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BIBLE STUDY.

THE ROMAN REPUBLIC.

Study by A. T. Jones, [Friday, February 24.](#)

The Army of Xerxes Against Greece—The Establishment of the Vision—
The Children of Robbers—By Peace Destroys—His Policy

Yesterday morning we sketched the lines of prophecy down to the fall of Rome, so that we could get the idea of God's handwriting in history.

In the eighth chapter of Daniel there is a phase of history developed that is not suggested in the seventh. Now you know that the eighth and eleventh chapters of Daniel begin with Media Persia; then comes Grecia; then the division into four; then these followed by the two—the king of the north and the king of the south. In the first verse of the tenth chapter we see that the king that was then reigning was Cyrus. Then said the angel: "There shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all." These were three from Cyrus, and the fourth was the fourth from Cyrus—not the fourth *with* Cyrus, but the fourth *from* Cyrus. The first of these was Cambyses; the second was Smerdis, or Gomatis; and then Darius the Persian, of the book of Ezra; then Xerxes. Xerxes of the Bible is Ahasuerus of the book of Esther. He is the fourth, who would stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

That feast at the beginning of Esther, at which Ahasuerus—Xerxes—gathered together all the governors of all the provinces—that was the grand banquet at the close of the council which Xerxes had called together to deliberate about his expedition against the realm of Grecia; and all the realm was literally stirred up for the expedition. Herodotus drew up a list, giving the names of the nations, describing the dress that they wore, and the armor that they bore. I have taken that history, and set it down bodily in the *Great Empires of Prophecy*, where you can get at it. This list alone occupies four pages of the book. I will read you the numbers of them: "The army of Xerxes, including what is brought out of Asia, and that have gathered in Europe, amounted to 2,641,610 fighting men." That was the army of fighting men alone. They were counted after they crossed the Hellespont, just as men would count sheep, and Herodotus recorded it. So he proceeds: "Such, then, being the number of the fighting men, it is my belief that the attendants who followed the camp, together with the crews of the corn-barks, and of the other craft accompanying the army, made up an amount rather above than below that of the fighting men. However, I will not reckon

them as either fewer or more, but take them at an equal number. We have therefore to add to the sum already reached an exactly equal amount. This will give 5,283,220 as the whole number of men brought by Xerxes, the son of Darius, as far as Sepias and Thermopylae." And he gathered them from all the nations, of the empire. He crossed from Asia into Europe at the Hellespont, and marched straight to Thermopylae, and there was fought the famous battle of Thermopylae.

Whether Seventh-day Adventists, other Christians, or men who care nothing for Christianity, who have studied history at all—everybody knows that the battles of Marathon, and Thermopylae, and Salamis, and Plataea are the key of history. The turning point of history from the East toward the West was in those four great battles, though Marathon occurred in the reign of Darius. Xerxes, though winning at Thermopylae, lost thousands of his army. Salamis was a sea-fight, in which his whole navy was defeated, and largely destroyed. Then Xerxes fled; and thousands of his army perished as they hurriedly marched away. He hurried as fast as he could into Asia, taking with him a considerable body-guard. More than 300,000 were left under Mardonius to try again the conquest of Greece in another campaign. Mardonius marched back into Greece, and his campaign culminated in the battle of Plataea, in which he and the whole army perished. Practically all whom Xerxes brought into Greece never saw Persia again.

That, in brief, is the story of his stirring "up all against the realm of Grecia." People may study that outside the Bible, and they do; but, when it is not studied *in* the Bible, nobody gets the philosophy of it. The philosophy of it is only in the Bible. Why did history turn at that point from the East to the West? Why is it that Marathon and those battles are the key? Thermopylae, Marathon, Plataea—what was the cause of these? "O," some one says, "the burning of Sardis." That stands out before men; but there is a cause yet away back; in the Bible alone you get the philosophy of it.

When the angel touches Grecia, he drops out all the rest of the history of Persia, and takes Grecia. "A mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those."

Then it is the king of the north and the king of the south, clear down to the sixteenth verse. But in the fourteenth verse you have this word: "And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall." But the margin is the true reading there. What does it say? "The children of robbers."

At that time many shall stand up against the king of the south. All the power of the king of the north and his allies was mustered against the king of Egypt; but at that time the children of robbers exalt themselves. What for? "To establish the vision."

Then when we reach the power, what is done? The vision is established. What, then, is the object of all the prophecy in the book of Daniel, in these lines of prophecy—I mean to that point? To bring us to that point, and to establish the vision. All the eighth chapter, and all the eleventh chapter, of the book of Daniel, up to this verse, are given for that one express purpose. There are other lessons in it; but the great leading thought, the one great aim, is the establishment of the vision. That is the thread-thought that is through it all; many other things are hung upon this thread: but that is the one thing—to bring you and me to the power, and the rise of that power, which establishes the vision. That power is the object of the vision.

Now who are these children of robbers? What power is that? Here is some more history: When, after the death of Remus, Romulus "found the number of his fellow settlers too small, he opened an asylum on the Capitoline Hill;" and "all manner of people, thieves, murderers, and vagabonds of every kind, flocked thither." Such was the origin of "Rome, the city of strength and war and bloodshed,"—"this city which was destined to shed more blood than any [other] city of the world."

"The most of these, if not all, were of course men: but in order that they might become a nation, there must be women. To secure these, Romulus 'asked those in the neighboring cities to unite themselves by marriages to his people. Everywhere they refused with contempt,' saying to him, 'Open an asylum for women, too.' Then Romulus had recourse to a stratagem, proclaiming that he had discovered the altar of Consus, the god of councils (an allegory of his cunning in general). In the midst of the solemnities the Sabine maidens, thirty in number, were carried off. 'From this rape there arose wars, first with the neighboring towns, which were defeated one after another, and at last with the Sabines. ... Between the Palatine and the Tarpeian Rock a battle was fought, in which neither party gained a decisive victory until the Sabine women threw themselves between the combatants, who agreed that henceforth the sovereignty should be divided between the Romans and the Sabines.'" — *Great Empires of Prophecy*, page 217.

That is the origin of Rome. What were the men at first? Robbers. And how did they get their wives? They stole them. And the children of these men are children of robbers.

[S. H. Lane: Do not some discountance that whole story?]

O yes; and a good many others discount the story of the Bible of ancient times—of Assyria, Babylon, etc. But all the researches and archaeological discoveries that have been made confirm the story of the Bible. So with Roman history. Only two or three weeks ago a pavement was discovered, with writing upon it, that demonstrates the truthfulness of one of the points in early Roman history that had been doubted, and practically set aside by the modern wise-acres. So although they discount it, it is the truth, and you may know it is the truth; because the Bible says that Rome is the children of robbers.

Thus when you reach Rome, that establishes the vision. What is the object of all the vision in the book of Daniel up to that point? To bring us face to face with Rome. And from that date to the end of the world, the world has to deal with Rome, in one phase or another. It may not be the actual form of the government of the rulers of Rome; but either in form or in spirit the world has to deal with Rome from that day until the end of the world.

This is as far as we will go now in the eleventh chapter of Daniel. Now turn back to the eighth chapter, because this is all summed up in that chapter. Verse 20. The angel explains what these things mean: the ram is the kings of Media and Persia; the rough goat is the king of Grecia. Four kings shall stand up out of the nations; but not in his power. And in the latter time of their kingdom, "when the transgressors are come to their full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up." This is the same power that is over there in the eleventh chapter and fourteenth verse—the children of robbers. What is it, then?—Rome.

"A king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power. And he shall destroy wonderfully," —more blood was shed by Rome than by any other nation that was ever on the earth—I read it a moment ago. "He shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and he shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy," —not through policy—but through *his* policy. It is his own, you see. Not the policy of another. It is *his* peculiar policy, distinguished from all others.

"Through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand." And what? "He shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many." By peace shall destroy many! Destroy people by peace

[Mrs. S. M. I. Henry: The margin says "by prosperity."]

[A. F. Ballenger: The Revised Version says, "And in their security shall destroy many."]

The text is true. By peace he shall destroy many. The peace of Rome is destruction to those who have it. There is a whole lot of history in that one clause. I do not say that the margin is not true, or that this Revised Version is not true. They are all true, and it takes all of them to express the full meaning in the original word. But the text itself is true, and I want to stick to the text.

[Voice: Is it in the spiritual reign or temporal?]

Altogether. It will come out presently. It is by peace that he destroys many.

[Mrs. S. M. I. Henry: Making them believe they are all right, when they are not?]

Yes; his very promises of peace to the people bring destruction, if they trust them. That is Rome.

"By peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand." To what time does that bring us? To the second coming of Christ, to the Stone cut out without hand. Then is not the history of the world, from the rise of Rome to the end of the world, in these two verses? From the time that the children of robbers exalt themselves, to the end of the world, we have Rome to deal with, but what did the exaltation of the children of robbers do? Established the vision. Then what was the object of all the prophecies before it?

Now let us glance at Rome in her history, just as it is spoken of here. "A king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences [dark schemes], shall stand up." Now put those two expressions together: "Through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper," and "by peace shall destroy many." The policy of Rome was a peaceful policy; but what was the result of it? "Shall destroy many." Also he shall "destroy the mighty and the holy people:" he does nothing but destroy. Well, we must not make the application until we get the text. I am not coloring this at all. I will read from the history presently—history written hundreds of years ago—exactly what I am saying. Rome did that, and we know she did. She set the people free, and made a proclamation: You are absolutely free from all garrisons, imposts, or taxes whatsoever, governed by your own respective laws and usages. We have simply fought your battles for your good; we have simply given you our armies, and navies, and poured out our wealth, to set you free; to set to the world the blessed example of liberty and republicanism. That is all the reward we ask, that virtue is its own reward.

The Greeks were charmed. They fairly worshiped Rome. The spirit of liberty and "the blessed peace and prosperity and liberty" that Rome had brought to them captivated them. They said that they themselves had had kings, armies, and navies that had fought for liberty, but it was their own liberty: but here was a nation from afar off, speaking a strange language, and utterly foreign to them, that had sent out navies and armies; and poured out its treasure, to fight other people's battles, to set other people free. They said, "Has there ever such a thing been seen in the world?"

Rome sent her armies, not for conquest, but to give peace. There were a number of games celebrated in Greece—the Olympian, the Isthmian, and several other games. The Isthmian games were celebrated on the Isthmus that connects the peninsula of Greece with the main body, where the canal is now between Corinth and eastern Greece—a very narrow neck of land. In November, 1895, Brother Holser and I had the pleasure of walking all around and over the very spot where this all happened. These games were held on the Isthmus for the benefit of all Greece, and all the states that Greece controlled. At the celebration of the Isthmian games, Greeks from all the states were assembled. Rome had just conquered King Philip V, of Macedonia. The war was over, and peace was concluded. The Roman general sends out into the midst of the theater a herald, who proclaims with a loud voice: "The Senate and people of Rome and Titus Quintius the general, having overcome Philip and the Macedonians, set at liberty from all garrisons and taxes and imposts, the Corinthians, the Locrians, the Phocians, the Eubeans, the Phtihot-Achaeans, the Magnesians, the Thessalians, and the Perrhaebians, declare them free, and ordain that they shall be governed by their respective laws and usages."

Through his policy he prospers. The Greeks in their gratitude spread the glory of Rome, and the result was that all the nations that were oppressed by their kings hastened to put themselves under the protecting wings of Rome. And thus, through this his policy, in a little time Rome secured the world's dominion.

But what was the result of the policy? What came at last? Never was there such a despotism on the earth as Rome; never a power that destroyed so many people; never one that so oppressed people who were subject to them. "By peace he destroyed many." The peace of Rome, I repeat, is destruction to him who has it.

"The remembrance of so delightful a day, and of the valuable blessings then bestowed, was continually renewed, and for a long time formed the only subject of conversation at all times and in all places. Every one cried in the highest transports of admiration and a kind of enthusiasm, 'that there was a people in the world who, at their own expense and the hazard of their lives, engaged in a war for the liberty of other nations; and that not for their neighbors or people situated on the same continent; but who crossed the seas, and sailed to distant climes, to destroy and extirpate unjust power from the earth, and to establish universally law, equity, and justice. That by a single word, and the voice of a herald, liberty had been restored to all the cities of Greece and Asia. That a great soul only could have formed such a design; but that to execute it was the effect at once of the highest good fortune and the most consummate virtue.'"

There is much more, but I skip what the historian himself has said with reference to the principles of Rome. On page 245, I read again:

"Had this deliverance of the Grecian states proceeded from a principle of generosity void of all interested motives, had the whole tenor of the conduct of the Romans never belied such exalted sentiments, nothing could possibly have been more august or more capable of doing honor to a nation. But if we penetrate ever so little beyond the glaring outside, we soon perceive that this specious moderation of the Romans was entirely founded upon A PROFOUND POLICY."

That was written by a man who was a Roman Catholic. "Through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper." Brethren, when you see the handwriting of God in Daniel, "Through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper," and then read that sentence in the history, is it difficult to see the perfect fulfillment of the prophecy?

The fulfillment of prophecy in history is not haphazard. You read prophecy in the book of Daniel or anywhere else, and know exactly what it says, and you will find that exact thing in the history. I have hunted for months—yes, for years—to find a book that had in it a certain thing that the prophecy points out that was not in any other book that I had yet found. At last I found the book that had in it the very sentence that I knew must be somewhere, and which was an exact fulfillment of the prophecy. Just as soon as I saw it, I knew it. Brethren, everything that is in prophecy can be found in history. But the Bible is the beginning—there is the foundation of your study. You must know what God's word calls for, before you can select it, and before you know what to select, from the history. I read on from *Great Empires of Prophecy*, pages 246, 247:

"But if we penetrate ever so little beyond this glaring outside, we soon perceive that this specious moderation of the Romans was entirely founded upon a profound policy—wise indeed, and prudent, according to the ordinary rules of government—but at the same time very remote from that noble disinterestedness which has been so highly extolled on the present occasion. It may be affirmed that the Grecians then abandoned themselves to stupid joy, fondly imagining that they were really free because the Romans declared them so. ... Nothing could be more gentle and equitable than the conduct of the Romans in the beginning. They acted with the utmost moderation toward such states and nations as addressed them for protection. They succored them against their enemies, took the utmost pains in terminating their differences, and in suppressing all commotions which arose amongst them; and did not demand the least recompense from their allies for all these services. By this means their authority gained strength daily, and prepared the nations for entire subjection. And, indeed, under pretense of offering them their good offices, of entering into their interests, and of reconciling them, the Romans rendered themselves the sovereign arbiters of those whom they had restored to liberty, and whom they now considered in some measure as their freedmen. They used to depute commissioners to them, to inquire into their complaints, to weigh and examine the reasons on both sides, and to decide their quarrels; but when the articles were of such a nature that there was no possibility of reconciling them on the spot, they invited them to send their deputies to Rome.

In other words: You are all free now: we don't ask a single cent—you must pay for it. We have done all this for the good of humanity—but you must pay for it. When we freed you, will

you say that we have no voice in your plans? We set you free, and now we have the right to have a voice in your plans and your work. If you do not recognize it, you are rebels. I will now read that:

"Afterwards they used, with plenary authority, to summon those who refused to come to an agreement, obliged them to plead their cause before the Senate, and even to appear in person there. From arbiters and mediators, being become supreme judges, they soon assumed a magisterial tone, looked upon their decrees as irrevocable decisions, were greatly offended when the most implicit obedience was not paid to them, and gave the name of rebellion to a second resistance. Thus there arose, in the Roman Senate, a tribunal which judged all nations and kings, and from which there was no appeal."

Now you see Rome in the eighth chapter of Daniel. I have spoken only of Rome; but it has been exceedingly difficult for me to keep you from seeing a whole lot of other history there.