

THE SCHEME OF REDEMPTION GOD'S PLAN IN PROPHECY 2

Program #1036

Eddie Parrish & Mark Teske

EDDIE: What do the prophets have to say about the kingdom of God? Is it still yet future to us, or has it been established already? That's our topic of study today on *The Truth In Love*.

EDDIE: Thank you for joining us today on *The Truth In Love*. We're glad to have you here and we hope that you'll enjoy and appreciate our study today. Mark Teske is here, as he has been the last few weeks, and we're going to be continuing our series of lessons on God's plan for the redemption of man.

MARK: As we started this series, we talked about God's eternal purpose and design, as well as the fact that before the foundation of the earth, He planned to redeem mankind. We have many passages in the New Testament that point back to that very fact. In addition, He also promised various individuals, starting in Genesis 3 in the Garden of Eden, and continuing on to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and to Judah as well, and we see the promises that He gave. We spent some time in our last session talking about some of the prophecies and the misconceptions that people had about those prophecies, thinking that God's kingdom was going to be something of a physical nature. But as we saw from scripture, it couldn't be that. It would have to be of a spiritual nature, and something unlike anything that they'd seen before.

EDDIE: That's right. As we begin today, we're going to look at two specific prophecies from the Old Testament that have much to say about the kingdom, and one of the highlights of these prophecies will be some statements made regarding the timing of the coming kingdom. And we'll be able to see that, based on what the prophets said about the timing of the

kingdom, the kingdom had to have come when they said that it would, or else they were false prophets. And if the kingdom came when they said it would come, then it would have to be a spiritual kingdom, because no political kingdom of the nature spoken of in these prophecies was established in the time frame that they said it would be.

The first of those is from Daniel 2. I hope that you will open your Bibles to Daniel 2. We will look at a prophecy that Daniel made there based on a dream that King Nebuchadnezzar had. To give some background on Daniel, he was a prophet who worked in the king's palace during the period of captivity in Babylon, that 70 years of punishment that God gave to His people because of their idolatry. Many of them were taken captive into Babylon, and Daniel was one of those captives. He worked in the palace and was able to prophesy while he was there and said a number of things about the coming kingdom.

Beginning in Daniel 2:1, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had dreams that troubled him, and he called for his sorcerers to help him to understand what the dreams meant. Now, the job was fairly easy for these sorcerers and magicians because Nebuchadnezzar, historically, would simply tell the magicians and sorcerers the content of his dream, and then they'd give an interpretation.

MARK: You could be a fraud and still get away with it under that type of a system.

EDDIE: Yes, that's right. It's a pretty safe activity. Suppose that I were to tell you that I dreamed about walking along the beach at sunset, and then all of a sudden a monster starts chasing me and things like that. If I told you that, then you could sit there and say, "Okay, the walking represents your life, and the monster represents the problems of your life that seem to always"...I mean, you could come up with something.

MARK: And you'd be hard pressed to prove me wrong until a long time after I had cashed your check and hit the road.

EDDIE: That's right. Which makes the point that a person cannot recognize error unless and until he knows truth. It's a general principle. If I didn't know what message there might have been in the dream, how am I going to tell you that what you're telling me it means is false, if I don't know what the truth is? So it was safe activity on the part of these magicians, and when they come to the king, they expect him to tell them the contents of the dream, and then they'll give him some kind of interpretation. But in verse 5, he puts a new twist on it. He tells them that

first they must tell him the contents of the dream, and then give him the interpretation, and only then would he know if they were telling him the truth.

MARK: I bet you could have heard a pin drop when he said that.

EDDIE: I imagine. It's funny, because it's almost as if they didn't know what to say, so they just simply repeated what they had said before. They said, "No, wait a minute, here's how that works."

MARK: This is the deal.

EDDIE: Yes. This is the drill right here. You tell us, then we tell you. And the king basically said, "No, it's not going to work that way this time. And if you don't tell me the contents of my dream and the interpretation afterwards, then I'll kill you." And he was serious about this. So of course they couldn't tell him the contents of the dream, because they didn't know. Ultimately, Daniel is summoned, and Daniel comes and tells King Nebuchadnezzar that "there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets," (Daniel 2:28) and He can reveal the dream. Daniel gave the honor and the glory to God, where it belonged. It seems funny that first of all, Daniel said that the magicians were right. No man on earth can tell you the contents of your dream.

MARK: He's asked the impossible, for man to do what he's asked them to do.

EDDIE: Exactly. For mere men. But that's when he added that there is a God in heaven, and He'll tell you what it is. And He did so through Daniel.

MARK: With God, all things are possible.

EDDIE: That's right. Daniel begins telling Nebuchadnezzar about his dream. In the dream was a great image. Beginning in Daniel 2:31, we read of this image and that it was a human form of some kind. We're not told exactly everything about it, but it seems to be a human form. This image was made of different types of metals. The head of the image was made out of gold, the breast and arms were made out of silver, the belly and thighs of this image were made out of brass or bronze, the legs were made out of iron, and the feet were a mixture of iron and clay. Then Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar that he saw a "stone that was cut without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay," and the image crumbled, and then the "stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." And you talk about hearing a pin drop. I would imagine Nebuchadnezzar was the same way. He probably was astonished

and astounded at the fact that Daniel could tell him the contents of his dream. Then Daniel proceeded to give him the interpretation. Notice that Daniel didn't wait for the king to tell him whether or not he was right. He told the king what he had dreamed, and then goes right into the interpretation. Daniel knew he was right because God was guiding him. Daniel begins the interpretation, in verse 39 by saying, "You, oh king, are a king of kings...you are this head of gold."

MARK: That probably earned him some brownie points with the king.

EDDIE: Yes, I guess so. Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom, the Babylonian empire, were represented in the dream by the head that was made of gold.

MARK: In this image we see the most precious metal down to the least precious, with the most precious being at the top. The one of the greatest honor of course, would be the gold at the head.

EDDIE: Right.

MARK: I'm sure that stroked the king's ego rather well.

EDDIE: Yes, I'm sure it did. Daniel quickly goes on to say that the portion of the image represented by the silver (the chest and arms), represents the kingdom that will come after him. Daniel doesn't name that kingdom. He just says it will be the one that comes after Nebuchadnezzar. We have the luxury of being able to look back through history and see what kingdom that was by name. Of course, the kingdom that overthrew the Babylonians in 539 B.C. was that conglomeration kingdom, the dual kingdom of the Medes and the Persians.

MARK: The Medo-Persian empire.

EDDIE: Yes, it was the Medo-Persian empire that overthrew the Babylonians. That kingdom was represented by the chest and arms of silver in the image. Then the belly and thighs of bronze, Daniel says (Daniel 2:39) was the kingdom that came after that, the third kingdom. Again, we have the luxury of looking back through history, and we learn that the kingdom that overthrew the Medo-Persian empire was the Macedonian or Grecian empire led, of course, by Alexander the Great.

MARK: Further on in this book, Daniel has some very specific prophecies about Alexander and the generals that came after him in that Greek empire. The prophecies clearly show us that Daniel knew what was coming in the near history from his time.

EDDIE: Yes, that's right. In 331 B.C., Alexander the Great conquered the Medes and the Persians, and the story goes that once he had

conquered everything, he sat down and wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. And so he was represented in the dream by that bronze or brass part of the image. Then Daniel mentions that the legs of iron and the feet of the iron and clay mixture were representative of one kingdom. The legs and the feet of the image were one kingdom, which he calls the fourth kingdom. It is important that in verses 40-43, the legs of iron, and the feet of iron and clay are a fourth kingdom. Again we look back in history, and...

MARK: Who came after the Greeks?

EDDIE: Exactly. It was the Romans. The Romans, in 63 B.C. conquered the Macedonian (Greek) empire, and they became the dominant power in the world at that time. Now, the key in this prophecy is what Daniel says regarding this stone that was "cut without hands" and rolled down the mountain and struck this image in the feet and then grew to be a mountain itself that filled the whole world. Daniel said in Daniel 2:44, that the stone represents the kingdom of God, the kingdom that God would establish. And he says in this same verse, "In the days of these kings," and he's just been talking about that fourth kingdom which was...

MARK: The Romans.

EDDIE: The Romans. "In the days of these kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." Now, Daniel stopped counting the kingdoms at the number four. You can look through the rest of that chapter, through the rest of that prophecy of Daniel in interpreting that dream, and you'll not find any additional numbers of kingdoms mentioned. Now, some people will try to say that feet have toes, and each one of the toes, the ten toes in that image, represents another kingdom. Show me in the scriptures.

MARK: In the days of the fourth kingdom, or in the days of those kings.

EDDIE: Yes. Show me in the prophecy where Daniel gives any significance to the toes. He doesn't. He stops counting at four. And we need to stop counting at four. Let's not try to manipulate the prophecy to try to make it say something that it doesn't say and try to change the timing of the prophecy. And that's what this whole business with the toes is all about. No political kingdom was established by God in the days of the Roman kings. In other words, God did not set up a political empire in the days of the Roman kings. And those who think that the kingdom is supposed to be political in nature have a problem with this prophecy,

because Daniel said it would happen in the days of that fourth kingdom, in that fourth worldwide empire. And since no political or earthly kingdom of God was established at that time, they have a problem. So they have to come up with this toe business to try to extend the timing and the date of the prophecy.

MARK: I think it's fair to say that anytime we hold to a doctrine that has a difficult time when it's compared to the word of God, it's time for us to give up that doctrine.

EDDIE: That's right. The bottom line is this: Either the kingdom that Daniel prophesied was established in the days of the Roman kings, or Daniel was a false prophet. That's it. Those are our only two choices. It was either established like he said it would be, or he's a false prophet. Now, Jesus said in Matthew 24:15 that Daniel was not a false prophet, but a true prophet. Since the Lord says Daniel was a true prophet, then the kingdom had to have been established in the days of that fourth kingdom, in the days of the Roman kings. Even Jesus, when he walked the earth said that "there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God" come "with power," (Mark 9:1). Now, either it came in the days of those people, or Jesus didn't know what He was talking about.

MARK: Either that, or we've got some men over 1000 years old walking around somewhere.

EDDIE: Yes. And I've seen some old people...

MARK: But not that old.

EDDIE: ...but not that old. But those are our choices. In the passage we mentioned last time (John 18:36), Jesus said that His kingdom was not political or earthly in nature. Daniel predicted the coming of the kingdom, but based upon what Daniel said about the timing of that kingdom, the kingdom he predicted could not have been political, because none was established in the time frame that he said God's kingdom would be established in.

MARK: And we've never throughout history seen a political kingdom that's lasted forever and consumed the whole world. Alexander the Great is about as good as you get when it comes to world domination. But he still hadn't conquered the entire world. We see even in the Far East, dynasties come and they go. There's no kingdom that's been around forever. But this kingdom that's represented by the stone not cut with hands is different in that way.

EDDIE: That's right. God's spiritual kingdom, the church, has

encompassed the world and is represented all over. And that fits with what the prophecy says about the nature of this kingdom.

MARK: It doesn't fit the nature of a political group, but it does encompass everybody. "And all nations shall flow into it." That's exactly what we see in His church.

EDDIE: That's right. That's absolutely true. Another prophecy that we want to spend some time with today comes from Isaiah 2:2-4. Mark is going to read that for us.

MARK: "Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

EDDIE: All right. There are six fundamental questions about the nature of the kingdom in these few short verses.

MARK: The first question that we always ask is what. What are we talking about here?

EDDIE: Well, the prophecy speaks of the Lord's house, and the mountain of the Lord's house being established in the top of the mountain. People will say, "let us go up" to the house of the Lord. So we're talking about something referred to as the house of God. And interestingly, in the New Testament, the church is referred to as the house of God.

MARK: Now, when you say the church is referred to as a house of God, are you talking about the building, or are you talking about something different?

EDDIE: No, it's not the building. It's the people, Christians, who make up the body, the church. And Paul said to Timothy in I Timothy 3:15, "I write" these things to you "so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." So you have reference to the church as the house of God. Peter referred to it as the "spiritual house" in I Peter 2:5. So the "what" of the prophecy is the house of God. And we

have reference to the church as the house of God in the New Testament.

MARK: So the “what” that Isaiah is talking about here in this passage would be the church.

EDDIE: Yes.

MARK: That makes sense. Now that we asked “what,” let's ask “when” is this going to happen?

EDDIE: Isaiah said it will come to pass in the last days. In some translations it is referred to as the latter days. Some have said that the last days are a very brief period of time right before the coming of Christ. But it's interesting that 2,000 years ago, Peter said in Acts 2 that they, at that time were living in the last days.

MARK: So Peter was living in the last days, and we're living in the last days, and the last days would end I guess at the coming of Jesus?

EDDIE: That's right. And the last days began with the inauguration of the New Testament, the new covenant of Jesus Christ, and the establishing of His church. In Acts 2:16, Peter said to these people who had seen the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that they were witnessing, “This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel.” And Joel's prophecy says, “It shall come to pass in the last days.” So Peter was living then, at the time the church was established, in the last days.

MARK: The last days as God's not going to change his method of dealing with mankind until Jesus is here judging us.

EDDIE: That's right. Also, the question of “where” is important. He says that the “where” would be Jerusalem. “The word of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3). So these things about the establishing of the Lord's house in the last days would happen in Jerusalem. And where were the people in Acts 2 when the church was established?

MARK: Jerusalem.

EDDIE: Acts 2:5, “There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.”

MARK: Fourth question, who?

EDDIE: That's stated in the prophecy as all nations. All nations would flow into this kingdom. Is there any evidence that all nations flow into the church?

MARK: In Acts 2, we see men from all these nations that are listed specifically by name. We have a list of all these different countries, proving that it wasn't just people from Jerusalem, but people from all over.

EDDIE: That's right.

MARK: It corresponds also to what Daniel said in Daniel 2, that the stone not cut with hands would be a mountain and consume the whole earth. Again, all nations coming there.

EDDIE: All nations. And regarding the question "why," he says in the prophecy, that "we shall walk in His paths" (Isaiah 2:3). And those that are in the church (Matthew 16:18-19), would be shown the pathways to walk by the apostles, to whom Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom. As people obeyed the apostles, they would be ushered into the kingdom, or the church. So that answers the question "why."

MARK: How? That's another good question.

EDDIE: Yes. How would they enter into the kingdom? Well, the prophecy says that it would be through personal initiative. He says, "Many people shall come and say, Come, and let us go up" to the house of the Lord. People who want to be a part of the kingdom have to exercise personal initiative to do that. They have to allow themselves to be taught. They have to learn. John 6:45 says that the one who hears and learns from the Father comes to Jesus. And so personal initiative is involved in one's coming into the kingdom.

MARK: As we look at Isaiah's prophecy, one of the things that's so interesting about it is in verse 4, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks." The prophet goes on to say that, "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." It seems that these weapons of war would show an end and that there should be no more wars. So I look at this, and I wonder if that would mean that there should be an end of warfare when this kingdom comes, and a time of physical peace here on earth?

EDDIE: I can imagine there are some that are watching us who probably have disagreed with much of what we've said about the nature of this kingdom and the fact that the kingdom that Isaiah prophesied would be the church, and was. I believe that's what the Bible teaches, but I know some would disagree with that, and they'd probably go right to verse 4 to try to bolster their disagreement. They would say that Isaiah said that when this kingdom comes, there won't be wars anymore and people won't be fighting in warfare. And so if you say that the kingdom has come and it's in the form of the church, yet people are still fighting, and there are still wars going on in the world, therefore, it can't be the church. And they believe that when this political kingdom is established, there will be a

literal peace on the earth during that period of time that Jesus is reigning. But here's the point to remember from Isaiah 2. Isaiah, when he says they'll "beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks" and not "learn war anymore," he's not talking about what's going to be going on in the world at the time of the kingdom. He's talking about what life will be like in the kingdom. And he's saying in that kingdom, people are not going to be spreading that kingdom through warfare, and they're not going to be involving themselves in literal armed conflict with others within the kingdom. But, what happens outside the kingdom is outside the kingdom. And there are still wars going on today. But Isaiah is saying within the borders of the kingdom, that is not the way people are going to act. Peace will be the order of the day within the kingdom (Ephesians 2:17). The Lord's kingdom would not be propagated by physical warfare.

MARK: We sing the song "Onward Christian Soldiers" and we understand the warfare that we're going through, but it's not a physical warfare. We don't grab up our guns and go out and fight for Christianity that way, but it's a spiritual battle that we're talking about. We're spiritual soldiers. And I think that helps us to focus in on just what this means in verse 4.

EDDIE: It's exactly what Paul said in II Corinthians 10:3-5. He said, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal." They're not physical. There is a war that we fight, but it's not through physical, armed conflict. He says the weapons of our warfare are "mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God." He said that where our warfare is being waged is with the minds of people and in trying to propagate the truth about a spiritual kingdom and spreading its borders through teaching, and through the knowledge of God.

MARK: That spiritual kingdom.

EDDIE: Exactly. And so the message is that God's kingdom is spiritual in nature. And the prophecy of Isaiah 2 can be seen in these New Testament passages that we've looked at, and was to have been fulfilled in the church. In a few lessons from now, we'll be talking about some of the common objections that are raised to some of the things that we've said, and we'll look at those and compare them with the Bible. We'll let the Bible be its own best commentary. We'll let the Bible speak for itself. And we'll see that what we've said is indeed true, that the prophets predicted

the coming of a king and the coming of a kingdom that was not political or physical or earthly, but spiritual in nature.

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We'd be glad for you to have a copy of the lesson today. It won't cost you anything, just the time that it takes to contact us. Mark, thank you again for being with us today on the program. We look forward to seeing you again when we study God's word next time.

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