

Week 3 - The Times of the Gentiles.

As you study end times prophecy you will come across a phrase that we have already mentioned in this study "The times of the Gentiles". The phrase comes from Luke 21:24. We will study Luke 21 and Matthew 24 in a later session but just so you are familiar with the phrase lets look at the verse:

Luke 21:24 "And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Jesus is describing the 70 A.D. invasion of Jerusalem by Rome, but we see the phrase here "times of the Gentiles"

Jerusalem is trampled by Gentiles to this day.

There is a tendency to confuse this phrase with "the fullness of the Gentiles" mentioned in Romans 11:25.

In Romans, Paul is speaking of the rapture of the Church. The phrase "times of the Gentiles" refers to the times where there is no Israelite king on the throne in Jerusalem. The Gentile nations are the predominant players in the world and Israel is largely subservient to them.

The times of the Gentiles began with the Babylonian captivity, and continues to this day.

Lets take a look at Daniel 2 where the entire "times of the Gentiles" is laid out in advance for us through a dream that God gave Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

Daniel 2

Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

Background:

Daniel and many of his countrymen have been taken captive by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar after his first siege of Jerusalem. They are in Babylon and the young Daniel along with three of his friends, Hananiah, Michael, and Azariah, are being trained for the king's court as Wise Men, also known as Magi.

These four men follow God above all else but they understand the situation they are in and up until this point they are not rebelling against the king, they are following orders and doing the things they are commanded to do as unto the Lord.

Towards the end of their training, or shortly after it had ended the king has a dream and it troubles him so much that he cannot sleep. He calls all of his magicians, astrologers, and wise men together and wants them to interpret the dream. To be sure the interpretation is true, Nebuchadnezzar does not tell them the dream, he instead charges the wise men to tell him the dream and then interpret it. He commands that if they are not able to accomplish this, then all of the wise men would be killed.

The wise men of course are not able to do what the king asks but when Daniel hears of the king's demand, he and his three friends take it before the Lord. The Lord reveals the dream and the interpretation to Daniel, and he in turn presents it to the king.

(read Daniel 2:24-35)

v24-25 - Daniel went to Arioch - Arioch "I have found a man. - He takes credit.

v27-30 - Men cannot BUT GOD CAN!

This vision concerns not just Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom, but the whole span of the future which was, to Nebuchadnezzar the latter days, and we will see that while most of what the vision represents has passed, some of it is still yet future.

Daniel makes it clear to Nebuchadnezzar that the interpretation was not given to Daniel because he is wiser than anyone else, but that it was given to save Daniel and his friends, and to make these things known to Nebuchadnezzar.

God was reaching out to Nebuchadnezzar.

The reason for prophecy is to make God known to man. To show His power and wisdom and to bring man to the knowledge that He is sovereign and wants a relationship with them.

Daniel describes this great image, it was great in size and splendor and made from various metals that gradually decrease in value but become militarily stronger as they go until the last section.

Then a stone cut without hands hits the feet of iron and clay and breaks it in pieces. Then it becomes a great mountain to fill the whole earth.

(read Daniel 2:36-45)

The interpretation of the dream lays out the world empires for the rest of time.

Gold - Babylon (605-539bc) — Babylon was an absolute monarchy, God's ideal government is an absolute monarchy but not one led by Nebuchadnezzar, God's ideal monarchy will be led by the man Jesus!

Three major world empires succeeded Babylon - Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

These world powers would become stronger and last longer than Nebuchadnezzar's but none would have the centralized power in the monarchy like Nebuchadnezzar had.

Mede-Persian empire (539 - 331BC) is represented by the chest and arms of silver two arms representing the Medes and Persians.

This empire was considered a monarchical oligarchy with the nobles equal to the king in all but office.

Greece (331 - 168 BC) is represented by brass, indicating a lower value of aristocracy of mind and influence.

Rome(168BC - 476AD), being ruled by democratic imperialism and employing a martial law through the might of its military is represented by Iron.

There are two legs of Iron just as there were two legs of the Roman empire. An western leg which covered europe, and a eastern leg that extended into the middle east. The eastern leg outlasted the western leg by several hundred years.

“Liberal commentators do not believe that the fourth kingdom is Rome, but they say it is Greece, and that the second and third kingdoms are Media and Persia respectively, instead of the Medo-Persian Empire as a whole. They interpret this way because they believe it was impossible for Daniel to predict the rise of these empires.” - Guzik

The liberal commentators are correct. It was impossible for Daniel or any other man to predict this, BUT NOT FOR GOD!

We then see these feet of Iron mixed with clay and the 10 toes.

This is a second phase or revival of the Roman empire which we believe is yet to come.

“Since the fall of the Roman Empire, there has never been a world-dominating empire equal to Rome. Many have tried - the Huns, Islam, the so-called Holy Roman Empire, Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin - but none have succeeded. Each of these had amazing power and influence, but nothing compared to that of the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire, in some form or another, will be revived under the leadership of the final fallen dictator, the Antichrist.” - Guzik

This empire with be militarily strong, but will be made up of a confederation of 10 kings and their allegiance to each other will not be so strong.

Politically they will not be as strong as the original roman empire and during this phase of the Roman empire the stone cut without hands will come and destroy it and become a mountain to fill the entire earth.

The Stone cut without hands implies that it it God’s doing not man’s.

God formed this stone not man.

The stone made cut without hands is Jesus.

[Isa 28:16 NKJV] 16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily.

[Psa 118:22 NKJV] 22 The stone [which] the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.

He will break in pieces this last gentile kingdom and set up his own kingdom which shall never end.

[Rev 19:11-21 NKJV] 11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him [was] called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes [were] like a flame of fire, and on His head [were] many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He [was] clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on [His] robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. 17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, 18 "that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all [people], free and slave, both small and great." 19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. 20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Turn over now to Daniel 7 and we will take a look at another vision, this one given to Daniel, that parallels this one in chapter 2.

Daniel 7

This is 40yrs after Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

Lion with eagles wings - represented Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar. His wings are plucked, he was humbled and afterwards given the heart of a man and lifted up from the earth.

Many believe that Nebuchadnezzar became a believer after God caused him to go mad and live as a beast in the wilderness.

Daniel 4 is written by Nebuchadnezzar and he tells the story of how God humbled him and made him to live as a beast in the field.

At the end of chapter 4 we read this:

[Dan 4:1-3, 34-37 NKJV] 1 Nebuchadnezzar the king, To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. 2 I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me. 3 How great [are] His signs, And how mighty His wonders! His kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom, And His dominion [is] from generation to generation. ... 34 And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion [is] an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom [is] from generation to generation. 35 All the inhabitants of the earth [are] reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And [among] the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?" 36 At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works [are] truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.

It is quite possible that you could meet Nebuchadnezzar one day in heaven.

The next beast we see is the bear with three ribs in his mouth.

The bear is the Medeo-Persian empire. Many believe that the three ribs represent the three major military conquests of the medo-persian empire, Babylon, Egypt, and Lydia.

"The Medes and Persians are compared to a bear on account of their cruelty and thirst after blood, a bear being a most voracious and cruel animal." - Clarke

"The command to arise and devour much flesh indicates the extreme cruelties often practiced by the Persians, and the wide extent of their conquests." H.A. Ironside

The Leopard is the next beast we see this one with four heads and four wings.

*"The **leopard** was known for its sudden, unexpected attacks. This one was especially swift (with **four wings**), and clever (having **four heads**)" - Guzik*

Alexander the great conquered the known world by the age of 28. His military was extremely swift and lethal.

"Nothing in the history of the world, was equal to the conquests of Alexander, who ran through all the countries from Illycium and the Adriatic Sea to the Indian Ocean and the River Ganges; and in twelve years subdued part of Europe, and all Asia." - Clarke

He died at an early age and the Grecian empire was divided into four parts under four men or four heads - Casander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy.

The detail given here is amazing and all in advance of the events taking place. How did Daniel know????

*“The Babylonian Empire dominated in Daniel's day. One might have guessed - especially in the reign of Belshazzar - that the next empire would be the Medo-Persian Empire. But how could Daniel know that the next world empire would be like a leopard in its rise and prominence, and that it would be divided into four parts? This shows a plain principle: God knows the future, and reveals certain details of the future through His prophets. It shows that God lives outside our time domain and can see the future as well as the past. He sees the whole parade of human history, not just the part passing in front of a single spectator. The proof of fulfilled prophecy is exceptionally persuasive; no wonder Peter says: **We have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts (2 Peter 1:19).**” - Guzik*

The fourth beast was indescribable. It was not an animal known to Daniel.

[Dan 7:7-8 NKJV] 7 "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It [was] different from all the beasts that [were] before it, and it had ten horns. 8 "I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, [were] eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

This beast represents the Roman empire which was more powerful than any of the other beasts. The world had never seen anything like it.

The ten horns are represent the same ten kings represented by the ten toes in chapter two.

These ten kings are representative of ten rulers who will rise up in the last days.

Out of these ten will come the little horn also known as the anti-christ. Three of the ten kings will submit to the authority of the anti-christ, which means seven of them will not.

This tells us that although the anti-christ will exhibit great power and authority, not all of the earthly powers will submit to him.

Lets look at these horns elsewhere in scripture.

[Rev 13:1-7 NKJV] 1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. 2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like [the feet of] a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. 4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who [is] like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" 5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. 6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. 7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

[Rev 17:3 NKJV] 3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast [which was] full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

[Rev 17:12-13 NKJV] 12 "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. 13 "These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.

We see the consistency here between the new and old testament of the visions and symbolism representing the anti-christ and the ten king confederation that will comprise the revived Roman empire in the last days.

We can see that when we take our time to look at scripture in its entirety, that God has been faithful to interpret the signs and symbols for us in his word.

There is no need to speculate about these things, He has given us the interpretation!

As we watch the news and read what is happening in our world, we can see the beginnings of these things coming to pass.

We see Europe trying to unite together under one currency and one governing body. We see the religions of the world struggling to figure out a way they can coexist and live peaceably with one another.

The world is ripe and ready for a man to arise with all of the answers. To unite everyone and bring peace to the world. Any peace he promises will be a false peace because no peace will come to the world until the PRINCE OF PEACE returns to the world to rule!

We have no need to worry though, because we as the Church, while it is important for us to understand these things, we are not looking for the anti-christ or the revival of the Roman empire or ten kings, but we are looking for our Lord and savior Jesus Christ!

[Tit 2:11-13 NKJV] 11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

Let us live soberly and deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Let us be righteous and godly in this worldly age looking for our blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and savior Jesus Christ!