

# CHAPTER THREE

## THE POLITICAL COURSE OF THIS WORLD

As we have seen very clearly, God does not desire that we be ignorant concerning those things that are to come upon the world. God has given us clear instruction and clear direction. It would seem that the political leaders of this world would earnestly seek to understand what God has revealed. But it seems that even those who profess to be believers either do not know or choose to ignore what God has revealed. More astounding than that is that those rulers who deify the God of Heaven are busily fulfilling the prophecies of Scripture. God has said that He has planned it all and He will carry it out.

(Isa 46:9-10 NNAS)

"Remember the former things long past, For I am God,  
and there is no other; *I am* God, and there is no one like Me,  
{10} Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient  
times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose  
will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';

One of the most important books of Scripture in which God has revealed His plan of the ages is the book of Daniel. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah also contain much in the way of prophetic utterances. In many of the prophetic books of the Old Testament the prophets speak of the future of Judah and Israel but frequently the prophecies have a double reference. By the *Law of Double Reference* we mean that the prophecy has a fulfillment to be accomplished soon but the complete fulfillment is an event much later in history. The scope of Daniel's prophecies are from the immediate (the days in which he lived) to the end of all things. We have all enjoyed the accounts of Daniel's life and those of other Hebrew young people in Babylonian captivity. Daniel was a man most special and God chose to reveal through him great truths concerning God's plan for mankind.

## THE TIME OF THE GENTILES

As we saw from our Biblical Time Line, God chose to select Israel as a special people through whom He would bring the redeemer. God's purpose for Israel was that they were to demonstrate to the whole world the true and Only God. Israel failed to fulfill this assignment. Israel instead followed the gods of the nations around them. As punishment God used these same gentile nations to chastise Israel. It is error to think that God only had a plan for Israel. God said to Abraham, "That through *Abraham* all the nations of the world would be blessed." Israel did not fulfill that portion of the covenant but man's failure does not alter the purpose of God. Daniel, while in Babylonian captivity was used by God to reveal God's plan for the gentiles as well as for the nation of Israel.

Scripture tells us that God has used many different ways and means to reveal His truth to us.

(Heb 1:1-2 NNAS)

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in  
the prophets in many portions and in many ways,  
{2} in these last days has spoken to us in His Son,  
whom He appointed heir of all things, through  
whom also He made the world.

God caused a gentile king to have a dream. That man's name was Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar forgot the dream but was troubled by it. He imposed an impossible task upon his wise men. He demanded that they tell him the dream. Daniel steps into the scene at this point and God revealed both the dream and the interpretation to Daniel.

## THE DREAM

(Dan 2:31-35 NNAS)

"You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. {32} "The head of that statue *was made* of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, {33} its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. {34} "You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. {35} "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

## THE STATUE

1. THE HEAD...PURE GOLD
2. THE BREAST AND ARMS...SILVER
3. THE BELLY AND THIGHS...BRASS
4. THE LEGS..IRON
5. THE FEET..IRON AND CLAY
6. THE ROCK..CUT OUT WITHOUT HANDS

## THE INTERPRETATION

Not only did God reveal the dream to Daniel but God also gave Daniel the interpretation. As we study this passage of Scripture we not only learn what God has in store for this world but we also are taught by God how we are to handle His Word as it pertains to prophecy. As I have said so often God does not want us to be ignorant, and God has not left us without guidance as to the understanding of God's Word. If we will but allow the Holy Spirit to guide us and not impose irrational and preconceived ideas upon the Word of God, God will lead us into all truth. The sad fact is that most of the time we come to the Word not to be instructed but to prove a point. Let's allow God through Daniel to teach us from His Word.

1. The head of Gold...

(Dan 2:37-38 NNAS)

"You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory; {38} and wherever the sons of men dwell, *or* the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given *them* into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold.

God does not make us wonder what the interpretation of this symbol should be. God very simply states through Daniel that the king Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold. Daniel also indicates the kingdom over which Nebuchadnezzar was king, and Daniel also indicates that it is God who has given him the kingdom.

God asserts his sovereignty over the kingdom affairs of this world. God establishes kings and kingdoms and God removes kings and kingdoms. God established Nebuchadnezzar as the king of kings of this world. Nebuchadnezzar was the absolute authority and power in his kingdom. There has never been a king since whose power was so pure, therefore the head of gold. Prior to this kingdom, there had been strong nations but none who ruled the world as did Nebuchadnezzar.

## 2. Breast and arms of silver...

(Dan 2:39a NNAS)

"After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you,

Daniel continues with the interpretation indicating that the *breast and arms* are another kingdom, and one that will follow that of Nebuchadnezzar. God did not name that kingdom but history reveals that the next kingdom was a coalition of Media and Persia known as the Medo-Persian empire. The Medo-Persian empire conquered the Babylonian empire but the rulers never did have the pure kingship of Nebuchadnezzar. As you can see each succeeding kingdom becomes stronger in military might but weaker in the purity of the authority of the heads of state.

## 3. The belly and thighs of brass...

(Dan 2:39b NNAS)

then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth.

History reveals that the kingdom which followed the Medo-Persian empire was that of Greece. Under Alexander The Great, Greece conquered all of the then known world. Alexander is reported to have cried because there were no further kingdoms to conquer. Alexander however shared his power with generals and a senate.

## 4. The legs of iron...

(Dan 2:40 NNAS)

"Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces.

What a description of the next phase of gentile history. The Roman empire killed, crushed and destroyed as it defeated the empire of Greece and extended its boundaries. It was a strong military power holding hostage by cruel force all peoples whom they conquered. Although Roman Caesars viewed themselves as God, no Roman ruler had absolute authority but shared with a senate and generals. The Roman empire was divided into the east and west as represented by the two legs.

## 5. Feet and toes of iron and clay...

(Dan 2:41-43 NNAS)

"In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. {42} "As the toes

of the feet *were* partly of iron and partly of pottery, *so* some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. {43} "And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.

This last kingdom in gentile world history is not revealed here. We do have a description of this kingdom elsewhere in Scripture. This final gentile kingdom will be the subject of study at another time. As we look at the representation, we see that it is the extension of the Roman Empire. It has the strength (military might) of the iron but there is mixed with it baked clay. This is a kingdom of treaties, and a combination of diverse peoples united only to further the ends of a charismatic leader.

There is a distinction which we must point out at this time. Daniel makes specific reference to the toes of the feet...

(Dan 2:42 NNAS)

"As the toes of the feet *were* partly of iron and partly of pottery, *so* some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle.

In the next sentence Daniel makes it clear that these toes are ten kingdoms.

(Dan 2:44a NNAS)

"In the days of those kings

Ten kings and ten kingdoms united together in a revived roman empire is indicated to be the last kingdom of this gentile world system. It is very easy to see that history has not recorded such a kingdom and therefore it must be some time in the future. As we saw in our biblical time line, God has interrupted the affairs of this world to reveal a mystery hidden in times past. That mystery is the *Church*. Both gentile history and the History of the Jews have been interrupted while God calls out from all nations a people for His name. When God has finished this task the clock of world events will begin to tick again.

#### 6. The stone cut out without hands...

(Dan 2:44-45 NNAS)

"In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and *that* kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. {45} "Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy."

Daniel states that, *in the days of those kings*, the *God of heaven* will set up a *kingdom*.... God's kingdom, or the Kingdom of God is the last and final kingdom of this world. This can in no way represent the church or the reign of God in the lives of believers. This is an event yet to be realized.

Note the events of this time. This is not a kingdom of man's making or a kingdom with man at its head. This kingdom is represented as a stone cut out without hands. **Take note** God is at work here. This stone strikes the image at the feet and grinds this world system into dust (judgment of the nations) and it is blown away as dust. This is an eternal kingdom, a kingdom a kingdom of God. What a glorious and appropriate

conclusion that God who created this world should in the end establish His kingdom and finally recreate this world.

The final sentence of verse 45 states... "The great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy." You can be most certain the events yet to come will take place just as certainly as the events in the past have taken place.

## DANIEL'S SEVENTY WEEKS

### THE TIMES OF THE HEBREWS

The history of this world follows two distinct and different paths. These paths parallel each other much of the time. There are times they join and times they cross but they continue incessantly toward the purpose of God to establish His kingdom here on this earth. We have seen how God revealed the times of the gentiles to a gentile king, and the interpretation to his servant Daniel. Prior to this God had prophesied through Jeremiah concerning seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

(Jer 25:11-12 NNAS)

'This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. {12} 'Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the LORD, 'for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation.

Daniel, in reading *The Books*, came across the prophecy of Jeremiah. The Books are the Hebrew Scriptures including the pre-exile prophets. As Daniel read the prophecies of Jeremiah he understood that God had revealed to Jeremiah that a certain time (length of time) had been determined upon Jerusalem, and the captivity. He also realized that the prophecy of the image was being fulfilled before his very eyes. Babylon had been conquered, the Medo-Persian empire had begun and Daniel desired to understand the prophecy concerning Jerusalem. Daniel prayed to understand the prophecy. God granted his request the record of this is in the following verses:

(Dan 9:21-23 NNAS)

while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in *my* extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. {22} He gave *me* instruction and talked with me and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. {23} "At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell *you*, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision.

### THE INTERPRETATION

(Dan 9:24-27 NNAS)

"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy *place*. {25} "So you are to know

and discern *that* from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince *there will be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. {26} "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. {27} "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

Gabriel states that there are Seventy 'sevens' decreed on your people and your Holy City. The wording indicates that there will be seventy periods each divided into seven sections. We will attempt to determine the length of these time periods in a moment. This period of time has been *decreed*. The literal connotation of this Hebrew expression is a "cutting off," in the sense of severing from a larger portion. Thus the seventy 'sevens,' "are a fixed and limited period, of definite duration, forming part of a longer period, the duration of which is not fixed, or at least not declared." (G. H. Lang)

Gabriel states that during this decreed period of time six (6) things are to be accomplished:

1. "To finish the transgression"
2. "To put an end to sin"
3. "To atone for wickedness"
4. "To bring everlasting righteousness"
5. "To seal up vision and prophecy"
6. "To anoint the most Holy"

Let's consider these six things that are to be accomplished:

**First, to finish *the transgression***, that is to restrain or arrest the national transgression of Daniel's own people. It is significant that the definite article appears here in the text: "*the transgression*" indicating God's own judicial opinion of the nation's apostasy.

**Secondly, God's purpose is "*to make an end of sins*"**--literally, to restrain, or "seal up" the deliberate wickedness of His people Israel, in order that, as Ezekiel puts it:

(Ezek 37:23 NASB) "And they will no longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. And they will be My people, and I will be their God.

**Thirdly, Provision must be made for the nation's guilt: "*to atone for wickedness.*"**

Atonement for Israel's sin is to be found only in the atonement provided by Jesus Christ for all sin.

(Rom 2:11 NNAS) For there is no partiality with God.

(Acts 2:39 NNAS) "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

(Rom 11:25 NNAS) For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery--so that you will not be wise in your own estimation--that a partial

hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; (Zec 12:10 NNAS) "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. (Zec 13:1 NNAS) "In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity. (Rom 11:26 NNAS) and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB."

#### **Fourthly, "to bring in everlasting righteousness"--**

(Jer 31:31-34 NNAS)

"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, {32} not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. {33} "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. {34} "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

#### **Fifthly, "to seal up vision and prophecy"--**

This signifies that point in time in which prophecy is no longer needed. All the prophecies of Scripture will have been fulfilled and their authenticity established. This, of course, could only be when Christ comes to rule and reign here upon this earth.

#### **Finally, "to anoint the most Holy"--**

"to anoint the most holy place," There is nothing said as to any anointing of Solomon's Temple, nor of the temple as rebuilt by Zerubbabel, as described in the Book of Ezra, following the captivity period; both of these were apparently considered as a continuation of the original Tabernacle. But Zerubbabel's temple knew the desecration and defilement of the madman Antiochus, as we know, and the Temple of Herod was subsequently "forty and six years...in building" (John 2:20), around the probably decadent remains of Zerubbabel's edifice. This Temple of Herod never knew the majestic presence of the glory of God; the incarnate Son entered its outer porches and courts, indeed in the days of His flesh, but probably never entered the house itself, which was ultimately destroyed by the romans under Titus in fulfillment of our Lord's prediction (Matt. 24:2)

We know from other Scriptures that there will be yet two temples built in Jerusalem; one of these will be erected by unbelieving Israel at the end of the age in their reoccupied land, in which Antichrist will sit, "showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 11:1,2) There seems no reason to doubt that the

construction of this temple may take place within the reasonably near future, in view of the return of Israel to the ancient national home, which has been one of the thrilling developments of recent years. But there is every reason to doubt that the sanctuary of such a building will be the "most holy place" which is before us in Daniel 9:24. No anointing of it is suggested in Scripture; no glorious manifestation of God's presence is anywhere hinted at.

The other temple of God to be built upon earth which is yet future is the magnificent edifice described in minute detail in Ezekiel, in which, during our Lord's millennial reign, the visible appearance of the glory of God will return and remain. In this temple the original Ark of the Covenant will no longer be seen, for, as we have already seen in Jeremiah 31, there will then be in effect the "new covenant" which God has declared He will make with His finally restored and forgiven people.

We have considered in detail the purposes to be accomplished by the decreed seventy "sevens," and we are now ready to examine the chronological aspects of the prophecy. The prophecy begins with the declaration, "Seventy sevens are decreed," the word "sevens" can mean seven days as in Daniel 10:2 or seven years as in Gen. 29:27. In either case the Hebrew word is the same. The word literally means divided into a period of seven units. The context must tell us the meaning of this word. We can state that the period decreed is seventy sevens, or 490 periods of some length.

Verse 25 tells us that the whole period is to be marked by a specific beginning point, which we shall be able to identify, and by a specific ending point, "the consummation" (v27). We must first of all determine the beginning point. The event that begins this period of time is, "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem." There were four separate and distinct decrees. (1) Cyrus II Chronicles 36:22-23 and repeated in Ezra 1:1-4. This decree was limited specifically to the restoration of the temple. (2) Decree by Darius, Ezra 6:1-5, 8-12. This was only a confirmation of Cyrus' original proclamation, this was exclusively for the temple. (3) The third decree was by Artaxerxes, king of Persia, Ezra 7:11-26. This decree deals with temple services and not with Jerusalem the city. Some years afterward, when Nehemiah visited Jerusalem he found the wall of the city broken down. (Neh. 2:13) (4) A decree by Artaxerxes recorded in Nehemiah 2:3, 5, 8. We find a decree that exactly meets the specification of Daniel 9:25.

(Neh 2:1-3 NNAS)

And it came about in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, that wine *was* before him, and I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence. {2} So the king said to me, "Why is your face sad though you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of heart." Then I was very much afraid. {3} I said to the king, "Let the king live forever. Why should my face not be sad when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies desolate and its gates have been consumed by fire?"

This event gives the cause as well as the date of the decree under consideration..

(Neh 2:5-8 NNAS)

I said to the king, "If it please the king, and if your servant has found favor before you, send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it." {6} Then the king said to me, the queen sitting beside him, "How long will your journey be, and when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me, and I gave him a definite time. {7} And I said to the king, "If it please the king, let letters be given me for the governors *of the provinces* beyond the River, that they may allow me to pass through until I come to Judah, {8} and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest,

that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress which is by the temple, for the wall of the city and for the house to which I will go." And the king granted *them* to me because the good hand of my God *was* on me.

This then is that vital decree we have been looking for. From this point we can begin to compute the 490 sevens. In his book, *The Coming Prince*, Sir Robert Anderson establishes beyond controversy that the twentieth year of Artaxerxes began in July, 446 B.C., and the decree to rebuild Jerusalem was given in the month Nisan following (Neh 2:1), in the year 445 B.C. probably on the first day of the month.

From this date the 1st of Nisan 445 B.C. we begin our computation. This period of time is broken into three periods:

1. Seven sevens . . . 49 periods of time (rebuilding of the streets and walls)
2. Threescore and two sevens . . . 434 periods of time (unto Messiah the prince)  
(total 69)

These are consecutive periods of time . . . 49 until the city Jerusalem is rebuilt plus 434 unto Messiah the prince for a total of 483 out of a total of 470 time periods. We know, as will be evident as we go on, that these sevens are years. This is made clear from Nehemiah 4:1-3,7-9,12-16, or a total of 49 years to accomplish Daniel 9:25b, or the time required to rebuild the walls, streets, moat etc.

We should remember that the total length of time which was to elapse "unto Messiah the prince was to be sixty-nine sevens, or 483 years. These years were Jewish years of 360 days, including twelve months of thirty days each. We must convert these years to days to bring us to the end of our second period. [483 years of 360 days equals 173,880 days] This brings us to A.D. 32 (10th Nisan-April 6th) I must thank Philip R. Newell for this information. Mr. Newell was an instructor at Moody Bible Institute.  
( Philip R. Newell, *Daniel*, pg,148 )

We know from Luke 3:1 that the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar marked the beginning point of our Lord's public ministry. This would have been August 19, 29A.D., at which time our Lord "began to be about thirty years of age." (Luke 3:23) We know that He was crucified on the fourth Passover of His ministry, that would be A.D. 32. The 69 sevens must end before the Passover of A.D. 32, for the prophecy plainly stipulates that "after the threescore and two sevens following the first subdivision of seven sevens, that Messiah shall be cut off."

The question which next confronts us is this: To what point in the ministry of our Lord does the language of the prophecy suggest that we look as the termination of the 69 sevens? Their duration, we note from verse 25, is "unto Messiah the Prince." We read in John 12:1 that Jesus came to Bethany "six days before the Passover" in A.D. 32. The Passover was always on the 14th day of Nisan. Six days before would have been the 8th of Nisan. This was the day before the weekly Sabbath, the 9th of Nisan. The next day or the first day of the week was the day of the "Triumphal Entry" or the 10th of Nisan. This then is the end of the 69 sevens and after this the Messiah is to be cut off. Our Lord was crucified before that week ended fulfilling completely and literally the 69 sevens of Daniel.

3. One seven...(The ruler that is to come)

I have left the third division until last for clarity. The prophecy states that after the Messiah is cut off a ruler will come. This ruler will make a covenant with the many for one seven or seven years. In the middle of the seven years he will break that covenant and cause the sacrifice and offerings of the temple to cease. He himself will set up an abomination in one wing of the temple. From that point God will pour out upon him that which is decreed.

(Dan 9:26-27 NNAS)

"Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. {27} "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

This portion of the prophecy has not been fulfilled as yet. This distinctly refers to the Great Tribulation period which is to come. Once again we see that "Parenthesis of time" when God turns from Israel to call out of all nations a people for His name. When that is complete then time will march on until that which has been decreed has been fulfilled.