

The God Of Dreams – Part 2

Daniel 2:24-49

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It has been said that the true character of a person is often revealed in a crisis. Certainly, Daniel and his three friends (we'll call them Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) are in a crisis. King Nebuchadnezzar has had a dream and calls his wise men together and says, "I had a dream, and I want you to tell me two things: I want you to tell me what the dream was, and I want you, secondly, to tell me what the dream means." Basically, these wise men, soothsayers, astrologers and so forth said, "Listen, King, that's crazy! Nobody has ever asked anyone to do such a thing, and there is no way that you could do that unless the gods be with you." They recognized that it would take a supernatural revelation from the God of heaven to be able to do what the king was requiring. The king said, "Listen, if you don't do what I've asked then I'm simply going to cut you into little pieces, breakdown your homes, you know, destroy your homes, no biggie, just wipe you out." They said, "Still, there's no way we can do that." The edict was given to destroy all of the wise men of Babylon which would include Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the four Hebrews that had been carried away captive from Jerusalem.

How did Daniel and his three friends respond to this crisis? In verse 14, he responded with wisdom. I want you to back up there and look at it. It said, "Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon." God gave him the spirit of wisdom to be able to approach Arioch and ask that Arioch give him an audience before the king so that he might ask the king to give them some more time so they could tell him the dream and its interpretation. He also responded in verse 16 with faith—the amazing faith of Daniel! I want you to notice that. "Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation." That took a lot of faith. He was basically sticking his neck out telling the king, "I will give you the interpretation. All I need from you is just a little bit of time." That was taking great faith on Daniel's part.

Thirdly, Daniel responded with prayer (verses 17-18). "Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah," these are the Hebrew names given to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, "his companions." I can imagine them saying, "I can't believe you'd do that. I can't believe you said that." They went to prayer and began to pray to the God of heaven (verse 18) that He would give them mercies "...concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon."

Fourthly, these four Hebrews responded with praise (verses 19-23) as God gave to them the dream (he gave it to Daniel in a night vision), and their response was to praise the Lord; which is kind of interesting, instead of immediately running in to the king saying, "Hey, I got your dream! I got your dream! Don't worry about killing anybody." Instead, he got on his knees and they gave thanks unto the Lord and praised God, in summary, basically for His wisdom and power. Notice verse 23, "I thank thee, and I praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast

given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter." They were praying, praising the Lord and giving thanks to God, because God had answered their prayers. The Bible says, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Amen? They got on their knees, they prayed, and God answered their prayer and gave them the dream.

This is where we pick it up in verse 24, and what we have from verses 24-45 is Daniel's prophecy. Daniel prophesied in the sense of explaining the meaning of the dream and giving the interpretation (verse 24). "Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation." Now, Daniel was in a position that if he wanted to get rid of all the other wise men which weren't of God, the astrologers, magicians, soothsayers, Chaldeans, he could have very easily done that. He could've said, "King, you get rid of these other guys, make me and my three friends the top dogs in your kingdom, and I'll give you the dream and the interpretation." Even what would become his enemies, these ungodly individuals, Daniel has an influence for good on their lives.

It's amazing how many times, I believe, God would use the righteous to spare the wicked or the unrighteous—that God would hold back His wrath or punishment on those that are wicked or unrighteous for the sake of the good people or the righteous people that love the Lord. He says, "Destroy not the wise men of Babylon," of course, that would include him and his three friends. Verse 25, "Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste," he says, 'Let's get in there quick before this execution takes place,' "and said thus unto him," that is, Arioch speaking to the king says, "I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation." When I read that I say, "Really? You found him?" Talk about pride. He probably saw an opportunity to get in with the king, "Hey, King, guess what I found? I found someone that is going to tell you your dream and what it means. Aren't I a wonderful person?" There's an interesting contrast between Arioch's pride, in trying to see himself advanced, and Daniel's humility, wanting to see God get all the glory and all of the praise.

Verse 26, "The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? 27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king;" now, he did get that little jab in there. He wanted to make sure the king knew that these so-called 'holy' wise men are not able to make known the dream and the interpretation unto the king. "But," (verse 28) this is perhaps my favorite verse of this whole section, "there is a God in heaven..." stop right there. Isn't that awesome? I love that statement, "there is a God in heaven." The next time you're facing a crisis and things are going chaos and crazy, and you're starting to freak out, just remind yourself of this statement—there is a God in heaven! Just remind yourself that God is in heaven and is still sitting on the throne.

Secondly, notice that the God of heaven (this is one of the favorite statements about God in the

book of Daniel—He is the God of heaven) “...revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days,” which, interestingly, would include from Babylon all the way up to what is yet future for us. When we read (in just a few verses here) the interpretation of this prophecy, from our perspective, some of it now is history and some prophecy. Now, when Daniel interpreted the dream, only the kingdom of Babylon was on the scene at this time. There was no Medo-Persian Empire. There was no Grecian Empire. There was no Roman Empire, yet that was still all future. He accurately predicted the kingdoms of men, the Gentile world-ruling powers that would come from Babylon all the way down to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It contains for us history as well as prophecy. This God of heaven has made known what shall be in the latter days, “Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these,” so God of heaven brings hope. “As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came unto thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter,” he was recounting for the king what precipitated his dream. He went to bed at night and was wondering what the future held: Where is my kingdom going to go? What is going to happen after I’m gone? Is Babylon going to go on forever?

You know, we sometimes get the idea that as a nation we will just go on and on forever. We forget nations come and nations go. As far as America is concerned, we are a very young nation compared to other nations. A lot of kingdoms and nations have come and gone, and God remains still sitting on His throne. He says, ‘As for thee, you went to bed and you were wondering what the future held.’ Remember, the king went to bed and could not sleep. His thoughts troubled him. ‘You were wondering “...what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. 30 But as for me,” here’s Daniel’s humility, genuine humility, “this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart,” or God has made known this dream and its interpretation, that you, O king, may know what thoughts God has for your future and the future of other kingdoms.

Daniel starts in verse 31, “Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image.” Now, he is going to tell the king what the king dreamed. He saw this great image indicating that the image or a statue the king saw in his dream was very, very large. “This great image, whose brightness...,” some translations have splendor, “...was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible,” or awesome. “This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, 33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. 34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” This was the dream that King Nebuchadnezzar had. He saw this large statue, and this large statue had a head of gold. His breast and arms were silver. His belly and thighs were brass. His legs were iron, (this definitely is not a statue of me. I don’t have a belly and thighs of brass and legs of iron) and his feet were a mixture, in this big statue, of iron and clay. I want you to notice verse

36, "This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king."

I want you to notice what Daniel did not say. He didn't say, "Is this the dream?" He just said, "This is the dream." Notice how certain that Daniel is about the dream that God showed him was the same dream that the king had. I would have been with a little trepidation and fear kind of like (quavering), "Is that the dream, O king?" I'm holding my neck like, "Please don't take my head." Daniel just said, "That's it, man. I laid it out for you. That's the dream that God has given to you."

Notice how Daniel begins to describe the meaning of this dream (verse 37). "Thou, O king," referring to Nebuchadnezzar, "art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory." The majesty, splendor, and glory of Babylon was amazing. In a few chapters (Daniel 6), we're going to talk about the city of Babylon. It had one of the seven wonders of the ancient world—the hanging gardens of Babylon. It had golden gates. The walls were so wide you could ride several chariots abreast around the top of the walls. The gardens were amazing! It was this city that was just amazing by ancient standards, and the splendor, the majesty, the power, and the world dominion that the Babylonian kingdom had at that time was absolutely amazing!

The head in this statue that Nebuchadnezzar saw was himself and the Babylonian kingdom. Verse 38, "And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. 39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom..." stop right there. This other kingdom is "inferior to thee." We're going to project an image on the screen in just a second. I want you to see it in the Bible first. This second kingdom is the Medo-Persian kingdom—not just the Persians, not just the Medes, but was known as the Medo-Persian Empire. We'll see that very clearly when we get to Daniel 5:31.

Then there was this third kingdom (verse 39), "...of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth." This was the belly and thighs in this image of brass. This kingdom represented Greece. Now, I'm going to be giving you all of this information here (if you're taking notes you can go back and write it down). The first kingdom, the head of gold, was Babylon. The second kingdom was the kingdom of Medo-Persia, the breast and arms of silver. The third kingdom, the belly and thighs of brass, was the Grecian Empire under Alexander the Great and his conquering of the world. Then there's a fourth kingdom (verse 40), I want you to notice, "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise." Stop right there at the end of verse 40. This fourth kingdom represented by the legs of iron, two legs both made out of iron, represents the Roman Empire—the iron rule of Rome.

Verse 41 says, "And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes..." earlier, there was only the mention of feet. Now, there is the mention of feet and toes, "...part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron,

and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. 43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. 44 And in the days of these kings," that is, what is represented by the feet and the toes which were a combination of iron mixed with clay, it says that "...the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. 45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold;" the metals going from the feet back up to the head, "the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

We're going to spend a little more time looking at this image, so if you want to throw the first image up on the screen. I did not draw this. I wouldn't have put this guy in a mini skirt if I had drawn this. I wanted to start really simple and basic. Basically, this is just a representation kind of a concept of what Nebuchadnezzar dreamed. He saw in his dream this great big image, whether he had surf trunks on or a little mini skirt on I'm not really sure. Basically, as we just read, the head of gold represented Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire. I'm not going to bog you down with dates, the next slide will have some dates (don't go there yet). The chest and arms of silver is the Medo-Persian Empire. The belly and thighs of brass or bronze is the Grecian Empire; and the legs of iron, there were two branches of the Roman Empire, speak of the Roman Empire. The feet and toes mingled of iron and clay represent for us right now the future, and that future kingdom is going to be a revived Roman Empire. It's going to be connected with Rome in some way. It's interesting that when you get further on in the book of Daniel, these same empires are mentioned but they're mentioned as wild beasts or wild animals. There's an interesting contrast. When they're mentioned as wild beasts or animals, it's God giving the vision directly to Daniel. When Nebuchadnezzar has this dream and sees the image, he sees it as this magnificent, radiant, beautiful, metallic statue of gold, silver, brass, iron; and it gives to us the understanding of two different perspectives—man's view of man's kingdom and all its majesty and splendor, and God's view of man's kingdom saying they are like wild beasts or wild animals.

Now, before I forget, I think there is some significance in the fact that the metals go from gold all the way down to iron mixed with clay—a very, very inferior kind of idea. They don't actually even mix together. There is a successive decrease from gold, down to silver, to bronze or brass, to iron in the quality and the value of the metals. It starts with gold, comes all the way down to iron, and in the feet and toes. The significance is there even in the ten toes—we're assuming ten toes—and in the book of Revelation there are ten kings or ten nations. This is a revived Roman Empire that will dominate the world just when Jesus Christ returns in His Second Coming power and glory. (Let me have the other slide we have for us. This one is a little more dramatic.)

In the prophecy of Daniel, the king had seen a stone. The Bible says it was cut without hands from the heavens. That phrase indicates that it was of divine origin. It wasn't chiseled out by

man. It wasn't something that man produced. It was an uncut-by-hand stone that came from heaven. This stone struck the image on the feet and then destroyed the image. The stone grew into a great big mountain and then into a kingdom which would go forever and ever and ever and ever. That stone is a reference to Jesus Christ and His Second Coming. He is coming to put an end to the kingdoms of man. (This slide does have the dates of the kingdom of Babylon, 605-539 B.C. The kingdom of Persia, 539-331 B.C.; and then the kingdom of Greece, 331-16 something (I can't see. I should have better eyes.) Anyway, it's up there if you want to write them down and take notes. (I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to see even though I'm wearing my glasses tonight.) Some of those dates are for you there on the screen, and then the kingdom of Rome and the feet of iron and clay—the divided nations—I believe that we'll see a revival of in these last days.

These kingdoms in their succession, when Daniel gave the interpretation to the king, did not exist. They were still yet future, but God sits in the heavens and knows the future. He knows the end from the beginning. What this does is bring great comfort to know that God is in control. Amen? God knows the beginning from the end. He knows the future. He knows what's going to happen. He's in control, and the God who sits on the throne will fulfill His sovereign purpose and plan.

As you look at the text of Scripture in your Bible, there is a gap between verses 40 and 41. Between verses 40 and 41, there has been a huge gap between the Roman Empire, the fourth kingdom, and the future empire—the feet and toes of iron mixed with clay. The gap that exists between verses 40 and 41 is, I believe, called the Church Age or sometimes known as the Age or dispensation of grace. We're living in that right now. We're actually living between verses 40 and 41. We, as Christians, are living in the Church Age—we're saved by God's grace. This is a time when God is saving Jew and Gentile, and they're becoming one in what is called the Church, which is the body of Christ of which Christ is the head. Now, what is going to happen before verse 41 onward begins to unfold (between verses 40 and 41 we have the Church Age) is, I believe, the church will be raptured or taken off the earth by God—caught up to be with the Lord in heaven.

The rapture is not the Second Coming. The rapture is when "...the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God," and Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 4, a classic passage on the rapture which begins in verse 13. He says, "But I would not have you to be ignorant brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus," those that died in Jesus, your Christian brothers and sisters that have died before the Lord returns, "...will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain...shall not prevent them which are asleep," and gone to be with the Lord, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first," you say, 'Well, what do you mean the dead in Christ shall rise first? I thought they already went to be with the Lord?' They did, but their bodies are going to be resurrected.

When the Bible says, "...the dead in Christ shall rise first..." it's actually talking about a physical resurrection of Christians that have died. Their bodies will be resurrected and caught up into heaven, their bodies will be metamorphosized or transformed and reunited with their soul and spirit, and they will be forever with the Lord. Now, as soon as that happens, the Bible says, "Then we which are alive and remain," in other words, we could still be alive when the Lord returns and catches up the church. We will be "caught up," and there's our word. The word in the Greek is *harpazo*—caught up. We use the word "rapture," and some people say, "Oh, the rapture is not in the Bible." The word doesn't appear in the Bible. The word "trinity" doesn't appear in the Bible either but we believe in the triune nature of God. By the way, it does appear in the Latin Vulgate translation, if you have a Latin Bible. The word "raptus" is where we get our word "rapture." It means to snatch up or to take away by force. So, we who are alive will be caught up. We'll be raptured, and we will be with the Lord. At that moment, our bodies will as well be, and I use the word metamorphosized—they'll be changed or transformed. The Bible says, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye...this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality...then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

Now, some of you might be saying, "Come on, Pastor John, you really believe that Jesus is going to come back and that Christians are going to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air?" My answer is yes! I really believe that. If God kept His Word and accurately fulfilled to a t this prophecy that Babylon would be overtaken by Medo-Persia, Medo-Persia would be overtaken by Greece, Greece would be overtaken by Rome, and in the future we would have a revived Roman Empire; and during that time of tribulation, after the rapture happens, there will be seven years of tribulation...In several weeks, we're going to get to what's called the 70 weeks Prophecy of Daniel where he lays it out in numbers specifically when this takes place. During this 70th week, this last seven years of God's prophetic calendar for the nation of Israel and for the world, there will be a revived Roman Empire with a leader whom we commonly call the anti-christ. You've all heard about the mark of the beast and 666 written on your forehead or on your hand. That will be instituted by this "king" so to speak, this human ruler, who will be head of this ten-nation confederacy represented by the ten toes in Nebuchadnezzar's image—at which time Jesus comes back in His Second Coming. So, the rapture takes place between verses 40 and 41. You say, "I don't see it there." It's in the white space. Trust me, it is there. There's been a huge gap now since the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire went on for about 500 years after Christ. They were the first to persecute the early Christians, but here will be a revived Roman Empire.

Did you know the nursery rhyme "Humpty Dumpty" was actually written about man's attempts to revive the Roman Empire?

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.

All of the king's horses and all the king's men

Couldn't put Humpty together again.

Mussolini tried to do it, Alexander the Great, and all the different men that have tried to have their kingdoms revived and bring back the Roman Empire. Adolf Hitler tried to create a revived Roman Empire to make the Mediterranean Sea a German lake, and it failed. There is coming a day when there will be a revived Roman Empire. It will have its seed in Rome, and there will be a man come to power that will once again rule the world. He'll be Satan's man of the hour. A lot of people are enamored by the idea of: Is he alive today? Is the anti-christ in the world? I don't even care if he's around today or think about whether he's around today because I'm looking for Jesus Christ not the anti-christ. I don't plan on being here. If you want to stick around and shake his hand, go for it. I don't even want to see the dude until we come back with Christ riding on white horses, Revelation 19, and Jesus destroys this anti-christ with the word of His power, the brightness of His coming.

Between verses 40 and 41, the church is raptured and there is seven years of tribulation which takes place. The background for that is verses 41-43; the background for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ would be verses 44-45. In the rest of the book of Daniel there will be more prophecies about these kingdoms. There will be more descriptive detail about them being mentioned (all except for the Roman Empire). They are also mentioned in the book of Revelation. We'll give you the cross-references for them as well.

Notice verse 44, "And in the days of these kings," that is, the ten toes of iron and clay, "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom," this is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, "which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." This is talking about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ in what we call the Millennial or thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ. He's the stone (verse 45) "...cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure." Notice, there is coming a day where there will be the end of man's kingdoms. Oh what a day that will be! Amen? And we pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." As we look at the world so troubled today, we realize that man is unable to make a kingdom that lasts forever, he can't save himself, and there's no hope in man. Did you notice that the wise men, the astrologers, the soothsayers, and the Chaldeans of Babylon could not help the king but the God of heaven brings hope and help.

In closing, notice verses 46-49, Daniel's promotion. "Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. 47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret. 48 Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon." By the way, this is going to get Daniel in trouble because the other wise men are going to be jealous and envious now; Daniel will end up in the lion's den, and Shadrach,

Meshach, and Abednego will land in the fiery furnace.

Notice that Daniel, even in the moment of this promotion, didn't forget his three friends. He was thinking of others. "Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king." God wanted to place Daniel in that strategic location. God wanted to place him in just the right spot to have just the right influence so that God could speak to this king.

Let me wrap up what we've covered tonight by way of three lessons. First, we understand, not only from the book of Daniel but from the Bible, that there is a God in heaven because sometimes we will be tempted to believe there is no God in heaven. Where is God? Why would God allow this? Why would God allow that? Why doesn't God intervene? Why doesn't God do something? There is a God in heaven. You've got to remind yourself of that.

The second thing we need to remember (the background for these are all Daniel 2:28) is that the God of heaven reveals Himself to man. (1) There is a God in heaven, and (2) this God of heaven actually reveals Himself to men. He's not a God who hides Himself, He's a God who reveals Himself. God cannot be known apart from revelation, and God does choose to reveal Himself to man whether it be dreams or visions or whether it be in creation, "The heavens declare the glory of God...day unto day uttereth speech..." whether it be through prophets, the Bible, which is the written Word of God, or whether it be through the greatest revelation of God to man ever—the incarnation when God became flesh in the Person of the Son, Jesus Christ. I laugh when people say, "If there really is a God in heaven, where is He? Why doesn't He speak?" He does speak. He did come to earth, and He spoke like never a man spake. He healed the blind, raised the dead, cleansed the leper, and He calmed the sea. He brought people from the dead back to life. He died on the cross, was buried, and three days later He rose from the dead. Then He, physically, bodily (whistles) ascended right into heaven. I don't know if it sounded like that...you gotta throw in some sound effects there...but He went right back up into heaven. I mean, who has done that? Who ever came from heaven, born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, performed these miracles, died for the sins of the world, rose from the dead, and then (whistles) went right back to heaven? Jesus. Even when He spoke they said, "Never a man spake like this man."

God does speak. God does reveal Himself. God is not hiding. He died on the cross for our sins. You don't think God loves sinners? He's reaching out to them and He's reaching out to you tonight. If you've been filled with despair or thinking there is no God, there's a God in heaven and God reveals Himself.

Thirdly, and lastly, (verse 28) we see the God of heaven has a sovereign plan and is working it out. God has a sovereign plan, and He's working it out. God knew that Babylon would only go so long, and God knew that the Medo-Persian Empire and Darius the king would actually take over the Babylonian Empire. God knew that the Medo-Persian Empire would only last so long (you can study the history, it's there for anyone to study) and be overtaken by the Grecian Empire, and the Grecian Empire would only last so long and be overtaken by the Roman

Empire. Remember when Jesus was born in Bethlehem? In Luke 2 it says, "...there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." Rome ruled the world with its iron fist, ruled by law even though it had a senate. There is going to be a future Roman Empire, but it's going to be a confederacy of ten nations.

Way back as far as the early seventies, Europe starting forming (we call it today) the European Union. At one time it was known as the European Common Market, and we know that Britain just broke away. We know that they have euro currency. If any of you have ever traveled to Europe, you know that you get your euro coins and can travel over the borders with no border checks. It has become a United States of Europe. In many ways, the stage is set for the rise of this anti-christ with all this talk about globalization, the demise and the weakening of the United States and Great Britain is setting the stage for a United States of Europe. It's going to need a leader, and that leader is going to be satan's man of the hour.

It's amazing when you see, looking even at current events, how the world stage is set for this one-world government, this one-world leader. It's happened before—it'll happen again. He's going to hate God, hate God's people, and persecute those who missed the rapture and are left behind to face the time of tribulation which, by the way, is God pouring out His wrath upon the world. It's actually a time when God will actually pour out His wrath upon the unbelieving world—this Christ-rejecting world. You don't want to be here. That's why you need to get right with Jesus and accept Him as your Savior so that if the Lord comes tonight, and the rapture could happen tonight, I'm not predicting it will happen but it could happen at any moment. If I keep talking, it could happen before I finish the study tonight because I believe we could be raptured at any second and we'll be caught up to be with the Lord. I could dig that! I would welcome that. What a glorious thing that's going to be—forever with the Lord and the reunion that we're going to share up there! It's going to be marvelous!

You sports fans, have you ever...maybe you're into basketball, maybe you're into football, maybe you're into hockey, maybe you're into some other kind of sport, I don't know, but have you ever had a big game coming up and you're routing for your team. You have to record the game and watch it later. Normally, you don't want anyone to tell you how it ends, right? "Shhhhh! I haven't seen the game yet. Don't tell me what's happening!" Because you want your heart to thump and beat and you want to be all nervous and you don't know, but I think of the times years ago where I got kind of crazy with the NBA. I became a Lakers fan for a while (I've repented of that lately), but I used to watch the Lakers games and be all involved in it and stuff, yell and scream at the television, and get all freaked out. One time my kids even taped me to show me how bizarre I got during the game. They go, "Dad, listen to what you say." But I thought about, you know, whenever you tape a game and then find out how the game ended, and your team won, you can watch the game but you can relax when you watch the game. Right? Have you ever had that experience? I have. Hey, I can just enjoy this. If they get behind, I know they win. One of their star players gets ejected out of the game, "Hey, they're fine. They still won." I know they won, so I can just enjoy the game. I'm not going to yell at the referees—which was a big accomplishment for me. I'm not going to scream and yell at the players. I'm just going to enjoy the game because I know my team wins! Guess what? We

know our team wins! We can relax. Amen?

God has just given us a panoramic view of history past to history future. There is actually coming a day when Christ will return and put an end to the kingdoms of men, and His Kingdom will be forever and ever and ever and ever and ever and ever and ever and to His Kingdom there shall be no end. We win the game! We can relax. Amen? Let's pray.