***Jewish History

RV111-01***

This is the fourth segment concerning the first seal of the series that we will be studying in Revelation chapter 6. We have been looking at some background material preparatory to studying the first seal as Jesus Christ breaks those seals on the scroll which He holds in His hand.

The world today is, of course, a very troubled place, and it's troubled over the conflicts primarily that are taking place in the Middle East. People are seeing increasing strife between Jews and Arabs, which threatens world peace, and they don't see any end in sight to that conflict. Americans themselves are torn between trying to help keep the peace in the Middle East, and at the same time exposing its military forces to the fanaticism of religious ignorance which wants no peace.

Israel, of course, as a nation, tries to hang on, but is increasingly unable to bear the economic strain and the drain upon its facilities, which is constantly imposed upon the country when it is on a war status basis. So, inflation runs rampant in Israel; wages are down; and, the country wonders if it can survive. If it were not for the huge influx of finances from other nations, the nation of Israel could not survive. Now Israel itself is considering pulling out of Lebanon completely just to take the pressure off its economic life.

Russia, meantime, relentlessly pursues a position of world domination in order to impose socialism on all nations. Russian military power is awesome, and the United States faces a threat now to its very national survival. However, the United States government continues to finance the nonproductive economies of communist countries by backing loans of international bankers to those countries – loans which they will never repay, but which will be a burden upon the American taxpayer to repay. So, our treasuries are drained in order to support our enemies. And we say, "How can such bad exist?" But that's the status of the world today. Russia viciously persecutes Christians in communist countries as it seeks to stamp out the authority of Scripture, which declares that it can judge what communism and Russia and its satellites do. It's the same old problem that existed in the ancient Roman Empire when the Christians rose up and said, "We have a higher law than man's law, and it judges what you do."

Americans themselves have rejected their Christian heritage, and are now bearing the bitter fruit of making man the Lord of human culture. So, we have seen this week a disgruntled office seeker who has murdered the mayor and one of the councilmen of the city of San Francisco with deliberate premeditation; served 5 years in prison; and, then he was set free. Those men are dead, and he lives. But the Bible says, "He should not live. He should be executed. He should die." We have lost our guidelines.

Immorality has reached into family life in frightening proportions because we have abandoned our Christian national heritage, so that adultery; child molestation; and, depravities of every imaginable kind are both commonplace and viewed with indifference. The educational system of our country glorifies the physical, and minimizes the aesthetic and the mental. So, scholarly ambitions are looked down upon, but being an athletic star is exalted. The state of Texas is now pursuing what's wrong with Texas schools. It's not only that the national scores are down, but Texas is one of the worst when it comes to the national testing programs and what the government school students achieve. The committees have already centered upon the fact that one of the problems is the exaltation of athletics – the physical above the intellectual.

I recently told Mr. Steve Danish, our principal at Berean academy that I would like to institute a jacket letter program in B.C.A. A. – a letter for academic achievement. We would have no letters for athletics. We would have letters for people who can bounce a ball and have muscle. But for people who can achieve intellectually, we should honor them with a letter on their school jackets. We're going to see if we can pursue that, and to establish dignity of learning; dignity of intellect; and, dignity of the aesthetic.

**School Athletics**

I have observed over several years that there is something terribly corrosive about athletics when it goes beyond the P.E. classes of the school. When kids are playing each other, and they're just having fun playing the various games, and learning how to develop these skills, it's a contribution to education. But the moment we start playing other schools, it has a corrosive effect. And kids who have capacity for intellectual and aesthetic qualities (I've observed at close range, and we have them all around the place now) are just degraded as animals because the programs of the physical override the intellectual (the aesthetic), and it has a way of carrying itself into the spiritual as well.

But that's what we are nationally because we have lost our intellectual spiritual orientations. The state of Nebraska is determined to stop the Christian school movement because the Christian schools are saying, "Hey, let's turn this thing around. Let's honor the God who gave us intelligence by promoting that intelligence. Let's honor the God who gave us skills by developing those skills. Let's honor the God who has given us aesthetic qualities (a creativeness that reflects divine creativeness), and let's train our kids to be creative individuals – not to be a bunch of physical muscles running around with people cheering for some little prowess of being able to pitch a ball.

**Christian Schools**

The state of Nebraska says, "We don't like that," because Christian schools undermine the principle that man is Lord. That's what the fight is all about. You cannot have Caesar as Lord and God as Lord. I'm surprised at Christians who don't understand this principle, and the remarks they make about the Nebraska situation. The authority to license is the authority to control. Don't ever forget that. If you can license, you can control. When you license, that means that you're in charge. And that means that whoever issues the license is the one who makes the rules. That's the issue between what is the authority of God and church, and the authority of the government. The churches in America have become country clubs, organizations of mutual praise, full of positive thinking promotion in order to make man his own image.

**Positive Thinking**

Yesterday, I saw Norman Vincent Peale (who was one of the original positive thinkers of this country) on a television ad. His first line was, "I believe that the answers to the life lie within yourself." Nothing could be further from the truth. That's Eastern mysticism: pure; plain; and, simple. And that is the satanic notion that all we have to do is look within ourselves, and we're going to come up with the answers, both for our personal lives and for our national life. The Word of God says, "You in yourself are zero; you're depraved; you're corrupted; and, your mind is distorted from God's thinking. You can't distinguish between a human viewpoint and divine viewpoint until God comes along with His Word and says, "Here is divine viewpoint, and this is a human viewpoint, and that's the difference." Then God gives you a local church and a pastor-teacher gift to come along and instruct out of that or so that you know what is divine viewpoint; you can apply it to your life; you can apply it to society; and, you can start moving up into the image of God to which you are created. Norman Vincent Peale is wrong. When you look within yourself, there's nothing there unless you have first put it in there through the Word of God.

**Public Entertainment**

Public entertainment, of course, at worst, is filthy and degrading; and, at best, it's insane. It is seldom challenging and ennobling to those who participate in it. I am amazed at how much it means to, if not degradation, there is in public entertainment now.

**Personal Enterprise**

Personal enterprise is squelched by our society – a society which wants to take by force what some have earned to give to those who have not earned. From the programs of welfare of the government to crime in the streets, it's all under the same category – taking from those who have produced to give to those who have not produced. This, in turn, then discourages production.

**A Computer Society**

We are moving into a computer controlled society which is rapidly eroding our privacy and our personal freedom. But when you have the welfare state of socialism, you must be able to control people to force them against their wills to do what the government deems best for them.

**The World is Ready for a Dictator**

So, the world, in short, is primed to receive a dictator who can force some order and control on people to establish peace and control in society. That is where we have come with our rejection of God's thinking. The time will come, as it happened in pre- World War II Nazi Germany, where things became so torn apart in German society that they welcomed Adolf Hitler – a strong man who said, "I'm not going to ask anybody. I'm going to tell you how it's to be done, and I'm going to straighten it out." And one thing he did was that he brought law and order, and he brought peace and prosperity to German society. But he brought along with it all the evils of making man lord once more. The world is ready for a dictator. The Bible makes no secret as to how this will come about.

The book of the Revelation, which we are studying, gives the details of the tribulation terror and the failure of that effort. God is going to use the consequences of man attempting to make himself lord of human society. God is going to use that to bring mankind to its knees. And from the wreckage of Satan's world system and man's lordship is going to come the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ ruling this earth. But first comes the antichrist, the strong man that all the world will welcome, to straighten it out. Beginning in Revelation chapter 6, we study the practices and the career of that strong man. Today, Jesus Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords in exile, but not for long. The dawn of a new age is obviously on the horizon.

**The Times of the Gentiles**

We're going to begin this morning by looking at the problem that exists for the nation of Israel today in terms of its worldwide dispersion, and where that has brought it to this moment. There is in the Bible the expression "the times of the gentiles." This expression refers to the time during which gentile nations dominate the Jewish people and their homeland. In the seventh century B.C., the northern kingdom of Israel had been taken into captivity by the Assyrians. So, all was left of the Jewish people was the southern kingdom of Judah. In 605 B.C., the southern kingdom was attacked by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The King of Israel at that time was Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar. This conquest marked the beginning of the period in God's program known as "the times of the gentiles."

**Jewish History**

This period in Jewish history had been preceded by some tremendous prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who were spelling out to the people all of the things that they were doing. Interestingly enough, these were the same things that we are doing today in this country. The prophets were coming and warning them as to what they were doing economically. They were creating inflation. They were debasing their coinage. They were being deceitful in business practices. The social life was being degraded by the corruption that was being permitted. They were militarily falling down. They were depending upon alliances. Israel had the idea that Egypt was a strong man that she could depend upon. But the prophet said, "It's a weak reed. If you depend upon Egypt, you're going to come to national destruction."

Well, all of this had gone on for years. They had warnings that their enemies are stronger, and that their enemies would destroy them: "The only way you can keep peace is being strong enough that your enemies do not dare attack you. And if they do that, you can immediately destroy them." They would not listen. They treated Jeremiah like a dog, and they finally put him in prison. They said, "We're sick and tired of listening to your pessimism." They took his message from God, and used it against him to bring punishment to him.

**The Babylonian Captivity**

Now Jehoiakim is king of this disintegrating nation. In comes Nebuchadnezzar, and indeed he conquers Israel. The nation's sovereignty comes to an end, and "the times of the gentiles" begins. This expression is found in Luke 21:24, which gives us the point of the termination of this era: "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the gentiles until the times of the gentiles be fulfilled." Luke is speaking here about the repeat in the future for Israel of what had already happened in their history in the past, where they were overwhelmed by gentile military powers. This period of "the times of the gentiles" was going to exist until Jerusalem was no longer under gentile domination. It is when Jerusalem will again be free, and the land of Israel would be free from gentile control.

Nebuchadnezzar took a number of Jews, including the famous Jewish boy Daniel, to Babylon as captives. In Daniel 1:3-7, we have this described: "The king spoke on to Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and the king's seed, and of the princes; youth in whom was no blemish, but well-favored, and skillful in all wisdom, and gifted in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning in the tongue of the Chaldeans;" that is, the Babylonians. One of the things that Nebuchadnezzar was smart enough to recognize was that the Jews that he had conquered were intellectuals. They were not big masses of muscle running around. These people were smart; they were intelligent; they were wise; and, they were educated. They centered upon the aesthetic, and upon the cultural, and upon the spiritual. And he said, "These are quality people. I'd like to have them in my government." He says, "Select a number them." Well, he not only selected those who were leaders, but he eventually, upon subsequent deportation, selected people who were skilled craftsmen of various kinds. And he literally took them by the thousands – not just a few handful here and there.

We read about Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and we think that it was just a handful of people. No, it was thousands of young people; thousands of qualified intellectuals; and, thousands of craftsmen that were taken to Babylon to staff the government of the Babylonians. You have to hand it to Nebuchadnezzar. The guy was smart.

"And the king appointed them daily provision of the king's food and of the wine which he drank, so nourishing them three years, that at the end of them, they might stand before the king. Among these were the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: unto whom the prince of the eunuch it gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego." Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are their Babylonian names. If you have trouble remembering those names, just remember the little rhyme: "Shake the bed; make the bed; and, to bed we go:" Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. That'll help you remember their Babylonian names.

All of this exodus of quality people is being pulled into Babylon in order to update (to improve) that society. Jehoiakim is watching all this happen. He grits his teeth, and he takes it for a while. However, after three years, Jehoiakim decided to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar, and he died a few years later in 598 B.C. before Nebuchadnezzar was able to return to Jerusalem to deal with him. That put Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin on the throne. We have this recorded in 2 Kings 24:1-6. Jehoiachin had a very short reign. He only reigned for three months and ten days, and in 597 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin and several thousand Jewish leaders and craftsmen, including Ezekiel, captive to Babylon. So, he expanded the captivity. This is recorded in the 2 King 24:8-16.

In 2 Kings 24:10, we have Nebuchadnezzar's response to the father's rebellion: "At that time, the servants of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. And Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. And Jehoiachin, the King of Judah, went out to the King of Babylon: he and his mother and his servants and his princes and his officers, and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon, King of Israel, had made in the temple of the Lord, as the Lord had said. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princesses, and all the mighty men of valor: even 10,000 captives, and all the craftsmen, and smiths: none remained except the poorest sort of people of the land. And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land; those he carried into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. And all the men of might, even 7,000, craftsmen and smiths 1,000, all who were strong for war, even them the King of Babylon brought captive to Babylon."

So, he takes more captives back to Babylon. In the process, in order to deal with the father's rebellion, he destroys the temple, and takes the valued treasures of the temple back to Babylon with him. This rebellion results in Jehoiachin being removed, and being replaced by his uncle Zedekiah. Nebuchadnezzar replaces Jehoiachin with his uncle Zedekiah, who, after 10 years, also decides to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar. All of these are evil men acting against the advice of Jeremiah who says, "Don't try it. Don't rebel. You're going to be destroyed. Don't count on Egypt. They won't carry you through."

**Lineage**

One thing you want to remember is that all of these men have an important lineage. They are all of the line of David. Now we're down to Zedekiah. The lineage of David is the one through whom must come the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords who is to rule this whole world: the Messiah Savior Jesus Christ.

Well, when Zedekiah decides to rebel, Nebuchadnezzar returns and lays siege to Jerusalem. In 587 B.C., he captures Zedekiah. The officers bring him to Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar killed all the sons of Zedekiah while the father watching, and then he gouges out the eyes of Zedekiah; blinds him; and, sends him back to Babylon to die. 2 Kings 25:1-7 and Jeremiah 52:1-11 give you the details of this terrible punishment. Zedekiah was the last king in the line of David to rule over the Jewish people, and the nation officially ceased to exist.

The next king in the line of David who will rule over the world is the Lord Jesus Christ. When He came, that was part of His claim. He came with full royal rights. He was in the lineage of David. And that's why the Christmas stories in the Bible make such an emphasis upon the fact that He was in that line. It's because the nation had ceased to exist with Zedekiah, and its next king would be Jesus Christ. And He was rejected, so He will not come to the throne until after the tribulation era when the millennial kingdom is set up here on this earth.

Part of the punishment upon the Jews at this time by Nebuchadnezzar was to finish whatever he had not done before, in destroying their temple; destroying the city of Jerusalem; and, tearing down its walls. 2 King's 25:8-10 tell us that disaster: "In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the 19th year of King Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, King Nebuzaradan, captain of the Guard, a servant of the King of Babylon unto Jerusalem. And he burned the house of the Lord (that is, the temple) and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house he burned with fire. And all the army of the Chaldeans, who were with the captain of the guard, broke down the walls of Jerusalem round about."

They just put the torch to Jerusalem so that when they got finished, there was nothing but a pile of rubble. That was all that was left. Why should this have happened to Abraham's people? Why should this have happened to the people that God had given such great promises to of national greatness, and who enjoyed such greatness under such things as Solomon? 2 Chronicles 36:14-21 is very instructive as to why this happened, because it is a warning to us today relative to the preservation of our own national entity:

"Moreover, all the chief of the priests and the people transgressed very much after all the abominations of the nations, and polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem." It wasn't bad enough that the people were evil. Even their religious leaders were evil. That's how far they had come. They were in the temple of God, polluting and corrupting the very temple of God with pagan practices."

Verse 15: "And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up early and sending, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place." God says, "I don't punish without exercising grace." That's a God principle to remember about God: "First, I give you a chance; then, I lower the boom." There is always grace before judgment. So, God says, "I've sent my messengers. I've sent Jeremiah. I've sent Ezekiel. I've explained to you what you're doing. I've warned you. I've cautioned you how on far you're drifting from divine viewpoint principles."

Verse 16: "But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets until the wrath of Lord rose against His people till there was no remedy." They finally pushed their opportunity of grace to the point where God said, "That's it. You have abused My messengers. You've rejected My Word. You've treated Me like dirt. That is it. Now you've passed the point of no return. The nation is going down."

"Therefore, he brought upon them the king of the Chaldeans (the Babylonians), who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man, or maiden, or old, or him who stooped for age. He gave all into his hands." That's the way it is with a brutal conqueror. He has no compassion for the young men; he is delighted to ravage and to rape the young women; and, he has no compassion for the elderly.

"And all the vessels of the House of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king and of the princesses: all these he brought to Babylon. And they burned the house of God, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious vessels. Those who had escaped from the sword, he carried away to Babylon, where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the Kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah: 'Until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths, for as long as she lay desolate, she kept sabbath to fulfill 70 years."

And in this statement in 2 Chronicles, the prophet says, "God is taking the nation now into foreign captivity to punish this nation, and He is going to punish them for a specific period of time: 70 years." Do you know why it's70 years? Because under God's order for the Jewish people, He said, you are to till your land for six years in a row. When you come to the seventh year, let it lie fallow. I'm going to give you so much of an increase of crops in the sixth year of the series such that you'll have enough food for the seventh year, and you'll have enough food for the next year until the first crop comes in of the next series. But every seventh year, you do not work the land."

Isn't that great? Wouldn't you love to have a job such that your employer says, "Every seventh year, I'm going to pay you so much in the sixth year that you don't have to work for a whole year?" I don't even want to ask you to raise your hands if you'd like that kind of a deal, because I know just what you'd say. You'd say, "Anybody who's got a deal like that must be crazy not to take it." But greed does make you crazy. These poor dudes couldn't resist going out there and saying, "Let's use the seventh year too." Sure, God prospered them in that sixth year, and they came rolling in. And they said, "Can you imagine how much more we can roll up if we work the land that seventh year?" And they did it for 490 years. They never skipped a seventh year.

And God says, "Now, who do you think you're kidding? You were enjoying all your prosperity, and you kids were learning this bad habit from your parents. You knew the Word of God. You knew that My Word said, 'Don't do that on the seventh year,' but you went ahead and did it. You took comfort from the fact that people had gotten away with it for several centuries here." Well, now He says, "It's all going to come home. I'm going to send you into the most miserable kind of captivity you can imagine in Babylon, and you're going to stay there for 70 years – the 70 years that you robbed me when I said to let the land have a Sabbath. You worked it, and now I'm going to let you work it out in slavery.

So, that was a significant point – that 70-year captivity in Babylon. That becomes important in a little bit because Daniel starts studying the writings of the prophets, and he sees this figure of 70 years. Daniel, having been taken with that first early captivity of Jehoiakim into Babylon, starts counting up. Daniel is one of the primary political figures (one of the primary government agents) now in Babylon, and he starts counting up, and he says, "You know what? That 70 years must just about the over." The problem was that he didn't know exactly when God started counting those 70 years – whether it was from Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, or Zedekiah. Which King did he start counting it from?

So, that's what led him to go to God and say, "what's the story?" What is in store for the Jewish people? What is ahead for us? And out of that request came the dramatic timetable for human history upon which the book of the Revelation is anchored. You cannot understand the Revelation unless you understand this part as well.

**Daniel Interprets Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of an Image**

You remember that King Nebuchadnezzar had this terrible dream in which he saw this image made up of various kinds of metal. The first part in Daniel 2:36-38 is described as a head of gold: "This is the dream and we will tell its interpretation before the king." None of the Magi of Nebuchadnezzar could explain the dream to him, but Daniel, having access to God, says, "I can tell you what it means. You, king are a king of kings." That means he was a world ruler. Babylon was a world empire: "For the God of Heaven has given you a kingdom of power and strength and glory. And wherever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the foul of the heavens, He has given into your hand, and had made you ruler over them all. You are the head of gold."

So, here is the Babylonian conqueror, Nebuchadnezzar. The Babylonian empire is established over the known world, and the Bible says, "This in this image was the head of gold." The thing that's important about this image is that this image that was out here on this plane of Shinar (ending up in the two feet) signified various stages of world governments which were going to progress.

The first one was Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold that existed at the time when Israel lost its national sovereignty. Well, in time, the Babylonian empire was conquered by the MedoPersian Empire under Cyrus in 549 B.C.

So, we come to the second segment of this figure and of the world empires. MedoPersia was described as "the breast in arms of silver in Nebuchadnezzar's image of the world empires. In Daniel 2:32, we read, "And the image's head was of fine gold; its breasts and arms of silver." Verse 39 says, "And after you (that is, after Nebuchadnezzar – the Babylonian empire shall rise another kingdom inferior to you." And that was the silver kingdom. Every kingdom degenerates. It's not the same quality as the one before it. So, the medals become less precious. So, the MedoPersian Empire came into being, and under ruler Cyrus permitted the Jews to return to Babylon to rebuild the temple. We have this described in Israel 1:1-4 and Ezra 6:15-18. It was dedicated in 515 BCE. They went back, and they rebuilt the temple.

However, when they dedicated it, the Bible says, "The old timers, who knew the original temple of Solomon, wept at the dedication ceremony. They were not weeping for joy. They were weeping for the obvious inferiority of this second temple over against the grand structure that God had given them under Solomon. They knew that they were in national eclipse. This temple, of course, is necessary for the Messiah's reign when he comes. Malachi 3:1-3 tell us about the fact that the Messiah is going to come to sacrifice in this temple in the land. So a temple is necessary. The Jews wanted to restore the temple because they needed that temple if the Messiah was to return.

Now the Jews are back in their land, but they're still under the control of gentile rulers. The rulers of MedoPersia. In 445 B.C., the Persian ruler Artaxerxes gave the order to move ahead one step more with restoring Jerusalem; that is, to build the walls around it. The report of this is in Nehemiah 2. The year was 445 B.C., and the ruler was the Persian ruler Artaxerxes. He gave the order to rebuild the walls. So now the Jews have lost their national sovereignty. They're permitted to go back under Cyrus of the MedoPersian Empire. They rebuild their temple. It is inferior – not as great as they once had.

Then years go by, and the Persian ruler Artaxerxes gives Ezra and Nehemiah the authority to go back and rebuild the walls. They go back and, they rebuilt the walls.

Along comes a third world empire. This one, again, is made of an inferior metal: brass. The belly and the thighs of brass. This was in 334 B.C., when Alexander the Great conquered the MedoPersian Empire, and Greece now became the ruler of all the world. Greece is the belly and the thighs of brass in Nebuchadnezzar's image. Daniel 2:32 says, "And the belly and its thighs of bronze." Verse 39 says, "After you (that is, Nebuchadnezzar) shall rise another kingdom inferior to you (the MedoPersian), and another third kingdom of bronze, which shall bear rule over all the earth." And you want to notice that phrase, "bear rule over all the earth." These were world empires. This was one nation ruling all the known world at the time.

So, now Alexander has conquered the world. At the age of 31, he sits in this tent, and he weeps because there are no more worlds to conquer. He has done it all, and he dies. The Jews are still under gentile authority, and now, during the period of the Grecian rule of the world, they have become very much absorbed into Greek life, the Hellenistic lifestyle – so much so that they couldn't even talk Hebrew. And that is the reason that the group of scholars were appointed to produce the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, which is represented by this Roman LXX (70), because purportedly, 70 scholars worked on it, where they translated the Hebrew Old Testament Bible into Greek so that the Jews in the Greek empire could read their own Scriptures. They had become so much like the gentiles, and so departed from their Jewish heritage, that they couldn't even speak Hebrew anymore. So, the Septuagint version was brought into being to give them their Scriptures so that they could read it as these people who were living in the Greek culture. Of course, the Septuagint version is enormously important to us because it is the predecessor of the translation of the Greek New Testament in what we call the common Greek (the Koine Greek), and the Septuagint gives us a lot of information as to the meaning of words relative to Old Testament Hebrew words.

So, the Septuagint was produced. Alexander dies, and his empire is divided between Greece, Egypt, and Syria, all of whom successively ruled Palestine. There was just a short period of Jewish independence under the Maccabean Revolt, but not very long. They continued (city, nation, and people) under gentile rule.

Then we get to the bottom of the image: the 2 legs. In the Peter 63 B.C., along comes the conqueror of Rome. And Rome becomes the ruler of the whole known world. The Roman Empire is described as being the legs of iron, and of having feet which are part iron and part clay. Daniel 2:33: "Its legs of iron; its feet, part of iron and part of clay. The Jews again are under gentile domination, now under Roman authority, and they are under this authority when they cause the death of their Messiah, Jesus Christ, in 30 A.D. The Jews in Palestine, following the death of Jesus Christ, revolt against Rome. Rome moves in on them and destroys Jerusalem; destroys the temple; kills a couple of million Jews; and, disperses the rest around the world. So, in 70 A.D., the Jews not only do not have national sovereignty, but they're scattered among the nations of the world. This was all because they would not obey divine principles as far back as the time of Nebuchadnezzar.

So, the Roman Empire now dominated the Jewish people. Well, in time, the Roman Empire itself degenerated, and it split indeed into two sections of the two legs. It split into the western and the eastern portions of the Roman Empire. The western portion had its capital at Rome; and, the eastern portion, that Constantine set up, had a new capital, and Constantine called it after himself, Constantinople. That became the capital of the eastern Roman Empire. This was in 395 A.D., when the Roman Empire finally was split in two. So, you have the empire split – represented by those two legs of Nebuchadnezzar's image. The subsequent result in the course of history had the Roman Empire, both Western and eastern portions, splintering off into national entities: Byzantium; the Crusaders; Turkey; and, Britain, all one after another, dominated the land of Palestine. The Roman Empire really exists today, but it exists as national entities (as individual countries).

Then, finally, wonder of wonders, on May 14th, 1948, the new state of Israel was proclaimed. It was based on a partition of Palestine between Jews and Arabs, which had been adopted by a UN resolutions. Then in June of 1967, Nasser of Egypt decided that he was going to finish off the Jews. He was going to destroy that Jewish state. He was going to push the Jews into the Mediterranean Sea, and finish them off. Well, they got a big surprise. The war lasted for six days. It's called a Six-day War. In that war, the Jews charged into what was known as the West Bank, which was controlled by the nation of Jordan (that territory on the western side of the Jordan River). They charged in, including the city of Jerusalem, and finally stood at the Wailing Wall. And there the return of the entire city of Jerusalem was again achieved, never having returned that to that city in full possession, since Nebuchadnezzar stormed in there and took it away from them.

However, does this end the times of the gentiles? The Bible says the signal is when the gentiles no longer dominate the city of Jerusalem. No, it doesn't. The Jews are there, but their hold is very tenuous. We know from the Word of God that Jerusalem will again fall under gentile control in the period when the antichrist, the world's dictator, rules the world. When he turns against Jerusalem (when he turns against the Jewish people), he will take Jerusalem, and once more, the city of Jerusalem will be under gentile control.

That is where the Jewish people have come today. When they called for the death of their Savior, Messiah, Jesus Christ, and Pilate said, "This man is innocent. I'm washing my hands in front of you symbolically. I am innocent of the blood of this just man." And they screamed out, "His blood be upon us and our children." And that's exactly what God gave them. The blood of Jesus Christ, their Messiah, whom they murdered, has been upon them and their children. So, the Scriptures predicted: "Your lot as a nation will be so miserable, and it will mount in terror. The tribulation period will be the epitome of it. It will mount in terror so that you will go to bed at night, and you say, 'Would to God it were morning. I'm afraid of the night.' The morning will come, and you'll go into the day, and you'll say, 'Would to God it were night so that I could hide. I'm afraid of the daytime and what I'm exposed to.'" And the prophet said, "You will be the dog's tail. You're going to be under everybody's foot. You're going to be what everybody kicks around."

That's where the Jew is today. He can't survive as a nation. He is economically on thin ice. He can't make it without a great deal of outside help. He is on a constant war footing. He is under constant threat. He never knows peace. He never knows when he's going to get on a bus, and some idiot is going to blow the thing up; or, some terrorist is going to throw a bomb in a classroom or in a school room inside of a synagogue. He doesn't know what's going on.

Those of you who may have traveled to Israel, you may have you may remember the security procedures just to get on one of the planes and get out of the country. They take you into room after room and ask you the same questions again. They ask you, "Have you noticed anything different in your suitcase? Has anybody had access to your suitcase? Has anybody touch this?" And what are they looking for? They're looking for some terrorist activity to blow up this plane full of American tourists. They live in fear, and that's why they would welcome the antichrist who says, "I'm going to put you under peace. You aren't going to have to worry about anybody. Things are going to be well for you." All of this is because they would not obey the Word of God, and because they would not subscribe to the national principles that God ordained for their preservation.

This brings us then to the results of the 70-year inquiry of Daniel, because God gave Daniel more than he asked for. Daniel just wanted to know, "When are we going to get out of Babylon?" God says, "I'm going to tell you something. I'm going to tell you more than that. I'm going to give you the rest of Jewish history from your point to the end." Daniel says, "You're kidding." God says, "I'm going to give you the whole thing. I'm going to give you the anchor points so that you'll know how to divide the major portions of Jewish history.

Next time we will look at this time table of Jewish history, which will lead us right into the tribulation of Revelation chapter 6.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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