



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Jewish People, Jesus Christ, and World History

Zechariah 1:18-21

"A Mini-Panorama of World History"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we again approach Thee through the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We thank Thee that that name prevails with Thee, and that having been brought to know him, and to be united to him through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and the faith that Thou hast given, we have acceptance before Thee. And Lord, we are grateful, and we are thankful.

We pray that through the Holy Spirit who has come to indwell us, we may be able to understand in a more significant and meaningful way. Give us direction and guidance tonight as we look again into the prophecy of Zechariah and take a look at the relationship of that book and its teaching to the past, the present, and the future of the ancient people of Israel. We look forward to the future with anticipation and hope, and we thank Thee for the evidences that Thou has given us in Scripture of Thy faithfulness to the promises that Thou hast given, for we receive encouragement and strengthening, and we are established as we reflect upon the inviolability of the things that Thou hast set forth in holy Scripture. Be with us tonight in this hour. Glorify Thy name through the Scriptures. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Tonight our subject is "A Mini-Panorama of World History." And we are turning again to Zechariah chapter 1, and I would like to read the last few verses of the 1st chapter of the Book of Zechariah, which incidentally, is not the 1st chapter in the Hebrew text, but the beginning of the 2nd chapter. And then I want to read a few verses from the Book of Daniel chapter 2. So, beginning with Zechariah chapter 1, in verse 18; the prophet now writes,

"Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What be these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. And the LORD shewed me four carpenters." (It's probably better to render this smiths or simply workers, rather than carpenters. They seem to be workers with metal. The Hebrew seems to suggest that.) "Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them," (that is, to terrify them) "to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it."

A very simple little prophecy having to do with four horns, which went on and scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem; and then four smiths who come to terrify those that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

Now, we turn over to the Book of Daniel, and read verse 24 through verse 25. You remember that Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, had this magnificent vision, or dream would be better, of that marvelous appearing image, and then called in his wise men and asked them to give him, and he had forgotten it. Do you ever forget dreams? You know, if you don't write down your dream it's so easy to forget them. Now, I had one last night. I won't tell you what it is, but I do remember a part of that dream. Most of the time, if I don't write down what I dream, in order for a joke, I will forget it. And

evidently, something like that happened to Nebuchadnezzar, and he had this dream. It made a great impression on him, but he forgot it. And so, he called for his Maurice Woodruff's and Houdini's and Jean Dixon's and they were unable to give him any indication of it. But they were smart, they said that "If you tell us what the dream was, we'll tell you how to interpret it." And of course, I could have said that, too. If you'll tell me what the dream is, I'll tell you the interpretation. I specialize in interpretations. But if you cannot tell the dream, how can we trust your interpretation? So, Nebuchadnezzar was a very intelligent man, that's why he was the king of the Babylonians.

So, the word went out, of course, that all of the wise men were to be destroyed. And Daniel was one of those wise men, and so when news came to him, well he said "What's the king in such a big hurry about? Perhaps we can discover the meaning of the vision." And so we read verse 24 of Daniel chapter 2,

"Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation. Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. (Notice that expression, that's one of those expressions in the Old Testament that almost always refers to the Messianic days of the future.) Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; (You notice when Daniel gives his interpretation he doesn't say, "I think this is what you saw." He has

a sense of certainty and assurance.) As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart. Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thigh parts of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. (Now, you'll notice that in this vision, already, that there are four parts to this. He talks about the head and the fine gold. He talks about the breast, the silver; the belly, the thigh parts of brass. And the legs of iron, and the feet part of iron and part of clay.) Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

Now, Daniel goes on to say, "This is the dream, and we're going to tell you what the interpretation is." But before we get to that, let's turn back to our passage in Zechariah chapter 1. We want to say a few words about that. In the course of the exposition of the first couple of meetings, I made reference to the fact that the reemergence of the ancient biblical powers is really remarkable. We have, today, on the human scene, the emergence of the nation Iraq and Iran and Arabia. And we have, of course, preeminently Israel, and we have Egypt; we have many of those nations that are now extremely prominent in the news of our day. Many of you, who are not as old as I, may have some difficulty understanding just how exactly how you feel now, as over

against forty years ago. But I can remember when one spoke of these names of Iran and Iraq, in fact we didn't even call it Iran, we called it Persia, and Iraq and Egypt and those countries were totally out of it as far as the affairs of the 20th century were concerned. They really just did not count. They didn't have any influence. And as a matter of fact, when one used the term Arab, when you thought of that you thought of people who just lived out in the desert and were in a tent most of the time, and had no conception whatsoever of what was happening in the world.

That was probably wrong, but nevertheless it is true to say that they really were not a great influence in the history of the world then, but what a tremendous transformation has taken place. And we must admit that it is one of the critical spots on the face of the globe today, and one of the most significant. And our newspapers never issue an edition that does not point out the significance of what is happening in the east for the west. So, it's really remarkable to realize that these ancient biblical powers, these ancient lands, have now become extremely important for us in the 20th century.

And the continuous Jewish national survival, with the establishment in 1948 of a kingdom of Israel, is truly astounding. We've often quoted, and Bible students have quoted often the statement that Hegel, the German philosopher made, who said with reference to Jewish history and Jewish survival, "It's a dark, troublesome enigma to me. I am not able to understand it. It does not fit any of our categories. It is a riddle." And then Nicholas Berdyaev, the Russian philosopher said, "I remember how the materialist interpretation of history, when I attempted in my youth to verify it by applying it to the destinies of people, broke down in the case of the Jews, where destiny seemed absolutely inexplicable from the materialistic standpoint. And indeed, according to the materialistic and positivistic criterion, this people ought long ago to have perished. Its survival is a mysterious and wonderful phenomenon, demonstrating that the life of these people is governed by a special predetermination." That was a very interesting expression that Berdyaev should make with reference to Israel, "a special predetermination." We would

just call it predestination, divine election. "Transcending the process of adaptation expounded by the materialistic interpretation of history. The survival of the Jews, their resistance to destruction, their endurance under absolutely peculiar conditions, and the fateful role played by them in history; all these point to the particular and mysterious foundations of their destiny." I think that's interesting.

We, of course, cannot point to events in history and say, "This fulfills history." As a matter of fact we cannot, so far as I can tell, say that the fact that there is a nation Israel today is the fulfillment of the prophetic word. It's conceivable that Israel, as it exists today, will be destroyed. After all, there are eighty-five million or so people surrounding the land who would be very, very happy to see Israel disappear entirely. So, it's possible that that would take place. We cannot deny that it might take place, so we cannot really say that this is the fulfillment of the word of God, the specific fulfillment that the Scriptures seem to speak about.

What we can say is that the Scriptures do predict that Israel has a future. And in Isaiah chapter 54, verse 9 and 10 we read these words,

"For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee."

The context, of course, makes it plain that he is talking about Israel. Now, in Jeremiah chapter 31, and verse 31 or verse 35 and 36, I'll just read these verses. We read this, "Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me,

saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever." These are just some of the many places that indicate that Israel has a national future. In fact, the word of God goes on to point out; I think quite plainly, that God's word affirms that their survival is the clue to world peace. Someone said that when Israel is out of Palestine, she is out place. And when Israel is out of place, mankind is out of place.

Listen to the Psalmist in the 67th Psalm in verse 1 and verse 2, and notice particularly the pronouns as I read these verses. "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations." In other words, the clue to the experience of salvation among the Gentile nations is the blessing of the nation Israel. That's what Paul states in Romans chapter 11, if you turn to Romans chapter 11, verse 11 through verse 15, that's precisely what he says. He says, in effect, if the casting away of Israel has resulted in the salvation of the Gentiles in this age, what shall the receiving of them, but such a thing as life from the dead. So, in other words, Israel has been cast aside, Gentile salvation has taken place, but the apostle says that's nothing to what will happen when Israel is returned to the place of divine blessing. Present Gentile salvation will be even greater then, than now. And of course, this leads on up to his statement in verse 26, "And so all Israel shall be saved." So, when we think about the Old Testament, we really ought to realize that we are living in very interesting days. And while, as I say, we cannot be absolutely certain that this is the fulfillment of prophecy, we certainly can say this, it's in accord with the trends of things set out in the word of God.

We have, and I mentioned this Sunday, we have some very interesting things happening in our society, in the western world, and I made reference to the candidacy of Jesse Jackson. And I don't like to talk about politics for several reasons. Number one, there may be a democrat lurking in this audience, and he may be unhappy if I say I'm a republican or vice versa. And I might offend someone unnecessarily, that might really

hinder the preaching and teaching of the word of God. And then secondly, and probably even more significantly, I really don't consider myself a person who knows much about politics, and while I read a good bit and try to keep up with what's happening in the world, the thing that I'm interested in more, when I think of the political world, are the spiritual forces and trends that I see lurking in the background.

Jesse Jackson poses as a candidate of the moral values of human society. Now, this is the man who so far as I can tell, has admitted that he called Jews by the name of Hymies, but only after about three or four days of pressure. For those days he said, no, he hadn't said that. No comment. Finally, he admitted it. In other words, he had been lying. And yet, he poses as the candidate of moral values. So, what we have really is a liar who is leading a moral crusade. Now, it really takes a strange kind of person to follow that kind of platform. This is the man who has taken for month, the support of Black Muslim Louis Farrakhan, who has praised Hitler as a great man. When that got out he said, "Well, he was a wickedly great man." [Laughter] But he was a great man until he was checked, then he said he was a wickedly great man. Then he called Judaism a gutter religion, and others said, "No, he didn't really say gutter religion. He said it was a dirty religion."

Well, when the tapes were played and it turned out to be gutter, they were shown to be liars again. And after all, if it's a dirty religion, that's not a whole lot better than gutter religion, is it? [Laughter] So, finally Jackson, under political not moral pressure notice, not moral pressure but under political pressure, has said that Farrakhan's statements are inflammatory in the context of the Middle East. What about in the context of truth and in the context of God? And that he will not "permit Minister Farrakhan's words wittingly or unwillingly to divide the Democratic Party." In other words, the context of the Middle East and the Democratic Party are more important than truth, and more important than God. Now, this is a minister. That is, the person who is the Reverend Jesse Jackson.

Now, some real trouble has come as a result of this man, because the Jews are catching on, finally. They're catching on to the Jackson candidacy and his ties to the far left. This is what to me is very interesting. I'm not too much concerned about the other. I don't expect much of politicians. I don't think I've ever seen a politician in my day who has managed to keep himself from making misleading statements, if not lies. So I don't have too much confidence in them, but here is a man who really has ties to the far left. And the significant thing is that the Jewish people and the intellectuals are finally waking up to some of this. They have been monolithically liberal, and they have been democrats in philosophy and in politics. It's very rare to find a Jewish man who is a conservative and who is a republican. There are some, but nevertheless they're generally monolithically liberal and democrats.

Now, understand why, because they've been a persecuted people and down through the centuries they have felt a common feeling for the underdog, because they've been the underdog. And since the Democratic Party has generally played the part of being for the underdog, and since liberals, with their philosophy of the essential goodness of human nature, have also set themselves forward in that light, they've naturally tended to that particular position. But the Jewish people sense now, the thinking ones, that the political landscape is changing. And I mentioned Sunday that Irving Crystal, a man whom I like very much. He's a Jewish man. He writes in a commentary magazine, which is a Jewish intellectual magazine. I have one of the issues here; this is the latest one, July, and Mr. Crystal, who is a professor of social thought in one of our universities. He is Professor of Social thought at New York University's graduate school of business administration.

I mentioned that he writes a column in the *Wall Street Journal* once every three or four weeks as one of their special editorial writers. That's how I first became acquainted with him, and I liked his columns. They were very good, and he was not a typical Jewish man with a liberal philosophy, but had certain conservative tendencies, which have

turned, I think, even more conservative as the years have gone by. This article is entitled the political dilemma of American Jews. And in the article Mr. Crystal points out that it may be a time for reorientation of Jewish thinking. He pointed out that Jackson is the leader of the Blacks with twenty percent of the recent democratic votes in their particular primaries. But he is not a civil rights leader of a familiar kind, because they've largely, as you may know, they have largely supported the civil rights movement, and have largely funded the civil rights movement. But he is, as far as foreign policy is concerned, he is pro-third world and anti-American. And he is pro-PLO and anti-Israel. And so, this has posed a problem for the Jews, because of course, they have sought to be pro-American, and they have sought to be, of course, pro-Israel. So, the old Black Jewish coalition is coming apart. And furthermore, Jesse Jackson has said in 1985, next year he is going to New York City, and he is going to find a candidate and a properly militant black candidate, he's going to run him against Mayor Koch in the democratic primaries.

Now, at this point, some interesting things must be compared with this, because while that has stirred up the Jews to find anti-Israel, and yet at the same time outwardly pro civil rights and identified with that. Now the rise of the moral majority, and normally Jews would be against the moral majority, because moral majority stands for things that, generally speaking, are hostile positions so far as the Jews are concerned. That is, they're hostile to them. School prayer, they're largely against that; abortion, they're for abortion, generally. Any kind of relationship of church and state, any kind of close relation, Jews are against that, thinking of course, that they would suffer from it. But here is the moral majority and they are strongly pro-Israel. That's startling, that's a startling development. They don't understand it. And Mr. Crystal says they don't know what to do about it. In fact he said, years ago if someone had said that there would be a powerful revival of Protestant fundamentalism, and that it would take place a political and religious force, they would be very much alarmed by it, because they would just automatically think it would be anti-Israel. But the moral majority is pro-Israel.

Now, I have always contended, among my friends, I've always contended that Jewish people do not understand evangelicals. It is true. If you'll study the history, in fact if you'll study the history of premillennial thought, because you would expect premillennialists to be particularly favorable to Israel, if you will study premillennial thought you will find that there is a strain of anti-Israel in premillennial thought. It is surprising, but it nevertheless is true. It was a minority strain of thought, but nevertheless it was specifically there, and it made itself known. But what we have now is a moral majority, and they are pro-Israel, and evangelicals largely, by and large, have been pro-Israel all along. In fact, even before the establishment of the Jewish state, they were favorably disposed to that. And evangelicals have supported that.

The facts are the Jewish people do not understand what an evangelical is, just as Gentiles don't. Gentiles don't understand what an evangelical is. You have to understand the gospel to understand what an evangelical is. So, it's not surprising that they don't. If they understood the gospel, and if they saw individuals who believe the gospel, they would realize that those individuals are probably pro-Israel and not anti-Israel. So, American Jews have been reaching for a more explicit and meaningful Jewish identity themselves in recent years, and away from Universalists' secular humanism so prominent in their pre-war thinking. They want to become more Jewish, but they have this dilemma now with their political philosophy, which has been their political philosophy for generations. So, what we have today, I think, is as Mr. Crystal says, "Jews finding themselves in the old condition of being politically homeless."

And he says, "It's possible, though far from certain, that Jews in the west will find a new home, however uncomfortable, in the conservative and neo-conservative politics that in reaction to liberalism's left would drift, seems to be gaining momentum." In other words, Jewish people may be becoming more conservative politically and philosophically. And I found that a favorable thing, not politically. I'm not anxious that everybody become a conservative. I would be angry over that, you understand. [Laughter] But

that's not what I'm thinking about. I think that if that is the trend, what that will do is throw more Jews in contact with evangelicals. In other words, the chance of their association with evangelicals is increased tremendously if their political philosophy is similar, because as you look out over the evangelical church today, the evangelical church is largely conservative. There are some who are not, but they are a small minority, and I wouldn't want to say that everybody who is an evangelical must be a conservative. I think if he thinks theologically in his political views that's the way he will go, because it ultimately depends upon a view of human nature.

And if you believe that human nature is perfectible, basically good, liberalism will appeal to you. If you feel that human nature is imperfectable, apart from divine supernatural work in grace; if you believe that men are sinners, then you tend toward a conservative philosophy of life. But I find this very interesting that in Judaism, of all places, Judaism that has funded liberalism so largely, was so largely influential in the early days of communism and its establishment, is now realizing that maybe they're going to have to rethink their philosophical and political foundations. And for me, I think that's very interesting. At any rate, that's what I was speaking about Sunday when I said that that to me has some bearing on the things that Scripture says about Israel's ultimate future. Because in the future, they're going to have right views about human nature, right views about Jesus Christ, right views about God and his plan for men.

Now, Zechariah wrote almost twenty-five hundred years ago, and he spoke of Israel's captivity and desperation. He spoke of Israel's return, or Judah's return. He spoke, ultimately, of the world's reconciliation in the future. His prophecy, we said last week, contains four divisions. The first six verses are an appeal to repentance directed toward the remnant that had returned after the captivity. And then the second division contains eight visions that were given to the prophet by night. And we looked at the first of these visions last week. The theme was the return of Israel, and the reestablishment of them in the place of blessing with the Lord God. For example, we read in verse 14, "I am

jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great jealousy. I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease." And then in verse 17, "Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem." These night visions have one general theme, and the night visions' general theme is the theme of Israel and their coming king and kingdom.

The first vision was a vision of the angel of Jehovah in the midst of a disciplined nation. And that was the guarantee of their ultimate judgment and victory. Now, let's look for just a few moments at verses 18 through 21. This is really the answer to a question that was asked in verse 12. "Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?" It's the explanation of how he vents displeasure on those who have overdone the discipline of Israel. Israel is dominated by the nations, but she is going to be delivered. In the 18th verse, the prophet lifts up his eyes, and he looks, and behold four horns.

Now, the term horn, of course, is used in different ways, this is not a trumpet. It's not a saxophone, thank goodness. [Laughter] I always think of Mr. Spurgeon who was asked the question, "Do you think someone who plays the saxophone can go to heaven?" [Laughter] And he said, "I don't know whether he can go to heaven or not, but I have doubts about his next door neighbor." [Laughter] So, this is not a saxophone kind of horn. It's not a trumpet. This is probably, in the light of the context, the horn of an animal, like a ram or a bull or a goat. And thus, the term horn is a symbol of power. And in the Old Testament, of course, you have many instances of this. And in fact, it is used specifically of the power of a nation. In other words, the horn was the symbol of the nation's power. That's why we read, in verse 21, "to cast out the horns of the Gentiles."

Now, the prophet then sees four horns, and so, customarily he will ask the angel

who is talking with him, so far as we know this is simply an angelic being who interpreted for Zechariah these visions that he was seeing. Some have sought to make more of it than that. It's doubtful that we can do that. So he asks the angel who was by his side talking with him, "What be these?" And he said, "These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem." Strange combination of those names, but we'll have to pass that by; we don't have time to look at that. "These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem." In other words, these horns, if they represent four powerful nations, then since they have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem, it would be fair, I think, to say that they are representative of four ruthless powers who have scattered or winnowed Israel. But Zechariah doesn't go into detail, and so we have to be careful in our interpretation, and distinguish between what we can with reasonable certainty say about a text, and what we may speculate about a text.

Next, we read in verse 20 and 21, "And the LORD shewed me four smiths." And he said, "What come these to do?" Now these smiths are, let's just say, four workmen. He said, "These are the horns which have scattered Judah," that is, he's referring to the horns just mentioned. "These are the horns that have scattered Judah, so that no man so that no man did lift up his head: but these," that is, these smiths, they "have come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it." So, the four horns were typical of national powers that scattered Judah and Israel, and the four smiths have come to terrify them. That is, those horns that have lifted up their hands against the nation Israel. So, the four successive powers, if we can speak of four successive powers, which scatter Israel, are the ones that are cast down by the four horns that are the four smiths that are referred thereafter.

Now, this is a kind of mini portrait, so far, if we were to go to the maxi-portrait of what this may indicate, we would turn over to that passage in Daniel. And I would like for you to turn over there for a moment, because there may be a connection between them. Now, if we want to we can just say that that is just a general statement that Israel is

going to experience some bad times. And yet, at the same time, those that are used by God to discipline Israel are going to be terrified and themselves disciplined by the Lord God. And we could just let it go at that, and make it that vague. In fact, modern commentators tend to do that. Joyce Baldwin, in a recent commentary in the Tyndall Series, likes to say that these four horns that are referred to in Zechariah 1 do not speak of four different nations, but they just simply represent the totality of opposition. The number four suggesting totally, and the horns opposition, obviously, so it's just that Israel will have opposition. And then the smitings are God's way of supernaturally correcting it. That may be so. On the other hand, the early church did not think of it that way. The early church generally interpreted those four horns as individual nations. To give you one person's interpretation, there was a difference of opinion; Theodore of Mopsuestia has a certain view of the four nations. Jerome believes that these four nations are the nation Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. These are the four nations that are the ones that scatter, or winnow, Israel and Judah.

Now, that would harmonize with what Daniel speaks about in Daniel chapter 2. So, let's turn over to the Daniel passage and let me just kind of survey this. Remember, Daniel had his dream. Rather, Nebuchadnezzar had his dream, which Daniel interpreted. Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon. Organized rebellion against God began at Babylon, not rebellion but organized rebellion began at Babylon. And so, Nebuchadnezzar was given a dream of a colossus, a very natural thing for people who lived in the near east. And what he was given was a visualized portrait of Gentile dominion on the earth from the time of Nebuchadnezzar to the time of the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth. In other words, from 605 BC, approximately, all the way on to 1984 plus the seven year period of the tribulation, and the time of the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, an indeterminate period, because we don't know when our Lord shall return. So, Nebuchadnezzar wanted an interpretation of this magnificent dream of a colossus that he had. And he had been lying on his bed, and

someone had said he was out of sleeping tablets, and he had a case of royal insomnia, and so he was thinking about how he was going to govern his kingdom. Very much like Reagan or whoever is president might be worried about the Chinese or the Russians or whoever.

And while he was on his bed, Nebuchadnezzar said he had this magnificent dream with this magnificent vision. Then he was unable to get any satisfactory answer from his wise men, his fortune tellers, and finally Daniel is obtained. And he gives the interpretation of the vision. And beginning at verse 36, Daniel says, "This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king." I think it's so interesting that Daniel has no doubt about this. He doesn't say, "Now, I think this is the way it is. Or this is approximately the way it's going to turn out." But he has specific interpretation, and he says "This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold." So, in other words, the gold is identified with Nebuchadnezzar. "And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee." Now, we know of course, the Medo-Persian kingdom did arise after the Babylonian, and it surely was inferior. "And another third kingdom of brass," a kingdom that later on in chapter 8 of the Book of Daniel, we are specifically told is the kingdom of Greece in the struggle pictured there.

And finally he said, a " fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay." A great deal of extra attention is paid to this fourth kingdom. And in fact, the two legs are pictured,

which are the longest part of the colossus, and talks about "the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men." That's a clause that's very hard to understand. "But they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

Now, as you look at this, you can see some specific things. First of all, we have that which might correspond to those four horns, because we have the gold, and the silver, and the brass, and then the iron mixed with clay. And that might indicate that those four horns in Zechariah are just symbolic pictures of the same thing, the four kingdoms that shall winnow Israel during the times of the Gentiles. The times of the Gentiles beginning with Nebuchadnezzar and concluding with the Second Advent of Christ, are the times during which Israel does not have the city of Jerusalem under their control, or at least the land. There are some differences of opinion about that. So, Daniel then pictures these, it would seem, these four great world empires that must come upon the earth, until the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth.

And then, he speaks of the establishment of the kingdom through the coming of the stone. We read in verse 44, "The kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure." So, what he says then, in effect, is there is going to be evidently a lengthy period of time, Israel is going to be under Gentile dominion. Four great world empires will come on the scene and pass off of the scene, and finally the

stone cut out of the mountain without hands shall come, break in pieces the image, and in this way God makes known to Daniel and others what is going to come to pass here after. In other words, the kingdom is established through the rock, or through the stone, through the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is established at his Second Advent, and it's established by the power of God, and not by the power of men.

So, to summarize, while the man among the myrtles symbolized Israel's history, affliction, but ultimate blessing, this vision stresses Gentile history, world wide dominion over Israel, but ultimately, Israel's restoration at the Second Advent of our Lord, and the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth. And further, this panorama of history is fixed by Gods. He's the Lord of Hosts, and Daniel says, "The dream is certain. The interpretation is sure." One of the men who has written a book of prayer has said it talks about "him who holds history in the hollow of his." And I like the statement that Bismarck, the great German statesman said. He said, "The statesman must try and reach for the hem when he hears the garment of God rustling through events." And as one looks at world history today, it certainly appears as if there may be some things happening in our history that represent the rustling of the garment of God through our human events. And of course, the key personal issue is what is our relationship to the stone, or to the fourth smith to put it in the language of Zechariah?

George Bernard Shaw once said, "Thou we crucified him on a stick, he somehow managed to get hold of the right end of it." [Laughter] I like that statement, because that is what is true. They thought they had done away with him, but he got hold of the right part, or the right end of that stick. And so, the Scripture which says, "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste," is speaking the truth. But there is coming a time when he will come, and he will come as a stone and destroy human authority and power. It's important that we be rightly related to him. So, I see things happening in our history today that are very significant to me, but time will tell whether they really are or not.

I'm sorry that I have kept you over a few minutes tonight. Let's close our meeting with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these words from holy Scripture. We thank Thee for the assurance from the word of God that history is in the hands, and under the control, of our sovereign Lord in heaven. We look forward to the completion of it. We give Thee thanks for the greatness of the Son of God. And we look forward to the day when he is exalted, and when the ancient people is restored to the place of blessing by that sovereign God. And through the worship and praise of him, glorifies him who loved us and gave himself for us. We thank Thee for him, and we pray in his name. Amen.