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Theme for 2016 – Foreshadowings of the Antichrist
July 22nd, 7pm
Subject: Herod
Speaker: Brian Green

Autumn Conference - September 28th, 4pm and 7pm
Afternoon Subject: Alexander the Great
Evening Subject – Antiochus Epiphanes
Speaker: John Douglas

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The objects are:
1. To teach the nearing approach of our Lord’s return. James 5:8
2. To hold forth the Truth and to expose and resist error. Jude 3
3. To note passing events in the light of ‘the Scripture of Truth.’ 2 Peter 1:19
4. To unfold the Word of God by comparing Scripture with Scripture. Acts 17:11
5. To encourage missionary endeavour, and all service for Truth. Acts 1:8
6. To comfort and strengthen those who seek to stand with the Lord, apart from abounding lawlessness. 2 Timothy 2:19
7. To call for separation from false ecumenism. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

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The Seventy Weeks

By John Douglas

(This is a summary of the concluding part of a message on Daniel 9 given at a Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony Conference on 25th September, 2015. The former part of the message, entitled ‘Daniel at Prayer,’ was included in the previous issue of our magazine).

These seventy weeks of years of which we are told in Daniel 9 have been a matter of controversy and misunderstanding among God’s people. Everyone cannot be right, yet the word ‘determined’ occurs in verse 24 and it refers to the unalterable purpose of God (cf. also the significance of determined in verses 26 and 27). There is a way determined by the Lord. It is stated again in the last two verses of the chapter. I believe we should seek to find out more about God’s mind as to what is determined because that which is purposed is going to come to pass. May I come back to the two seventies? The seventy years at the start of the chapter belong to the past. The chapter finishes with the seventy weeks of years and, given Daniel’s standpoint in time, they refer to the future, and the coming of the Messiah.

The Advent of Messiah

This is an all-important chapter because it helps us get to the heart of the question in regard to God’s prophetic word. Twice we have reference to the Messiah, He Who is our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is mentioned in verses 25 and 26. That title ‘Messiah’ is carried over into the New Testament. Every time the name ‘Christ’ appears, it is a direct reference to the Messiah; and many times in the epistles we read of ‘Christ Jesus,’ or ‘our Lord Jesus Christ.’ The name ‘Christ’ is the direct equivalent of ‘Messiah’ in the Old Testament.

The word ‘Anointed’ is also employed to indicate the Messiah. In Psalm 2, it is so significant, even in reference to this prophecy here in Daniel 9. The psalm asks, ‘Why do the heathen rage?’ That word ‘heathen’ occurs many times in the Old Testament and is the same word that is translated ‘nations,’ or ‘Gentiles.’ So I am entitled, with all authority, to read in Psalm 2, ‘Why do the Gentile nations rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?’ Christians rest on the Word of God but the ungodly nations of the world are resting on imagination; they imagine a vain thing. They act on their imagination whereas the Christian chooses to act upon the Word of God. Here we have the kings of the earth setting themselves (with intensity) against the Lord and against His Anointed, against His Christ. Never forget that the term ‘Messiah’ is equivalent to the name ‘Christ’ in the New Testament, and in the Old Testament that same word is
sometimes rendered as ‘Anointed.’ So, the psalm speaks of men being against the Lord and against His Anointed; and we can say, against the Lord and against His Christ, His Messiah.

In verse 6, you find the same idea with reference to the setting up of the King. Look at the margin and you will see the sense is, ‘I have anointed Him in the office of the Messiah.’ He is the Messiah King. The symbolism depicts the holy anointing oil being poured upon Him there. Be very clear about that. That act of anointing is like a sure guarantee, a sacred pledge. It is, ‘I have set My King as the Messiah, the Messiah King upon Zion, the hill of My holiness.’ There is a clear emphasis upon My King, My holy mountain (Mount Moriah), My Son, in this part of the Psalm.

The Seventy Weeks of Years

In Daniel 9, the seventy weeks are weeks of years. Each week is seven years in duration. These seventy weeks comprise for the most part the times of the Gentiles, and Daniel foresaw how the times of the Gentiles will reach the point of consummation, and how the times of the Gentiles will come to an end.

The seventy years at the start of Daniel 9 mark the end of Israel’s captivity in Babylon, for the empire of Babylon was destroyed at the end of those seventy years. This is a striking thing. Then with the end of the seventy weeks of years, Israel will experience with joy her deliverance from her final captivity, and great Babylon will be brought into judgment; we learn of the downfall of greater Babylon.

We have seen that Daniel’s prayer is found in verses 1-19, and the prophecy in verses 20–27.

That distinction may be made. The division is simple. It helps us to get to the question as to God’s prophetic word.

Was Daniel’s Prayer Answered as He Intended?

I possess an edition of the Authorised Version with a marginal comment in reference to the seventy weeks. The comment in the margin has Daniel praying that Israel may no longer be a people. That is far removed from the Hebrew text. It has no place in Scripture, but it shows the interpolation, how men have suggested something else for the fulfilment of these seventy weeks, amounting, in effect to God, instead of having heard the prayer as Daniel put it, turning right round and doing the opposite. Daniel asked the Lord to receive His people again, to take them back, and embrace them in His love, and forgive them; but these interpreters are saying, instead of God doing that, He did the opposite. He cast them off that they may no longer be a people. That is unacceptable. It is not what this passage teaches.

Daniel learned about these seventy weeks. They span a time which corresponds in a
large degree to the times of the Gentiles. The seventieth week will see the end of the times of the Gentiles, which is marked by the coming of the Lord. Seventy weeks will see the fulfilment of God’s purpose at the end of the age. Now the seventy weeks are divided. First of all, there are seven weeks; then sixty-two weeks, making sixty-nine weeks of years. This brings our attention to ‘the Messiah’ in verse 25. We are looking at the advent of Christ, the Messiah. We know now, looking back, the Saviour did come in fulfilment of the Lord’s covenant promise. Verse 26 informs us that in the sixty-ninth week Messiah will be cut off. Here we have a puzzle for pious Jews in days of old who could not see how God’s prophetic word could be fulfilled; for on the one hand, Messiah will sit upon the throne of David and reign in glory and power, yet here we read Messiah is to be cut off. That is a puzzle which has caused the greatest difficulty. Some Jews then have two Messiahs in mind as their solution.

The Message of Calvary

Let me sum up. First of all, in reference to this prophecy, you can see from verse 26, Messiah is to come. Secondly, He will be cut off; He will come to die. He is to be wounded unto death. We can say, as Isaiah does, ‘He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him (there at Calvary. God has laid on His own dear Son) the iniquity of us all.’ Thus He is the sin-bearing Saviour. He is the substitute for sinners. He died in our guilty room and stead. He took the burden of my sin; the sin that had lain on me to begin with is transferred and put on Him. That is wonderful. That is the victory of the cross. Third, our Saviour is mentioned in this prophecy, ‘Messiah shall be cut off.’ He was to die ‘but not for Himself.’ He died a premature death, but not for Himself. He was not appointed to die for His own offences. He was not slain for the guilt of His own sin. No, it was my sin that put Him there. ‘There was One Who was willing to die in my stead, that I, so unworthy, might live. The path to the cross He was willing to tread, all the sins of my life to forgive. They are nailed to the cross, O how much He was willing to bear. With such anguish and loss Jesus went to the cross, and He carried my sins with Him there.’ Praise the Lord.

Some highly esteemed men see verse 24 as Calvary. It reads, ‘Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and the prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.’ But that is not Calvary. It cannot be Calvary. We have learned clearly from verse 26 that it is in the week number sixty-nine, the sixty-ninth week, Messiah is cut
off. That is Calvary. What is read here about the determinations to finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and the prophecy, to anoint the holy of holies belongs to week number seventy – a period of seven years to be later. It cannot be Calvary. We know that this final week belongs to the time of the end and pertains to the coming again of Christ the Saviour Who upon His return will finish transgression. He will make an end of sin. He will make reconciliation for iniquity. He will bring in everlasting righteousness. He will seal up, by way of completion, the vision and the prophecy. He will anoint the holy of holies. This then belongs to the seventieth week, not the sixty-ninth.

I use the illustration of my grandson when he was small. He loved doing jig-saw puzzles. One day he was a good way through the jig-saw, but in the middle there was a vacant spot. The piece was yet to be found. He found a piece and judging by the colour, and the way the jig-saw was cut, to him the piece was right. I could see it was not right but said nothing. He determined to make the piece fit and made every effort to press it in. It would not go.

The Covenant in Daniel 9

Those who interpret Daniel 9 differently are left with a piece that will not fit. The finishing of transgression and all verse 24 is a description of events in the seventieth week, not the sixty-ninth. Between this and Calvary there will, at the very least, be seven years. How do we account for that? Did the Lord die on the tree and then seven years later, or some other period of seven years, signify in some manner that He had brought in redemption. No, the piece will not fit. It is also imagined that the covenant mentioned in verse 27 is that of the Lord in salvation that He would confirm with many for one week. I do not know how good men can come to that conclusion. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in so far as He fulfilled the covenant of redemption, never made that covenant for one week of years, for seven years. How long does your salvation last? I have an everlasting salvation. The piece does not fit. Our Lord Jesus Christ has not made a covenant at any time for one week. No such thing. It is not in the Book. He never made a covenant for seven years. If we talk about the covenant of redemption, nothing else can be said but that it is an everlasting salvation. It certainly is.

If you look at the margin here, it brings out the clarity of the Hebrew text. The verse 27 reads, “he shall confirm”. This is the antichrist. It is not the Lord’s covenant because that is not for seven years; and I do not see anyone being able to allege that the Lord’s covenant lasts for just seven years. The antichrist will make a covenant for one week – for seven years. In the midst of those years, he will break that covenant. Compare Isaiah 33:8. In the midst of the week, ‘he shall cause the sacrifice and the
oblation to cease’ because that will be his intention. See the margin in your Authorised Version. It is not the covenant but a covenant. That makes all the difference. If it said ‘the covenant’ you could think, to begin with at least, of the covenant of Christ. But when it says ‘a covenant’ then immediately you are able to consider another covenant – the covenant of the antichrist which will be made for seven years and broken up in the midst of the week, broken up by the man of sin because he has in mind to set up the abomination of desolation (verse 27); and again, because he will have the intention in his heart and a determined purpose to destroy the nation of Israel once and for all. So there is a two-fold purpose for his breaking the covenant in the midst of the week; firstly, to set up the abomination of desolation, and secondly, to proceed then with the destruction of the nation of Israel.

The Glorious Conclusion
Well, our Lord Jesus, when He comes again, will bring in everlasting righteousness. He will bring in a new day altogether.

What a glorious day that will be when the King shall come. All these words can be given more attention. They deserve further study, but I trust as we have gone through Daniel 9, endeavouring to bring this summary before you that you can see this chapter as it stands in Scripture. We can say for sure that Daniel’s prayer was heard and was answered by God and the Lord has proposed in line with Daniel’s prayer (verse 19) to hear his cry, to forgive the sin of Israel and to hearken unto Daniel’s petition and do what he asked. The Lord began that great work in the days of Zechariah and Haggai, when the remnant returned in the second year of Darius and began with purpose to build the house of God. That was a commencement, but it was only a commencement in measure of what the Lord has purposed to do; and ultimately we have the purpose of God being carried through to completion and that is when the Lord comes again.

What a day. What a glorious day that will be when the King shall come. We have the blessed hope of our Lord’s coming again. We know for a fact the trumpet will sound. We know the Lord Jesus will descend bodily from the skies. We know the dead in Christ shall rise first and then we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord. This is future. This is glorious. This is certain of fulfilment. We shall be caught up together with Him in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we be – for seven years, for one week? - oh no! So shall we be for ever with the Lord.

Note for Psalm 2:1....(Goyim often refers to the Gentile nations: occurs 558 times in the OT, and is translated as nation 374, heathen 143, Gentiles 30, people 11).
Waiting for our Lord’s returning, be it ours His Word to keep;  
May our lamps be always burning, may we watch while others sleep.  
We’re no longer of the night; we are children of the light.

Being of the favoured number, whom the Saviour calls His own,  
‘Tis not meet that we should slumber; nothing can be left undone.  
This should be His people’s aim, still to glorify His Name.

Thomas Kelly

Called Home

Mr Sidney John Clarke was called home on 26th February, 2016, age 100. He was born in South-east London during the first world war and early came to know the Saviour. He was favoured to sit under the ministry of Mr Percy Heward in the Upton Lane meeting at Forest Gate, where he received instruction in Scripture Truth. Whilst living at Elm Park he was very much involved in the commencement of a Christian Bible witness at Aveley, Essex. After he removed to Ullesthorpe in Leicestershire, he, for many years, kindly sent to various friends and supporters recordings of the messages given at our meetings, which work he continued after moving to Norfolk. He has always been welcome as a speaker on the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony platform and we include in this magazine a message preached over 67 years ago. His much-loved unfolding of Leviticus 23 – ‘The Festivals of the Lord’ – was preached at a Conference in April, 1951. In more recent years, messages have been recorded and we give on another page a list of the tape cassettes which are available from us. His excellent exposition of Jonah is included in the book of messages on the minor prophets, entitled, ‘Israel and the Nations’ (still available at £5). He was a great, humble and faithful believer and has for a considerable time served as a trustee of the Testimony. On his 100th birthday last August, several friends were able to attend a thanksgiving at Eckling Grange, Dereham, where he has spent his last years.
Four Wild Beast Empires and the Kingdom of God  
(Daniel 7)

By S J Clarke

(This message was preached on 26th April, 1949 at a three-day Conference of the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony. It is taken from ‘Watching and Waiting,’ August 1949).

In Colossians, Paul, in terms descriptive of the pre-eminence of Christ, speaks of His being the Creator of thrones and powers ‘visible and invisible.’ In Ephesians 6, also, we are reminded that this world is actually ruled, not by flesh and blood, but by spiritual forces, and it is in the light of such Scriptures that I would like us to approach this passage. We have in chapter 2 the place possessed by the four great world empires as ‘flesh and blood’ in the course of human history, but Daniel 7 views these same powers under the governing influence of the devil himself.

World Dominion, an Age-long Issue

In reading through the Book of Daniel there is impressed upon us a predominating issue - the issue of world dominion. This is certainly true of chapter 7 and it is necessary to the understanding of the passage to have this clearly in mind. Such words as ‘thrones,’ ‘kingdom,’ ‘dominion’ and ‘kings’ occur no less than twenty-six times.

But not only in Daniel does this issue stand out. Away back in Genesis, at the very time of the projecting of God’s eternal purpose, when man appears on the scene, God tells him, among other things, to ‘subdue’ the earth and ‘have dominion’ (Genesis 1:28) – a dominion, incidentally, that was to be exercised over lions and bears and leopards. Satan, however, immediately makes a bid for world power and by bringing man to submit to his temptation assumes the authority that man thereby forfeits and from henceforth is seen in Scripture as ‘the prince of this world.’

After man as such had been tested and failed, God reveals His choice of a nation, Israel, to whom world power is promised, a promise that is conditional upon her obedience. In Deuteronomy 28 there are some remarkable statements made to Israel that were to become effective when established in the land. For example, they are told that they would be ‘the head, and not the tail,’ that they would be ‘above only’ and not ‘beneath,’ and that though they would lend to many nations they themselves would never borrow, i.e. implying great economic influence in the world – and we know only too well today that money talks, money is power. In addition, ‘all the nations of the earth’ would be afraid of them. But Israel, too, defaulted and forfeited this power.
As a result of that nation’s failure, the Lord in Hosea 13, says: ‘Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: as a leopard by the way will I observe them: I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps ... a wild beast shall tear them.’ In view of the similarity of this quotation to Daniel 7 – the same creatures being named – one cannot but feel that the Holy Spirit intends us to associate the two passages. These beasts are symbolic of Gentile powers to whom God would entrust the dominion of this world. See Jeremiah 27:5-8.

The Wild Beasts and World Dominion

Coming then to the vision of chapter 7, Daniel sees these four wild beasts arise out of the Great Sea – an expression used invariably in Scripture to denote the Mediterranean (Joshua 9:1; Ezekiel 47:15, etc.). The geographical setting is thereby indicated. Even as Israel’s power was related to the land, so is the power of the beasts.

Further, those beasts arise as a result of the striving of the four winds. As the wind in Scripture is used to typify the Holy Spirit, may not these winds also indicate spiritual forces – evil spirits – as a result of whose activities the four world empires assume their nature and course?

The first beast to arise is like a lion. Jeremiah 50:17 plainly speaks of Nebuchadnezzar in this way. It has eagle’s wings – denoting the rapid conquests of the Babylonian empire, which took only some forty-odd years to be established. The wings however were plucked, an unseen hand, as it were, arresting it, rearing it on its hind legs and causing it to stand upon its two feet – imperial advance is stemmed. A man’s heart is given to it, and as in Scripture a kingdom is seen represented in its head, so these words may have reference to the humbling experience which Nebuchadnezzar had, as narrated in chapter 4.

A second beast arises like a bear – a larger animal. ‘It raises up one dominion’ (margin), which took place with the dual powers of Media and Persia under Cyrus. The bear perhaps refers both to the large armies that the Persian kings used in their conquests and also to the brutality of the Persian regime. See Proverbs 17:12. Esther illustrates this, when Haman, with the emperor’s permission, decreed the extermination of the whole Jewish race and forthwith sat down to have a drink! What callousness!

It had three ribs in its mouth – denoting the conquests of Babylon and the rich and powerful kingdom of Lydia by Cyrus and of Egypt by Cambyses, his son. ‘And they said unto it, Arise devour much flesh,’ for even after this the Persian Empire continued to expand so that, according to Esther 1:1, it extended from India to Ethiopia – a tremendous area.

After this a leopard, a smaller creature, arises. This has reference to the Grecian Empire, which, with its much smaller armies under Alexander the Great, subdued the Persian Empire. The four wings of a fowl upon its back, as distinct from the two wings of the lion, would indicate the even more rapid advances of the Greeks, so that within twelve years the whole of the Persian Empire had been subdued, Alexander himself dying at the early age of 32 in Babylon.
The beast is seen with four heads – corresponding to the four kingdoms into which the Alexandrian Empire was resolved under four of his generals: Greece under Cassander, Egypt under Ptolemy, Syria and the East under Seleucus, and Asia Minor under Lysimachus.

At this point we notice that Daniel says: ‘After this I saw in the night visions’ – an expression used three times in this chapter (verses 2, 7, 13), introducing on each occasion a fresh emphasis. It is evident that Daniel is especially impressed with the distinct appearance of the fourth beast. Indeed, when he is being given the interpretation of the vision, he specially inquires concerning the truth of this beast (verse 19), although the emphasis is not so much upon the course as upon the crisis of this empire.

The Little Horn and World Dominion

The beast has ten horns, and afterwards there appears a little horn which uproots three of these horns – a feature that nullifies any thought of this little horn indicating the Papacy. The horn speaks of strength, though a ‘little’ horn, suggesting an initially insignificant power; ‘eyes like the eyes of a man,’ great intelligence; and ‘a mouth speaking great things,’ his awful blasphemies, which were the immediate occasion of the Divine intervention (verse 11).

It was during the course of the fourth beast, the Roman Empire, that the Lord Jesus was manifested and this same question of world-power was bound up with His coming. Immediately after His baptism and anointing, with God’s attestation, ‘Thou art My Beloved Son,’ He is directed by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. There this particular issue is precipitated – Satan takes Him up into an exceedingly high mountain and shows Him all the kingdoms of the earth, with the words: ‘All this power I will give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.’ One condition however he stipulates – that he be worshipped. But the Lord refused the offer; praise God. He refused – and chose a more excellent way!

What the Lord Jesus refused, however, the little horn receives. In Revelation 13 we read of the beast (described as having features associated with the first three empires – the lion, the leopard and the bear) arising out of the sea, ‘and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority.’ Further, in chapter 17, the ten horns, as ten kings, given power by God one hour with the beast, yield their power and strength to him. World dominion is thus his – and Satan is virtually in possession of his age-long quest, world worship, for we read ‘all the world ... worshipped the dragon’ (Revelation 13:3-4). Oh! Behind all else lies this question of worship – worship God-ward on the one hand and worship Satan-ward on the other.

Despite all this, however, there yet remains an obstacle to the full possession and enjoyment by the beast, as the Satanic agent, of his ambition of world power – a people! We recall the days of Esther, when Haman was in the place of power and the presence
of Mordecai, who would not bow the knee to him, continued a challenge to his exalted position. He therefore conspired to rid the empire of Mordecai and the people of Mordecai. Similarly, in this very book of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar decreed that all should worship the image that he had set up in the plain of Dura. But here again there were those who refused to do so, thus robbing him of his universal acclamation. The fiery furnace was the result.

So will it be in the days of antichrist – a people will be there, presenting constantly a spiritual challenge to his claims of universal power. And who are this people? They are described in verse 25 as ‘the saints of the high places’ (margin). This reminds us of the letter to the Ephesians, when Paul, addressing ‘the saints,’ speaks of their being blessed in ‘the heavenly places.’ The expressions are virtually identical and in both cases unquestionably refer to the saints of the present age. It is ‘the saints of the high places’ also who, in verse 22, possess the kingdom. Many wish to include the saints of the present time there, who yet exclude them from verse 25. Surely we should interpret this expression consistently.

Here then is the wonderful vocation of the church. In the time of antichristian lawlessness, when iniquity is heading up to its awful climax, we are called of God as a people to represent the Lord’s interests down here, to hold ground for the Lord, to be a spiritual challenge to Satan’s kingdom, ‘till He come.’ It reminds us of what we read of David’s mighty men, one of whom, Eleazar, the son of Dodo the Ahohite, at Pasdammim, after the people had fled through fear of the Philistines, held firmly a parcel of ground full of barley, so that his sword stuck to his hand. ‘And the LORD wrought a great victory that day.’ This is illustrative of our calling even now, although of course the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

**The Son of Man and World Dominion**

Yet during the whole course of the wild beast empires ‘the heavens do rule.’ God is still on the throne. The ten kings, for example, are given power one hour with the beast – an allotted time. And because ‘the kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and His Anointed, saying, Let us break Their bands asunder and cast away Their cords from us,’ He that sits in heaven laughs and speaks to them in His wrath, ‘Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.’ And the Son speaks: ‘The LORD hath said unto Me ... Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession’ (Psalm 2).

The judgment is set and the Son of Man comes in the clouds of heaven to receive the kingdom (cf. Matthew 26:64), which is His by right. John’s gospel tells us that it was as the Son of Man that He was lifted up as was Moses’ serpent and that by His death as Son of Man the world was judged and the prince of this world cast out. John also records that judgment has been given to Him because He is the Son of Man. Yes, the kingdom has been secured by the Cross, universal sovereignty was purchased by Him.
and for Him there, even as it will be as the Lamb, i.e. Christ in the power of His Cross, that He will yet make war with the beast and overcome him (Revelation 17).

Note again the symbolism used in this passage. At the very outset of this address we saw that Man was given dominion over the whole earth - over the lion and the bear and the leopard. Yet here we see these creatures themselves in the place of rulership. God’s order for the world has been reversed! Truly ‘the foundations of the earth are out of course.’ This is what happened when sin was first introduced. Adam subordinated himself to a serpent, one of those beasts over which he should have exercised dominion, and the world has been upside down ever since.

But here in Daniel 7 God is back where He started! The sovereignty of the earth is once more in the hands of Man, and all that that word means in the mind of God (cf. Hebrews 2:6-9).

The Saints and World Dominion

And yet when Daniel is given the interpretation of the vision nothing is said about the Son of Man! ‘The great beasts, which are four, they arise (Young’s Literal Translation) out of the earth, but the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom.’ This then is a precious Old Testament anticipation of the New Testament revelation of the mystery of Christ. In Ephesians, ‘Man’ is corporate. The ‘perfect Man’ is comprised of the Head and His members. The one involves the other.

And how blessed to see that the very people who were subject to the anti-Christian tribulation are those who possess the kingdom! ‘If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him’ (see also Acts 14:22), even as Eleazar, of whom we have spoken, in sharing David’s rejection, shared also in his triumph. We are reminded of John’s vision: ‘I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.’ Who are the ‘they’? Those that had not worshipped the beast but had gotten the victory over him and the number of his name. Then shall be the fulfilment of those oft-quoted words: ‘They overcame him by the Blood of the Lamb, and by the Word of their testimony: and they loved not their lives unto the death.’ This persecution is not defeat! but the occasion of the Church’s greatest victory and a preparation for her sharing the kingdom with her Lord.

We naturally shrink from tribulation. I myself know so little of it, but here it is in the Word of God. Viewed, however, in relation to the eternal purpose of God, is it not seen as a high privilege to which the Church is called (see Acts 5:41; Philippians 1:29)?

Such then is the prospect presented to us in this chapter. The fourth beast is given to the burning flame and wholly destroyed, in contra-distinction to God’s dealings with the previous empires, who had their dominion taken away but whose lives were spared for a season and a time. The kingdom under the whole heaven is given to Israel, the people of the saints of the Most High, and Christ as Son of Man in the place of universal and absolute supremacy, yet sharing the kingdom with those who share His rejection now. Hallelujah!
God's Purpose in the Church

By Sidney J Clarke

(The following is an extract from Mr Clarke's little booklet entitled 'God's Purpose in the Church,' still obtainable from us, price 5p).

Christ is ever God's all-inclusive purpose. References in Scripture to God's purpose always direct to Christ, the Son of God (e.g. Ephesians 3:11; Romans 8:28-30; 2 Timothy 1:9). The Father has no thought or design outside of Himself. All that God has in mind in relation to the Church is embraced in the Lord Jesus.

The first New Testament reference to the Church makes this very clear. In Matthew 16:16-18 the Lord Jesus reveals Himself as (1) The Foundation of the Church ('upon this Rock'); (2) The Builder of the church ('I will build'); and (3) The Owner of the Church ('My Church').

Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. He who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. And as to the Church, or a Church, being owned by any man or company, this is never once countenanced in Scripture, but such expressions as 'Churches of God' and 'Churches of Christ' are frequently to be found.

The first reference also to 'the house of God' in the Bible, by comparing spiritual things with spiritual, confronts us with a similar emphasis upon our glorified Lord. Jacob, in Genesis 28, dreams of a ladder set up on earth and whose top reaches the heavens, with angels ascending and descending upon it and the Lord standing above it. There he is blessed of God. On awaking he says, 'Surely, the L ORD is in this place ... This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' Whereas initially at Peniel (chapter 32) his name was changed to Israel, it is afterwards confirmed at Bethel (chapter 35). The Lord Jesus in John 1, obviously referring to these events, describes Nathanael as being 'an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile' (possessing no Jacob character) and then promises that henceforth he should see heaven opened and angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. The Son of man is the ladder of Bethel! Bethel, the house of God, the Church, is the place where heaven and earth are united – that is its God-ordained function. But it can only be constituted according to Divine purpose by virtue of the Person and presence of the Son of Man (cf. Matthew 18:18-20).

The great need of the Church is a fresh vision of Christ! Is not this the more impressed upon us when we consider that, at a time when the visible Church was in a degenerate condition God took hold of that 'disciple whom Jesus loved' and used him to present anew to His people the Lord Jesus Himself, with a revelation quite distinct
in emphasis from that set forth in the Synoptic Gospels. These things ‘are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God’ (that Foundation upon which the Church is built, Matthew 16) was the summarising of his testimony, and faith thus established would introduce a new infusion of life, at a time when deadness pervaded the Churches. How sadly impressive is their state recorded in the last book of Scripture and yet how significant is God’s answer to that condition – ‘THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.’

And is there not much in Revelation 2 and 3 that answers to the present condition of things in the professing Church? Would not God’s remedy be the same – the revelation of Christ, in view of His near return? Is not the cry, ‘Behold, the Bridegroom cometh’ that which will bestir the sleeping virgins? Are we, to change the picture, dwelling in our houses of cedar, while there is no established dwelling place for the ark of God, that rich symbol of our covenant-keeping, glorified Lord?

The ark was not made for the tabernacle or the temple. The tabernacle was made for the ark, the temple was made for the ark, and because of there being but one ark, there was only one tabernacle and one temple. Similarly, there can be but one foundation – the Divine Rock. Must we not be saddened by the existence, professedly, of a plurality of buildings, built upon distinctive creeds, forms of Church government, godly men, and other sandy foundations?

O to realise the tremendous privilege and the exceeding height of our calling, dear fellow-saints, to be a dwelling place for the Lord of glory and to be His visible expression upon earth as of one ascended and not now seen by mortal eye.

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Recorded Messages by Mr S J Clarke

(These messages have been recorded over the years and are available from us on cassette tape but not on CDs. The cassettes are £1.20 each or £25 for the set).

1. Babel.
2. The Cities of Refuge (Deuteronomy 19).
3. The Epiphany (Psalm 50).
5. Jonah.
6. The Lampstand (Zechariah 4).
7. The Mystery of Godliness (1 Timothy 3:16).
8. Every Eye shall see Him (Revelation 1:7).
9. Power and Glory (Revelation 4 and 5).
10. The Seven Sealed Scroll (Revelation 5).
12. The Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Revelation 6).
15. Restored Jerusalem (Revelation 21).
16. The Lost Tribes of Israel.
17. The Failure of Israel and the Church.
18. The Destruction of the European Union and What Follows.
19. The Ten Kingdom Confederacy.
21. The Antichrist: His Number and Those Who Receive It
23. The Song of the Lamb.
24. The First Resurrection.
25. Israel Converted and Blessed.
27. The Millennium.
28. The Length of the Millennium.

Bible Spreading Union: The 122nd Annual Meeting of the Bible Spreading Union will be held, God willing, on Monday, 12th September, 2016, at ‘Rehoboth’ Strict Baptist Chapel, Highland Road, Bromley, BR1 4AD. The preacher engaged is Mr Gavin Childress (Tottenham). Please support this meeting.

S.G.A.T. Meetings: The theme of the monthly meetings of the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony during 2016 is ‘Foreshadowings of the Antichrist.’ We trust that friends will be interested in the subjects chosen, and we would like to see others come to our meetings, which are due to be held on the fourth Friday of each month except August and December. The Autumn Conference is in September, when we have an afternoon meeting at 4.p.m. in addition to the usual evening meetings. All evening meetings are at 7.p.m. Details of the meetings arranged for the present quarter are given on the back page, and so that you can insert the dates in your diary and arrange to be present, we would mention that remaining meetings for the year are due to be as follows:

October 28 ......................Nimrod...........................................David McMillan
November 25 .................Goliath...........................................Richard Monteith