THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Dr. E. J. Young

Lectures delivered in
Toronto Baptist Seminary
March 22-26, 1965

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DANIEL — THE MAN OF GOD

WE ARE to consider these evenings certain aspects of the prophecy of Daniel, and what I want to say to-night is more or less in the way of introductory material. I do not think there will be any eschatology breaking forth to-night, at least I do not intend to have any, but we have to lay the foundation at any rate.

This book of Daniel, is, of course, one of the most interesting books in the Old Testament. I think everybody likes to talk about the book of Daniel and wonders what it is all about, what it does mean. Before we get into that, however, we need to look at the book a bit carefully and ask what we can about the nature of the book and the time of its composition. Was there really a man by the name of Daniel? Is he an historical character, or is this simply a legend, and is the book a collection of legends that circulated among the Jews? Porphyry of Tyre, an early antagonist of Christianity, wrote fifteen books, entitled *Against the Christians,* and in these books he evidently, like Celsus, tried to destroy Christianity. Now these books are not extant, and we only know about Porphyry's writings on Daniel because Jerome preserved in his own *Commentary* on Daniel a great many of the comments of Porphyry. There is no reason, as far as I know, why we should not trust what Jerome has to say. Sometimes throughout his *Commentary* he quotes Porphyry in a favourable manner as agreeing with his own interpretation, and so I think that we simply have to depend upon what Jerome has said for an understanding of Porphyry's position. Now Porphyry said, if I may sum up his view, that the book of Daniel was not written by Daniel himself in the 6th century B.C., but rather it was written by an unknown Jew who lived in Palesti

in the 2nd century B.C., and that this man lied by claiming that the book was from Daniel. According to Porphyry, it could not have come from Daniel because it told the future, and Daniel in the 6th century B.C. would not have been able to know the future; and so Porphyry advanced the view that the book of Daniel was a product of the 2nd century B.C. Now how did he happen to choose the 2nd century? Let us just briefly review a bit of history.

THE DATE OF THE PROPHECY

You remember, or at least I hope you remember, that when Alexander the Great's Kingdom broke up, for a time his sons took it over, and then it finally fell into the hands of four of his generals, and two of those generals interest us particularly. In Syria Seleucus took over control, and in Egypt Ptolemy took control. Now those two countries were not very far apart. Syria is just above Palestine, and Egypt is just below Palestine and a little bit to the west, and there was warfare between Egypt and Syria. In the 11th chapter of Daniel you have a picture of some of this warfare, and because that picture is so accurate many believe that it must have been written by a contemporary observer. One of the men who reigned upon the throne of Seleucus, a usurper, was a man by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes. Now Epiphanes means "the illustrious": Antiochus the illustrious is what he called himself. The people called him Antiochus Epimanes, which meant Antiochus the madman, and I think that was probably a more accurate designation. Antiochus, on returning from Egypt on an occasion, turned aside on the Sabbath Day and entered the city of Jerusalem. He went into the very temple and desecrated the sanctuary, erecting there an idol, and he demanded that the Jews give up their religious practices and that they Hellenize; that is, that they live the way the Greeks did. A great many of the Jews were willing to do that and did for a time, and this continued until finally under Judas Maccabeus there was an uprising, and the Jews revolted against the Greeks. Now so much then for the background. We shall have

occasion during the week to make more detailed mention of this background.

Porphyry hit upon the second century B.C. as the time of writing because he thought the book described that period, and that has been a rather widespread view. A scholar of the 17th century by the name of Uriel Acosta advanced pretty much the same view, and in the early 18th century this view gained what we might call a classical expression. A German scholar set forth the view that the book of Daniel was written in the 2nd century B.C., that it had nothing to do with an historical Daniel or with Nebuchadnezzar, but that it mirrored an antipathy, even a hatred towards Antiochus. Daniel was a legendary figure who represented the Jews. He was their hero, set before them as a hero, and in order that the Jews might have courage, in order to withstand Antiochus and the Greeks, so they were to imitate this legendary Daniel who was set before them as their hero.

Now that was the view that was held on the book of Daniel by the liberal scholars up until almost recently. Just after the World War, however, a German scholar, Gustav Hoelscher, came out with an article in which he said that we cannot hold that the entire book of Daniel is written in the second century before Christ, because there is so much in the book that obviously is much earlier than that, and that has been the problem ever since. Today I think it is probably fair to say that most of those who hold a critical position believe that there is very much early material in the book of Daniel. They do not hold that the book was written in the second century B.C., but that it does contain much earlier material. They do maintain that the book received its final form in the second century B.C., but this is quite a different thing from the earlier view regarding the book. Now those who accept the Bible as the Word of God and who listen to the words of Christ have maintained all along that the book was written by Daniel. They hear the words of Christ when he speaks of "the abomination of desolation", and then, "as spoken of by Daniel the prophet", and that sounds

very much as though there were an actual man by the name of Daniel who spoke about the abomination of desolation.

There are, of course, a great many difficulties in any view of the book that you accept, but I believe that on the whole there are fewer difficulties in accepting the view of conservative scholars that the book was actually produced in the sixth century B.C., and that Daniel himself may have been the author and was the author of that book. I do believe that the book reflects very accurately upon the background of the times, especially the Persian period. I do believe that some of the historical objections, so-called, are really not found in the book. I want to mention just one or two of these difficulties, then we will go on to look at the content of the book itself.

DIFFICULTIES WHICH ARE ADVANCED

I want to be as fair as I can in stating this, but my impression, at least, is that the chief reason why men will not attribute this book to Daniel but place it in the second century before Christ is the accurate picture that is given in the 11th chapter of the book about the wars between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids. Now there is an accurate picture there, but there is also a very grave difficulty. The 11th chapter is written in the future, as though all these things are yet to take place. They had not occurred at the time of writing. It would seem, then, that if you say this was actually written by a contemporary, you must also say that he was giving a wrong impression. He was giving the impression that these events had not yet occurred, whereas as a matter of actual fact he was a witness of these events, and that consideration has influenced some men to the point where they say that a great part of chapter 11 is an interpolation, placed into the book by someone at a later time; but there is an objection to that: the style of chapter 11 is so similar to the remainder of the book that it is obvious that this is an integral portion of the book and not an interpolation; so you do have a difficulty there.

Furthermore, this chapter ends in a very strange way. If it were written by a contemporary it does not describe the death of Antiochus Epiphanes as that actually happens. It goes on and mentions other things, and it would seem as though all of a sudden the writer had lost contact with history; but there is a reason for that, and that reason, I think, is that the writer at that point is no longer talking about this Antiochus. He has introduced him as a type of the man of sin, of the great enemy of God's people, and the final verses of that 11th chapter concentrate upon this great enemy of God's people. That, it seems to me, is the solution for that particular difficulty.

Then there is another difficulty that is advanced, and that is the mention of Darius the Mede in the 6th chapter. We are told that the mention of Darius the Mede is an historical inaccuracy; there never was a man by the name of Darius the Mede, so we are told. Furthermore, it is plain that the writer of Daniel was ignorant of the history of the times in mentioning Darius the Mede, because that presupposes the existence of a separate Median Empire, whereas as a matter of actual fact there was no separate Median Empire, but rather a combined Medo-Persian Empire. Well, in answer to that, I would simply say this: that conclusion, I think, does not follow at all, nor do I think there is any error in the mention of Darius the Mede. Cuneiform tablets make it clear now (you can find this information in Professor Whitcombe's little book, *Darius the Mede*) that there was a man placed over Babylon, a general of Cyrus the Great who lived for a short time at least after the conquest of Babylon. That man may have been Darius the Mede. If that explanation does not satisfy, I would say that Professor Donald Wiseman of the University of London, who up until very recently has been curator of the Assyrian antiquities in the British Museum, Professor Donald Wiseman, a very staunch evangelical Christian by the way, maintains that Darius the Mede is but another designation for Cyrus the Great, and he makes out a rather convincing case on that subject. Those, I think, are the two principal diffi-

culties that are advanced. There are others, and perhaps we shall allude to some of them in passing, but those are the two principal difficulties.

I believe that the book is a unity, that it was written by Daniel in the 6th century B.C. I think that only so can we do justice to the words of Christ, "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet," and I want to present the book to you that way, as presented to us, not mere legends or stories, but actual accounts of that which transpired; in other words, an historical book. I believe that one of the strongest arguments for this is the position of the book in the history of redemption, or the Biblical Theological approach to the book, if you will.

HISTORICAL ACCURACY

Daniel, then, was carried over into captivity as but a youth. We are told in the 1st verse, "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it." Now there are a number of those who study the book of Daniel who tell us that in that 1st verse there are three errors of fact. That is quite a lot to get into one verse, but let us look at it a little more carefully. "In the third year of Jehoiakim king of Judah . . ." Daniel, we are told, has made an error in speaking of the third year of Jehoiakim, but if you look at Jeremiah you find that he refers the same events in chapter 25 to the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Jeremiah speaks of the fourth year, Daniel speaks of the third year; therefore Daniel must be in error, so the argument runs. Now I don't believe that argument is advanced today with quite the fervour that it used to be advanced. It has been made rather clear, especially according to recent books on Hebrew Chronology that different modes of reckoning are used. Daniel uses the Babylonian method of reckoning, and this is the way that works. What we would call the first year of a king's reign the Babylonians called the year of his accession or the year of his accession to the throne. What we would call the second year of the king's reign the Babylonians would

designate his first year. On this reckoning, therefore, what the Babylonians would call the third year of the king's reign would be what the Palestinians would call his fourth year. Now in Palestine itself there was evidently an alternation in the use of methods of reckoning, and here it would seem that Jeremiah uses the western method, the Palestinian method, and just as we would do speaks of the fourth year of the king's reign. Daniel, however, uses the Babylonian method which we might expect if the book were written in Babylon, and in speaking of the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, has in mind the same thing as Jeremiah speaks of the fourth year. So I think that is a perfectly legitimate explanation, and we have no warrant for saying that there is actually an error here.

The second so-called error here is the statement, "(There) came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem and besieged it." Nebuchadnezzar is called the king of Babylon, and that, we are told, is an error of fact. As a matter of actual fact Nebuchadnezzar at this time was only the crown prince. In his siege of Jerusalem and Carchemish, at least in this year, he learned of the death of his father, and went back to Babylon in order to take the throne. He therefore was not actually the king of Babylon, and so we are told in some commentaries that here is the second error of statement in the book in this verse. But isn't it rather clear that the verse is simply speaking proleptically! We might speak, in the United States, of the childhood of President Eisenhower. Was that an inaccurate way of speaking? Everybody knows what we mean by that. I don't think anyone would be deceived into thinking that we meant the man was a President when he was a child. We speak that way proleptically. I think that is all that Daniel is doing here, and I can say that a number of the liberal scholars hold the same view; so I don't think we need to assume that this is an error.

The third error, so-called, is the statement that he besieged Jerusalem, but they add to that that he conquered Jerusalem. Now the text does not actually say that he

conquered Jerusalem. It simply says that he besieged it, and I don't think any longer that even that can be questioned. Recently when I was in London in 1958 the same Donald Wiseman whose name I mentioned a moment ago took me into a certain room in the British Museum and showed me there a little clay cuneiform tablet. Now the old Assyrians and Babylonians wrote on clay. They didn't take out their fountain pens and write on clay, but they took a stylus that was wedge-shaped, and they impressed that in the moist clay, and that is called cuneiform writing. Now this tablet was a tablet of Nebuchadnezzar. I don't mean that the man himself did it. I doubt whether he knew how to write, but one of his scribes did do that. This was a tablet of Nebuchadnezzar, and there were other tablets. These have just been discovered within the last few years. I think that it was the year 1952 that they were first discovered, and they are accounts of expeditions that Nebuchadnezzar made to the west. He made a number of those in Persia. Sometimes he made more than one a year, and so there can be no question but that in this particular year he did go to Jerusalem. This cannot be challenged any longer; so I would say that instead of finding three mistakes or errors in this first verse of Daniel we find rather three very accurate statements of history, and we need not for a minute think that the writer did not know what he was talking about.

Now Nebuchadnezzar, the great king of Babylon, carries away captive Jehoiakim and some of the Hebrew youths, among them Daniel and his three companions, and he brings them to Babylon in order that they may be trained for a period of three years. We know that the Persians did actually have a three-year period of training for young boys. At this time Daniel was probably in his teens, and he was to be trained at the court of Nebuchadnezzar in order that he might serve as a statesman before Nebuchadnezzar.

THE STATESMAN AND PROPHET

Now let us look at this man Daniel, or rather this boy Daniel himself. The picture that is given to us here is

that of a man of courage, that of a man of principle. It is an altogether rather rare thing that we see here, and we cannot help but admire the courage of Daniel in what we read about him. The first thing that we learn about him is that Daniel purposes in his heart not to defile himself with the portion of the king's meat nor with the wine which he drank. The king had set this apart for Daniel in order that he might be trained and prepared, but Daniel determines to have nothing to do with it. I would ask that you notice that there is a firm determination here on Daniel's part, yet at the same time there is a true and genuine courtesy. Daniel is no fanatic; he stands by his principles, but he is a gentleman in doing it. That is a rather difficult thing to be. Sometimes when we stand by our principles we say things and we act in such a way that we regret it later on; but Daniel shows here a devotion to truth to his convictions and a perfect courtesy at the same time, and I think every Christian should seek to imitate him in that.

Daniel, it seems to me, is a statesman. Now in the New Testament, however, when this reference is made of Daniel, he is called a prophet: "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet." That does not fit in well with what I said earlier this morning of the nature of the prophet in Israel. The prophet, according to Deuteronomy 18, was raised up by God as a mediator between God and the nation. He was an Israelite "from the midst of thy brethren like unto me," and that was the function of the prophet; that was the technical position that the prophet occupied. Daniel did not do that. Daniel did not stand as a mediator between God and the nation. Daniel's entire training rather was that he should serve as a statesman at the court of Nebuchadnezzar. Why, then, does the New Testament speak of Daniel the prophet? I am inclined to think that it does that in the same way that it speaks of Baalam the prophet and David the prophet. These men possessed the gift of prophecy, but they did not occupy the technical position of a prophet. The distinction has been made between the gift of proph-

ecy and the office of prophecy, and that seems to me to be the explanation.

The Old Testament in Hebrew is divided into three sections; and you have in these three sections, first of all the five books of the law, then in the second section you have the books of the prophets, and these are again divided into two further sections—the former prophets and the latter prophets. The section comprising the former prophets consists of prophecies really interpreting the histories of Israel that were written by men whose names for the most part we do not know. They comprised books such as Joshua and Judges, I and II Samuel and I and II Kings. The second part of this second division of the Old Testament canon consists of what are called the latter or the writing prophets, and here are the great prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve minor prophets. But what is interesting is that the book of Daniel is not found in this group. Then we come to the third part of the Old Testament canon. Here we find the three poetical books such as Job and the Psalms and Proverbs. We find the five rolls as they are called, Esther and Ruth, Lamentations and so on, and then we find the book of Daniel among "the writings". Daniel is not placed among the prophets, but is placed among "the writings". Now I think that is intentional. I am more and more convinced that the books of the Old Testament find their position in the canon depending upon the place that their author occupied in the divine economy. Moses, the servant of the Lord, the servant who was faithful in all his house, is the author of the books called the law, and they form a unit. They form a section distinct. The second section consists of books written by men who occupy the technical office of prophet, and the third section consists of books written by men who are inspired of God, and yet who did not occupy this technical prophetic office.

Now I know that objections have been brought against that classification, but I am more and more convinced that that is the true explanation of the reason why the book of Daniel is not found among the prophets. It is

because Daniel himself did not occupy this technical office. Daniel was called to something very important. Daniel was to witness to the truth as a statesman at a heathen court at a time when the very promises of God had seemed to be forgotten, to have gone by the board, and the religion of Babylon was in the ascendency, and when the people of God were being engulfed in the exile; and were that to succeed, Christ would not be born, and the power of Satan would triumph. In this time there must come from the little despised kingdom of Judah, that is swallowed up by Babylon, a man who represents truth, who interprets the dreams of the Babylonians, who explains what the purposes of God are, who stands before the nation as a man of conviction, and so by contrast shows what a true believer in the Lord is. That, it seems to me, is the purpose that Daniel fulfilled in his active life.

THE MAN OF CONVICTION AND COURTESY

We look, then, at this man Daniel. I said a moment ago that he exhibits a devotion to principle, and coupled with that there is a genuine courtesy, but why did Daniel do this? What is the reason? It would be very interesting to point out the vocabulary that is used here. It is a vocabulary that reflects upon the ancient Persian language, and consequently it shows his familiarity with the times. I believe that when Daniel wrote this the Babylonian Empire had fallen, and Persia or Medo-Persia was in dominance, and Daniel writes in accordance with the customs and even the vocabulary that is widespread at his time. So we find, for example, one of the words that is used here, the word translated "portion of the king's meat", in the Hebrew reflects a Persian word that was in use at the time. Why is it then that Daniel took this position? It was not mere stubbornness at all. It was not because this meat and wine were rich and so might have been harmful to the development of these young men. No, nothing like that. I think the reason why Daniel did this was that he recognized that the food and the drink of the king had been consecrated to idols. They had been

dedicated to the religion of Babylon, if you will, and there is a time when a man must make a stand.

That is hard for us to believe today. We are living in a day when people just don't have any convictions. They speak a great deal about tolerance, but you can't be tolerant unless you really believe something firmly. If you have convictions, then you can be tolerant of other people's convictions; but if you don't believe anything, if nothing matters, you are not tolerant, you just don't care. Tolerance is a noble quality, but the man who must be tolerant is the man who himself believes something firmly. What impresses me today is that people just don't believe, they don't have any convictions, they don't care. As long as things go all right and they make more money, which seems to be the only reason for living with many people, they don't care. You go to your church, I'll go to my church, we'll have dialogues all over the place with everybody. It doesn't really matter at all. It reminds me of one of your humorists, Stephen Leacock, who somewhere wrote about the lady that brought up her daughter as a Christian, but also taught her to be a Mohammedan to make sure; and that is just the attitude today. It doesn't really matter what you believe, it doesn't matter whether you believe anything or not. We live and let live, and then we call all of that tolerance, and yet deep down in our hearts I think we must realize that something is wrong there. We cannot help but admire a man that has convictions. I mean if he is honest and straightforward and above board with those convictions; I am not talking about a fanatic, but a man who has deep principles. He is usually maligned by the world, no matter what he stands for, but nevertheless it is a wonderful thing to see men like that. I think our countries need men like that more than anything else; men who believe in what is right and who are determined to do what is right, men who are more concerned to do what is right than they are to win an election. We need that, and the church needs that. It is no wonder that people do not respect the church, because the church is so ready to jump on the band wagon, what-

ever comes along. We need in the church men of conviction, and do you know as you look over the history of the church you will find that many of these men of conviction are great men; for example, Augustine and Calvin and Luther, and come down to our own day to Machen, Shields and others. They are men who are great men. I don't mean that they didn't have faults; you can look at their lives and find fault with every one of them. That is not a very hard thing to do, but they are great men. They tried to live up to the light that was in them. They spoke with conviction, with feeling, and they were willing to suffer, to swear to their own hurt; and that is what people can't understand.

That is what Daniel was. That is the picture I want to leave with you this evening, just a young boy. He realized that if he had done this seemingly harmless thing of partaking of the king's meat and the wine that he drank, he would have compromised his conviction. He would have made it appear that it did not matter if a worshipper of Jehovah should also partake of that which had been offered unto idols. There would be many who would say that he took himself too seriously. There would be many who would say that he had made a mistake, that he should have given in here, and then he would have had an opportunity for a stand later on. It never works out that way. The opportunity never comes back again, if we compromise when we should take a stand. We are not going to take that stand later on, but simply compromise more and more. You have seen that happen, I am sure. Men say, "This isn't the time to stand up and be counted for Christ; we will wait for a more favourable opportunity when we will have influence." That isn't the point. It isn't that we have influence. It is that when the moment comes, we make it known where we stand, irrespective of whether anybody else goes along with us or not, irrespective of what the results will be. If we are true Christians, then at the moment of opportunity we must let that fact be known; and that is what Daniel did. That is why we cannot help but admire him. Just a young boy, he was not

going to be guilty of idolatry. He wanted to make clear the distinction between the true religion and the religion of Babylon. That was a positive act, and it was a negative act; and yet you cannot really preach the Gospel in this day and age without telling people what the Gospel is not. It must be contrasted with falsehood and error in order that people may see what it truly is; and that is exactly what Daniel did. And so he took this stand.

THE GRACE OF GOD

Was there in this any rashness of action? Was he simply hoping for the best? No, I think not. I think that there may have been revelation of God to Daniel. Daniel knew that this was the thing he should do, because in this action of Daniel the grace of God now triumphs in Babylon. Indeed, God's grace begins to show itself as superior to the idols of Babylon, and in this action of Daniel attention is called to the fact that the God of the Hebrews is not like the gods of the other nations. You remember how Rabshakeh had stood before the walls of Jerusalem, and he had said in effect, "Your God is like the gods of the other conquered nations"; but now Daniel is showing by his action that that is not so. He is showing that the God of the Hebrews is different, that this God is unique; and as a result, when the period of testing came, Daniel and his friends were seen to be far better than the others. These were youths in whom there was no physical blemish, and they were youths of sound mind. They were the chosen ones of the Jews that might serve in the interpretation of dreams.

The Babylonian inscriptions make it very clear that the dream was widespread in Babylon. It was looked to as a source of information, and the interpretation of dreams became a regular trade among some of the Babylonians, and there were those that were called "the wise men" who would be able, supposedly, to interpret dreams that people had. Daniel learned that trade. He learned what these dreams were, and what meaning they might have. This does not necessarily mean that the dreams actually did have significance, but he learned what the prac-

tices were that were used in Babylon at that time. He showed himself, in other words, to be wise. He showed himself to be a man that the king could trust. He showed himself to be one that was really a credit to his own people, and he showed himself among all these things to be distinct. It was God Himself who gave this knowledge and skill in understanding and learning and in wisdom, and Daniel, we may assume, learned the language of the people among whom he dwelt, and thus was prepared for the visions that were to be received later on.

THIS PERIOD OF MIRACLES

We are dealing in this book of Daniel with a special epoch in revelation, and that is where the difficulty comes in. We are face to face with the miraculous. There are, I think, in the Bible four great periods of miracles. One of those was the period of the Exodus, one was the time of Elijah and Elisha, the third was this period of the Babylonian exile, and the fourth was the time when our Lord came to earth in the Apostolic age. Those were times when miracles had to be performed. By a miracle I simply mean an act performed by the supernatural power of God in the external world which in its appearance is different from what God's ordinary providential working seems to be, and which also is designed to be an attestation or sign. In the period of the Exodus when the religion of Egypt was ready to engulf the Hebrews, the power of God had to be manifest. The same is true during the time of Elijah and Elisha. That same thing is true during the exile, and when Christ came to earth then Satan, as it were, marshalled all of his forces in order that Christ might be deflected from the cross. Then at the founding of the church the miracles had to be performed that it might be seen that this was the power of God at work. And so during the exile also miracles had to be performed in order that it might be seen that the God of all power was indeed at work, and that He would fulfil His promises, and He would in time bring His people away from the dominance of Babylon.

That, then, is the time in which Daniel lived. We ought not to look at this book simply that we may learn of the future from it. We have an interest in eschatology. There are two points, however, to which I would call your attention. This book contains some of the most beautiful prayers in the Old Testament, and this book sets forth the character of Daniel, the only one in the Old Testament of whom no sin is recorded, and yet he himself acknowledges his sin. This, then, is Daniel, the man whom God uses in order to reveal the truth that is to come, a statesman, a man of principle, a true gentleman; and it is his work that we shall plan to consider in the remaining nights of this week.

DANIEL AND THE HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

THE BIBLE is a unit and presents a harmonious message. That message is clear, both in the New Testament and the Old Testament, and the Old Testament serves as a preparation for the New. There is given to us in the Old Testament a history of redemption: a plan of salvation is gradually unfolded, and into that plan every bit has its proper part and its function to play. The critics who divide the Old Testament up into separate pieces and who simply explain it as the compilation and collection of tradition, whether written or oral, are really hard put to it to explain the wondrous unity that results. If the contents of the Old Testament have come from different sources, if they represent really nothing more than tradition that the Hebrews had handed down, be it oral tradition or written tradition, and if this was gathered together by different redactors and collectors and finally put together in the form that we now have, it is a very remarkable thing that those redactors have been able to come up with the unity that is found in the Old Testament. There is, I say, a plan of salvation, a history of redemption that is unfolded. And I want to consider with you this evening the place that the Book of Daniel occupies in that history of redemption.

I think that the study of this history of redemption or Biblical Theology, as it is sometimes called, is one of the strongest evidences for the unity of the Bible and also for its divine authorship. Everything in the Old Testament is based on the fact that man fell into sin, for the whole plan of redemption is the unfolding of God's purpose in delivering man from the guilt and the power of his sin. And the third chapter of Genesis is really fundamental for the understanding of all that follows. We know that God

drove man out of the Garden of Eden, but before He did that He stated the promise of salvation, and that promise of salvation is gradually unfolded by the prophets. It is first given to us in what we might call "seed form" and then it is developed bit by bit so that as we turn the pages of the Old Testament we learn more and more about the coming Redeemer and about the salvation that He is going to bring to mankind.

ISRAEL TO BE SEPARATE

For a time the people of God existed independently, individually we might say, and it was necessary that God should separate them from the world of unbelief. And so he called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees. It was necessary that the people of God be set apart, distinguished from the world that they might live together, for when men are living in the midst of a sinful world they find very often that they fall into the practices of that world. If the people of God are separate and belong together they can strengthen one another. We hear a great deal today about taking religion out on the sidewalks, about going away from Christians. I heard of a minister who felt that it was a sad thing for Christians' families to live close together, thinking that they should break up and go out and live in the midst of unbelieving communities so that they would have a witness. I don't agree with that. I know that we must be in the world, but I know also that Christian people can be a blessing to one another and can strengthen one another. And so God called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees in order that His people might be separate.

For a time the line of redemption consisted simply of the patriarch and his family. He was, you might say, the priest of the family. He was responsible for the education of his family, and then as time went on we know that the children of Israel went down into the land of Egypt, and there they stayed in bondage. There they were almost engulfed by the Egyptian religion, although to a certain extent they stayed apart. But at His own time God, mind-

ful of His promises to the patriarchs, brought them out of the land of Egypt. Then He determined to form them into a nation, and they were thus formed. They were given His holy law, and God made it known that He was to be their God. He revealed to them the fact that He was their God by an act of redemption for He brought them out by a strong right arm from Egyptian bondage. They were established into a nation, and that nation was to be unlike any other nation. It was to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, and God was to be the ruler. The king that God would raise up was to be a man after His own heart. He was in his administration of the kingdom to set forth the justice that characterized the divine dealings with man. He was, as I said, to be a man after God's own heart.

When finally the people entered the promised land they found an entirely different situation from that of the desert wanderings. For a number of reasons they became separated and divided. One of those reasons was geographical. Palestine is a mountainous land, and the people were separated. Even today in Palestine with all of our modern systems of communication and with modern highways and all the rest of it, if you travel about among the Arabs in Palestine you will notice differences of pronunciation of Arabic among Arabs that live only twelve or thirteen miles apart. And so in Biblical times you can readily understand that the people would have become separated, and we find that time characterized in the Book of Judges as a period when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes".

Because of reverses the people began to realize that this was not a good condition of things. They needed a central authority, but they wanted a central authority that would be like that in other nations. They asked for a king that would be like the kings of the nations round about them. They did not ask for a truly theocratic king, they did not want to be a distinct unique people, but rather they wished to be like others. They asked for the king in what we may call an untheocratic spirit. They had

learned a lesson that they needed a king, but now they must learn a further lesson that they need a king who is a man after God's own heart; and that was given to them in David. After the experiences with Saul, when things did not turn out as they should, then the people realized that they needed a different kind of king. When they had asked for Saul to be their king, Samuel said, "You have not rejected me, but you have rejected the Lord for your asking." To paraphrase the thought, they were asking for the king in a wrong spirit. But then finally they see that there must be a truly theocratic king; there must be a man after God's own heart. That alone will fit the situation. The theocracy (and the word simply means the power of God, the rule of God: it comes from two Greek words) was the kingdom of God, the kingdom in which the rule of God would be manifest: and Israel was designed to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, to bring the knowledge of the true God to all the world. That was the function that Israel was intended to fulfill.

ISRAEL DIVIDED

As we pointed out this morning, the nation fell far short of that ideal. Instead of doing that, she became faithless. And so Israel had all the weaknesses of any kingdom. And when Solomon was on the throne, although Solomon was permitted to build the temple in which God might manifest His presence, nevertheless there was a lack of wisdom in some of the things that he did, and we find that there was rebellion after his death. David had built up the kingdom. David was a man after God's own heart, and yet as we examine the life of David we realize that he sinned greatly, and because he was a man that shed much blood David was not permitted to build the temple. Now the name Solomon, Shelomah, at least reminds us of the Hebrew word for peace, *shalom*. And Solomon did build that temple. Solomon had asked God for the gift of wisdom, and yet we know that Solomon did depart therefrom. And so following his death there was the schism. This was a great blot upon the history of the nation.

The northern tribes went their own way. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, erected the two calves, one at Dan in the north and one at Bethel in the south. And the kingdom went its own way, having nothing to do with Judah. There was rivalry between the two nations from this time on, and that rivalry made the two nations a prey for other countries round about. There grew up to the east in the Mesopotamian plain the kingdom of Assyria. Assyria and Babylonia had been powers right along. Now one and now the other seemed to gain the upper hand, but it was during the 8th century before Christ that Assyria became very prominent, and the Assyrian king, Tiglath-pileser III, was a usurper who was determined to conquer all nations. We know what his purposes were because the Book of Isaiah states so clearly in the 10th chapter what that man desired to do. I want to go into that tomorrow morning in greater detail.

This man purposed in his heart to make all nations subservient to himself. He was a dictator, and all dictators seem to be alike. The first thing that he did was to go down to Babylon and make it clear that he was in control, and he put up a statue of himself. Dictators are always doing that. Today they put forward a photograph of themselves. When I was in Hitler Germany, Hitler had photographs of himself everywhere in Germany. Mussolini did the same thing in Italy. That seems to be characteristic of dictators, that they want a representation of themselves everywhere. I think one thing that characterizes modern dictators also is that they don't have a sense of humor. I can't speak about Tiglath-pileser on that particular point, I don't know whether he did or not. I know that the inscriptions which he has left are very difficult to read, but I won't attribute that to any lack of sense of humor, I will attribute that to my lack of knowledge of the language. But at any rate he exhibited a good many of the characteristics of dictators. Another thing that characterizes these men is their cruelty. They must have the upper hand, they must have the last say. And that certainly was characteristic of this man. His inscriptions make

it clear that he was a man of cruelty. He glories in his inscriptions in the fact that he has put many people to death, and he uses expressions such as "I filled the valley with their bones". He had no compunctions whatever in the taking of human life.

ISRAEL SCATTERED

Tiglath-pileser introduced a policy which had been practised before but never upon the scale he used. He would conquer a nation and bring that people under his subjection and then scatter them abroad throughout his empire. In that way he would destroy their power to withstand him. And that is what he did with his conquered nations. Assyria, you see, was gaining the ascendancy, was gaining in power right along, and you have to the south of Palestine, Egypt. In between is this divided country Judah and Israel. Against Assyria or the Mesopotamian power they cannot stand. Finally the Assyrian comes to the north, and Israel is taken captive. Israel is taken captive by Shalmaneser, and the Israelites are taken away from Samaria. Incidentally that is a very interesting point. The Bible seems to imply, though it does not say so in so many words, that Shalmaneser captured Samaria. An inscription of Sargon has appeared which seemed to give the impression that Sargon had captured Samaria, and so there have been some who say that the Bible has made a mistake on this point, that actually the city was captured by Sargon and not by Shalmaneser; but further study seems to show that what Sargon is talking about is not the first capture of Samaria, but later incursions, later taking away of captives, and it would appear that after all the one who did conquer Samaria was Shalmaneser. These were Assyrians, and first the Northern Kingdom had to go. Later on Nebuchadnezzar came to the west and conquered Jerusalem, and so both Israel and Judah were taken captive. They were taken out of their land, and there came the period of the exile.

This is called the period of indignation or wrath. God speaks to the nation through the prophet Isaiah and

calls this a period of His indignation. This is the time when the wrath of God is manifested against His people. In the destruction of Judah the theocracy came to an end. My friends, think for a moment of what that means. Here is the kingdom of God, the rule of God, the power of God. God in Jerusalem would have His people a kingdom of priests, a holy nation in the midst of a sinful world, but they have so turned against Him that they no longer are fit to be His people, and the exile must come. The Israelites must learn the lesson of humility; they must go through the valley of humiliation in order that they may see that they are to be a servant of the Lord and so bring the truth to the world. They failed, and they failed miserably, and the question may very well arise, What about the promises of God? What about the promises made in the garden, the promises to Abraham, and to Moses? What about all the promises to David? Are these to be forgotten, to be thrown overboard? The nation is no longer in Jerusalem. The Davidic throne is gone apparently. What, then, is to happen?

THE FUNCTION OF DANIEL

Now it is in this juncture that Daniel is raised up, and one of the functions of Daniel is to explain what God's purposes are. Daniel was a man of prayer. In the 9th chapter Daniel is studying the Book of Jeremiah, for Jeremiah had prophesied that the exile would last for seventy years, and now these seventy years are nearing a conclusion. What will God do? Daniel, in that 9th chapter, acknowledged that the exile has come upon the nation because of its sin, because it has not hearkened to all that was written in the law of Moses; and identifying himself with his people, Daniel says, "We have sinned, we have done iniquitously, we have transgressed. To the Lord belongs glory and honour, but to us is confusion of faces this day." Daniel was concerned about these things. There may have been very few among the Jews who were concerned, but remember that God never leaves His people without some witness, and sometimes, I think, we may take it to heart

that when we are inclined to be discouraged at the paucity of true believers in the world, we may remember that there are always those who will bear testimony to the truth. God has not forsaken His purposes, and Daniel was raised up in order that he might explain the purposes of God.

I said last evening that he was taken just as a young boy to Babylon, and it was in Nebuchadnezzar's second year that Daniel begins his activity of interpretation. Somebody will notice in this second chapter of Daniel a difficulty. It speaks here of the second year of Nebuchadnezzar and says, "Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him." If you turn back to the first chapter you remember that it was a three-year period that the youths had to undergo, and if it was a three-year period that would have occupied three years, and now Nebuchadnezzar, in his second year, has these dreams and his sleep breaks from him. How can we harmonize these apparent chronological difficulties at this point? I think we must call to mind, as we said last night, that this book uses the Babylonian method of chronology, that what he calls here the second year of Nebuchadnezzar would be what we would call the third year of Nebuchadnezzar; that is, the year of his accession which would refer to a part of that year, we would call his first year. There is, then, the first year according to the Babylonian reckoning, what we would call the second year; and then according to the Babylonian reckoning the second year, what we would call the third year. Now if we assume that Daniel was introduced to his training right away that would have been the year of Nebuchadnezzar's accession. He would have been trained during the part of that year, during the first year (Babylonian reckoning) of Nebuchadnezzar and during part of the second year (Babylonian reckoning) of Nebuchadnezzar, so you see there is no conflict. This does not mean three full years of 365 days each and that the three-year period lasted for precisely that amount of time, for the Hebrew method of reckoning would speak of three

years as including one full year and parts of two other years. So if you use the Babylonian method of reckoning here there really is no difficulty. It would be what we would call the third year of Nebuchadnezzar that these dreams were given to him.

THE DREAM OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR

This dream was a divinely-imposed dream. It was given by God in order that it might serve for Daniel to interpret and to explain the purposes of God. If you look at this chapter you will see that the king brought in his wise men, his magicians and astrologers and sorcerers and so on, and the Chaldeans, in order that they might show the king his dream. I want to stop for just a minute in this second verse and call your attention to the mention of the Chaldeans. This is said by many to be evidence that Daniel could not have written the book because in the sixth century B.C., it is claimed, this use of "Chaldean", as referring to a group like this, was not in use. This is evidence of a later date. In answer to that I would say, however, that Herodotus tells us in his account that he, in visiting Babylon, met the priests; and this term is used and implies that the Chaldean priesthood had gone back at least as far as the time of Cyrus, that is very close to the Book of Daniel. Quite possibly, then, Daniel, writing after the downfall of Babylon, could have used that term "Chaldean". I do not think anyone knows enough to say that that is an error of usage. Here the term is actually used to refer to a specific group, probably priests, and in the light of Herodotus' use it seems to me that we cannot find fault with what is done here.

At any rate the king says that he has had this dream. Then you will notice in verse 4: "Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriac — At this point there is a change in the language in the Book of Daniel, and I think the best way to translate it is this way: "Then spake the Chaldeans to the king . . ." The next word is pronounced *Aramith,* and I think that simply means that the language to follow is Aramaic. Let me say that the Aramaic language is a language in many ways quite similar

to the Hebrew language. There is a change in the language, and from this point on to the conclusion of chapter 7 the Book of Daniel is written in Aramaic. Beginning with chapter 8 again it is written in Hebrew. Why is that? Well, I really wish I knew the answer to that question. There are many theories given, and I am not sure that any of them is really satisfactory. I will mention one, and you can take it for what you think it is worth. The section of the Book that deals with the Gentile world powers is written in Aramaic; the section of the Book that deals in particular with the Hebrews, the people of God, is written in the Hebrew language. I am not going to say that was necessarily the case, but it seems to be. I am not going to say, either, that that explains everything, for it does not. The minute you begin to think about this you realize the number of difficulties there are involved, and I am not sure at all that that is really the explanation. New explanations and attempts at explanations are being made quite often, yet when you read them you really have the feeling that you have not gotten very far. At any rate, this is written in Aramaic, in what is called by scholars Kingdom Aramaic, which was the Aramaic that was in use as the *lingua Franca* of the Persian Empire. There are, as I said last night, some very ancient elements in this Aramaic, but it may be that the Aramaic has been brought up to date. At any rate, I cannot myself see that there is anything in the language of the Aramaic which precludes the authorship by Daniel in the 6th century B.C. I am well aware of the difficulties that are involved, but I cannot see anything that precludes the authorship by Daniel. And so there is a change in the language at this point. It does not mean that the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, but it simply means the Chaldeans answered the king, and then we are given more to indicate the change of language, Aramaic; that is, from now on we are dealing with the Aramaic language, and the things that the Chaldeans say are said in the Aramaic language.

THE INTERPRETATION

They ask the king to tell them the dream, and they will give the interpretation; and that, of course, raises a

question in the king's mind. These men were clever at this sort of thing, and if you give a man a certain interpretation or dream, if he is clever, he can probably come up with some kind of an explanation. One thing that makes me think that is true is that every once in a while I find I am on the spot. I am invited to say a few words, and haven't known that I was to do it, and I get my thoughts together and manage to talk for a few minutes—whether I have said anything or not is another question. If the dream had been told to them then they would have come up with some kind of an explanation, and the king very obviously realizes that that is not satisfactory. At least he must know that this is a different kind of dream, and it is a dream that has troubled him, and he wants to know the certainty of the thing, and so he utters these threats against the wise men.

Daniel is introduced, and Daniel (let me go over this very rapidly) first of all goes to God and prays that God will reveal this secret. The prayer that is given here is truly remarkable. In this, you will notice, there is a complete lack of any selfishness. Daniel is praying here that God's name be blessed for ever and ever; even before he asks that his request be granted, he is concerned that God's name be blessed. He speaks of the greatness of God in his prayers, and then thanks God that this secret is revealed, and then he goes back to Arioch. Now Arioch says, "I have found a man," as though Arioch himself were responsible for this, but Daniel takes no credit for this revelation. Daniel gives the credit to the true God, and I think that we need to notice that. It is a wonderful introduction to the revelation to be given.

In this dream there is a great colossus, a statue, and this statue is of diverse nature. What strikes us is that the head is of gold, and we can see that colossus, the head of gold shining as it were, and then Daniel looks at the other parts of the statue and characterizes them. He relates this so that the king will know that he is accurately describing the dream which the king has, and the conclusion of the matter is set forth in verse 28, when he says unto Nebuchadnezzar: "But there is a God in heaven

that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days." There is "the latter days" again, and that is the key to the understanding. We are looking forward to the Messianic time, to the time when God will manifest His purposes of salvation, and so he tells us about this dream and identifies the king himself as the head of gold. "Thou art this head of gold." That is, the Babylonian Empire as it culminates in its king. Nebuchadnezzar is the head of gold. I am inclined to think there is a particular emphasis upon the king here, for Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest of all the Babylonian kings. The power of Mesopotamia has come to its culmination in this king Nebuchadnezzar. He is the head of gold.

Daniel goes on to say that there will come after him another kingdom inferior to him. If you know Latin just think of the actual etymology of the word "inferior". The Aramaic word is *ara,* closer to the earth, more earthly, lower in that sense in being closer to the earth, lower than the first kingdom. And then there is a third kingdom of brass which shall bear rule over all the earth, and then the fourth kingdom; and then he sees that in the days of these kings, the lower kingdoms, in their days the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Then we are told about this stone that is cut out from the mountain which breaks in pieces the parts of the image. So God makes known to the king what is to come hereafter, and "the dream", he says, "is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

GOD'S ETERNAL KINGDOM

Let us see what is intended here. There are four kingdoms, and there is a fifth kingdom, the kingdom of God. If I understand this language aright, what Daniel is saying is that in the days when these four kingdoms exist, the God of heaven will set up another kingdom; and the kingdom which the God of heaven will set up is an eternal kingdom, it will never be destroyed. That is stated

explicitly in verse 44: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom." This is a remarkable concept, and there are those who approach the Bible with the idea that whatever we find in the Old Testament has to have its roots somewhere else in the world in some other religion, and so they looked for a scheme of four kingdoms followed by a fifth, and learned treatises have been written upon this subject, Where did the writer get this idea of four kingdoms followed by a fifth? I want to say that if you read this carefully you will see that that is not what is here. There are not four kingdoms followed by a fifth, but rather while the four kingdoms are in existence, while the colossus is still standing, then the God of heaven sets up the eternal kingdom; and that is not found anywhere outside of the Book of Daniel. This is a revelation from God; this cannot be duplicated in Persian religion or anywhere else. It is a revelation from God.

What are these kingdoms? Well, there are three major interpretations. The first one is agreed upon by just about everybody, and that is that it is Babylon. Of course, "Thou art this head of gold." It says that. Then what about the second kingdom? One view is that the second kingdom is Medo-Persia, which actually followed Babylon, the third kingdom is the Grecian kingdom of Alexander the Great, and the fourth kingdom is the kingdom of the successors of Alexander, the Seleucids in Syria and the Ptolemies in Egypt that we spoke of last night. That view has been held by some evangelical scholars. I have been told that there is a recrudescence of that view in England today. I have not seen anything in writing, however, recently in which that view has been set forth, and I do not think that it is very widespread. The common view that is held by the critical scholars is this: the first kingdom is Babylon, the second kingdom is Media, not Medo-Persia but just Media. Now actually the kingdom that followed Babylon was Medo-Persia, the combined Empire, and there was no separate Median Empire at all, except for a very short time later on after the time of Daniel, but the critics say the second kingdom is Media, the third kingdom is Persia,

and the fourth kingdom is Greece, and there are reasons given for that interpretation. Then the Messianic kingdom, we are told, followed the Grecian kingdom, as of course, it did historically.

There are several objections to that view. First of all, there is this objection, that you just did not have a separate Median Empire and then a separate Persian Empire following it. The answer to that objection that is given by the critics is, "We know that, but the author of Daniel who lived in the 2nd century, did not know that: he made an historical error at this point." I do not think myself that there is any warrant for accepting that view. I think it is a very weak view. There is a strong line of evidence against it. I am simply going to say right now that I think it can be refuted. For one thing, and I am simply going to mention this again, it goes contrary to what is stated right here, that the Messianic kingdom is set up, not after these four kingdoms, but during the period of the colossus. Look again, if you will, at verse 44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." "In the days of these kings": it doesn't say "*after* the days of these kings"; therefore, that whole idea of four kingdoms followed by a fifth is really contrary to what is stated here in Daniel.

There is another interpretation, and I invite your attention to this. It is, of course, that the first kingdom is Babylon; the second kingdom is Medo-Persia, which followed Babylon; the third kingdom is the Grecian Empire; and the fourth kingdom is the Roman Empire. If you adopt that position, then you will find yourself in harmony with what is stated here, that "in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed."

Now there, it seems to me, is the position that Daniel occupies in the history of redemption. The people are out of their land. Some of them, like Daniel, are concerned; what is to happen, what will God now do? What is the meaning of all this? They had heard the prophecies of

Isaiah when he had shown the boasting of the Assyrians, how they would engulf the very kingdom of God, if that were possible, and now all this has apparently come to pass. Have the promises been forgotten? No, the revelation is given that the kingdom of man will exist now in the form of Babylon; then in the form of Medo-Persia, a kingdom that conquered more territory than Babylon; after that another kingdom, even that of Greece, a kingdom that conquered even more than Medo-Persia; and then the power of man will come to its culmination, its high point, in Rome.

That does not necessarily mean just the historical Roman Empire (we plan to go into that point more tomorrow night) but Rome, in one form or another, will be the kingdom of man at its greatest. This will be the enemy of God's people, but God Himself will establish a kingdom, and His kingdom will be eternal. Even from this I think we can see that the kingdoms of the colossus are all essentially the same, all belong to the colossus; that is, a great statue of a man. All are human kingdoms in opposition to God's kingdom, but the kingdom that He establishes, He firmly establishes. It is the heavenly kingdom. It is the kingdom that He will establish, whereas the colossus will be destroyed by the stone not cut out by hands. The kingdom that God establishes will endure for ever. That was the message of comfort that God gave to the world through the prophet, Daniel, at this time when humanly speaking all seemed to have gone by the board. God would surely fulfill His promise of redemption.

DANIEL AND THE WORLD EMPIRES

LAST night we looked at the 2nd chapter of Daniel, and you remember that that chapter recorded the dream which the king Nebuchadnezzar had. In that dream there was set forth a great colossus, and that colossus represented the powers of man. It might have been divided into four parts. There were four Empires mentioned there. I said a word last night about the identification of those Empires. Daniel interpreted that dream when he was yet but a young boy in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign.

The subject with which we are to deal this evening is really the same thing presented in a different way, given to us in the 7th chapter of Daniel. This chapter also has a date. "In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters." We do not know exactly when the first year of Belshazzar was, but I think we may rightly assume that he did not reign for a very long time. The events recorded in this chapter, in other words, occurred shortly before the events that are given to us in the 5th chapter of Daniel, which tells us about Belshazzar's great feast and his being slain when Babylon had fallen. Belshazzar was a lesser king; he did not equal Nebuchadnezzar in grandeur, and he was not actually a monarch. It so happens that the real monarch was a man by the name of Nabonidus, yet Nabonidus did not want to exercise the functions of government with one particular exception, and that was the celebration of the New Year's Festival. Nabonidus spent a great deal of his time in Arabia in a place called Tema in the desert, and left the ruling of the kingship unto Belshazzar. In the year 1854 a tablet was discovered which mentions Belshazzar by name and

Nabonidus by name, and says that Nabonidus entrusted the kingship to Belshazzar; so Belshazzar was actually the king with whom the Hebrews had to deal.

The 5th chapter of Daniel has been the object of a great deal of attack. Some have said that there is an inaccuracy there when it speaks of Belshazzar as king, but I don't see how else you could speak of Belshazzar, unless you went into a long technical explanation every time you mentioned his name to state what the actual situation was. This tablet says that the kingship was entrusted unto Belshazzar, and I would say that the man unto whom the kingship is entrusted is a king to all practical intents and purposes. Furthermore, we need to notice that the word "king" is used in a variety of senses in the ancient world. There is a Hittite document which speaks, for example, of "the great king" and then it speaks of "other kings". The word "king" does not necessarily mean a monarch, and so if a man is called king we have to ask in what sense that is true. Even in *The Thousand and One Nights* there is diversity of uses of the word "king". So when Belshazzar is called king that does not mean that he is sole ruler, but it simply means that he is the man in authority. I personally don't see what else they could have called him. I have studied this matter and spoken to others about it. I remember that when I was in England I asked Donald Wiseman what his opinion on the subject was, and he had the same opinion. He said there could be no error in the Book of Daniel at this particular point. You will notice that Belshazzar says to Daniel that if he interprets the writing on the wall he will be made the third in the kingdom, or it may mean one of three in the kingdom, and there again you see an evidence of the accuracy of the Book of Daniel because, as a matter of fact, Belshazzar himself was only the second in the kingdom. It was Nabonidus who was the first in the kingdom. Belshazzar, however, to all intents and purposes was the king. He was the man with whom the Jews had to deal, and when they speak of him they use the Aramaic word for "king". I cannot see that there is any inaccuracy in that.

REVELATION THROUGH A DREAM

Belshazzar knew something about Daniel, and he knew something about him because of the interpretation that is given here, although it may be that Belshazzar himself did not receive this interpretation or did not pay much attention to it. We are simply told that in the first year of Belshazzar's reign, Daniel had these dreams and visions of his head upon his bed; then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters. We have said that one manner in which the revelation of God was given to the prophets was by means of dreams. Dreams are particularly in evidence at this time and also in the life of Joseph. At that time, likewise, the people of God were in a foreign country; then they were in bondage to Egypt, or at least they were ready to be in bondage to Egypt, and that period is characterized by dreams. Here also, during the exile, God reveals His will by means of dreams.

Now it would be very easy to misunderstand this. It would be very easy to assume that Daniel merely has a dream, and then when he gets up in the morning he writes down the sum of the matters that he has dreamed, and lets it go at that. I do not think we can take it that way. I believe that this is a revelation from God, that God Himself has given this material to Daniel in the form of a dream, and that is the reason why Daniel remembers so accurately the content of his dream and why he is able to write the dream down. A dream, after all, is a very illusive thing. I suppose you have all had that experience, waking in the morning, or really being about half awake when you are not quite sure whether what you have been dreaming is real or not, and then it sometimes comes to you as quite a relief to find out that what just a minute before had been so vivid is after all but a dream. But then when you try to recall the details of your dream you realize how difficult that is, and if you were to write down a dream that you had had, that would be truly difficult. Daniel can do that because Daniel is inspired of God and is writing down a revelation that God has given to him.

Daniel does not write down everything but just the

sum of the matters, the main points, you might say, of the dream. "Daniel spake and said (here he is relating to us what was the content of his dream), I saw in my vision by night." It was a dream vision that came to him at night, "and behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea." If I understand this verse aright, Daniel means that in his dream he beheld the boundless sea before him, and the four winds of heaven strove (better translated simply "burst forth") upon that sea. The winds blew so that the water of the sea was stirred up. The four winds are the winds of the four directions. The sea, as this chapter later points out, stands for man, for the sea is humanity, and from the sea the great nations are to arise. These are human kingdoms, but I think there is something symbolical in what is stated here. The four winds of heaven seem to stand for the powers of heaven, and what we learn is this, that what occurs on earth among men has been decreed by God. The powers of heaven stir up the great sea, and then from that sea the beasts arise, but what takes place on earth does not take place apart from God. God decrees what is to occur here, and that is represented by the winds of heaven, the heavenly winds breaking forth upon the great sea.

Then Daniel goes right to the heart of the matter, and I would ask you to notice how succinctly Daniel records these events. I think that is true of the Bible generally. The Bible is not a wordy book; it does not include a lot of unnecessary material. When you and I write we find it very difficult to be succinct and go right to the point. We have to relate so many matters that are not really essential. The first chapter of Genesis is an example of compact writing. Think of all that it says there. It goes right to the point; every word is essential. You have heard that story, perhaps, about the young man who was a reporter; he was just beginning his work and his first assignment was to go out and cover a fire. He did that, and he came back and began to write up about the fire. He wrote page after page telling everything about the fire, and then he handed it in to the editor. The editor gave it

back to him and said, "cut that down, you have got too much in here." "Well," he said, "if I cut that down I will leave out something important"; and then the editor said to him, "The account of the creation of the world is told in a few hundred words in the first chapter of Genesis, but you need all these pages to tell about a fire." I think that hits most of us who write. The Bible goes to the very heart of matters and states only what is essential; so notice as we read here how Daniel brings out just those things that are essential for us to know.

THE LION AND THE BEAR

In the 3rd verse there is a general statement: "And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another." These beasts (the word simply means animals) are great; their size is mentioned, for each one of them represents a human kingdom. They arose from the sea; they partook as it were, the nature of the sea; that is, they are human, they come up from mankind, and what is stated about them is that they are diverse one from another. They are not the same. This verse does not tell us whether they came up all at once simultaneously. or whether they came up one after another, and the answer to that question is left for the subsequent verses. The first was like a lion, and it had eagle's wings, and we are told that Daniel beheld till the wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. You can see that there is a similarity between this first beast and the head of the gold of the great colossus. Daniel would have recognized right away that this was the Babylonian Empire. This is a lion with eagle's wings. In the Book of Ezekiel Babylon again is represented by the lion and the eagle: that beast and that bird stand for Babylon.

There is erected today in the great Kaiser's Museum in Berlin the street leading up to the Ishtar Gate of Babylon, and if you have ever had the privilege of seeing that street you see on either side a tiled wall; the glaze on the tiles is just as bright today as it was when they were first erected, and on either side there is a procession of lions

leading up to the Ishtar Gate. It was the lion that symbolized Babylon and the eagle, and I would suggest that if the Book of Daniel was written by some unknown Jew of the 2nd century B.C., how did he ever come to know that the lion and the eagle symbolized Babylon? This indicates that whoever wrote this was familiar with Babylon, and it points to the fact that Daniel himself was the author.

This beast arises, then, but you will notice that the wings are plucked from it. It is lifted up from the earth and made stand upon its feet like a man. I think that means upon its hind feet standing upright as a man, and a man's heart is given unto it. There is, in other words, a power that is higher and stronger than the beast which compels that beast to change its nature. You are, perhaps, reminded of the time when Nebuchadnezzar was driven from his throne to go out into the fields and to eat and live as did the wild beasts until he learned that God reigned on high. So this Babylonian Empire is staunch in its conquests, and a human nature, so to speak, is given unto it. It is changed, and we learn right away that there is a power that is greater than Babylon.

Daniel goes on to say: "And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh." This second beast is compared to the bear, which again is known as a rapacious animal, but if you will note there is a double-sided character to this second beast. If I understand this verse aright, it gives the picture of the feet on one side being raised as though to go forward. The feet on the other side are stationary, and it symbolizes what we might call "a double kingdom". I think it is the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians, but what is characteristic of this beast is its ability to devour, and the command is given to it to arise and devour much flesh. That means, of course, that it is to conquer many nations.

Let us look briefly at history: Daniel lived in Babylon under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar the great king. Along about the middle of the 6th century B.C. to the east in

Persia, in the plateau that we today call Persia or Iran, there arose a man in the district known as Anahan, and this man was Cyrus. Cyrus first conquered his own country. Then the Medes joined in with him, and he conquered the district known as Persia, and he annexed one territory after another unto himself. The kingdom, however, was of a double kind; it was a Medo-Persian kingdom, the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians, and in the 6th chapter Daniel speaks of the law of the Medes and Persians. Cyrus extended his conquests, and I think it would have been apparent that it was only a matter of time until Cyrus would come down into the Mesopotamian Valley and would conquer Babylon also; and that he did in the year 538-539 B.C. Belshazzar was then upon the throne, but Cyrus took the city without fighting we are told, and in that very night Belshazzar was slain. Then Darius the Mede took the kingdom, ruling over the Babylonian Empire for a time. Now the law of the Medes and the Persians was in effect at that time. Cyrus did not stop in his conquest of Babylon; as you know he permitted the Jews to return to Palestine. He allowed his conquered people to worship their own gods. He was a much wiser king in that respect than were the kings of Babylon and Assyria, and so the people were satisfied with his reign. But Cyrus went on extending his kingdom far and wide, and that, I think, is what is meant by this command, "Arise and devour much flesh." This great nation extends itself far more than Babylon had done.

GOD IN CONTROL

Notice, however, that this nation also is subject to a higher power. The command is given to it; it is not a suggestion, but a command. There is One that is more mighty than Cyrus, more powerful than Medo-Persia, and this One tells the kingdom what it is to do, "Arise, devour much flesh." That means, of course, that these kingdoms are subject to God. I personally find a great deal of comfort in this fact. It would be very easy for us when we read our newspapers to think that evil was in control of the situation. We might very easily fall into the tempta-

tion of believing that the kingdoms of this world actually control things. There was a time when it seemed as though Hitler could have everything that he wanted. It was a tragic thing that this man who was willing to do so much evil could simply go on in his evil ways. When we think of the many that were put to death in those awful concentration camps, it is almost unbelievable. If you have ever visited any of those concentration camps the very thing makes you just sick to think that men can be so cruel against other men. There is a sign at Dachau today which says "never again", but we know all too well that it can happen again, that the heart of man is evil. We may fall into the temptation of thinking that human kingdoms do after all control things, that God might like to intervene but He is too important to do so. This verse, however makes it clear that that is not the case. God allows evil to go on only so long, and then He brings it to an end, and where is Hitler now? We no more worry about him because he and his power are gone; and the power of Communism also, who can say what its future will be? We know this, however, that this world is under God's control, and the Russians cannot control this earth as they desire. Communism is not strong enough to destroy the Gospel of Christ, and God is in control. When He says, "Arise devour much flesh," then the nation will do so, only as long as He permits. Our God is Sovereign; He does according to HIS will, not man's will. In the armies of heaven above and on earth who can stay His hand and say unto Him, "What doest thou?"

THE LEOPARD AND THE STRONG BEAST

Then Daniel looks and again another animal appears, this time one like a leopard or a panther. Upon its back are four wings of a fowl, and it has four heads; and dominion was given to it. This beast symbolizes the kingdom that follows Medo-Persia, and what characterizes it is the rapidity with which it can move about. That is shown by the fact that it is represented by a panther or a leopard. It is shown also by the fact that it has the four wings. The four heads point, as it were, to the different directions of

the earth, for this kingdom extended itself as Medo-Persia had not been able to do. Now I believe that the reference here is to the Grecian Empire. Alexander the Great extended the sway of that Empire far and wide. We know that he is supposed to have died lamenting that there were no more worlds to conquer. There is a Medieval legend to the effect that Alexander even went as far as India. He certainly extended his sway to great distances at any rate. Again, "dominion was given to it," and I want to stress that fact that even this kingdom which had a far greater extent than the two preceding it, had to receive its dominion; even Alexander the Great was not controlling things. When God wanted his life to go, God took that life. Alexander could not prolong his life. He could not live on for ever, nor can any man. Dominion is given to this kingdom. It is GIVEN to the kingdom, which means that God is in control of what this kingdom also does.

The fourth beast is introduced, you will notice, with particular solemnity. Daniel says: "After this I saw in the night visions." He speaks thus in order that he may concentrate our attention upon the fourth beast. And then he says: "behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly." You will notice that this beast is nondescript. It is not compared to any known animal, not a lion or a bear nor a panther or a leopard, but it is simply said to be "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it." The emphasis falls upon the strength of this fourth beast. The first three beasts were known for their ability to conquer, but this beast is a beast of strength, a beast which destroys and devours and breaks in pieces. It is set apart, it is different from the other beasts. It is unique, and Daniel looks at this beast which is dreadful and fearful exceedingly. What does this mean?

May I just repeat what I said last night? The critical view of Daniel is that the fourth beast is the Grecian Empire. That interpretation is based upon the assumption

that the author of Daniel made a historical error, and the error was that he assumed that the second kingdom was Media, and the third kingdom was Persia. I do not believe for an instant that that view can be maintained. Those who hold that the fourth beast was Greece now have to face up to the statement that it has ten horns, and they must then identify those horns. If the fourth beast is the Grecian Empire, then what is meant by these ten horns, and what is meant by the little horn? The advocates of this view have no trouble with the little horn, they say that that is Antiochus Epiphanes. You remember we mentioned that man the other night. He was a ruler of Syria. He was also a usurper, and he was a man who committed a great abomination in Jerusalem, entering the temple on the Sabbath Day and erecting an idol there in the temple. He is a forerunner in the 11th chapter of Daniel of the Antichrist himself.

Now the higher critics tell us that this Antiochus Epiphanes is the little horn. One reason why they say that is in the 8th chapter there is also mention of a small horn, a little horn, which very obviously is Antiochus Epiphanes. The two, therefore, we are told, are said to be the same thing. Without going into it in any great detail, I have written a number of pages on it in my Commentary on Daniel, I think it can be shown very clearly that the little horn of chapter 7 and the little horn of chapter 8 are not the same, and are not intended to show the same thing. If you hold that the little horn is Antiochus Epiphanes then you must hold, of course, that the fourth kingdom is the Grecian Empire, and then you are faced with the problem of identifying the ten horns.

Just what are those ten horns? Those who seek to identify the ten horns try to find ten rulers among the Seleucians, that is, ten rulers of Syria and seek to establish that this culminates in Antiochus Epiphanes. Then you have the additional problem of identifying the three horns that were uprooted by Antiochus Epiphanes, the so-called little horn. A great deal of scholarly work has been extended in an endeavour to do that, but I just want to say it can-

not be done. There were not these ten rulers that fit the picture here. I think when we begin to identify these ten horns we get ourselves into very great difficulty, especially if we are limited to ten rulers of Syria. It does not fit the picture at all, and I am more and more convinced that those who would make of the fourth kingdom the Grecian Empire have really missed the point of the Book of Daniel. That is a great error. We shall see that with respect to the Seventy Weeks, when we make these fit into the period of Antiochus Epiphanes we really take the meaning out of that prophecy, but that is the widespread view of the Book of Daniel today. It is almost a dogma of modern criticism. If you pick up modernistic books on the Bible you will find that this is stated with almost no evidence being given to support it. The critics have reached a point now where they simply make assertions with little supporting evidence, and this is one of the fundamental dogmas of modern higher criticism that the fourth beast in Daniel is Greece; and you can judge a Commentary by its identification of the fourth kingdom. If it says that the fourth kingdom is the Grecian Empire you can be pretty sure you are dealing with a Commentary written from the Liberal standpoint.

I would ask also, What was there about the Grecian Empire that made it fundamentally different from the three that preceded it? I cannot see that that difference is present. Then also, I think we need to point out that there never was this separate Median Empire and Persian Empire, and this identification is based upon the assumption that the writer of Daniel made an error. I am not willing to grant that, for I think there is no evidence to support that. There is an error made, but it wasn't made by the writer of the Book of Daniel. It is made in this incorrect identification of the fourth kingdom.

What, then, is this fourth kingdom? In line with what we said last night that during the days of these kings God in heaven would erect a kingdom, I think we are compelled to say that the fourth kingdom is the historical Roman Empire, the Empire that was on the scene when

our Lord was born. The Roman Empire differed from those that preceded it. Now John in the Revelation goes back to this, and John perceives that the great enemy of the people of God is first Babylon, and he speaks of Babylon as "the mother of harlots and abominations", for he is taking that from Daniel and from Isaiah; and then John rightly goes on to see that the great enemy of the people of God is Rome. Incidentally, the Book of Revelation is based very largely upon the language of Isaiah and Daniel. It is almost unbelievable how much of Isaiah and Daniel are found in the Book of Revelation, and the Divine interpretation of these two books, of course, is given to us in the Book of Revelation.

All right then, this kingdom is diverse. Literally, "it is acting diversely from those that were before it." It is set apart. It is distinct. This is the Roman Empire. This is the culmination of the kingdom of man. This is the Ecumenical World Empire at its strongest. It is Rome, for it was while Rome was in existence that our Lord was crucified. But now Daniel calls attention to the ten horns, and it had ten horns. Just what does that mean? Now I don't want to be dogmatic because there are so many differences of opinion here. We have a book in our library at Westminster Seminary written by a French scholar who had it in apparently for ten bishops in the French church. He identified those ten bishops as the ten horns. I don't know that his view is particularly widespread. At any rate, I think that kind of thing is very dangerous. There were people not so long ago who were pretty sure that Mussolini was the little horn, and they were making identifications of that kind. They were saying that he was the Antichrist or the Man of Sin.

If we look at this portion of Scripture, it seems that on the head of this beast there were ten horns. They symbolize a particular period in the development or growth, you might say, of the beast. I do not think that if we try to identify them we will get anywhere by identifying ten kings or kingdoms or ten people that are precise contemporaries. That is what we would actually have to do, because these horns are right there at one time on the head

of the beast. I hold this view and I set it forth rather tentatively. It seems to me that these ten horns signify a period that will follow the historical Roman Empire.

Then there comes the little horn, and the little horn is characterized by the fact that it has eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth that speaks great things. By saying that it speaks great things the Bible means that it speaks blasphemous, presumptuous things. Now that little horn, from the remainder of the Book of Daniel, of this chapter at least, appears to be the power that is opposed to God, what we may call the Antichrist, and if I understand this rightly, we have a picture of the Roman Empire and then of a period subsequent to the Roman Empire, and then of a time when the opposition to Christ will concentrate itself, and that concentrated opposition is represented by the little horn. That little horn may stand for a kingdom. It may stand for an individual, the Man of Sin. It may stand for an ideology such as Communism. It may stand even for a coalition of governments. I do not know, and I do not think the Bible is specific enough here so that we can go around pointing to different people and different kingdoms and saying, "That is the little horn." On the other hand, I think the Bible is specific enough so that we can recognize the work of the little horn wherever we find it. Wherever there is opposition and hostility to the work of Christ there is the work of the little horn.

Now according to this chapter that work will be intensified as the days draw to a close. The power of evil will be strengthened, and it will all but destroy the people of God. It will progress for a time, for times, and then we would expect it to say for "four times" giving a complete number of seven, but instead of that it says "and the dividing of a time", implying that the power of the little horn will be cut off. In other words, I think there is given us here a picture of the kingdom of men from the time of Babylon until the Second Coming of Christ. The period that is characterized by the ten horns seems to me the very period in which we are living. There are empires and kingdoms which in one sense or another may trace their origin back to Rome. They are the kingdom of man. They

exist for a time, and then the power of evil in this concentrated form appears upon the scene. The little horn is boastful and blasphemous against the work of God until finally he is destroyed.

THE SON OF MAN

As Daniel hears this little horn uttering these blasphemous words his eyes are lifted to heaven, and there he sees a judgment scene. There is a throne of fire, with wheels of fire, and the fiery stream issues from before him, and on that throne there sits the Ancient of days. That simply means an aged, venerable person. The symbol is of God, seated upon the throne of judgment. It is certainly one of the most majestically conceived scenes in all of the Old Testament. There is God, seated upon the throne of judgment, and all this while we hear the words of the little horn. Then the thrones are cast down. That does not mean they are destroyed, but it means they are thrown down in order that judges may sit upon them. And then there is brought unto the Ancient of days with the clouds of heaven one like the Son of man. The words "Son of man" simply mean a man, but there comes on the clouds of heaven this One like the Son of man. That symbolism signifies the Deity, for the coming on the clouds of heaven is a coming to judge, and it is only God who can judge, and like the prophecy of Isaiah that we considered this afternoon, so here also there is a foreshadowing of the doctrine of the Trinity. God is upon the throne, yet there comes with the clouds of heaven one that is Himself divine, that performs the functions that only God can perform. The judgment is uttered, and the fourth beast is given to the burning of fire, a complete destruction of the kingdom of men, but to the Son of man there is given a kingdom that is said to be an eternal kingdom and a universal kingdom.

If you will look at these kingdoms of the beasts you will see that there is a great deal that is similar about them. All of them arose from the sea; that is, they are all human kingdoms. We need to realize that that which is human is temporal. I remember in Germany that when

Germany for a time had an alliance with Russia, Hitler had placards all over the city, at least all over Leipzig where I was, saying that Russia was the third Reich's eternal friend. Now that is fairly strong language. I remember hearing a German lady asking this question: "Do you think," she said, "that anything human can really be eternal?" There were some people that were not taken in by all of that. Well, nothing that is merely human can be eternal, and every one of these kingdoms was human in origin? It arose from the sea.

THE UNIVERSAL ETERNAL KINGDOM

Notice this also, every one of these kingdoms sought to be universal, world-wide. Each succeeding kingdom was more universal than the one preceding it. That is not really an accurate way of speaking. A thing either is universal or it is not universal. What I should say is that each succeeding kingdom sought to conquer more territory than the one preceding it, and we know how much territory Rome has conquered; but none of these kingdoms is truly universal. Where is Babylon today or the remains of her rule? She never conquered the whole world, nor did Medo-Persia nor Greece nor even Rome.

Furthermore, each one of these kingdoms sought to be eternal. The Babylonian kings spoke of themselves in language that implied that they were always on the throne. Each one sought to be eternal, for they all wanted to rule God out of the picture; and so it is with the stage represented by the ten horns. We fall into the error of thinking that human kingdoms will endure for ever, but where is Babylon today and where is Medo-Persia? You may visit Athens and see some of the glory that was Greece. You may go to the Forum at Rome and see the ruins of ancient Rome, but those kingdoms are gone, never to appear again upon the scene of history. They are human. They are local and they are temporal kingdoms. But now the kingdom of the Son of man is quite different. It is of divine origin, and that is why it is universal, and that is why it is eternal.

Behind the Iron Curtain today there are men and women who acknowledge Jesus Christ as the King. They are not excluded from this kingdom because of their race or because of their colour, or because of their nationality, for this is a universal kingdom. I remember that when I sailed to Palestine the first time I was on a ship that stopped, it seemed to me, at almost every port, and I was glad for that because I was seeing more of the world, and we finally went up into the Black Sea. We went through the Dardanelles and into the Black Sea, and as we sailed through the Dardanelles we were very close to land, and I was standing there on the deck of the ship looking at that land, for that was Asia, and I was just a boy at that time, and quite thrilled to see that new country. There was a lady on that ship who was going to Palestine as a missionary to the Jews, and she took me to task for showing any enthusiasm about this country. "That," she said, "is Turkey, and don't you know that the book of Ezekiel teaches that no Turk and no Russian can possibly be saved?" Well, I have heard the Book of Ezekiel accused of teaching a lot of strange things before, but never anything quite like that, and so we may thank God that that is not the case. Men are not excluded from the kingdom because of their nationality. The kingdom of the Son of man is truly a universal kingdom, and we may rejoice in that fact. We are not alone. All over this world there are men and women who acknowledge the same Jesus Christ as their King.

Furthermore, this is an eternal kingdom, and we who probably are living at the time of these ten horns, or it may be that the little horn is with us, whatever be the case, we are members of a kingdom that will not perish. All of the forces of Communism cannot destroy Christianity, and all of the indifference of professing Christians cannot destroy Christianity, for our King is the Son of man who will come with the clouds of heaven in glory, and His kingdom is an eternal kingdom and will not pass away.

In the city of Damascus, in Syria, there is a great mosque which the Mohammedans accept as one of their

most sacred buildings. Along one of the walls of this mosque today there are a number of small shops, and if you were to go there you could ask one of the shopkeepers for a step-ladder, and he would know what you wanted it for, and he would give you that step-ladder. Then you could climb up on the roof of the shop and walk right over and touch the wall of the mosque. If you were to do that, you would find a number of small bushes growing there, and you would pull back these bushes until you would find the thing for which you were looking. There is an old doorway that is all walled up, and the whole thing has been whitewashed over, but on the lintel of that doorway there are these words in the Greek language: "Thy kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting Kingdom, and Thy reign endureth for ever and ever." You see, at one time, this building was a Christian church, and the true God was worshipped therein. The forces of infidelity have all but obliterated the fact that at one time the true God was worshipped in this building. But Satan is never completely thorough, and these words remain to bear their mute yet eloquent testimony to the fact that the true God was once worshipped in this building; and so it is. It may seem that the kingdom of the Son of man has come upon dark days, and that it will perish from off the face of the earth, but it is not for us to be discouraged. We are to look at the King and to remember that we are members of an eternal kingdom. In the kingdoms of this world there is darkness, and there is unrest, but in the kingdom of the Son of man there is peace and there is life and there is light and there is hope. Enter ye in.

THE SEVENTY WEEKS I

Text: Daniel 9:20-27.

I WANT to speak this evening and to-morrow evening, the Lord willing, on the subject of the Seventy Weeks. That does not mean that I am going to speak for seventy weeks, but it may seem to you that that is the case.

In the first year of Darius this revelation was given to Daniel. The time of the exile had about come to an end, and Daniel, as he tells us, was concerned about this matter. He had been studying the prophecies of Jeremiah and he tells us in verse 2 of this chapter that God would accomplish seventy years in the destruction of Jerusalem. Daniel, therefore, turned to God in prayer, in supplication, fasting, sackcloth and ashes, and he sought of God information concerning the situation. What was to be the future of Gods people? The exile was the period of God's wrath and indignation against the Jews, but this exile would not last permanently. Now it was about over. What was to happen? What was God going to do for His people? When would there be a deliverance?

In this prayer, this beautiful prayer that is given in the 9th chapter, Daniel acknowledges and confesses the sin of the nation, and he identifies himself with that nation in the sin. I believe that Daniel is the only man in the Old Testament of whom no sin is recorded. It is sometimes said that Joseph may also be placed in that category, but I think there is question about that. At least of Daniel no sin is recorded, but that certainly does not mean that Daniel was a sinless man, for in this prayer he gives expression to his sinfulness. What is God going to do with this nation to which confusion of faces has come? What will be the future? It is while Daniel is praying that the angel Gabriel is sent to him, and the angel brings to him a message; a message, I believe, that has to do with his

prayer, that tells him what is going to happen to Jerusalem and to the nation, a message that centres about the fact of redemption; and that is contained in these four verses which conclude the chapter, beginning at verse 24, and I want to read those to you now: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

There was one commentator who spoke about these four verses as "the dismal swamp of Old Testament criticism" which meant that he found them very difficult to study. I would like to say, by way of introduction, that they are difficult, and there are many questions that arise in connection with them which I think we must leave unanswered for the simple reason that we do not know the answer. I am afraid of anyone that is too dogmatic in studying a passage like this, and what I want to try to do to-night and to-morrow night is to bring out what seems to me to be the central meaning of the passage, also to discuss it in connection with the parenthesis view of the church. The other day we considered a passage which was regarded from the dispensational standpoint

as the most important passage in the New Testament, and surely this is the most important passage in the Old Testament to support that theory. If we can understand this passage aright then we have an answer to the question of what the prophets were speaking, and so I shall make references to that view as we proceed.

If you look, however, at these four verses I think even on a superficial reading you will see that verse 24 stands as a sort of a heading. That gives us the general theme in one verse, and then beginning with verse 25 certain details are set forth. I want to take this 24th verse up in some detail to-night because it is essential to an understanding of the whole passage; and so notice the first sentence, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city"—they are determined in order to accomplish certain purposes. Six of these purposes are mentioned; for example, "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity." These are three of the purposes. The period of the Seventy Weeks, then, is decreed or set aside for a specific purpose to accomplish these six things that are introduced here by the word "to".

THE SEVENTY SEVENS

Let us look at it a bit more closely. The first two words are translated in the English "seventy weeks". If we were to translate these words literally we would have to change the order and put the word "weeks" first. The two words here rendered "seventy weeks" have the same consonants. The second word in the Hebrew occasions no difficulty; it is the ordinary numeral seventy. But the first of the two words, translated "weeks" does occasion some difficulty. It is not the ordinary Hebrew word for week. It is an unusual form, and what it really means is "that which is divided into seven". I think we may translate it by the word "sevens" and translate the whole construction, "sevens, even seventy of them", or to put it freely in English, "seventy sevens".

Why would anyone translate this "weeks"? That is the

common translation. Well, people realize that there is difficulty here, and those who translate this as "weeks" right away take that in a figurative sense. There are some, very few, who say that it means an ordinary week of seven days. Somebody sent me a mimeographed paper, written by a man who had been at Wheaton College, I believe, and had advanced the thesis that this meant a week of ordinary days, so that the entire period of seventy weeks would be about a year and a half in length; and I believe that some German scholar wrote his Doctor's thesis to show the same thing, but I don't know of anybody else that really holds that view, because if you say this only refers to a period of about a year and a half in length it does not really fit into the context very well. It does not make much sense. Almost everybody, then, agrees these are not ordinary weeks of seven days. Well, then, what are they? They go back to the beginning of the chapter where there has been mention of seventy years. I do think that this does reflect upon that phrase "seventy years", but we are told in most commentaries that these are weeks of years; that is, each week instead of being seven days long is seven years long, and if there are seventy of those you get a total of 490 years. Consequently, I think the most common interpretation is to say that this is a period of 490 years from its beginning to its conclusion.

I would simply call your attention to the fact that the ordinary word for weeks is not used here. Rather it is simply a word meaning seven, "sevens, even seventy of them, are determined." That, it seems to me, is the force of this phrase. What then is a seven, how long is that seven? Well, here we cannot be dogmatic, and if some of you want to say that the seven is seven years long and the entire period is 490 years long, I can sympathize with that, although I think there are great difficulties in adopting that view. I do not think we can tell how long the seven is. I think that this does reflect upon the seventy years of the exile, and the seventy times seven would be a period that would remind us perhaps of 490 years, but it is not precisely that. In other words, I do not think

that these sevens are given to us in order to enable us to measure the length of time. They are indefinite numbers, if you will. All we are told is that there is a period of seventy of these sevens. It is close enough to the 490 so that when the fulfillment comes then we will recognize it, but it is not precisely 490 years. In a few minutes I think I can support that by further argumentation, and you will see why I am adopting this position.

The verb that is used here is in the singular, and that means that the subject is really a collective, so if I may paraphrase it I would say that a period of seventy sevens has been decreed, or I might also say sevens even seventy of them; this period has been decreed. The verb means that it has been set aside; it has been determined; that is, by God, for it is God who determines the times and the seasons, and this particular period, the precise length of which we do not know, but which is simply characterized by this "'seventy seven", this particular period of time has been decreed by God, and that is the first thing that Daniel must know.

THE PEOPLE AND THE CITY

It has reference to Daniel's people and to his holy city. It has been decreed with reference to his people; that is, the Jews that are in bondage at that time, and also with respect to his city which is holy; that is, Jerusalem. Daniel, in his prayer, had prayed concerning that. What will be the future of the Jews? What will be the future of Jerusalem? During the exile we know that the land of Palestine had suffered because of poverty. Jerusalem had been in ruins, it had not been completely rebuilt. We know that most of the Jews were there in Babylon. They were out of their own land. You can see that a devout Jew would be greatly concerned as to what was to take place next, and so God is giving this gracious revelation that this period of time has been set aside. It is a particular period of time. It has reference to Daniel's own people, and to his holy city.

There are those who say that is so, that it is concerning his own people and the holy city, Jerusalem, and that

therefore it has no reference to anything else. I cannot see that that follows. That is sometimes used as an argument for saying that what follows will take place during the millennium, and have reference only to the Jews. I do not think that is the meaning of the language at all. I do not think that Gabriel means to say to Daniel that this period has been determined by God with respect to the Jews and Jerusalem and has no reference to anything else. After all, these people at that very moment were in bondage to Babylon. They had dealings with a Gentile nation, and so their very fortunes are bound up with other people. It is true that the heart of this message answers the question, What will happen to the Jews? but their happenings do not occur in a vacuum, they occur In connection with other nations also. So while the heart of the message does refer to the Jews and to Jerusalem, that certainly does not exclude reference to other people. It is, then, with respect to "thy people" and "thy holy city" that this period has been decreed.

SIN TO BE REMOVED

It has been decreed or determined by God for the accomplishment of specific purposes, and there are six of these that are mentioned here. Three of them, the first three, are more or less negative in character; and the last three are, I would say, positive in character.

There is some textual difficulty with respect to some of these words that are used here: "to restrain the transgression" ("to imprison the transgression". it might be rendered), to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity." You will notice that in those three phrases the words "sin" and "transgression" and "iniquity" are used. In his prayer Daniel had said, "we have sinned, we have transgressed, we have done iniquitously." By bringing those three words together Daniel is simply setting forth in its fulness the nature of that which has separated man from God. He is speaking of sin in a complete sense. Sin means a rebellion against God. I am more or less appealing, when I say that, to the etymologi-

cal background of the word; the word that is used seems to have reference to a political sphere first of all. It refers to rebellion against a ruler. On the Assyrian inscriptions there are a number of statements to the effect that a certain person has sinned against the ruler. That means he has rebelled against the ruler, and while this word often seems to have the connotation of missing the mark, I think the other is not entirely lacking. At any rate, it is sin here in a moral sense. It is rebellion against God that is in view. "The transgression," likewise, seems to have come originally from the same sphere, the political sphere, but it refers to the breaking of God's commandments, the transgressions, the walking across as it were, the shattering of God's law; and the dealing iniquitously, doing iniquitously, is simply another word for sin, for dealing in that way that is unjust: so we have sin set before us in its fulness here.

The purpose of the decreeing of the seventy sevens, then, is in order that sin may be removed. If you look at this 24th verse you will see that the transgression is to be shut up, to be so imprisoned that it will never come forth to be seen again. Now what transgression is referred to? That is, of course, the question. "To make an end of sins". What sins are referred to? "To make reconciliation for iniquity." There the infinitive that is used is an infinitive that literally means "to cover over", and what it implies is that an offering has been made, a sacrifice has been made, so that the sin is covered over and no longer seen. I believe that these three statements have to do with the putting away of sin. What sin is that? There are those who tell us that it is the sin of the Israelites in particular, and that that will be done during the millennium, but is that really what Daniel is talking about? I think there is a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews which reflects upon this when it says of Christ "now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26). That, it seems to me, is what is intended here. It is the very pinnacle, as it were, towards which the Old Testament points, that sin shall be removed. In the Garden of Eden

man transgressed, and before God drove man out of the Garden of Eden He gave this announcement to the serpent, "And enmity will I put between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed; thou shalt bruise his head, and he shall bruise thy heel" (Gen. 3:15). In other words, this enmity is to culminate in a decisive blow in which the seed of the woman will bruise the serpent's head; and all of the Old Testament points forward to the time when that act will be accomplished. That is the great goal of the Old Testament, looking towards the fulness of time. The prophets who were given worked upon the foundation of Moses, but they looked forward to that time when God would send that One Who would heal the breach between Himself and man. It is that that Isaiah speaks of and Jeremiah, and I believe, Daniel also. This is the great question in the Old Testament. When will reconciliation be made? When will God show His face again? When will this breach which has separated us from God be healed over? So Daniel is here telling us when it is to take place, this thing for which the people longed. Because of their sin they are in bondage, they are in exile. When will this occur? I think that it is that for which this prophecy, like all other Old Testament prophecies that speak of the future, is looking.

There is, then, a period of seventy sevens. This has been determined by God. This has reference to "thy people" and "thy holy city", and it has been determined by God, so that these things may be accomplished, the putting away of sin.

RIGHTEOUSNESS TO BE BROUGHT IN

We have only looked at what we may call the negative aspect of this. There is also a positive aspect to consider, and that is given in the last three statements of this verse: "to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." Let us just take those one by one. "To bring in a righteousness of eternity". That is on the positive side. That is one of the results which will be accomplished by

setting aside, or the determination of the seventy sevens. That is one thing that the seventy sevens are going to accomplish. They are set aside, they are determined so that this may be accomplished. What does it mean? "The bringing in of eternal righteousness." You might say in place of the sin that has been imprisoned, shut up so that it will no longer appear, there is introduced (literally "there is caused to come") a righteousness of eternity, of the ages, if you will. What does that mean? What is righteousness, this righteousness that is brought in? It is a righteousness that is brought in through the seventy weeks. They are determined in order that it may be brought in — a righteousness that is eternal, that is of the ages.

What is that righteousness, then? Well, I think that when we look at the New Testament we have the full answer, but even the Old Testament speaks of the righteousness and salvation of God. Isaiah speaks that way. This righteousness and salvation are tied up together, and they are God's righteousness. It is not a righteousness that sinful man can somehow produce, it is a righteousness that has to do with eternity. It is similar to the Sun of Righteousness that rises with healing in His wings. It is that righteousness which God Himself provides, and I think the Apostle Paul in the Epistle to the Philippians really brings out the meaning when he says: "That I may be found in Him (that is in Christ), having a righteousness, not my own, which is of the law, but the righteousness of Christ." And again Paul brings it out when he speaks of the gospel and says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation . . . for therein is revealed the righteousness of God from faith unto faith." There is a beautiful development in Paul's thought there. There is first of all this grand declaration, "I am not ashamed of the gospel"; and then Paul gives us the reason why he is not ashamed of the gospel, "for it (that is, the gospel) is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile." Then he gives us the reason

why it is the power of God unto salvation, "for therein is revealed the righteousness of God from faith unto faith, as it is written, the just shall live by faith." I think that is the righteousness of which Daniel is speaking here also.

You may remember Martin Luther's comment on this verse in Romans. There was a time in his life when he dreaded this verse, when he greatly disliked this verse, and he did not like to think about it because he thought that the word "righteousness" spoke of an attribute of God, God showing Himself to be righteous in the condemnation of the sinner. Now it is perfectly true that even in the condemnation of the sinner God shows Himself to be righteous, but that is not the meaning of this verse, and happily Luther came to understand it differently. The righteousness of God is a righteousness that comes from God. That is the righteousness in which Paul would stand when he would appear before God, not in his own righteousness, a righteousness that would be obtained by trying to obey the law, for that would never produce a righteousness, but it is a righteousness that has a heavenly character, a righteousness that God provides; and so here, although that is not stated, this is no earthly righteousness. It is not a righteousness that the Jews could somehow produce by repentance of what they had done in their sins. It is rather a righteousness that God Himself provides.

There are so many connections between the Book of Daniel and the Prophecy of Isaiah that I think here also there is one of them, and we can really have an understanding of this phrase by looking at some of those statements in the book of Isaiah in which righteousness and eternal salvation of God are tied together, and so there is the introduction to righteousness, the righteousness of eternities. I personally feel that this one phrase really rightly helps us to understand the three that have preceded. I think this shows without a doubt that the seventy weeks point forward to the time of Christ, that this righteousness has been introduced by Jesus Christ. It is not

a righteousness that is to come in at some future time, for Christ has brought in this righteousness, and the wonderful characteristic of the gospel is not that God tells us that our sins are forgiven and then refuses to have anything to do with us, but He tells us that we are clothed with a righteousness, even the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and upon the basis of that God tells us that our sins are forgiven, and He looks upon us as clothed in Him. There is, then, an eternal righteousness which these seventy sevens are set aside to introduce.

VISION AND PROPHET TO CEASE

Then if vou look at the next statement, "to seal up the vision and prophecy," I think this has often been misunderstood. The Hebrew simply says "to seal up vision and prophet"—not prophecy, but prophet. To seal up the vision and the prophecy might give the impression that this was to accredit the prophecies that had been uttered. I do not think that is the meaning of the passage. Rather it is to seal up vision and prophet. Now "vision" referred to one medium of Old Testament revelation, and "prophet" referred to the mediator who set forth the revelation of God that came to him through vision. We have been discussing this in the past days, that God made His ways known unto the prophets through dreams and visions, and there are visions in many of the prophets. The vision was characteristic of the prophet, and the term even had a general sense so that a long prophecy such as that of Isaiah bears the heading "The vision of Isaiah". There the word practically means "the revelation", and again in Amos, "the words of Amos which he saw" and the word "saw" there is a word that is related to the word for "vision", and so this came to characterize the means of Old Testament revelation. This is to be done away. The vision will no longer be given to the Old Testament prophet. The prophet himself is to be done away. for the prophets, as we have said, were simply types. Thev were there under Moses as a witness of the thing to be spoken of. They were not an end in them-

selves. There is not to be a renewal of the Old Testament age with prophets again, but the prophets belong to that age that has passed away. They were forerunners of Jesus Christ Who is the Great Prophet, and when Jesus Christ comes we no longer need the vision. We no longer need the prophets.

It is perfectly true that you do have prophets mentioned in the New Testament. I am well aware of that, and you do have perhaps visions. Paul had a vision, but that is something quite different. Those were gifts that accompanied the Apostolic age, the founding of the church. They belong to the period of fulfillment. That is not what Daniel has in mind here. That is not the Old Testament age. The Old Testament age is the age of vision and prophet, and that is now sealed up so that it will no longer be seen. It is done away, for something new and something better is to come.

Then the last statement that is made here is "to anoint the most Holy". That is a difficult phrase. Literally it means "and to anoint", and the Hebrew word reminds us of the word Messiah. "To anoint a holiness of holinesses" is the literal translation of these words. That means to anoint that which is most holy or to anoint the most holy thing. What does that refer to? Well, I want to say very frankly I do not think we can be dogmatic about that. There are differences of opinion. I think we are justified perhaps in interpreting this phrase in the light of the other five, and if the other five refer to the Messianic work it would seem that this does also, and I can have great sympathy with those who believe that this refers to the anointing of Messiah for His work — the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him, but I am not going to say that in any positive fashion because we simply do not know. I think the only thing we can be sure of is that this phrase is included with the other five and would seem to have reference to the same work; but literally it is simply "to anoint a most holy thing" or "the holiness of holinesses", and that, I think, is all that we can say positively about it.

We have, then, in this 24th verse this truth brought to light that God is going to bring redemption to His people. He is going to remove sin, and He is going to introduce eternal righteousness, and the Old Testament age will pass away; and in order to accomplish that He has determined a period of seventy sevens. If I understand this text aright it means that this period has been determined by God for the purpose of accomplishing these things, and when these six things have been accomplished then the purpose of the seventy sevens will have been fulfilled, and they will have come to an end.

THE BEGINNING OF THE PERIOD

Now right away, someone is going to say, when did they begin and when did they end? There is one thing I think we can agree upon, we have to agree upon it, and that is that nowhere in the text does it tell us where they ended. Well, where did they begin? If you go on to the 25th verse you will see that they are divided into three groups. Verse 25 says, "And thou shalt know and understand, from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince is seven sevens." There is one seven set out as the first part, and then sixty and two sevens, and those are two sections, you might say, of the entire period of seventy sevens; then there is also mentioned in the 27th verse "and in the midst of the seven" which refers, I think, to the last or the seventieth seven. They begin, it would seem with the going forth of a word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. "Thou shalt know and understand" is equivalent to our Lord's words "he that hath ears to hear, let him hear." It would seem to imply that a spiritual discernment is found in Daniel, and Daniel is to pay attention to this. He is to know and to understand.

We have time to-night just to say a little bit about the beginning of this period. In the King James version we read: "From the going forth of the commandment," and that is a very unfortunate translation because the Hebrew simply says "the going forth of a word". If you

will look back to verse 23 you will see that it starts out "At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth". This Bible has a little 5 before "commandment", and in the margin it says Hebrew "word". It is the same as the expression in verse 25, "At the beginning of thy supplications the word came forth." That word came forth from God, did it not? simply a word, not a commandment, and this language in verse 25 is the same, "From the going forth of a word," and the content of the word has to do with the restoring and the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Many commentators believe that they must find a commandment to return to Palestine and to rebuild Jerusalem. There was a German scholar in the last century named E. W. Hengstenberg, one of the greatest Old Testament scholars, I think that Germany has ever produced, and a true Bible believer. He was converted in early life when he went to teach Arabic to men who were going out to the Mission field. Then he plunged himself immediately into the study of the Old Testament, and he has written as full a discussion of these seventy sevens as anybody that I know. He has over 200 pages on these four verses alone. He has worked it out that the commandment refers to a period in the life of Artaxerxes, a Persian king, and he dates that as 445 B.C. Then, you see, what he wants to do is to get 490 years in there and work that up until the conclusion of the whole period. Now it does not work out very satisfactorily, and as you know Sir Robert Anderson of Scotland Yard wrote a book on this subject beginning at the other end, as it were, beginning with the month of the triumphal entry, and working back he came to the year 445, but he insisted on certain presuppositions, and every month had to have so many days that there could be no extra days in any of this reckoning, and you had to begin at a certain time and work back, and that way he believed that he had worked this out mathematically. Now I frankly think that kind of thing is wrong. I do not think that this passage was given to us in order that we might be clever with mathe-

matics and so on, and I am not impressed when every now and then somebody comes up with long tables to show that he has worked this out right down to the dot. In every one of these cases certain things have to be granted in order that all of these mathematical calculations may work out. I think we get much farther by looking at what the Bible itself says here. The emphasis of the Bible is not on the end of this period certainly, because that is not mentioned. The emphasis of the Bible is not upon the beginning of this period. The emphasis of the Bible is upon what is going to be accomplished by this period. That is where I want to place the emphasis. God evidently sent this word forth, and the content of it was to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, and I am inclined to think there is only one period in history when such a word went forth, and that was the first year of Cyrus, which was 538 or 539 B.C. and if you add 490 to 539 you do not come up to the time of Christ, which is another reason why I do not think 490 precise years are intended.

THE PARENTHESIS VIEW OF THE CHURCH

There is this three-fold division. The parenthesis view of the church maintains (and I can do little more than state this) or most of the advocates of the view maintain that this period begins in 445 B.C. You have the period of the seven sevens or forty-nine years, which roughly covers the work of Ezra and Nehemiah (I agree with that interpretation). Then you have the period of the 62 years which they claim brings us up to some period in the life of Christ, possibly the time of the triumphal entry, although the Scofield Bible, I am very glad to notice, says that we cannot be precise about this (I forget the exact language), but the prophetic language, it says, is so close as to show what is intended, and yet not precise so that it will be the subject of curiosity. Something to that effect it states, and I think that is a very wise note, but according to the dispensational view 69 of these periods have been accomplished by the first advent of Christ. I think it is fair to put it that way.

Then the last period, the seventieth seven, was not fulfilled immediately, but rather there is the great gap, the great parenthesis, and at the close of that the seventieth seven will come. Let me state it a little more fully in order that we may do justice to this view. We today, in this church age, according to the parenthesis view, are in just that, a parenthesis. This age will come to a close when Jesus Christ returns for His saints. When He comes *for His saints* the seventieth week, or seven of Daniel, will begin to run its course. The Jews will be regathered in Palestine. They will make a covenant with the Man of Sin for seven years. In the midst of that week; that is, after three and a half years, he will break the covenant, there will occur a great tribulation lasting for three and a half years, and at the end of that period Christ will return *with His saints*. They make a distinction between His coming *for His saints* and coming *with His saints*. Following that there will be the thousand year reign, the period of the millennium, and after that the judgment of the Great White Throne, the nations will be gathered together for battle at Armageddon, and then the eternal states will begin. Now that is one presentation of this parenthesis view.

I want to present the view that the seventy sevens are a unit, that just as there is no gap between the first period of seven and the second period of 62, neither is there a gap between the second period of 62 and the last of one. I think there is reason for that division which we will have to let go till to-morrow night. If there is this gap (this is just a consideration, I am not going to call this an argument) notice this, this parenthesis of the church age has already lasted nearly two thousand years; that is, four times longer than the entirety of the seventy sevens themselves. Let me state that again, the parenthesis view is that the seventy sevens last 490 years. Between the 69th and the 70th there is a parenthesis that already has lasted nearly 2,000 years or four times as long as the whole seventy sevens themselves. Just keep that in mind.

Then this second consideration; there is no gap between the first and the second period. Why should we assume a gap between the second and the third period? These, it seems to me, are considerations that are worth while keeping in mind.

May I close by saying, as we turn our thoughts away from some of these considerations, I believe God has given us here a look into the future; rather He gave Daniel a look into the future, an assurance that the salvation would come. He tells Daniel what will happen to his people, and what will happen to his holy city. He tells Daniel that this period has been determined in order that the promised work of salvation might be accomplished. There, I think, is where the emphasis should fall.

THE SEVENTY WEEKS II

Text: Daniel 9:24-27.

LAST night I gave the first of these talks on the seventy weeks, and by right I should have covered thirty-five weeks last night, and left thirty-five for to-night, but that is not quite the division that we find in the Scriptures, so in a sense we shall have to start at the beginning to-night also. We are going to start to-night at verse 25. We spent most of last night on the 24th verse of Daniel 9 and to-night, then, we shall begin with verse 25. I want to read this verse and then we will begin to comment on it. Gabriel is speaking to Daniel and says: "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and three-score and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."

We looked at the first part of the verse last night, and I made the comment that the word "commandment" is really out of place here, it is from the going forth of a "word" to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince. This word goes forth from God. The language is the same as in verse 23. It is God Who has in His hand the destinies of His people, and it is God who decides when they are to leave the land of their exile and return to Palestine and rebuild their city and their temple. Yet, although the word goes forth from God, we have every right to look at human history and see when the Jews actually did first return from Babylon and begin the rebuilding of their city; and I think that that occurred during the first year of Cyrus, which would be 538 or 539 B.C. In that year they left Babylon, many of them, and returned to Palestine. Many of them remained in Babylon. Among them was Daniel, but the others did

return to Palestine and began the rebuilding of the city.

I think that is the *terminus a quo* of the seventy sevens; that is, it seems to me the beginning of the period, for that is the only time in which they return to rebuild the city. Some appealed to the 20th year of Artaxerxes about which we read in the second chapter of Nehemiah. You remember that in that 20th year of Artaxerxes Nehemiah the cupbearer was standing before the king and his countenance was sad. The king asked him what it was that troubled him and he told him that he was grieved because the city walls lay in ruins, and Artaxerxes the Persian king allowed Nehemiah to return, and we have that very interesting account in the Bible of how Nehemiah alone, before he made arrangements, went out and looked at the walls of the city, the gates that were broken down and so on, and yet, even in that day the city was in existence. The walls were broken down and in need of repair, but the people lived in houses, and even before that time the prophets Haggai and Zechariah had prophesied, and Haggai had condemned the people because they lived in what he called "cieled houses" and the temple of the Lord had not been built, and he stirred the people up to the rebuilding of the temple; so long before the time of Artaxerxes the city was in existence. In other words, I do not think that 20th year of Artaxerxes is what is in mind here. If you look at this language it is "to restore and to build Jerusalem"; that is, really to rebuild Jerusalem, and that was not done in the 20th year of Artaxerxes; the walls needed repairing, but the city was there. But it was in the first year of Cyrus that the Jews did return and began this work of rebuilding the city. I would say, therefore, that that is the time when the seventy sevens begin.

THE END OF THE PERIOD

The end of the period is also given and that is stated in the words "unto the Messiah the Prince." If we were to read this in the Hebrew we would see that the definite article is missing: "Unto an anointed one who is a prince." That is the meaning of the language. Who

is this Anointed one that is also a prince? If we look at this language, the word "one who is anointed" seems to me to stress the fact that he is a priest. In the Old Testament the priests were anointed and the kings were anointed, but there is very little said about the anointing of the prophets. I am inclined to think that the prophets were anointed, but the stress is not placed upon that. That is placed upon the anointing of the priests, then kings; and so when it says "prince" right away we are brought face to face with the fact that this is a ruler, a king, a man who sits upon the throne. The language is not redundant when it says he is an anointed one. I think the emphasis there primarily is to the fact that he is a priest.

There are many who tell us that this is Onias the Third, that he is the anointed one. Onias was a high priest of Judah, a man who lived about the time of the Maccabees, a man whose life was taken by murder. He seems to have been a good man, but he was slain; yet he is not the one of whom Daniel is speaking, for while he might have been anointed as a priest, he was not a king, he was not a ruler. Others say this is Cyrus, but while Cyrus may have been a ruler he was not a priest. We must therefore, look for someone who was both a priest and a ruler, a priest and a king, and if we look carefully at this passage and the whole Messianic emphasis that is given to us in verse 24, I think we do not go far astray if we say that this anointed one who is a king, this priest king, is none other than the Messiah, that is JESUS.

When we speak of Jesus Christ we are both giving His name and His office. His name is JESUS, His office is Messiah or Christ, for Christ is simply the Greek translaton of the Hebrew word for "anointed one". I think, therefore, that the reference is to our Lord. It is unto our Lord that this period points.

THE DIVISIONS OF THE PERIOD

If you will look in your English Bibles you will see that it shall be "seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks". The English Bible makes a break, a major break after the phrase "threescore and two weeks" (that is, sixty and

two weeks): it will be seven weeks, and sixty and two weeks; that is, of course, a total of sixty-nine weeks unto Messiah the Prince. You might ask, Why not just let it stand that way? The answer is that in the Hebrew Bible the major break is after "seven sevens". According to the Hebrew Bible and its accents, from the going forth of the word unto Messiah the Prince is seven sevens. The sevens, according to this interpretation, last from the going forth of the word until the Messiah appears. Now the accents that have been placed in the Hebrew Bible were placed there by Jewish scholars called Masoretes along about the 7th and 8th century A.D., and they are very valuable, but they are only an interpretation. Nevertheless, upon the basis of this interpretation certain Lutheran scholars, who are devout students of the Bible, have founded a particular interpretation. Let me give this interpretation to you. They say that from the first year of Cyrus, the going forth of the word unto Messiah the Prince, unto Jesus, is seven sevens. Then they say following Christ there is a period of sixty and two sevens, that is the very age in which we are living today; that is characterized by rebuilding, they tell us, and all of that refers to the growth of the church, the preaching of the gospel. Then there is one seven remaining, sixty nine and one, and this one that remains is a time when Messiah will be cut off. By that, they say it means that the Christ will lose all of His influence in the world. There will hardly be anyone that believes on Him, and then the Antichrist will be manifest for one seven until Christ Himself returns. I call that view "the Christian church exposition" because it places the church in the very heart of this prophecy. It is a very attractive view. As far as I know it was first presented by Kliefoth in a German commentary, it was taken over by Keil who is certainly one of the greatest Old Testament commentators ever to have lived. It is a view that as far as I know is confined to the Lutheran church. We cannot dismiss it off hand, and yet for reasons that I want to develop as we proceed, I do not think that is the correct view.

I am very hesitant about disagreeing with the accents that the Masoretes have placed in the Bible, for those accents are really a commentary. They show us how the phrases are to be divided, how they are to be grouped together; and it is very evident that that work was done with extreme care, and consequently one cannot lightly throw aside those accent marks, and yet at this particular place, and also in the preceding verse I think we may disregard the accents. I do not think this means to say that from the going forth of the word unto the Messiah is only seven sevens. I think rather that what it means is "from the going forth of the word unto Messiah the Prince is seven sevens and sixty and two sevens". There are, in other words, two periods in between the time of Cyrus and the time of Christ.

If that is so, and at this particular point the dispensational interpretation agrees with what I am saying, what is meant by the seven sevens? Why this division, then, into seven and then sixty and two? What is the purpose of that? Well here, of course, we need to be very cautious. I do not think anybody has the right to be dogmatic or can be dogmatic here for the Scripture does not speak positively. I think it is a dangerous thing for us to speak positively, and fortunately this is not a life and death matter. All I am going to give you is what I think is intended, and if you don't feel that you can go along with this that is perfectly all right. There are plenty of people who feel that they cannot go along with it, but it seems to me, at any rate, that the seven sevens refer to the work of Ezra and Nehemiah, to the end of the period that we call the restoration; then the sixty and two sevens take us on from the end of the restoration, the work of Ezra and Nehemiah, until the time of Christ. They cover that great inter-Testamental period, the period about which the Bible is almost silent. That is the period of the sixty and two sevens and they bring us, then, right up to the Messiah, Who is the Prince. We are told, then, that the city will be built again, the streets shall be built and the wall even in troublous times. That, I think, refers to the

work of the rebuilding under Nehemiah when there was affliction. It is a statement that the city would be built again. Notice in this that there is a definite answer to Daniel's prayer. The Jews wanted to know what would happen to their city, Jerusalem, and they are being told the city will be built again. The Jews lamented because the city was in ruins. We have the Book of Lamentations, we have the 137th Psalm, we have that longing for the city of God, Zion. Jerusalem is to be built again; and that is the message, I think, that is given in this verse.

THE MESSIAH CUT OFF

In verse 26 we read: "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." Let us look briefly at this verse, and see what we can get out of it. It has a reference to what follows the sixty and two. The word "threescore" just means sixty, so after the sixty-two sevens then Messiah will be cut off. The dispensationalists or the advocates of the parenthesis view of the church claim that this means that the cutting off of the Messiah takes place after the sixty and two sevens, but before the seventieth seven begins to run its course. The order of events, according to the parenthesis view of the church, is that we have, first the seven, then the sixty and two, then the cutting off of the Messiah in a parenthesis, and then finally the seventieth seven. They maintain that after the sixty and two have run their course, when Christ has come, then He will be cut off by death, and after that the seventieth week or seventieth seven will run its course.

In a minute or so I want to try to point out that it is not necessary to hold that interpretation at all. The one thing that is stated here is that after the sixty and two sevens, then Messiah will be cut off, but it does not say that the cutting off is not in the seventieth seven. I think verse 27 shows that it is. It does not at this point say anything about that last seven, because the emphasis in this

passage is upon the cutting off of the Messiah and not so much about when it takes place other than after the sixty and two sevens. Messiah shall be cut off, and it reflects upon the statement in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, "He shall be cut off from the land of the living," or upon the laws of Leviticus: "He shall be cut off from Israel." A man who has sinned in a certain way will be cut off from the people, will be severed from them, and in the light of Isaiah 53 we may say that this means the Messiah will be cut off by death. He will be separated from His people, simply cut off from them, abandoned as it were, given over to the judgment, to the condemnation, cut off from His people. He will be cut off; and then the next phrase, "but not for himself" is better translated "but there is not to him"; that is, He has nothing. I think, in other words, that this is a clear statement of the Crucifixion of Christ. After the sixty and two sevens have run their course, then the Messiah will be cut off by death, and He has nothing. He, Who is the Messiah, Who is the very Creator of heaven and earth has nothing, for He is despised and rejected of men. And so the Jews, seeing Him there said, "We have no king but Caesar," and in that hour God, as it were, rejected Him. God hid His face from Him, so that He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He is utterly rejected, this One who is a Ruler, a Prince and an Anointed One, a Priest; this One unto whom the sixty-nine sevens point is cut off by death, and He has nothing. That is the first great event that must be noted with respect to the seventy sevens.

THE CITY AND SANCTUARY DESTROYED

There is a second event, and that has to do with the city and the sanctuary. Daniel has prayed concerning these. What is to be their future? The latter part of the verse, I think, we can read this way: "And as for the city and the sanctuary, the people of a Prince who will come will destroy them." Let us take just that phrase. Now to put it mildly the Hebrew of this verse is difficult, and I think we have to be very cautious in the way we handle

it. I am convinced that the translation that I have just given you can be defended grammatically — And as for the city and the sanctuary, the people of a Prince that is coming will destroy them. The object of the verb is placed first, "the city and the sanctuary", the verb is "will destroy". Let me just state it by turning the words around so that the meaning will be clearer. The people of a Prince that will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. That is what is being stated here. The city is Jerusalem. The sanctuary is the temple that will be in Jerusalem. These are going to be destroyed by the people who belong to a Prince that will come. Now the phrase "will come" may either mean that He will come in the future from Daniel's day or it can simply mean He comes in a hostile sense. Either one of those translations is possible, and I am not sure that we can prove that one over against the other is the correct one; but the people who belong to a Prince that will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.

You see, then, that after the sixty and two sevens, after the first two portions of the seven sevens have been concluded, two things are going to happen: first, the Messiah will be cut off and has nothing; secondly, the city and its sanctuary will be destroyed. Those are the two points that we need to keep in mind. Christ will be crucified, Christ will be cut off by death, Jerusalem and the temple will be destroyed. That is what this passage clearly teaches.

Let us look at this a bit more closely, however. Who is it that destroys the city and the sanctuary? The answer is, the people; people, that is, armies will destroy them. These are the armies of a Prince, of a Prince who will come. Now the higher critical scholars maintain that this Prince is Antiochus Epiphanes, but there is so much in the way of that view that I do not think it would be profitale for us now to spend much time in consideration of it. In my commentary I have tried to answer it in detail. I am convinced that cannot be the meaning of the passage. All of that is based upon the assumption that the Fourth Empire is Greece and that goes contrary to the express

statement that in the days of these kings, these four kingdoms or kings, the Lord of heaven will set up an everlasting kingdom. Therefore, we must look at this passage again and see what we can come up with if the Fourth Kingdom is Rome.

Now right here I think that the advocates of the parenthesis view of the church and myself happen to be in agreement. The people who came were the Romans — the Romans right after the time of Christ, and they belonged to a Prince, and that Prince is Titus Vespasianus. If you ever go to the city of Rome you will want to see the great arch that is erected there. It is called The Arch of Titus, and then as you look on that arch you will see carved there scenes from the destruction of Jerusalem. Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us how the armies of Titus came to Palestine, how they attacked the city of Jerusalem, how they blockaded that city, how they attacked it with battering rams and finally broke it down after a long siege of many days. There was starvation in that city, and the Jews had turned even one against another. Finally the Romans broke down the walls and came into the city. They desecrated the temple, and Josephus says that the blood of the Jews flowed down the steps of the temple like the water of a stream. It is a terrible picture that is given. In 68 A.D. the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, and the prophecy of Jesus Christ was fulfilled that stones of the temple were not standing one upon another. The temple was rased, and it has never been rebuilt; and if you go to Jerusalem today all you will find remaining of that temple is that one little section known as "the wailing wall", but throughout Jerusalem you will see here and there in the old buildings large pebbled stones. Those stones are about the size of an average dining room table, and those are the stones that were at one time a part of Herod's temple. This remarkable building was destroyed, as Daniel prophesied. This is an example of a fulfillment of prophecy. These people who belong to that Prince that would come, that is Titus, they destroyed the city. These are the two things that are set

forth as taking place after the sixty and two sevens; the death of the Messiah and the destruction of the city and the temple.

UNTO THE END — DESOLATION

The latter part of this verse is quite difficult. "The end thereof": its end, what does that mean, the end of the city, the end of the sanctuary, just what is referred to there? It is "with a flood", an overflowing that is. The language is taken from Isaiah, "and unto the end of the war desolations are determined," or you can read it, "unto the end is war, a determination of desolations." What end is spoken of? I think it means unto the very end of the city and the sanctuary, until Titus was through with his work, for then Jerusalem was really destroyed. The Romans took away its name and they gave it a Roman name, Colonia Aelia Capitolina, and for many years the Jews were no longer in Jerusalem, not until the next century do we find them back there again. Then there are the early traditions about Helena, the mother of Constantine, sending to Jerusalem to find the true cross, but there is a period of darkness, a period of obscurity there when Jerusalem is destroyed. That is what this verse means. I am skipping over the details of the latter part of this verse because they are not really to the main point of the message, but they are essential in this respect that they make it clear that to the very end there will be suffering, war, desolations determined.

THE COVENANT CONFIRMED

Now we come to verse 27, and this is the crucial verse for the understanding of the prophecy: "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease," and I think if we look at that we can start with that first part of the verse. The question is, what does the verb mean here? The verb in Hebrew is the first word. I reads like this: "And he will cause to prevail for many (or with respect to many) a covenant for one seven." There the word is used in the singular.

The great question here is, What is the subject of this verb? There have been a number of suggestions. Some say that one week will confirm a covenant. That is a view that is quite old. It has been held by some conservatives. Others say that the verb is impersonal and you might translate it by a passive: "the covenant will be confirmed." Others say that the subject is the Prince of verse 26. Now they would interpret it this way: "the people of a Prince who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary and will confirm a covenant with many for one week." I would ask you to notice that the word "Prince" is in a rather subordinate position, and you are not likely to take it as the subject of the verb.

Let us just take a common ordinary English sentence; a sentence that may not make much sense, but at least it will show what I am getting at here. The son of the man went down the street and saw the dog. Who saw the dog? Your first inclination would probably be to say the son saw the dog, but I think you will acknowledge that the man grammatically could have seen the dog. The son of the man went down street and saw the dog. Normally you would say it was the son.

THE DISPENSATIONAL VIEW

Now that is what you have here, that kind of a construction. The people of the Prince will destroy and will confirm the covenant. Normally you would say that the people are the ones who will confirm the covenant because "Prince" is in a subordinate position, but that is not the strongest objection to this at all. The dispensational view is that this refers to a revived Roman Empire. The next event, according to God's plan, we are told, is the return of Jesus Christ. We are told that that return is imminent and that when Jesus comes He will come FOR His saints.

I read a novel once which tried to show this, and about all that I can remember of the story was that one morning people woke up and all of a sudden their friends were gone; people whom they knew just were not there. What had happened? Well, it finally became apparent that the rapture had occurred, and these people were believers

and they had been taken up into the air with the Lord. And so the parenthesis view says the next event in the Divine programme is for the return of Christ, the rapture. Chist will come FOR His saints. When He does that the seventieth seven begins and it runs for seven years. The Jews will be regathered in Palestine, but the political situation will be different from what it is right now. There will be a revived Roman Empire, and the ruler of that Empire, the Roman Prince, will make a covenant with these Jews, a covenant for seven years. The terms of the covenant will be that they will give political allegiance to Him, and in return for that He will allow them to worship and sacrifice in their temple. The temple will be built. He, you see, makes a covenant with them, the Jews, for one week; that is, for seven years. That is a very difficult view, and I think that strains the language most impossibly. Just look at what we are asked to believe. May I paraphrase the thought in order to make this clear as possible? Daniel asks, "What will happen to my holy city?" The answer comes that the people of a Prince to come will destroy your city, Daniel, and he, the Prince, will make a covenant thousands of years later with the many.

Now that is what you have to believe. In verse 26 the Prince refers to Titus. In verse 27 the Prince does not refer to Titus but to a ruler of the revived Roman Empire. Let me say that again, that you may see the force of it. We are asked to believe on this view that the people of a prince, Titus, will restore the city and the sanctuary, and then the prince, no longer Titus, but the ruler of the revived Roman Empire, some thousand years later will make a covenant with many for one week. Now that is not only impossible grammatically, but that just does not make sense. How can you call the armies of Titus the armies of a prince who has not even appeared upon the scene of history? You cannot do that, can you? You cannot say that the armies of Napoleon are the armies of De Gaulle, can you? How can you possibly say that? They have no connection with him except that De Gaulle belongs to the same country. So you cannot say that Roman soldiers of the first century A.D. are the soldiers of a

prince who hasn't even yet appeared upon the scene of history, but that is what we are asked to do here. In verse 26 that prince is Titus; in verse 27 when that prince makes a covenant it is not Titus at all; it is somebody that hasn't yet appeared. I think any view that requires that kind of thing just destroys itself by its own weakness.

There is something else that we need to notice, and that is that this verb does not refer to the making of a covenant. This idiom has recently been discovered on an Assyrian inscription of one of the Assyrian kings. It means to make a covenant firm, or if you will, to confirm a covenant: a covenant that is already in existence is now going to be made firm; that is, the conditions of that covenant will be brought to pass, will be made forceful at this time. So we have to reject this parenthesis view of the church because it speaks of the making of a covenant, and the Bible does not speak of the making of a covenant. The Bible is talking about a covenant that has been made long before, one that is already in existence. All the Bible is talking about is the confirming or ratifying of a covenant that is already in existence.

I feel that right here the parenthesis view of the church fails. This is the passage upon which that view is based, but this passage does not support that view. It demands of the passage what the passage does not give, and I have never yet seen a satisfactory explanation of these particular points, but you just can't take the English Bible and build theories on that; and that has been half the trouble, that those who present these views don't have a competent knowledge of the original languages of the Bible. We have to know what God is saying, and that is why, if we are going to speak on these things, we have to know the languages of the Bible.

Let me give you just an example: there is a theory going around, I am sure you have heard it, that there were men on earth before Adam. There was a pre-Adamite race. A lady wrote to me about this recently. She was sure, apparently, that this was so. What is the foundation for that view? If you turn to the first chapter of Genesis

in the English Bible it says, "replenish the earth". Now "replenish" means to fill up again, and so these people reason if you are going to fill it up again it must already have been filled, and on the basis of that they argue there were people here before Adam. Now that is catchy, and that is novel, and that is interesting, and people will always listen to that sort of thing. There is only one thing the matter with it, it is *wrong*. The Hebrew does not say anything about replenish — it is just a simple verb, fill the earth, but you see if we don't know and just take the English Bible we are likely to build wrong views, and we should not go around teaching others unless we have the truth ourselves. What is the reason for that? No translation can be absolutely perfect, and I suppose that when the King James translation was made the word "replenish" simply meant replenish or fill, but today it means fill again. And so here, you see, some of the translations say, "And He shall make a covenant with many for a week." That is inaccurate. There is no talk here about the making of a covenant, and so I think that on the basis of these verses the parenthesis view of the church simply has to go.

WHO CONFIRMS THE COVENANT?

What is the covenant? Who is it that confirms that covenant? There is here a traditional view in the Christian church. It hasn't been confined to any one part of the church, but it has been held throughout the history of the church, and I think Augustine gave it its first classic expression, and that is that it is the Messiah who confirms this covenant. How does He do it? He does it by His death, for by His death He brings life and salvation to His people. It is the covenant of grace that God made with the fathers in which He promised to them eternal life and required of them faith in Him, and Christ is the Mediator of the covenant and He brings it to pass by His death. He confirms it for one week. There is the answer as to the relationship of the death of Christ and the seventieth seven. The death of Christ is in this seventieth seven, not before it but in it, and that is proved by the following phrase: "In the midst of the week He will cause

sacrifice and oblation to cease." The advocates of the parenthesis view of the church say that this is the Roman prince. After three and a half years this Roman prince supposedly goes back on his word. He causes the Jewish sacrifices to cease, and then there are three and a half years more of terrible persecution. But inasmuch as everything else has fallen away we know that this cannot be the meaning of the phrase, but look how beautifully this fits in with the traditional interpretation. Jesus Christ caused sacrifice and oblation to cease by the death of Himself: "in the midst of the week" He dies. There is an historical fact that everyone has to explain. To me it is a remarkable thing, the more I think about it. The Jews today do not have sacrifices. They do not try to reinstitute sacrifces. Many of them have gone back to Palestine, but they are not rebuilding their temple, and they are not reinstituting sacrifices. When Jesus Christ died the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. That temple was no longer the temple of God, but it was abomination. From then on the way of access into the presence of God was through the blood of Jesus Christ, and that is the only way, and any other way is an abomination. Very shortly thereafter that temple was destroyed. The sacrifices ceased, and they have never been reinstituted, and I think everybody has to explain that fact. What is the reason? Do you know what the Jews did then? They were driven out of their land for a time. They gathered together their learned doctors and they spent hours discussing how to obey the law under different circumstances, and the result is we have the Jewish Mishna and the two Talmuds, and those are long, long, long works. They discussed just about everything in them in order to keep Judaism alive, but for some reason there seems to have been no desire to reinstitute sacrifices. This prophecy was fulfilled by our Lord's death: the sacrifice ceased; and so I say, this is a reference to Jesus Christ and to His atoning death.

The passage does not tell us when the seventy sevens come to an end. I look at it this way, and I may be mis-

taken. What happens to the city and to the sanctuary is a consequence of the death of the Messiah. They are destroyed, and this is given to us even in this 27th verse: "for the overspreading of abominations He shall make it desolate even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." Again, those are difficult words. I think it refers to the fact that the temple, which is no longer the temple of God, but just an abomination, will be destroyed, destroyed completely, and that is the end that is in mind there. That desolation will continue until the temple that once was the temple of God is now completely destroyed.

The cutting off of the Messiah, then, is in the seventieth seven; the destruction of the city and the sanctuary, it seems to me, occurs as a consequence of Christ's death, just after the sevens have come to an end. The whole remarkable period has been decreed by God in order that the Messianic salvation should take place, and when Christ died on the cross there was no longer any need to talk about seventy sevens for they were over. They had accomplished their purpose. Daniel's city will pass out of existence, yes, but the Christ has caused sacrifice and oblation to cease because He has offered the one sacrifice that is efficacious to put away sin. The veil of the temple is rent in twain. and there is access unto Daniel's God through faith in the Messiah, the Prince who was cut off by death.

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