

touches on many principles that are very important in all of our interpretation. And lest I forget at the end of the hour to give out the new assignment, I am going to request that you give a copy of each of these to everyone (distribution of assignments)

This is the assignment for next time. Mimeographed.

We were finishing up at the end of last period our discussion of ch. 2. We noted there two possible interpretations. We looked at a number of suggestions that we saw were not satisfactory. But we saw two that are widely held among evangelical Christians today.

The first of those was that the church is the ~~xxx~~ stone, and we saw the difficulty of that. But at this point I do not wish to rule it out. There are many very fine Christians who interpret it in this way, that the church is going to so grow that it will take over the whole world. Certainly we must agree that if it was God's plan that everyone on earth at some time in the future were to be converted and to become ~~xxxx~~ thoroughly Christian and become completely sanctified, it would be a complete end of all wickedness upon this earth. But that hardly fits the picture we find here in Dan. 2, or in Dan. 7. In both of which it seems to be a supernatural intervention, rather than simply a growth of the church.

Yet, though the picture in Dan. 2 shows the stone hitting the image and destroying it and then growing to fill the whole earth, and that would seem to fit the idea of supernatural intervention instead of a (gradual) growing of the church, we don't want to push the figure too far. We don't want simply on that basis to say that it could not mean that the church is going to grow until it covers the whole earth. This was a widely held view a couple of centuries ago. There were a great many fine hymns: Jesus shall reign where the sun . . . etc., which I believe are true, but I believe are true of what Jesus will do by His return, rather than by what the church will do.

I think the church is here for a witness to win souls to the Lord, rather than to change the whole earth. I think Christ will do that. I don't think that's a function he has given to the church. But since there are many very fine Christians who hold to this view,-- they say this view was in eclipse in the last half century but recently a number are coming back to it. Some books have been written recently strongly presenting it saying it is very pessimistic to think that the church is not going to succeed in converting the whole world.

But the question is not what's pessimistic or what is optimistic, but what has God given the church as its function and what is His will? I've even known some to say that a true Calvinist must think that God is going to convert the whole world. I think that's as great nonsense as anything I can imagine! Certainly God if he chose could have 9/10 of the world converted in only one generation, but only 1/10 in another generation.