

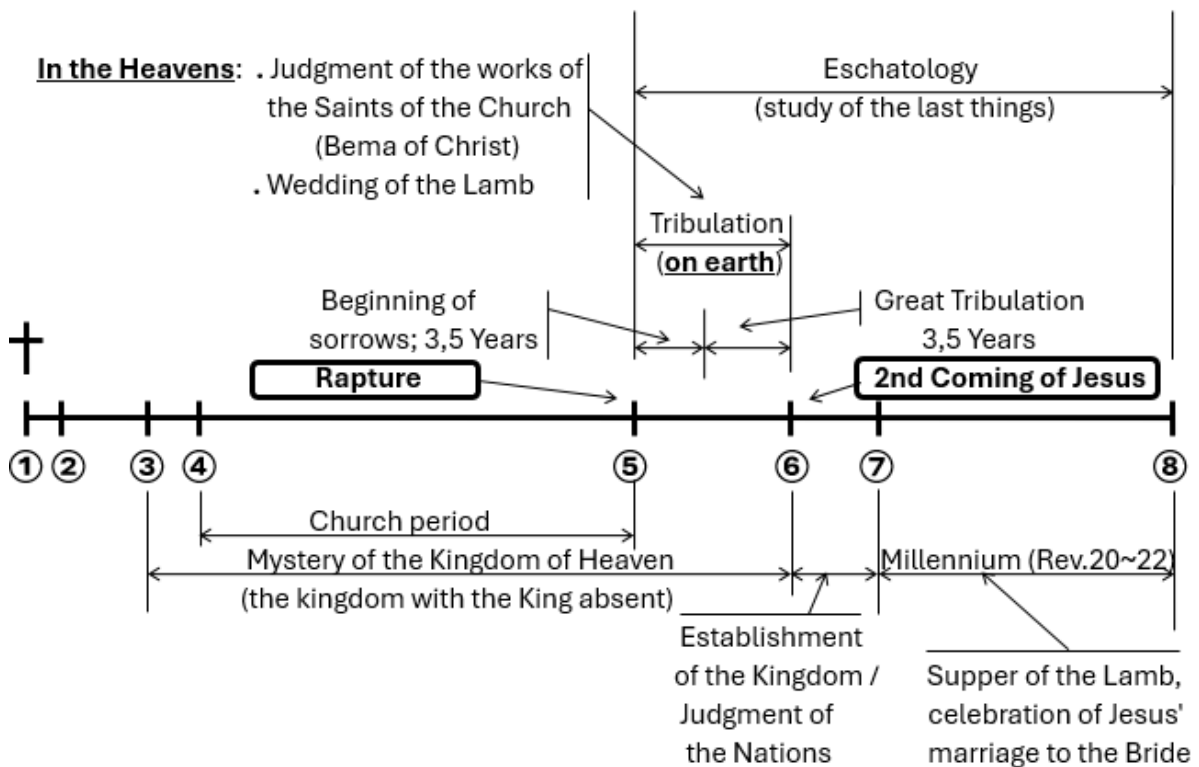
Lesson 76

11. STUDY OF THE APOCALYPSE

11.1. The Seventy Weeks of Daniel

- We have finished studying the Church period and will now begin studying the period called the '*Tribulation*', which is described in the Book of Revelation, (*we will still look at the seven letters to the seven Churches in Revelation 2 and 3*). The Tribulation is a time of judgment for those who remain on Earth after the Rapture of the Church.

Study of the Last Things



- Analyzing the figure, we see the Rapture of the Church, Jesus' encounter with his bride in the air, the Bema of Christ, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, as well as the 2nd Coming of Jesus to Earth. However, while all of this is happening in Heaven, tribulation will be taking place on Earth. The inhabitants of Earth will be subject to 7 years of judgments, divided into two periods of 3.5 years: the beginning of sorrows and the great tribulation.
- With what authority can we say that the Tribulation lasts 7 years? Does the Bible clearly state that '*the tribulation lasts 7 years*'? No, it does not say that. However, the Bible does describe the Great Tribulation, which lasts 42 months or 3.5 years.
- To define the total duration of the tribulation, let's study Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks. Let's analyze it step by step and ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten us as we study it. Studying this prophecy prepares us to begin the book of Revelation. This prophecy determines that the period of tribulation will last 7 years.

⇒ **Jeremiah 25:11**

- What land is this? Who is Jeremiah speaking to? He is speaking to Israel. *'All this land shall become a desolation and astonishment for 70 years.'* Note that these 70 years have nothing to do with Daniel's 70 weeks; it is merely a coincidence of numbers. Here, Jeremiah is prophesying that Israel (*more specifically Judah, since the kingdom was divided*) will be taken captive to Babylon for 70 years.

⇒ **2 Chronicles 36:17~21**

- **V.21:** *'to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah...'*, refers to the same prophecy we read in ⇒ **Jeremiah 25:11** *'until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths.'* Let's talk together: Saturdays *'until the 70 years were fulfilled.'*

- Jeremiah prophesied, and ⇒ **2 Chronicles** describes when that prophecy was fulfilled. Why were the people held captive in Babylon for 70 years? Why did the land need to observe its sabbaths? The people of Israel broke a law, which is why they were captured and taken to Babylon.

⇒ **Leviticus 25:8~13;** The Year of Jubilee.

⇒ **Leviticus 26:33~34;** There was a threat if they did not obey the law of the Jubilee year.

- What we read in Leviticus 25 is the law. God gave the people of Israel a law that every 49 years (*in the 50th year*), the land would have to rest. This year was called the Jubilee year for the land of Israel and was considered a Sabbath year. The word 'Sabbath,' as used here, does not refer to the weekly Sabbath day (*Sunday, Monday, etc.*). This Sabbath is a transliteration of the Hebrew word *'shabath'*. The word *'shabath'* simply means 'rest.'
- ⇒ **Leviticus 25:8** says, *'And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years.'* This refers to the week of years for Israel. For the Israelites, the week of years was more common than the week of days because of the law. In many passages, the Bible does not specify, and the most common interpretation is the week of years, which means seven years. God said, *'You shall count seven sabbaths years, or seven weeks of years,'* which is 7 years + 7 years + ... = 49 years. Every 49 years, there will be a year of rest for the land (*the 50th year*). In the 50th year, everything should return to the way it was. For example, if you had given possessions as payment for debts, they would be yours again. If you had made someone a slave as payment for debts, you would set them free. This is the Jubilee year. It is also called the sabbatical year, the year of rest, when the land must also rest. Nothing could be planted on the land during this 50th year. The law says, *'It is for the land to rest; it is a Sabbath, it is a rest.'* Sabbath (*shabath*) means rest. An example of using the word 'week' to mean seven years is found in the story of Jacob and Laban in ⇒ **Genesis 29:26~30**.

- Israel was not complying with the law of the Jubilee year. The Sabbath law is very important to God. In Israel, anyone who worked on the weekly Sabbath was stoned. Why are we so serious about the Saturday (*Shabath = rest*)? Why don't we, as a Church, observe the Sabbath as prescribed by the law?
Every born-again believer keeps the Shabath within him. Jesus is our Shabath; '*he is our rest*'. Every Sabbath in Israel pointed to Jesus; he is our rest. When I received Jesus into my heart, I entered into a permanent Sabbath. Therefore, I no longer need to keep the Shabath. I entered into permanent rest, and that rest is Jesus.

⇒ **Hebrews 4.**

That is why we do not need to observe the Saturday (*Shabath*) – it is within us, and we are within it. Those who are not at rest and do not live in rest are violating the Saturday (*Shabath*).

- The fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, was a punishment for Israel's failure to observe the sabbatical year, a time of rest for the land. The prophet Daniel was among those taken captive to Babylon. According to ⇒ **2 Chronicles**, those who were not killed were taken captive to Babylon, and few remained in Jerusalem. The most important people, including the princes, were taken to Babylon, where the king made them slaves.
- Daniel was a young Israelite taken as a slave to Babylon. He was special and wise, and even served in the government. He was a man who literally believed in the word of God. God gave him many revelations. The Book of Daniel contains many prophecies and revelations, and reading it is key to understanding the Book of Revelation. Daniel is the key to interpreting Revelation and understanding eschatology. It is important to read the Book of Daniel while studying the Book of Revelation.
- Let's not forget that we are taking this study of Daniel's 70 weeks step by step. We have read about the Sabbath law and the Year of Jubilee. We know that the kingdom of Judah was taken captive to Babylon because its people were not observing the sabbatical years. Among these captives was Daniel. He was just a teenager when he was taken there. When the 70 years of captivity were coming to an end, Daniel was still alive. He was part of the two empires that enslaved Judah: the Babylonian and Medo-Persian empires.
- During the time of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, God gave a prophecy about the nations. Interestingly, God did not use a Jew, but rather a Gentile, in a dream, to receive the prophecy. God gave the prophecy about the future of the nations to King Nebuchadnezzar, a Gentile. God had a plan of salvation for Nebuchadnezzar. He was saved, though he did literally become an animal. God's love for humanity is wonderful. (⇒ **Daniel 4:28~37**).
God's love is doing what we need, not what we want. God's love is revealed by doing what we need. Nebuchadnezzar did not want to be disturbed, but God wanted to save and use him, so he could not resist God's love. Even if one 'grows hair and nails like an animal,' he or she will be saved.

- Then God gave Nebuchadnezzar a prophecy, but He used a Jew to reveal its meaning. God entrusted the covenants, the law, and the promises to the Jews (⇒ **Romans 9:3~5**).

⇒ **Daniel 2:1~13**; The king and the Chaldean magicians.

- Nebuchadnezzar said to the magicians, '*I had a dream, and you will tell me the dream, as well as its interpretation.*' What a situation! There are spirits of divination, but the devil's power is limited.

In the past, before you accepted Jesus, whenever someone consulted a fortune teller, used cowrie shells, tarot cards, tea leaves, palm reading, or crystal balls, or visited a gypsy, that person was exposed to the demon of divination.

⇒ **Acts 16:16~24**; Paul casts out a spirit of divination.

The Bible records Paul casting out a spirit of divination from a girl who was highly profitable for her master. Believe me, these spirits can really divine, but only to a certain extent. In the case of the magicians with Nebuchadnezzar, for example, they were unable to predict the future because God was in control. So, what did Nebuchadnezzar, a good king of Babylon, do? He said, '*I will kill all these magicians.*'

⇒ **Daniel 2:14~24**; Daniel intervenes with the king.

- Daniel knew what Nebuchadnezzar wanted and said, 'Calm down, King. Give me some time, and the king will have the revelation.' Then, Daniel went to pray with his friends, and God showed him the dream and its interpretation.

⇒ **Daniel 2:25~35**; The king's dream.

- God reveals to Daniel the dream that the king had: '*What will happen in the last days.*'
 - **V.27 and 28**; See what the reward is? Daniel could boast in the presence of the king. But he said, '*The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king – but there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets.*' Daniel gave all the glory to God, saying, '*But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets.*' He gave all the glory to God. This is a great example for us.
 - **V.35**: '*the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.*' Who is the stone? Jesus.

⇒ **Daniel 2:36~49**; The interpretation of the dream.

- The future of nations, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar. Although the prophecy was given to a Gentile, who interpreted it? Daniel, a Jew. The Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. (⇒ **Romans 3:1~2**). Nebuchadnezzar saw the four world governments that would exist after him through a statue: the four world empires.

1st. The Babylonian Empire, represented by a head of gold.

2nd. The Medo-Persian Empire, represented by the chest and arms of silver.

3rd. The Greek Empire, represented by the belly and thighs of bronze.

4th. The Roman Empire, represented by the legs of iron (*the 1st form of the Roman Empire*).

- The restored Roman Empire has feet that are partly iron and partly clay. (*It is not the 5th empire, but rather the 4th empire restored at a later time*).
- The eternal Kingdom of the Lord Jesus is the stone cut without hands.
- The Four World Empires: This is all historical for us. We only need to consult an encyclopedia to see that it's real. There was the Babylonian world empire, the Medo-Persian empire, the Greek empire, and the last one, the Roman empire. In his interpretation of the dream, Daniel did not speak of five empires; he spoke of four. However, the 4th empire, the Roman Empire, is divided, which seems to suggest the existence of a 5th empire. However, it is not a 5th empire, but rather a 2nd phase of the Roman Empire.
Daniel did not say, '*The 5th kingdom will be,*' but rather, (**V.41**): '*the kingdom shall be divided,*' mentioning the characteristic of iron, the same material mentioned for the 4th empire.
- What was the Roman Empire like? When they conquered a city or country, they '*shatters everything*' (**V.40**). That was characteristic of the Roman Empire. They arrived and '*really put the heel right on.*'
They conquered and imposed their system, the Pax Romana, in which they appointed governors who all ruled under the Emperor's dominion. Daniel describes the 4th empire as having two phases: one with legs of iron and the other with feet partly of iron and partly of clay. He also says (**V.43**), '*they will mingle with the seed of men,*' In other words: '*they will be united through marriage.*'
- How did the Roman Empire become an empire in its initial phase? Its armies advanced and dominated other peoples through wars, establishing the empire. However, in the 2nd phase, Daniel says they will intermarry and form alliances. They will marry for love, not by force. What do we see today in Europe? People are uniting and marrying in alliances, while maintaining their sovereignty as countries. Daniel says the same thing in **V.43**: '*but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.*' In **V.42**, it says, '*so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile.*' The empire will be strong because it is united. At the same time, it will be weak because each country will remain separate. It will not be an empire like '*the legs*' were. Do you understand?
- Therefore, God gave Nebuchadnezzar a vision of the empires that would follow Babylon. Before Babylon, other empires existed, such as the Egyptian and Assyrian empires. However, in this case, God was prophesying about the empires that would follow Nebuchadnezzar.
- Satan's goal has always been world domination and to receive the worship of mankind (⇒ **Isaiah 14:12~14**). Before the languages were divided at the Tower of Babel, the Bible states that the whole earth had one language and one speech. Satan tried to unite all men in opposition to God through Nimrod and his followers.
 - ⇒ **Genesis 10:8~10**; Nimrod
 - ⇒ **Genesis 11:1~9**; The Tower of Babel.
 God testified about the unity forming among men and the power it would generate (⇒ **Genesis 11:6**): '*Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.*'

Therefore, God intervened and separated humanity into nations by diversifying their languages. The Church should seek to walk in unity, with one voice – the voice of the Holy Spirit.

- That is why, throughout history, we can understand Satan's attempts to establish his world government through the empires that were formed. However, God has always triumphed through His faithful remnant. God has always had a presence on earth. Today, the Holy Spirit acts through the Church to restrict the kingdom of darkness and prevent Satan from establishing his kingdom. However, there will be a time when God allows Satan to establish his kingdom. This will happen during the Tribulation period, which we are beginning to study. With the rapture of the faithful, the Church will be removed, and Satan will be able to establish his kingdom.

⇒ **2 Thessalonians 2:3~12.**

Why does God allow this? Remember the principle of judging deeds and their concrete manifestations? God will allow Satan to manifest everything in his heart through deeds: *'I will be like the Most High.'*

- The prophecy to Nebuchadnezzar referred to the future of the nations. Daniel received further revelations about this prophecy concerning the four future kingdoms.
 - ⇒ **Daniel 7:1~8;** Through a dream, the vision of the four beasts symbolizing the four kingdoms was seen. Note that the existence of the four kingdoms is made clear here. The last kingdom is described as having not yet happened; it speaks of a future phase.
 - ⇒ **Daniel 7:9~14;** The vision of Jesus' victory and the establishment of his eternal kingdom.
 - ⇒ **Daniel 7:15~28;** The revelation of the dream given to Daniel includes details about the 4th kingdom and the 2nd phase that will occur through the manifestation of the Antichrist.
- Let's recap. We are introducing the study of Daniel's 70 weeks. Israel was taken captive to Babylon because they did not allow the land to rest on its Sabbaths (*Saturday = Shabbat = rest*), Sabbaths means rest. While in Babylon, the king has a dream about the future of the nations, which Daniel interprets. Daniel had many other revelations about the end times. Although the prophecy about the future of the nations was given to a Gentile, it took a Jew to receive God's revelation about it. The figures given to Daniel in 500 BC have everything to do with history. For us today, all of this is history; we only need to consult encyclopedias.
- Now, imagine Daniel receiving all these revelations about the future of the nations. He would ask, *'What about Israel?'* What would the future hold for the nation of Israel, held captive in Babylon? That was Daniel's concern. God answered through the prophecy of the 70 weeks of Daniel, which we will study in the next lesson.