
Part 4: *Books*

The Ways of God:

A Brief Outline of

*God's Dealings with Israel, the Nations,
and the Church, and His Purposes
for the Glory of Christ*

“Hold fast the form (outline) of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, an faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 1:13).

Preface

This little sketch of God's Ways, will, it is hoped, be useful to some in grasping the great outline of the purposes and counsels of God.

They were written by the author at the time the subjects were lectured upon to a small company of Christians in 1865.

That the Lord may deign to use and bless them to His glory and His people's good, is his earnest prayer.

Blackrock, Feb. 1870

London: Robert L. Allan

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction: Government, Grace, And Glory	171
Chapter 2: The General Scope of the Dealings of God	172
Chapter 3: The Past History of The People of Israel	176
Chapter 4: The Times of The Gentiles, And Their Judgment	181
Chapter 5: The Calling of The Church, and Her Glory	185
Chapter 6: The Corruption of Christendom	190
Chapter 7: The Judgment of Israel and the Nations Introductive of the Kingdom	194
Chapter 8: The Judgment of Israel and the Nations Introductive of the Kingdom (Continued)	198
Chapter 9: The Judgment of Israel and the Nations Introductive of the Kingdom (Continued)	204
Chapter 10: The Glory, or Kingdom	207
Chapter 11: Satan Loosed For a Little Season, The Great White Throne, And The Eternal State: and Conclusion	211
Chapter 12: Conclusion	212

Chapter 1:

Introduction: Government, Grace, And Glory

At a time like the present so full of events crowding themselves together in the history of this present age -- an age which ends with consequences so deep and solemn to the world, and so full of blessing to the Christian, and the Church of God -- it is a blessing from the Lord to have our minds directed towards the Prophetic Word, and to the Ways of God. It is said of the Prophetic Word, that "ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1:19).

It is desired, as briefly as is consistent with the end in view, and as the Lord may graciously afford guidance and blessing, to bring before the reader, the general scope of the great dispensational dealings of God, which it has pleased him, in His infinite grace, to make known to us in His Word, so as to display those dealings in the Government of the world -- His Grace towards sinners -- and His purposes for the Glory of His Son. Those subjects have been entered upon with the desire that some may be enabled to follow those dealings in their *consecutive* order as nearly as such may be followed, and thus grasp the dispensational dealings and purposes of God thus revealed.

It is not pretended to give a complete view of these things, but such a general view of the whole dispensational dealings of God as may lead the mind to a closer searching after the more minute details of these dealings from the Word, and thus to a more perfect and growing apprehension of His purposes and ways.

In carrying out such a desire, many truths well known of late amongst the Lord's people will be before us -- needfully so -- that the more important parts may not be forgotten or omitted in the consecutive order of God's ways. And should it be found necessary to depart from this consecutive order, it will be with the desire but to link together the events more fully and clearly, that the mind may be enabled to pass along the chain without leaving any links behind.

The purpose of these papers is to put the truth plainly and simply before the mind from Scripture, for that "godly edifying which is in faith" -- not to combat with error, however useful and necessary such may be in its season. For it is strongly felt that when the truth, with its divine and perfect Light shines into the soul, it dispels the darkness, and finds a resting-place in the heart that desires to be subject to the everlasting Word of God. It is like the bringing in of a light to a dark place -- it dispels the darkness; while the endeavor to combat with the darkness will

not dispel it and the two things -- light and darkness -- cannot combine.

May the consideration of these truths prove a blessing from Him who alone can bless. And may He enable us to practice that which He teaches, and to live in the power of the things which are unseen and eternal -- abundantly blessing His own word to our souls.

In searching into these subjects a very large scope of Scripture will be before us.

The prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament embrace five great distinct subjects, viz.

1. The Corruption or Ruin of Israel, God's elect nation.
2. Judgment following this ruin, whether from the hand of the Gentiles or otherwise.
3. The Times of the Gentiles, and their judgment.
4. The Crisis, or short period of judgment when the Lord will make "short work upon the earth"; introductory of that age when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14).
5. The glory or Kingdom, which we know familiarly as the Millennium.

Prophecy is in the main occupied with earthly events; and that of the OT is silent as to the mystery, "which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God" (Eph 3:9). "The mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest through the prophetic writings" (Rom. 16:25, 26; *διὰ, τε γραφῶν προφητικῶν*, i.e. the prophetic writings of the NT in which are revealed the mystery of "Christ and the Church"). God's dear Son having been rejected by the world and the Jew, is to have a heavenly bride -- a church gathered to Him out of Jew and Gentile -- while He is hidden in the heavens, by the Holy Ghost come down, which will to joint heir with Him of all the glory which the Father has given Him when 'He assumes openly the headship of all things.

I would make a remark upon 2 Pet. 1:20, before passing on. "Knowing this first that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." There have been certain *partial* fulfillment of prophecy in times past which, no doubt, bore largely in them the features of the occurrences to which, when fulfilled in a primary application, they referred. But if we were

to say that their scope *ended* there, we should miss the mind of the Spirit in the object of the scripture, and at once make it of private interpretation, by confining its application solely to the occurrence which had come to pass. Prophecy begins in the mind, and counsels, and self-conceived purposes of God, and only ends in the full display of Himself and in the glory to be perfected and displayed in His Son. It links together two things -- the counsels of God and their accomplishment in Christ, We cannot, therefore, begin at a subsequent point, or stop at any prior to the end, without losing its great aim.

No matter how accurate may have been the apparent fulfilment of certain prophecies; when we come to examine the details, we are sure to find features which clearly show that

when God was pleased to use the circumstances that were then coming, or through which those who were addressed were passing at the moment; and even these before Him, -- He has always shown that He had other thoughts in view, reaching on to the accomplishment of His full purposes and glory; of which the matter then before Him served as a type. Instance the plague of locusts in Joel, which the Spirit of God uses to bring the consciences of the people before Him at the moment; and yet it forms an impressive figure of the judgment of Judah at the hands of the northern army, and the deliverance of the nation and judgment of the Gentiles, at the time of the introduction of the kingdom. Many other instances could be adduced as to this principle.

Chapter 2:

The General Scope of the Dealings of God

With respect to this subject we will refer to three Scriptures:

1st, "But when the *fulness of the time* was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4).

2nd, "In the *dispensation of the fullness of times*, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance" (Eph. 1:10, 11).

3rd, "And the angel . . . swear by him that liveth for ever and ever . . . that there should *be time* (delay) *no longer*: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished" (Rev. 10:6, &c.).

These three portions of Scripture mark out the great leading events or epochs of God's dealings towards the world. The first of them is past; and the two others manifestly future. We shall now endeavor to ascertain from Scripture to what past dealings and ways of God the expression in Galatians refers -- "When the fulness of the time was come." We must, consequently, take a general glance at the past history of man, as revealed to us, from the beginning until that moment.

We turn to Gen. 1, 2, and there we find that God, having created the man and the woman in innocence, bestowed upon them the

Dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth

-- a joint universal dominion over all that God had created in this world. We pass on to Gen. 3, and there we find that Satan had come in and succeeded in overthrowing him from this universal lordship, and that man had fallen under his power and become estranged from God. God had given to Adam in his state of

innocency a law, upon the observance of which he was to retain the blessings and dominion he had received, in the condition in which he had been placed. The observance of this command of God -- to avoid the eating of one tree in the garden -- would have kept him as a creature in his proper place of subjection to God. It marked his responsibility as an intelligent creature to his Creation.

Adam, thus fallen, hears a promise that in due time the woman's seed (which he was not) should bruise the head of Satan, who had thus brought man under judgment before God, and had thus overthrown man from this place of dominion through his subtlety. Adam, hearing of this promise made to the woman's seed, passes out from the presence of God, and from a state into which he could never return. God "drove out the man," and placed a barrier to prevent his access to the Tree of Life, and his return to the condition of innocence in which he had been placed at the beginning. Then begins the trial of man in this condition, which lasts about four thousand years, till the "fulness of the time was come."

For about sixteen or seventeen hundred years of this time of testing, men are left to themselves (God always preserving a witness in the world for Himself) till the flood; when the earth was "corrupt before God, and . . . was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Gen. 6:11, 12). The knowledge of God which men had, and the testimonies of creation, proving His eternal power and Godhead. Paul says, writing of this,

The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse (Rom. 1:20).

So He said,

The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold I will destroy them with the earth (Gen. 6:13).

God brought in the flood upon the world of the ungodly, saving Noah, the eighth person, who had found grace in His sight. And the world that then was, being overflowed with water perished; and this ended the trial of man left to himself without law.

Noah and his family are saved through the judgment of the world; and we find him on the earth thus cleansed. Into his hand God places the sword of government -- (Adam had lordship -- Noah, government).

Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he man" (Gen. 9:6).

Noah, thus entrusted, began to be an husbandman, and planted a vineyard, and he drank of the wine and was drunken. His younger son, Ham, came into his tent, and beheld the degradation of his father, who thus lost morally the place which God had given him.

The world had begun again on a new principle; which goes on until its judgment by fire. Peter writes,

The world that then was, (*i.e.* before the flood,) being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens, and the earth which are now, by the same word, are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men (2 Pet. 3:6, 7).

A new principle now finds a place in the hearts of men. The worship of Demons began. When men knew God,

they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened: professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things (Rom. 1:21, &c.)

Wherefore God gave them up to what they desired; and as man cannot do without something to rule his conscience and heart; if he has not God as above him, he will have some thing else. Satan gets this place, and man turns to the worship of devils. We learn this in Josh. 24:2.

Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood (properly "river") in old time, even Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.

These gods were demons, as we read, "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God" (Deut. 32:17; 1 Cor 10:20).

In such a state of things man's heart became filled with self-will. Self-will which shows itself in independence of God, and would prove a center in it self, having lost that which linked it with Him as the only center of good. Men unite to make a common center of unity apart from God.

Let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth (Gen. 11).

This was expressed in the building of Babel. This meets its judgment from God; who goes down and scatters men abroad upon the face of the earth, giving restraint of the confusion of different tongues or languages, which has ever since proved a

hindrance to this common purpose of man's heart, preventing the intelligent interchange of his thoughts.

When the world had thus gone into idolatry, "and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever," God separated to Himself one man -- Abraham -- and in him a family, a nation, -- *i.e.*, Israel -- that He might (amongst other governmental ways) place man under another test on new ground. In the course of time He separates, by a typical redemption, this nation from the world (Egypt,) to Himself: giving them, thus separated His Law; and eventually taking up His dwelling amongst them between the cherubim, on the ark of the covenant.

The law represented to man the test of his responsibility as a fallen child of Adam, and the authority of God. Ignorant of themselves, they accept it as the condition of their relationship with God -- the lawgiver, Moses, goes up to mount Sinai to receive it, and before he returns to name the conditions, those who accepted them set up a golden calf and worshiped it as their God, and fail! (See Ex. 32.) God then puts the tables of the law into the hands of the mediator a second time, and adds to the conditions of pure law, the character of long-suffering and mercy, saying,

Jehovah, Jehovah God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation (Ex. 34:6, 7).

The history of Israel thus set on new ground, gives us the result of this fresh trial. It lasted till the captivity of Babylon. During that time of trial we hearken to the pleading voice of the prophets and messengers of God, striving to win back the rebellious people to the observance of the conditions of their relations with Him, and to keep the law that defined those conditions: but we hearken in vain to a national response from the people. This long-suffering and mercy goes on till they had exhausted it -- till to allow it to go further would but show that God was careless as they about His name. At last it runs out; and we read in Hos. 1:6, as to Israel (the ten tribes)

I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away.

And again as to Judah, to whom was granted a further respite,

Ye are not my people, and I will not be your God (Hos. 1:9).

Man now gets a trial in another form. That of Israel had been at the beginning of their history, a pure theocracy, until they desired a king. After the history of the royalty of Israel and its failure, God removed the seat of His government from the center from which He had governed the world, while He owned Israel as His nation -- He took away the glory or Shekinah, where He manifested His presence from their midst, and gave them up to captivity in Babylon. He then transferred the supreme power of the world into the hands of the Gentiles, beginning with Babylon. Universal despotic dominion is given unto the hands of Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon:

Thou, O King, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory;

and whosoever the children of men dwell, the beast of the field, and the fowls of the heaven hath He given into thy hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all (Dan. 2: 37, 38).

How then will he use it? Will it be to the glory and honor of Him from whom he had received it? The result is known. Lifted up in pride of heart, as soon as he had received the power, he makes of himself a center; and endeavors to make a religious and idolatrous center of unity apart from God; (see the golden image of Dan. 3) and casts the saints of God who witnessed for Him, into the burning fiery furnace. Lifted up in pride, he says,

Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty? (Dan. 4:30).

He loses his moral reason and becomes a beast; thus typifying as their head, the power of the Gentiles in the whole period of their existence, till the "times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled."

And now into this wilderness of the world, into the spot where God had fenced in His vineyard and planted His vine -- "a wholly right seed" -- that it might bring forth fruit. The vineyard of which He says,

What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? (Isa. 5);

and when He looked that it should bring forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes, after all His care and culture, and became "the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me." Into the moral wilderness of this world, and into that little spot on which He had bestowed such care, came His last trial for man.

Then said the lord of the vineyard, what shall I do? I will send my beloved Son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him (Luke 20:13-15).

The tale was soon told. They gave Him a cross, when He came to seek His crown. They gave Him spitting, when He came to seek for fruit! And thus ended the probation of man for four thousand years, under every form of trial. The fulness of the time was come (Gal. 4:4, 5).

Man cannot now say that one single way was left untried of God -- He is left without excuse. The fulness of the time was come, and God had sent forth His Son, who was so received. The Son had come to seek and to save that which was lost! He took the two-fold position: "made of a woman," through whom sin had entered -- "made under the law," through which the Jew was under condemnation. His purpose was to redeem, by His death, them that were under the law, that those who believe, of both Jew and Gentile, might receive the adoption of sons -- that God might display the exceeding riches of His grace towards those who were under sin and condemnation. He bore in Himself on the cross the judgment of God against and concerning sin, making good the righteous demands of the moral nature of God as to sin. Rising from the dead He becomes the Head of the new creation, and the One in whom all who believe, live; and "have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7).

To those who believe, God reveals His purpose;

that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance (Eph. 1:10, 11).

And when that time shall have come, the strong angel swears by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that there should be time (delay) no longer, and that when the seventh angel should sound, the "mystery of God" should be finished (Rev. 10). When that sounding comes, we find the time has arrived to gather together in one all things in heaven and on earth, in Christ; and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the Lord and His Christ in the days of the millennium. This glory, or kingdom is, as we shall see, the making good of all that has been ruined by the first Adam, in and by the second {last} Adam -- the Lord Jesus; and will comprise the restored nation of Israel, again God's *earthly* center; the Gentiles rejoicing with His people. And in the *heavenly* sphere of its glory, the saints will have their inheritance or joint-heirship with Christ, in His glorious reign over the world for the thousand years. "The glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another."

During the interval between the "fulness of the time," and the "dispensation of the fulness of times," the mystery of God," of Rev. 10, goes on. This is His non-intervention in open power) to set things in the world to rights; while He watches over all in secret -- the time when He bears with long-suffering the evil, without judging it -- when wickedness is in high places, and goodness trampled under foot -- when falsehood triumphs, and truth is fallen in the streets. The Son, too, sits upon the Father's throne, having overcome the world, in this anomalous state of things (Rev. 3:21). The testimony of the cross and rejection of Jesus, and His resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God -- the gathering together, while He is hidden, of the joint-heirs -- God's secret work progressing, fitting the spiritual stones to His spiritual house. The Church of God suffers through this interval in outward brokenness and weakness in the "kingdom and patience of Jesus" -- the "kingdom and power" will come. Judgment and government placed in the hands of the Gentiles is so far separated from righteousness, that when the only righteous Man stood before the judgment-seat of Pilate, owning that the power which was there was given of God, ("Thou couldst have no power at all, except it were given thee from above," John 19), it condemned the guiltless. The time, too, of blindness for a season of the beloved people of Israel -- a veil is over their face. Gentile domination goes on in the world. The great image of Dan. 2 has not yet received the blow upon its feet by the stone cut out without hands. The whole creation groans and travails in pain, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19-22). Satan goes about unrestrained, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Jesus, rejected by the world, sits at God's right hand, waiting till His enemies are made His footstool (Psa. 110; Heb. 10).

We must now retrace our steps for a little. We saw that man lost the headship and dominion given to him in Gen. 1, 2. If we turn to Psa. 8, we shall find that there is a "Son of Man" on whom this dominion is bestowed.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the

paths of the seas.

Who is this “Son of Man”? And where is this dominion to be exercised and enjoyed? Heb. 2 answers us,

Unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the habitable earth to come (οικουμενη) whereof we speak; but one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels, thou crownedst him with glory and honor; and didst set him over the works of thy hands; thou has put all things in subjection under his feet . . . We see not yet all things put under him, but we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honor.”

It is the second {last} Adam -- the Son of Man -- to whom this headship is given. It is in an *age to come* this dominion is to be exercised and enjoyed. Meanwhile, when waiting for the assumption of this headship, He is “crowned with glory and honor.”

We will now turn to Eph. 1:19-23, to discover what work progresses while He is there. We find the apostle again quoting the same Psalm in v. 22. He speaks of the exceeding greatness of God’s power, which He wrought in Christ

when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body; the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

We learn from this and other scriptures that while He is thus exalted and hidden from the world, a Church or Bride is being formed for Him out of Jew and Gentile; that God puts forth the same power that He used to raise Christ, as Man, from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand; (He was always the eternal Son, the word that was with God, and was God). That the same power is put forth to quicken with, raise up together, and seat together in Christ, in the heavenly places, the joint heirs, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

We find this Psalm {83} again used by the apostle in 1 Cor. 15:27. There we learn that this dominion is taken by Christ at the resurrection of the saints from among the dead of which the chapter treats. Christ has been the “first fruits” of this “first resurrection”; they that are Christ’s (and they only) at His coming. When that day comes some shall not have been laid to sleep by Jesus; but all -- living or dead -- shall be raised or changed. The dead raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. It is then that God will gather together all things, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, in Christ; and when the saying shall be brought to pass, “death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor. 15:54; Isa. 25:8). God then brings in the blessing of the habitable earth, in the judgment of the world or the quick {the living}, as we find largely brought before us in this and its kindred passages or content of the prophets. And the kingdoms of this world shall then become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ. “When the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.”

We find this, to speak for a moment in general terms, in Isa. 24-27. The world and its systems brought under judgment, and reeling to and fro like a drunkard under the judgment of God (Isa. 24: 20). The hosts of the high ones on high (Isa. 24: 21) are cast

out and restrained. Satan and his hosts cast out of the heavenlies (Rev. 12), having so long deceived and hindered the earth’s blessing from God. The kings of the earth (Isa. 24:21) shall be punished on the earth when they are gathered together against the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19). This universal judgment makes way for the establishment of His throne in Zion. “In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined” (Isa. 25). He will remove the vail of idolatry that is spread over all nations; He will take away the rebuke of the remnant of His people Israel who have waited for his intervention. During this judgment “He is a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.” The Lord subdues the pride of the terrible enemies of His people, and gives them songs of deliverance in the land of Judah. “We have a strong city, salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks” (Isa. 26). These three chapters are of exceeding beauty, showing what the Lord will do at that day, when the saying is brought to pass -- “Death is swallowed up in victory” -- or in other words, the time of the first resurrection. All things that had been marred and destroyed in the hands of the first Adam, shall be more than made good in the last Adam -- the Son of God. He takes the headship of Psa. 8 not only by right, but by redemption, as the inheritance had fallen under the power of the enemy through man’s sin. The joint-heirs will then enjoy unitedly with Him this headship in the heavenly glory, and the name of the Lord shall be excellent in all the earth: not only as King in Zion, at “the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world begun.”

To conclude, we see that man has destroyed himself; every fresh trial and deeper privilege only proving how complete has been his ruin and failure. He has sinned away every blessing as soon as he had received it; but God will make good in a far higher sense, and to His own glory, everything that man has ruined, and under which he has failed, in the last Adam -- in Christ! The period which we have considered as to man’s trial embraces the time from the garden of Eden to the cross -- the rejection of God himself in the person of Christ. We shall see, in considering the other subjects, this humiliating, yet necessary discovery, more clearly brought out in detail.

True, that man was as really lost and ruined at the day of Gen. 3, as when he rejected and crucified Christ Himself, but it was the cross which brought out definitely the enmity of his heart to God and good. Before the cross there was no distinct demonstration of this. He had failed in many a patient trial from God; but his ruined state was fully proved, when God, gentle, human, loving, full of grace and truth, came into his midst, and was rejected in the person of Jesus Christ!

Chapter 3:

The Past History of The People of Israel

After our short survey of the general dealings of God, we now come to consider His ways, as exhibited more in detail; and in doing so we turn to that people, or nation, which was peculiarly the platform for their display, in government, long-suffering, and mercy -- the people of Israel.

We have seen the state of the world and failure of man in the days before the flood: and afterwards Noah set up on the renewed earth, the world going into idolatry, and amongst the jarring elements of human wills, man striving to make a center and a name apart from God, and the judgment of God thereon -- the divisions of the world into nations in the family of Noah. There was a purpose with God at that time, in His mind and counsels, which we find in Deut. 32:8.

When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the peoples, according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

Here we find that centuries before they existed as a nation, the counsels of God were occupied about them. His dealings with the nations of the world were arranged with reference to the seed of Jacob.

The world had lost the knowledge of the one true God and had gone after idols, even the family of him of whom it was said, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem." Satan had succeeded in gaining the position God should have had in the mind and heart of man.

"Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the river in old time, even Terah, the father of Abram, and the father of Nachor: and they served other Gods" (Josh. 24:2).

We learn from 1 Cor. 10:20, in which the apostle quotes Deut. 32, that these gods were demons. This being the case, God *chose* one man, whom He *called* to separate himself from his country, associations, and his family, to be a witness in the world, and against the world for Him. To this man, Abraham, God *gave certain promises*, both of a temporal and of a spiritual nature.

The question before us being the past history of the nation of Israel, we pursue only the temporal promises. When Abraham came into the land of Canaan, God said, "Unto thy seed will I give this land" (Gen. 12). When Lot had separated from him, these promises are renewed.

Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to

thy seed for ever, &c. (Gen. 13:14, &c.).

Again in Gen. 15 we find the promise renewed, and the bounds of the land named; "And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it." And again, "Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates." In a vision in the same chapter God reveals to Abraham that his seed would be a stranger in a land that was not theirs and that they should serve them. "And they shall afflict them four hundred years. And afterward they shall come out with great substance."

Now these promises were *entirely unconditional*: they were given by God, and received by Abraham without any condition whatsoever. We find them, still without condition, repeated to Isaac, in Gen. 26, and to Jacob in Gen. 28. We turn to Ex. 2 when the four hundred years were expired, and we find these promises to the father's alluded to;

And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob; and God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them (Ex. 2:23-25).

The people are now redeemed, and taken out of Egypt (Ex. 12-14), the covenant name of Jehovah revealed to them (Ex. 6:2, 3). Afterwards they are told God's purpose in thus taking them out.

Unto thee it was showed that thou mightest know that the Lord (Jehovah) he is God, there is none else beside him (Deut. 4:35).

Or, as He says in Isa. 43:12, "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I (Jehovah) am God." On the redemption of the people God takes up His dwelling amongst them in the cloud and the glory.

The question, Had fallen man any righteousness for God? -- had not, however, yet been raised. The people journey from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai, the objects of perfect grace. Here God proposes certain terms of relationship with them;

Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. *Now* therefore *if* ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, *then* ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine, &c. (Ex. 19).

And all the people answered together and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.

See also Ex. 24:3, 7, where the covenant is ratified by blood. Thus they enter upon a covenant of obedience as the terms of

relationship with God. Instead of saying, “No, we cannot trust ourselves in the least; if we accept such conditions as these, we shall surely fail : we shall not be able to keep our blessings for one hour.” Instead of this, they were full of confidence and ignorant of themselves. The result is plain and solemn. The lawgiver goes up to the mount that burned, to receive the terms of the covenant; and, ere he returns, the people make a calf and worship it, as the god that brought them out of Egypt: they say,

Up, make us gods which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the *man* that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him (Ex. 32:1).

Moses returns with the tables of the law in his hand; he sees the music and the dancing when he came *nigh* unto the camp: he saw that on the side of the people the terms of the relationship were broken; and his anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hand, and broke them beneath the mount. Pure and unmixed law never, therefore, came amongst the people. The lawgiver returns to the mount; he goes up again, “Peradventure he might make an atonement for their sin”; and in answer to the prayer of Moses, the people is spared, and a covenant of long-suffering, patience, and mercy added to that of the law; and it is established afresh in the hands of the mediator and the people (Ex. 34: 27).

The Book of Leviticus, with other matters, settles the approach to God, who dwelt amongst them, and the priesthood, which as soon as it was consecrated was ruined, Nadab and Abihu offering strange fire, are destroyed (Lev. 10).

The Book of Numbers gives the journey through the wilderness, and the revolt of the Levites (Num. 16).

When about to enter the land, the covenant is renewed in the plainest way, establishing the terms of their possession of the land on condition of their observing them, in the Book of Deuteronomy. Deut. 27 states the principle of legal righteousness, and Deut. 28, as other parts of the book, the conditions of their inheritance and blessing, in the land.

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth, and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field: blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep: blessed shall be thy basket and thy store: blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out” (Deut. 28:1-6).

And the alternative,

But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field; cursed shall be thy basket and thy store; cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land; the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep: cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and

cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out (Deut. 28:15-19).

The whole chapter, as the book at large, states in the most solemn manner the conditions of their possession and retention of their blessings in the land. And we read in Deut. 29:1,

These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab (in the borders of Israel), beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.

Accordingly we find them entering the land under the leadership of Joshua, the waters of Jordan separating themselves, and the “*Lord of all the earth*” passing into the land before His people, to possess the land in them. This was an important title which the Lord thus assumes, to which we shall have occasion to refer again (see Josh. 3).

The Book of Joshua gives the history of their conquest and partial establishment in the land. In the last chapter we find Joshua establishing a covenant with the people, in which they bind themselves to serve the “*Lord their God,*” and to obey His voice, and under these conditions to retain the blessing.

We now see one point established clearly, of the utmost importance, which is, that the people never yet possessed the land, or the blessings promised to the fathers, under the *unconditional* terms promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These promises are yet to be fulfilled and accomplished in grace; they took them under the law.

The results of their inheritance of the land, and the blessings conditionally held, we find in the Book of Judges, as in other scriptures.

And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baalim: and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods; of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord and served Baal and Ashtoreth . . . And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my *covenant* which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice: I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died; that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord, to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it or not, &c. (Judg. 2:11, 13, 20-22).

This book shows their failure, and the faithfulness and long-suffering of God, who raised up judges and deliverers from time to time, to bring temporary relief to them from the hands of their enemies.

In 1 Samuel we find the failure of the priesthood in the family of Eli. We read, “Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial, they knew not the Lord” (1 Sam. 2:12). This chapter treats of this failure, and the cognizance the Lord takes of it. In Judg. 3 the Lord establishes the regular line of prophets in Samuel (Acts 3:24), “ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord,” to form the link between Himself and the

consciences of the people. ¹ In 1 Sam. 4, the Ark of God, on which He manifested His presence, is taken. Eli dies, and the wife of Phinehas, dying on giving birth to her child, names him "Ichabod," saying, "The glory is departed from Israel." The prophet Samuel is now the link between God and the people. "He judged Israel all the days of his life."

When he became old, he set his sons to be judges over Israel, but they "walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment" (1 Sam. 8).

The people now desire a king, and

the thing displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us; and Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee for they have not rejected *thee*, but they have rejected *me*, that I should not reign over them.

The Lord now gives them a king, a man of their own choice, Saul the son of Kish. 1 Sam. 9-15 give us the history of his appointment and failure, in that which he had been raised up to do.

And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from *thee* this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine, that is better than thou (1 Sam. 15:28).

God now gives them a king, a man of His own choice, "David the son of Jesse," who at last is settled in the kingdom. After him, his son Solomon is established on the throne of the kingdom, in the full tide of prosperity and blessing, "neither adversary nor evil occurrent" (see 1 Sam. 16 -- 1 Kings 5). But "Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt," and he multiplied wives unto himself. Both of these things were expressly forbidden in Deut. 17,

And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice; and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the Lord commanded (1 Kings 11:9, 10).

They had now failed under *prophets, priests, and kings*. Solomon had for a little moment united all these in his own person, serving as a type of Him in whom all shall be established. We read in 2 Chron. 9:3, 4, when the Queen of Sheba came up, she heard the *wisdom* of the *prophet*, and saw the magnificence of the *king*, and the ascent of the royal *priest* to the House of the Lord -- a faint shadow of the coming day of the glory of the Millennial Kingdom.

God now stirs up the adversaries of the kingdom against

Solomon, declaring by His prophet that He would take the kingdom from him; yet He would still preserve one tribe to David's house, that he might always have a light before Him. Accordingly when Rehoboam came to the throne the mass of the nation revolted under Jeroboam, who established a separate kingdom, and idolatrous centers of unity at Bethel and Dan (1 Kings 12:25, &c.). The tribe of Judah only was preserved to the house of David.

From this time we pursue the histories of these two divisions of the nation, under the kings of Israel, and the kings of Judah. That of the former is a tale of evil without any redeeming point, till we come to 2 Kings 17, when, under their last king, Hoshea, Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria came up and led away the nation of Israel captive.

In the ninth year of the reign of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes (2 Kings 17:6).

Read the entire chapter, which gives the account of this. These tribes have never been restored.

We follow the history of the kingdom of the house of Judah from Rehoboam's day, which is such another tale of wretchedness, and failure, and departure from God, occasionally relieved by the reign of some faithful king, such as Josiah and Hezekiah, till the house of David consummated its guilt in Ahaz. This king had set up the altar of a strange god in the house of the Lord, and made molten images for Baalim, and followed the abominations of the heathen. He was scarcely exceeded in iniquity by Manasseh after the reign of Hezekiah. In the reign of Zedekiah the time had come when those touching and solemn words were pronounced:

The Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes and sending, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and mis-used his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy (2 Chron. 36:15, 16).

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came against the city of Jerusalem, and besieged it and took it, and brought the nation captive into the land of Babylon, and put out the eyes of the king and slew his sons, rifled the house of the Lord, and burnt it and the king's house, leaving a few of the poor of the people to be vine-dressers and husbandmen in the land. They had failed under prophets, priests, and kings, and God pronounced these words by the prophet concerning their last king:

And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him (Ezek. 21:25-27).

The glory, or presence of Jehovah, that had dwelt amongst them since they had been redeemed from Egypt, departs from its house. Turn to chs. 9 to 11 of the prophet Ezekiel. In ch. 9 the prophet sees the glory of the God of Israel gone up from the

1. This is a very important principle. When the ark, which was the first link in the chain of relationship between God and His people is gone, there was no use in the Priesthood, because a priest had no place to sprinkle the blood, or to get the answers by Urim and Thummin. Priesthood was that by which a people in external relationship with God could *draw nigh to Him*. When it had become useless what was to be done? Here sovereign grace comes in, and establishes a line of prophets, by which He *could draw nigh to His people*, and keep up the link in their consciences, when all ordered relationships were broken. A prophet is one, at any time, who speaks from God to the conscience. A prophet is always sovereign grace.

cherub, and standing upon the threshold of the house the Lord marks His own, who were faithful, then executes judgment. In Ezek. 10., the glory departs from off the threshold, and stood over the cherubim that were to bear it away. And in Ezek. 11, the glory goes up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mount of Olivet, that is upon the east side of the city.

As soon as the people had gone into captivity, the “sword” of government is handed over to the Gentile king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, and the “Times of the Gentiles” begin.

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 heaven, hath he given into thy hand, and hath made the ruler over them (Dan. 2:37, 38).

Israel had been God’s servant up to this (in this *position*, however faithless). See Isa. 43:10 -- “Ye are my . . . servant whom I have chosen.” (See also Isa. 41:8; 42:19; 44:21.) The Gentile king now takes the place of the Lord’s servant, though in another sense. (See Ezek. 29:18, 20; Jer. 25:9, &c.) During the times of the Gentiles, God assumes the title of the “God of *heaven*,” as we see all through the Book of Daniel, which treats of these times. He had gone over Jordan into the land of Israel, as we saw, under the title of the “Lord of all the *earth*,” and had exercised His government from the center of Israel. The people having proved themselves worse than the heathen around, utterly untrue witnesses to the “Lord of all the *earth*,” God removes His presence from amongst them, and bestows the government of the world into the hands of the Gentile king.

Thus ends, properly speaking, the past history of the nation of Israel. In the language of Hosea,

The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prime, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim.

And again,

Call his name, Lo-ammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God” (Hos. 1, 3).

We must not however, close our brief review of their past history, without looking shortly at the return of a remnant, part of Judah and Benjamin at the close of the Babylonish captivity. We turn to Jer. 25 and we find that when they were about to be sent into captivity into Babylon they are told by the prophet,

Behold I will send . . . Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof . . . and this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

We find in the Book of Esther how God secretly watched over His people, without publicly owning them or manifesting Himself to them, in the land of their captivity.

We read in Dan. 9 that as soon as the seventy years of the kingdom of Babylon had expired, and Darius the Mede had taken the kingdom,

I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the

desolations of Jerusalem.

When the seventy years were over, a remnant of Judah and Benjamin came back, and settled in the land (Ezra 1, &c.); they rebuilt the temple, and reared up and repaired the city (Nehemiah).

The history of this remnant is touching and impressive. It was, however, an empty temple; they had neither the Shekinah, (the Glory, or presence of Jehovah), nor the ark, nor the Urim and Thummim. They did not pretend to more than they had, but did what they could in the ruins of everything around. This was not the *national* restoration as was promised by the Prophets; nor was it the inheritance of the land according to the promises to the Fathers; only a remnant of Judah and Benjamin returned under the permissive patronage of their rulers, to whom they were still subject.

Behold we are servants this day; and for the land that thou gavest to our fathers to eat the fruit thereof, and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it; and it yieldeth much increase to the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress (Neh. 9:36, 37).

The national restoration will yet take place of which God declares,

I will make them *one* nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and *one* king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all (Ezek. 37:22).

And again,

They shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors (Isa. 14:2).

This remnant of the nation remained in the land under their oppressors, until the coming of their Messiah, and His presentation to them. Only a little band of disciples attached themselves to Him, and received Him as the Christ: the mass of the people refused Him and choose a murderer in His stead. They were warned by Him that He had come in His Father’s name and that they would reject Him: and that if another would come in his own name, him they would receive (John 5).

With His own blessed, unwearying love He pleaded with, yearned over, and wept for the people still beloved for their fathers’ sakes, till compelled to say,

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate, for I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord (Matt. 23:37-39).

The sentence of judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, pronounced by the prophet seven hundred years before, but in longsuffering withheld (Isa. 6:9, 10) came to pass (Matt. 13; John 12). The householder had sent His Son to receive the fruits of His vineyard, and the husbandmen said,

This is the heir, come let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours; and they caught him and cast him out of the

vineyard, and slew him.

His love was not turned aside even by this; the Holy Ghost takes up the voice of Jesus on the cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," by the mouth of Peter in Acts 3, who says, "And now brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also our rulers." Repent and be converted, and even now He will return. But they gnashed their teeth upon His witness, Stephen, and stoned him and sent a message by him after Jesus, "We will not have this man to reign over us."

Still in longsuffering He lingers until the day of Acts 28, when the final carrying out of the sentence was pronounced by Paul,

Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive, for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed: lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (Acts 28:25-27).

It only remained to complete the sentence by the armies of Titus -- till

The cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land (Isa. 6:11, 12).

The great *prophet* had come into the midst of His people: to Him they would not hearken. Rejected, He had gone to heaven to be a *Priest* for those who now believe; and when He comes again as *King* He will unite all these glories in His own person, and His kingdom shall have no end!

Chapter 4:

The Times of The Gentiles, And Their Judgment

We have shortly traced the past history of the people of Israel to the Babylonish captivity, when the sentence “Lo Ammi” (not my people) was passed upon them, the Glory, or symbol of the presence of Jehovah, departed from their midst, and the government of the world was transferred to the Gentiles. That is, “The times of the Gentiles” began {cp. Luke 21:24; Dan. 2}. We have also followed the history of the remnant of Judah and Benjamin, which returned to the land to have their Messiah presented to them, the sentence “Lo Ammi” {Hos. 1:9} not having been removed;² till after their complete dispersion and the destruction of the cities of the land³ (Isa. 6:10).

Just before the time when Judah was finally called into captivity, God sends His Prophet to Zedekiah, and to the Kings of Edom, Moab, &c., who were plotting to throw off the yoke of the king of Babylon, requiring that they should bring their necks under his yoke. He says,

I have made the earth, the man, and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power, and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. And now have I given all these lands into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him . . . Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live (Jer. 37:5-12).

It is with this Gentile power, and those which succeed him, until the end of their “times,” we have now to do.

We turn to the Book of Daniel and read of one of the Hebrew captives enabled of God to recall and interpret his dream to the Gentile king, who had forgotten it (Dan. 2:31-45). The dream was of a great image, whose head was of gold; the breast and arms of silver; his belly and thighs of brass; his legs of iron, and his feet part of iron and part of clay. The interpretation shows that this image typified the Gentile power from the days of the first king, Nebuchadnezzar, till its close. When in its *last* state, a stone⁴ “cut without hands,” a kingdom set up by the God of heaven, smites the image on its *feet*, i.e., at the close of its existence. Accordingly the component parts

of the image, then fully formed, are broken to pieces, and consumed by a crushing act of judgment, inflicted by the stone. They become like chaff in the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carries them away, so that no place is found for them.

Thus it is that the stone, which executed this act of judgment, becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth. The vision is plain, and needs but few words. The Gentile powers exist in different stages, each inferior to the other, the farther it removes from the source of its first power, until an act of judgment most complete and destructive is executed on its *last* state, by a power not intrusted to the hands of men, so that every vestige of the image disappears from the scene; and the power that strikes the blow is then exalted, and stands for ever.

Babylon was the head of gold; its source was God, as we have seen; its power absolute and unquestioned.

For the majesty that God gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up, and whom he would he put down⁵ (Dan. 5:19).

After it came the Medo-Persian, the breast and arms of silver, a united power (two arms), inferior to the first in its absolute power, inasmuch as if he who wielded the power made a law he was himself subject to that law as another; for “the law of the Medes and Persians altereth not.” And the power and government of the Empire was divided among Satraps and Princes under the King. See Dan. 6:1; Esther 1; &c.

The third kingdom, of brass, the Grecian, was still inferior; as the fourth, that of the iron, and the iron mixed with the miry clay, degenerates yet more. This last power was the Roman Empire.

The great point for us to understand is, that the great power given to the Gentile king, to which succeeded the other powers, as typified in the great image (which, as its existence is prolonged, deteriorates), runs on, till one great, crushing, complete act of judgment, *yet* to be executed, carries the whole, and every vestige of it away, replaces it, and *then* fills the whole earth.

I say “yet to be executed,” because it is a common thought to misapply this kingdom, which destroys the others and then fills the earth, to the Gospel. Grace, or the gospel, is never

2. The prophets who prophesied after the captivity count the years by the years of the Gentile oppressors, and none address the people as the people of God thus owned, save for the future.

3. This was carried out about AD 79 {sic, AD70}, at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman General, Titus Vespasianus.

4. That this stone is Christ, declares The Law (Gen. 49: 24); the Prophets (Isa. 8:14; 28:16); the Psalms (Psa. 118:22); the Gospels (Matt. 21:44); and the Epistles (Rom. 9:33 ; 1 Pet. 2:4).

5. Gentile Royalty was *despotic* royalty; as Jewish was to have been *obedient* Royalty.

represented in Scripture as doing this. In the first place, the image did not exist in the state typified by the *feet* in the beginning of the Gospel-day. In the next, it is on *them* the blow is struck, which is a crushing act of judgment, not grace. And next, it is the *first* act of the stone, an act of judgment, *before* it begins to grow and to fill the earth. This is noticed only in passing, as the object of these papers is rather to establish the truth, in tracing these Gentile powers to their end than to combat with error.

We now turn to Dan. 7, where these four great powers are expressed under the form of four ravening beasts. From the vast sea of human passions and wills, which floated unorganized in the world, striven upon by the four winds of heaven, came up four wild beasts or kingdoms. The wind is the force of Satan's power acting upon the *sea* -- *i.e.*, the vast masses of human population in a disorganized state. The first like a lion, king among the beasts of the earth, with eagle wings, the chief of birds: a power rapid in its flight, and soaring above the other powers of the world. This we know was the first of the four great monarchies -- Babylon (Dan. 1:1; 2:37, 38). It lasted 70 years.

Another wild beast follows -- the Medo-Persian, which succeeded that of Babylon (see Dan. 5:28, 30, 31).

Then a third -- the Grecian empire, formed by Alexander the Great, which followed the Medo-Persian (see Dan. 8:21, 22), afterwards divided into four heads.

The fourth, diverse from all the other beasts and yet partaking of the qualities or materials of all (see Rev. 13:2), strong exceedingly, devouring and breaking to pieces and destroying the rest, which also had ten horns. It is with this fourth empire we have more particularly to do: the chapter we are looking at is principally occupied with him. The fourth great power was Rome, which replaced the Grecian empire after it was broken into four heads (Dan. 7:6; 8:21, 22). This imperial power is introduced by the ancient name of that which surrounded it, its center, Rome, in Dan. 11, where we read, "the ships from Kittim shall come," &c. This is merely referred to, to show that we have all four powers defined from Scripture, either by name or circumstances adjacent. This power existed in its vast unbroken state in the days of Christ, as we read in Luke 2:1,

And there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that *all the world* should be taxed.

And it is with this power we, as Christians, called out from the Gentiles, have most to do.

In the second vision of Dan. 7, we find that the fourth beast had ten horns, and that amongst the horns came up another horn, before whom three fell; and this horn had eyes, expressive of active intelligence and design; and a mouth speaking great things. He speaks great words against the Most High, wears out the saints of the Most High, prevailing against them; thinks to change times (Jewish festivals), and laws (ceremonies), which are given into his hand for a time, times, and the dividing of a time: (*i.e.* the last three and a half years of the times of the Gentiles). Thrones are set and the Ancient of days sits, the dominion of the little horn is taken away, (he

personifies the beast in the end, taking the lead amongst the other horns, and so becomes the expression of the whole), his body destroyed and given to the burning flame. Judgment is given to the saints of the Most High (the *heavenlies*, "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world" 1 Cor. 6), and the saints possess the kingdom; (the earthly, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25). Afterwards we find, in another vision, the kingdom of the Son of man substituted for that of the fourth beast (the Ancient of days is the Son of man Himself, see Dan. 7:22), which is personified in the little horn that came up last amongst the other horns.

The questions now arise,

1st. Has not the fourth kingdom long ceased to exist in its vast iron power?

2ndly. Has it ever assumed the features conveyed by the ten horns?

3dly. Has it ever done what is attributed to it in v. 25?

Now these questions will be satisfactorily answered by other Scriptures. We turn to Rev. 13, and read of a wild beast which the prophet sees arising from the sea. It partook of the characteristics of the three foregoing beasts of Dan. 7, but it has another added, which was, that the dragon, Satan, gave him his power, and seat and great authority; this it had not before. It had seven heads and ten horns -- seven forms of government and ten divisions in its administrative power. John saw one of its heads wounded as it seemed, unto death, and the deadly wound was healed. There is no doubt but that this head was its imperial form, which has long ceased to exist: some think for ever -- that the wound was unto death. But the apparently deadly wound was healed, and all the world wonders; and they worship him, and, through him, Satan, who had given him his power, and seat, and great authority; and they say, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" This is clearly the little horn of Dan. 7, for the same doings are attributed to him. But we have in Revelation this added -- that he was the full expression and instrument of Satan when revived; for (as in Dan. 7:25) we read that there was given him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given to him to make war forty and two months (three and a half years). He blasphemeth God and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven, "the saints of the heavenlies"; and makes war with the saints on earth, and overcomes them -- we know from Dan. 7 until the Ancient of Days comes.

Turning to Rev. 17, in the explanation of the vision to the prophet we find the same beast, which "was, and is not." It had existed in its one vast empire, the fourth kingdom of Dan. 7; it had ceased to exist and "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit"; it would again appear, but when it did, it would be the full expression of Satan -- "The dragon gave him his power, and his seat and great authority" (Rev. 13:2).

But we must proceed with his description under his last form. "There are seven kings," seven forms of government of the Latin empire. "Five are fallen," five had disappeared when the prophet wrote. "One is," it existed then. Another form, not yet come, was to arise, and continue for a brief space. Then the

Beast or last head of the Latin Empire, that was, and had ceased to exist, -- he would be an eighth form, yet of the seven (Rev. 17:10, 11).

There is now a feature to be explained as to the ten horns, not belonging to his former state of existence. The ten horns are ten kings, they had received no kingdom then, they did not belong to his antecedents as one vast empire, but they would appear, and receive power at the same time as he when he would re-exist in his final form. They would have one mind, and they give their power and strength to the beast; they would have each his separate existence, and yet would own the beast as their chief -- the expression of the entire. These make war with the Lamb, and He overcomes them. Their end we find in Rev. 19. The rider upon the white horse, with the armies of heaven, comes forth at the last daring and blasphemous defiance of His authority; and the beast and these kings are gathered to make war against Him that sat upon the horse and His armies; and the beast was taken and was "cast alive into a lake burning with fire and brimstone." His armies, too, are judicially slain.

We have one point to remark, to account for the presence of Satan on the earth at this closing scene, when he gives his power to the last form of the Latin empire, three years and a half before the execution of the judgment, which introduces the kingdom of the Son of man. We turn for this to Rev. 12. There we find the man-child (Christ and the Church, His body) ⁶ caught up to God and to His throne, which is immediately followed by war in heaven. Satan is cast out to the earth; rejoicing in heaven follows; woe is pronounced upon the inhabitants of the earth, "for the devil is come down unto you, in great wrath, having but a short time." ⁷ He then turns his malice against the Jewish saints below, who are then the objects of the attention of God. He gives his power and authority to the beast for the 1260 days or forty-two months, or "time, times, and the dividing of a time," before, the end of the beast's existence: and the closing time of the times of the Gentiles.

Let us now sum up shortly what we have gathered from Scripture, i.e., the history of the Gentile powers from its beginning to its close.

We have seen that four great kingdoms arose, commencing with Babylon, which had its power directly from God, followed by the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the

Roman; this last was in existence when John wrote, and for some hundreds of years afterwards in more or less of its iron sway. It was then broken up into different kingdoms, and continued thus for a long time. Three and a half years before the end of the Gentile power, Satan is cast out of heaven. Next, the Latin empire, so long apparently destroyed and forgotten, is restored, but in a new form; not one vast iron power, but its divided kingdoms uniting to own one power amongst them as their chief, and giving to him their power and force. Satan makes him his ready tool, and the world wonders and worships. This chief blasphemes God, and as Satan cannot now accuse the saints in the heavenlies, "he makes his instruments blaspheme them. He turns his rage through this chief against a Remnant of the Jewish people then gathered into their country. And, finally, he leads him to turn his heart in open rebellion against Christ who comes to take possession of His world-kingdom, and put an end to the Gentile power. This chief and his allies gather together against the King of kings and His heavenly saints, and the end of the beast is the lake of fire and brimstone. This closes the history of the Times of the Gentiles.

We have now followed, without much diversion from our subject, the history of the Gentile empires to their conclusion, looking especially upon the features the fourth empire will assume, when revived as an imperial power, three and a half years before the close of its existence; when, in the person of its leader, it will be the plain and complete expression of diabolical power. Possessed by Satan, it will be instigated in rebellion against God and Christ and so be destroyed.

But, dear friends, we may remember when considering the past history of Israel, we saw that when Christ was presented to the Jews at Jerusalem, He was rejected, and received only by a little band of disciples, and that He told them that He had come in His Father's name and Him they would *not* receive; and that if another would come in his own name, him they *would* receive. Now during the time of the crisis of the world's history, synchronical with the three and a half years of the full-formed evil of the beast, which we have seen, the Jews will again have been gathered into their land, the chief part of them in a state of apostasy. Scripture largely shows that a false Messiah will present himself to them at that time, who will be received by the mass of the people, and rejected by a remnant of faithful ones -- just the reverse of what occurred in the day when our Lord Himself was there. This personage is the connecting link between the Gentile powers in a state of apostasy and revolt, and the Jews in a similar state. Christ was presented to Pilate as the representative of the fourth monarchy, and to Caiaphas who spiritually represented the Jewish nation in that day: both united in crucifying Him. At the same time He was rejected by the mass of the Jews and received by a little band of disciples. At the close of the existence of the fourth monarchy in its revived state, this false Messiah will appear, the mass of the returned Jews will receive him, and he will be recognized by the imperial head of the restored Latin empire, into whose hands he will play his game; but he will be refused by a little remnant, whose hearts God is training, through unexampled tribulation, for the Kingdom

6. This is apparent if we examine the Scriptures. In Psa. 2, Christ will get the Heathen and uttermost parts of the earth for His inheritance, and break them with a rod of iron and so inherit them by judgment. He gives this to the Saints in Rev. 2:26, 27. The man-child, embracing both Christ and the Church, is said to be the one who was to "Rule all nations with the rod of iron," in Rev. 10:11. Besides this, John, in Revelations, speaks as the prophets of the Old Testament, linking together the time previous to the ascension of Christ with God's dealing with the earth at His return, passing over the present interval of the calling of the Church, which is never counted in prophecy.

7. This casting out of Satan from the heavenlies is important. Satan and wicked spirits are spoken of as being in the heavenlies at this present time. He is termed the "prince of the power of the air"; and the Church of God is said, in Eph. 6, to "wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with wicked spirits in the heavenlies."

