

Babylon, the meaning of the great metallic image that the king saw in his trouble some and forgotten dream.

## **26. When God Unites the Nations**

IT WAS some six centuries before Christ, more than 2,500 years ago. A noted monarch retired to his regal couch for a night's rest from the busy cares of world dominion. Would the mighty empire that he had built stand the test of time, or would it break and crumble into pieces as Egypt and Assyria had done? Such were the thoughts coursing through his mind as he fell asleep.

### **A MONARCH DREAMS**

Then he dreamed. So startling and significant did his night vision seem that "his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him." Daniel 2:1. Strangely, he could not recall the details of the dream.

Deeply disturbed, he called together the leading wise men of his court. "Bring back my dream and give to me its meaning, and you shall live in honor. Fail, and you shall die; you shall be cut in pieces." Such was the import of his words to men who professed ability to interpret dreams.

Caught unprepared by this stern test of their false pretensions, the wise men cried, "There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter. . . . And it is a rare thing that the king requires, and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh." Daniel 2:10, 11. Sensing the shame of their science falsely so called, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, decreed death for these deceptive mediums of mystery and knowledge.

### **THE HAND OF GOD INTERVENES**

Among the learned men of Babylon were some newly come Daniel and three other young Jews. Some few years before the dream episode Nebuchadnezzar had taken the city of Jerusalem, made the land subject, and carried away choice Jewish captives to Babylon. Among them were Daniel and his fellows. At this time they had finished the king's court school, and were henceforth to be reckoned among the wise men.

Daniel sought and received consent to speak with the king, who granted him time to see what he and his companions could do about the mysterious dream. That night the young men prayed. "Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision." Verse 19.

Through proper arrangement Daniel was brought again into the presence of the earthly ruler of the world. Before Daniel could say a word the anxious king asked, "Art you able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?" Verse 26.

The next two verses state, "Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king bath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that reveals secrets."

Down the long, long corridor of time come ringing and echoing these words of faith, "There is a God in heaven." To the king upon his throne, to the beggar in the street, and to each and every one of us this God would reveal Himself.

Before telling the king the content of his dream Daniel pointed out two things. First he said, "As for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living." Verse 30. He took no credit to himself. Yet he added, "But for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king." Thus did Daniel courteously remind the king that, though his decree had sentenced Jewish captives to death along with other men, God's hand was intervening. God gave the king a dream. He gave His servants the interpretation. They gave it to the king. Their lives were saved. God's eye is on His people.

"For their sakes" He stepped in.  
"Truth forever on the scaffold,  
Wrong forever on the throne-  
Yet that scaffold sways the future,  
And, behind the dim unknown,

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Stands God within the shadows,  
Keeping watch above His own.”

### GOD SETS UP AND REMOVES KINGS

In his prayer Daniel said, “Blessed be the name of God: . . . he changes the times and the seasons: he removes kings, and sets up kings.” Verses 20, 21.

“The power exercised by every ruler on earth is Heaven-imparted; and upon his use of the powers thus bestowed, his success depends. To each the word of the divine Watcher is, ‘I girded you, though you has not known me.’ Isaiah 45:5. . . . And ‘Break off thy sins by righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.’ Daniel 4:27.” - Prophets and Kings, p. 502.

Said the Holy Watcher from heaven to Nebuchadnezzar: “That the living may know that the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever he will, and sets up over it the basest of men.” Daniel 4:17.

In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man. . . . But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counter play of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will.”-Ibid., pp. 499, 500.

Daniel made it clear that Nebuchadnezzar’s dream had to do with the future—the very future with which the king’s thoughts had been playing when he lay down to rest on his golden bed and dreamed. Said Daniel, “There is a God in heaven that reveals secrets, and makes known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.... As for you, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that reveals secrets makes known to you what shall come to pass . . . that you might know the thoughts of thy heart.” Daniel 2:28-30.

### **GOD ROLLS BACK THE CURTAIN OF THE FUTURE (Amos 3:7)**

Daniel now turns to the king’s dream. “Thou, O king, saw, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before you; and the form thereof was terrible. This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou saw 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. 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 threshing floors. 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.” Verses 31-35.

The king listened. To himself he said, “That indeed is the very subject of my dream.” He leaned forward with breathless interest, that he might now discover the meaning of the dream.

These were the first words he heard, “This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given you a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. . . . Thou art this head of gold.” Verses 36-38.

How delightful must these words have been to the troubled king! Like pleasant music they fell upon his ears and tended to set at ease the tension of his restless heart. Was he not the God recognized ruler of Babylon, the monarchy of the world? Had not the prophet of God just so said? What now of the future?

### BABYLON TO PASS AWAY

These and a multitude of thoughts swarmed within his mind as Daniel calmly and courteously spoke without interruption. Said he, “And after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to you.” Verse 39.

What? Was his mighty golden empire to fall to an inferior power, as silver is inferior to gold? Upon the walls of his house there had been inscribed: “For the astonishment of men I have built this house. These portals for the astonishment of multitudes of people with beauty I adorned.” “Thus I completely made strong the defenses of Babylon.” “May it last forever.” Large numbers of bricks dug from Babylonian ruins bear the name and title of Nebuchadnezzar.

Babylon was the first of what history knows as the four great monarchies. Her glorious capital city was laid out in a perfect square. It is believed to have been ten miles in circumference, with walls more than

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three hundred feet high and wide enough on top for five chariots to race abreast.

“Gleaming in the sun, its lofty palaces and temple towers stabbed the sky above the towering walls and thrilled the approaching traveler while he was yet miles away.”

Through the city flowed the river Euphrates, flanked by great inner walls and giant gates. The streets of the city were broad and straight, crossing one another at right angles. The city was laid out in luxuriant pleasure grounds and dotted with magnificent dwellings, royal palaces, and glorious temples. Here were the famous Hanging Gardens, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

But Babylon, the “head of gold,” was to pass away. Yes, “Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.” Isaiah 13:19. She was to remain but heaps of ruins, covered with the drifting sands of the centuries, a home only for owls, doleful creatures, and beasts of the wild. A place of uninhabited desolation, where even the roving Arab would disdain to pitch his tent or the shepherd to make fold there. Babylon’s time “is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.” Verse 22. (See also Jeremiah 51:6, 7)

So “Darius the Median took the kingdom.” Daniel 5:31. Cyrus the Persian led the successful attack in taking Babylon 538 years before Christ, about sixty-five years after Daniel’s prophecy. Medo-Persia, the breast and arms of silver, ruled. God had said to Nebuchadnezzar, “After you shall arise another kingdom.” Medo-Persia was that kingdom (Isaiah 13:17).

### **MEDO-PERSIA AND GREECE TO RISE AND FALL**

This silver kingdom of Medo-Persia was in supremacy for some two hundred years. But it was also to give way to yet “another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.” Daniel 2:39. This third universal kingdom was that of Greece. How well do we all remember the maps of these nations as we studied them in high school. A full reading of the eighth chapter of Daniel will reveal that Greece was to follow Medo-Persia. Alexander the Great reached the deciding point over the Medo-Persians at the famous Battle of Arbela, 331 BC, or 207 years after Babylon’s fall.

In five short years Alexander, through swift movement and audacious attack day or night, swept to victory at the age of twenty-five years. Seven years later he was dead. At the age of thirty-two, like a meteor in the night, his light suddenly went out. So swiftly does earthly glory fade! The decisive Battle of Pydna, 168 BC, is often given as a definite point in Greece’s decline. The brass kingdom was through.

### **ROME TO RULE**

Daniel continues his brief and graphic picture of the future, while Nebuchadnezzar listens in amazement to this thumbnail sketch of world history.

“And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and subdues all things and as iron that breaks all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.” Verse 40.

Iron Rome was to rule. “The iron monarchy of Rome” came to break in pieces, bruise, and subdue for nearly six hundred years. Jesus was born in this era and was crucified under Rome’s authority.

Hippolytus, who lived from about AD 170 to AD 236, wrote, “Rejoice blessed Daniel! You has not been in error. . . . Already the iron rules.” He spoke of Rome. The Catholic Encyclopedia says, “Hippolytus was the most important theologian and the most prolific religious writer of the Roman Church in the pre Constantine era.”

Gibbon says, “The images of gold, or silver, or brass, that might serve to represent the nations and their kings, were successively broken by the iron monarchy of Rome.”

### **ROME WAS TO BE DIVIDED**

With simple boldness Daniel presented to the king the rise and fall and division of great empires yet unborn, as though he were giving a demonstration of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division on a blackboard. The king listened in astonishment.

Four of the five sections of the great historical image have passed away in accordance with Daniel’s prophecy. We are now living in the feet of iron mixed with clay.

“And whereas you saw the 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 you saw the iron mixed with

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miry clay. 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.” Daniel 2:41, 42.

Rome was to be divided. Here is something new. Another world kingdom was not to follow. Division was to come. Rome’s mighty empire began to decay. Luxury, poverty, vice, and weakness, like white ants, burrowed from within. The Germanic tribes invaded from without, and the Roman kingdom was divided as the prophecy foretold.

Ridpath says, “At last the seals were loosed, and the barbaric tornado was poured out of the North. Through the Alpine passes came the rushing cohort of warriors, each with the rage of Scythia in his stomach and the icicles of the Baltic in his beard. The great hulk of Rome tottered, fell, and lay dead on the earth, like the stump of Dagon.” - History of the World, vol. 3, pp. 28, 29.

The ten main divisions, corresponding to the ten toes, are given as the Alamanni (Germans), the Franks (French), the Burgundians (Swiss), the Suevi (Portuguese), the Saxons (English), the Visigoths (Spanish), the Lombards (Italians), the Heruli, the Vandals and the Ostrogoths. These tribes made victorious invasion as early as AD 351. History gives AD 476 as the date of Rome’s fall, when Emperor Augustulus (Little Augustus) was deposed and the barbarian kingdoms ruled.

The modern nations of Europe developed from these barbarian tribes of the old Roman Empire. Some were to be strong and some weak. Thus it has been and is.

### **CAN THE NATIONS BE UNITED BY MAN?**

Daniel now presents to Nebuchadnezzar the long and tragic efforts of men to unite Europe and bring order to the world. Continuing the figure of the feet and toes of clay and iron, he says, “And whereas you saw 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.” Daniel 2:43.

Thus does the Bible declare with the utmost simplicity and clarity that the nations of our time cannot be permanently united by human effort.

Six notable characters have stepped upon the stage of history and sought to demonstrate that the kingdoms of Europe could be successfully ruled by one throne or under one federation. In 1939 the sixth tried it.

The first and one of the most notable was Charles the Great, or Charlemagne. He began to rule at the age of twenty-nine. Fourteen years before his death while Charlemagne was kneeling in worship at Rome on Christmas Day, AD 800, the pope placed upon his head the crown of the Holy Roman Empire.

Two strong factors were in his favor: First, the church desired the unity of Europe and it approved of him as emperor. Second, an enemy religious group, the Mohammedans, were ever menacing Europe from beyond the Pyrenees in Spain. Charlemagne’s illustrious grandfather, Charles Martel, had defeated them at the Battle of Tours sixty-eight years before.

But Charlemagne died, weary from nearly half a century of fighting all over Europe. He could not make the clay and iron fuse together.

Charles V, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, and Louis XIV, the vain Frenchman, we shall pass by as two more failures.

Then comes that master man of destiny—an Italian by blood, a Corsican by birth, a Frenchman by nationality—Napoleon Bonaparte!

Born in 1769, he grew to a stature of only five feet two inches. Thin-faced, sallow-complexioned, and round-shouldered, he yet developed one of the most remarkably rapid, clear-thinking, and tireless brains ever to function in a human cranium. His personality was utterly overmastering, his mind gazing out through eyes that crushed the strongest.

At the age of twenty-six, in 1796, two days before his marriage to Josephine, he was appointed head of one third of the armies of France. Two days after his marriage he departed for the war front. Passionate love messages went back to Josephine from every station as he set forth to “tear the heart out of glory.” And he did.

Three years later, 1799, he overturned the government of France and seized control. Then he set out to unite Europe—to give it one ruler, one code, one court of appeal, one coinage.” This is a story of sixteen years of unparalleled military action by a man who loved power as a musician loves his violin, and whose capacity for work seemed to know no limit.

For purposes of political unity he divorced Josephine to marry Marie Louise, of Austria. He

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established the Napoleonic order in Europe, placing his kin in leadership and arranging marriages to cement the states together, a method the Bible prophesied would be used. "They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men." Daniel 2:43.

But after his disastrous Russian campaign in 1812, his European federation soon fell like a house of flimsy cards. At Waterloo, June 18, 1815, just as the sun went down, the sun of his career set. He was through. "God Almighty has been too much for me," he said.

The Kaiser of Germany found the same thing to be true in World War I.

Adolph Hitler almost wrecked the world in his effort to unite Europe and set up a German rule to last for 1,000 years.

After World War I the League of Nations sought some sort of "cleaving together" of the nations, but with dismal failure.

After World War II came the United Nations and new talk of a United States of Europe. The ugly specter of Communism arose to challenge the best efforts of great men to unite anything.

No present ruler, no set of rulers, no league of nations of any kind, no federation of religions, can ever unite Europe and the world permanently. "They shall not cleave one to another."

### **WHEN GOD UNITES THE NATIONS**

At this point in the narrative King Nebuchadnezzar must have been puzzled indeed. Daniel's dark forecast rang the death knell of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Then it predicted the new situation—a division of Rome's kingdom and the utter inability of men to form any successful union of the nations. Glowing dreams would end in shattered hopes. Would the future of modern man be one of never-ending disunity?

Daniel gave the answer to the king's thoughts: "And in the days of these kings [the kingdoms of divided Europe] shall 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. Forasmuch as you saw 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 great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure." Daniel 2:44, 45.

### **SIX SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS**

Six vital truths stand out in this basic prophecy of the Bible:

1. There is a God in heaven.
2. He has servants on earth.
3. His hand is in earthly affairs.
4. He predicted the history of the world from Babylon, through Medo-Persia and Greece to Rome and her breaking into ten main divisions.
5. He forecast man's failure, in every case, to truly unite the nations of the world again. The kingdom of God will not come through the gateway of politics or of religion and politics.
6. God's kingdom is to be set up after the final breakdown of man's plans.

"The dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure." Today we live in the feet and toes of human history. Christ will come and take the initial steps for a reign of peace on earth

Through the centuries since the fall of Rome, ambitious rulers have tried, at the expense of millions of human lives to become world conquerors

### **MARTIN LUTHER'S TEACHING**

"The first kingdom is the Assyrian or Babylonian kingdom; the second, the Medo-Persian; the third, the great kingdom of Alexander and the Greeks; and the fourth, the Roman Empire. In this the whole world agrees, and history supports it fully in detail.

"But the prophet has the most to say about the Roman empire, . . . the legs, the feet, and the toes. The Roman empire will be divided. Spain, France, England, and others emerged from it, some of them weak, others strong, and although it will be divided there will still be some strength, as symbolized by the

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iron in it.... This empire shall last until the end; no one will destroy it but Jesus Himself, when His kingdom comes.” - Translated from Luther, Schriften, vol. 6, cols. 898-900.

### **TWO GREAT QUESTIONS**

The first important question for me is, How can I find entrance into that kingdom of God? The apostle Paul wrote, Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?” 1 Corinthians 6:9. And we are “all unrighteous, “for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” “There is none righteous, no, not one.” Romans 3:23, 10.

To Nicodemus, moral, reputable, an accepted ruler of the synagogue, Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3. It is therefore by way of the new birth, spiritual regeneration, that I must enter into the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God must come into me before I shall be prepared to go into it. For God has two kingdoms: the spiritual kingdom of grace and the literal kingdom of glory. The kingdom of grace is within me (Luke 17:20, 21). It brings righteousness and peace and joy (Romans 14:17). It is present (Colossians 1:13). The kingdom of glory is future. Christ will “sit upon the throne of his glory” (Matthew 25:31) and reign forever. Then the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ (Revelation 11:15).

The second and most pressing personal question is, “What shall I do to be born into this kingdom?”

The answer is, “I must go down to Calvary, and see there the love of God in giving His Son to die for my sins, for my transgressions of a holy law that could not be changed.” If my heart does not resist this love, it will be broken in sincere repentance, and love to God and His law will be born. There is no other place to go-nowhere but Calvary.

### **THE GATEWAY OF THE KINGDOM**

The gateway to the kingdom of God is the cross of Christ. Nicodemus found it when he watched Christ die for his sins. So may I find the entrance also.

The gateway of the cross swings both ways. It opens a way into my heart, and the kingdom of His grace comes in. One day it will swing the other way, and I shall enter into that eternal kingdom of glory and bliss forevermore.

“A land upon whose blissful shore  
There rests no shadow, falls no stain;  
There those who meet shall part no more,  
And those long parted meet again.”

“Perhaps you are saying within your heart, I admit that I am not what might be called a real Christian, but I believe I have as good a chance for heaven as some people I know who profess to belong to Christ.”

“Let me give you an illustration that I hope will make this matter of the need of accepting Christ still clearer. In Rome, Italy, some years ago, there entered the office of the American embassy a man who appeared to be in great distress. When he finally secured an audience with the ambassador, he stated his case, a very serious one, and then implored the ambassador for help.

“The ambassador immediately asked the man, ‘Are you a citizen of the United States?’ The man replied, ‘I lived in the United States for twenty-five years. I have reared my family there. I have always paid my taxes, and contributed to all worthy enterprises.’ ‘But,’ interrupted the ambassador, ‘are you a citizen of the United States?’

“He answered slowly, ‘No, I have never taken out citizenship papers, but I believe I have done my duty toward the Government just as fully as those who have taken out their citizenship papers.’ The ambassador replied, ‘I am sorry for you, but I cannot help you because you are not a citizen of my country.’

“Some years later a man entered the same embassy, and talked to the same ambassador. The man was trembling with fear and emotion, for his case was desperate. He spoke in broken English, but he stated his case to the ambassador with sufficient clearness to make him understand his situation.

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“The ambassador directed the same question to this man that he had asked the other man some years before: ‘Are you a citizen of the United States?’

“In a faltering manner he explained to the ambassador that some years before he had taken out his first papers, and just before he sailed for Italy, he had received his last papers, and so he was a full-fledged citizen of the United States.

“The ambassador exclaimed, ‘You are a citizen of my country. I extend to you the full power of the United States for your protection.’ . . .

“No foreigner can become a citizen of a country without making a positive, definite decision to take out his citizenship papers. Everyone is a foreigner by nature with respect to the kingdom of heaven. But we may become ‘fellow citizens with the saints,’ as Paul expresses it in Ephesians 2:19.

“So may I ask you the question, ‘Have you taken out your citizenship papers which entitle you to a place in the kingdom of heaven?’

“It is not a question of how near you think you come to doing as well as your neighbors who are Christians, but have you taken out your citizenship papers? Is Christ the King of your heart now?

“You say, ‘I do not know how to take out citizenship papers for heaven.’ If you are willing to acknowledge Christ as your personal Savior, to follow Him all the way, He will accept you as a citizen of His kingdom, and you will become right now a citizen of the kingdom of grace.

“You cannot do His will without His help, so it is useless to talk about being saved at last unless He has entered your heart and taken up His abode there. Our part of the transaction is to be willing to do God’s will. Christ’s part is to furnish the power to do the thing you will do.”-CHARLES T. EVERSON, JESUS, pp. 27-30. The palsied, bedridden man of Luke 5:18 was told by Christ to rise up and walk. How could he walk? Had he not tried many times? Yet at Christ’s command he willed to walk, and he walked. Christ gave him the power.

Let not one person make delay, but decide in Christ’s favor at His cross; then take up your cross and follow Him.

“I will follow Thee, my Savior,  
Where so ever my lot may be.  
Where Thou goes I will follow;  
Yes, my Lord, I’ll follow Thee.”  
-JAMES LAWSON

### **27. The Church That Ruled the World**

GOD knows the future, “declaring the end from the beginning.” Isaiah 46:10. And “he reveals his secret unto his servants the prophets.” Amos 3:7.

A few days before His death Jesus urged the importance of reading and understanding the prophecy of Daniel. Said He, ‘When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (who reads, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.” Matthew 24:15, 16.

Daniel was but a youth when God gave him the vision of the future as symbolized by the great image of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Daniel 2. In the seventh chapter Daniel was given another most important vision. He was now an old man. Babylon had also grown gray and weak, and was soon to be conquered by the Medo-Persians.

### **THE FOUR WINDS OF THE GREAT SEA**

Daniel spoke and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold “the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.” Daniel 7:2. In symbolic Bible language the four winds signify strife. Here is an example: “Upon Elam will I bring the four winds.... For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies.” Jeremiah 49:36, 37.

The sea, or waters, indicate multitudes of people, for we read, “The waters which you saw ... are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” Revelation 17:15. The prophecies of both Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 are in their last phases. Thus, with great urgency Heaven’s angel reminds us that time for this world is almost run out.