then there's something that Tregelles, the great Hebrew scholar, called attention to, and if you have studied chemistry – even one year of chemistry – you will recognize this: Even the *specific gravity* of these metals becomes less as you move down. All the way from the head of gold down to the feet of iron and clay there is deterioration.

Now there's something else that we must call to your attention here in conclusion which is very important. We are told that when Daniel appeared before king Nebuchadnezzar he said,

But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.... (Daniel 2:28)

Note the expression "in the latter days," which has a very specific meaning. Those of you who are students of Scripture, and especially of prophecy, will recognize that it is an expression that occurs again and again in the Old Testament. You ought never to confuse the last days of Israel with the last days of the church. They're not the same at all. And the mentioning of the last days of Israel began way back, long before the people became a nation. When old Jacob was on his deathbed he called his twelve boys to come around him, and he made a prophecy concerning them, and here's what we're told in Genesis 49:1: "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days" – the last days, in the latter times. You will find that the prophets all looked down the centuries to the *last* days. These last days concern the nation Israel.

Now what are these last days, these latter times, that God is talking about? Well, the fourth kingdom takes place, of course, in the latter days. That fourth kingdom is Rome. Now, my

friend, I want you to look at something that is without doubt one of the most amazing things in the prophetic Word. No man could have guessed like this. There are only *four* worldwide kingdoms represented by these four different metals. There is first of all the head of gold, specifically stated to be Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2:38. There are the chest and the arms of silver, clearly identified as Media-Persia, and the brass abdomen and thighs of Greece, the Graeco-Macedonian Empire. Then there are the legs of iron with feet of iron and clay, the Roman Empire, and there are no more kingdoms after that. Rome is the last worldwide kingdom.

Now will you notice, Rome came to a dissolution about the fourth century A.D. It was in the fifth century that the barbarian hordes poured into the Roman Empire, and my ancestors and maybe yours were in those barbarian hordes. It's awful to think that you and I had barbarian ancestors, but we did. The barbarians poured into that empire. It fell apart because it was rotten to the core. It was a dictatorship, the like of which the world had never seen. Edward Gibbon, in his *Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, has written:

The empire of the Romans filled the world, and when the empire fell into the hands of a single person, the world became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies. To resist was fatal and it was impossible to fly.

Robert Culver who more recently has written a brilliant book on Daniel says,

Two millennia ago, Rome gave the world the ecumenical unity which the League of Nations and the United Nations organizations have sought to revive in our time. The modern attempts are not original at all (as many of our contemporaries suppose), but are revivals of the ancient Roman ideal which never since the time of Augustus Caesar has been wholly lost.

Rome did not end. Rome fell apart, that's all, just came loose at the seams. It never died. Rome lived on and Rome lives today in the broken fragments of many countries of Western Europe. Isn't it interesting that when Rome fell apart the barbarian hordes poured in? Attila the Hun sacked Rome, then looked about and was so awestruck by what he saw and realized he could not handle, that he took his army and left the city. There arose no *fifth* empire, and there hasn't for fifteen hundred years been a world empire. That's something to think about.

In the seventh century, out of the East came the Arab hordes – they came from both East and West under the crescent – Moslems, if you please, fanatics to the core and with a sword to convert the world. They almost destroyed the civilization of Western Europe at that time, what little there was. But *they built no empire*. The crescent of the Moslems was lifted over Constantinople, the capital of the eastern branch of the Roman Empire, and you would have expected one of the caliphs to ascend the throne of the Caesars, but none ascended it.

Tartars and Turks moved through Asia. Genghis Khan, Suleiman the Great – neither of them became a world ruler. Napoleon tried it, and on his way to Warsaw God stopped him with the weakest thing in the world, a snowflake. Bismarck, the iron chancellor of Germany, tried to put Western Europe together and revive the Roman Empire. He failed. William Hohenzollern tried, Hitler tried, and Mussolini tried. All failed.

I say to you, my beloved, there have been only *four* empires, and for fifteen hundred years the nations of Europe have been at each other's throats. There has been warring back and forth

among those nations that composed the Roman Empire, and as of this writing the revived Roman Empire is somewhere down in the feet of the image where there are ten toes.

Now don't attempt to identify the nations represented by the toes. I can't; no one can yet. But they will fall into place after the church is removed at the Rapture. I have a friend who is always trying to locate which is which, and I like to kid him about it and say, "You remind me of going into the nursery and playing with a little baby's toes – this little piggy went to market, this little piggy stayed home...." Although we cannot identify the nations that will compose the revived Roman Empire, at this point we are somewhere down in the time of the feet of the image. Notice again that there will be division. At the beginning there are two legs of iron and now there are ten toes representing division of empire. And they are made of clay and iron, the clay denoting weakness and iron denoting strength. You and I know that in Europe there are both today.

Do you know what Western Europe is waiting for at this hour? It waits for a man big enough and strong enough to come along and put Western Europe back together again, and they are making progress. Europe feels itself caught between two colossi, two great juggernauts – Russia on one side, the United States on the other – and the little nations of Europe are now wanting to get together. They've already come together; they have the Common Market. No longer do you have difficulty crossing over from Germany to France and from one country to another. Someone who had been in Europe this summer was telling me that it was just like going from one state to the other, lots easier than coming into California – nobody looks in your suitcase! They're breaking down the barriers. A brilliant young German said not long ago, "We are *European*." Will that be the name of the new nation that will come out of this? Western Europe *will* come back together, and we're told in the Word of God that this last empire will be headed up by the Antichrist, for he alone will bring it back together again. And he will accomplish it in the *last days*.

This will end the times of the Gentiles, for when it comes back together it will defy God again. Remember, this is the empire that crucified our Lord Jesus on the cross. This empire in the days of Caesar Augustus sent out a decree that the whole *world* should be taxed. Boy! That sounds familiar, doesn't it? Mary had to go down from Nazareth to Bethlehem, because she was of the house and lineage of David, in order to enroll for the taxation made by Rome. And Rome will defy our Lord; Rome again will seek to destroy Him. Then He will come forth, and this time – it is His second coming that's before us – He is represented by the stone, the smiting stone.

Daniel continues,

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 threshingfloors; 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. (Daniel 2:34, 35)

Nebuchadnezzar beheld the image in awe and wonder. The stone, coming from beyond the environs of the image and without human origin or motivation, smote the image on the feet of iron and clay with such force that all the metals were pulverized. And a wind blew the dust of the image away, so that it entirely disappeared. Then the stone began to grow as a living stone, and it filled the whole world, taking the place of this image.

My friend, you and I are living in a world where men in the religious community have been saying for years that the church is going to convert the world, that the kingdom of God will be established by human effort. The Bible has been saying the contrary. When God is ready to set up His Kingdom, He won't need help from any church! This age in which we live will not end with a converted world. This age is to end by the catastrophic and cataclysmic coming of Jesus Christ to this earth to put down Gentile misrule and to take for Himself the scepter of world dominion. He is the smiting Stone of destruction.

The reason that Stone has not struck is that the last part of the prophecy has not quite yet been fulfilled. Antichrist is yet to appear, but God is holding him back. Europe is crying out for him. If any man will appear in Europe who can put the countries of the Roman Empire back together again, they'll not ask and they won't care whether he comes from heaven or hell. They'll take him if he will just promise to bring them together and give them a measure of peace, for that is exactly what the Antichrist will promise and accomplish for a brief time when he comes. But there's no real peace for this earth until Jesus comes.

In the meantime in patience our Lord is dealing with this world, and in mercy He's holding back the judgment. On an occasion when the Lord Jesus confronted the Pharisees, He said,

Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. (Matthew 21:43, 44)

My friend, if you fall upon this Stone, you can obtain mercy and you can be saved.

The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. (John 3:35, 36)

You and I have moved down pretty close to the end of the age, to a day coming when the Lord Jesus will come forward and take that scepter back into His own hands. And, friend, there will never be peace on this earth until that scepter is held by nail-pierced hands, until Jesus Christ rules on this earth. It's not until then that peace and righteousness will cover this earth as the waters cover the sea. That is the hope of the earth.