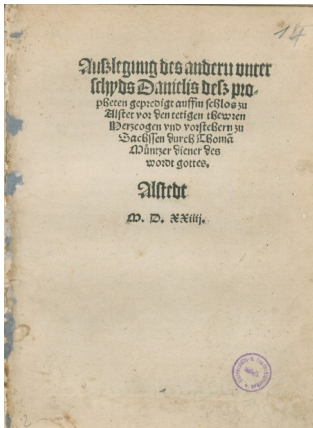


## **‘Sermon Before the Princes’**



*This is the printed version of the sermon preached to Duke Johann of Saxony and his son Johann Friedrich at Allstedt Castle on 13<sup>th</sup> July 1524.*

*It was subsequently printed in Allstedt around 20/22 July 1524, on a very basic printing press, with the title ‘Interpretation of the Second Chapter of Daniel the Prophet’. It is commonly known as ‘The Sermon Before the Princes’.*

*The text runs to 25 pages, with no decorative features.*

### **Interpretation of the Second Chapter of Daniel the Prophet, preached at the castle of Allstedt before the great, dear Dukes and rulers of Saxony by Thomas Müntzer, Servant of the Word of God. Allstedt M.D.XXiiii.**

FIRST of all, the text of the aforementioned chapter of the predictions of the prophet Daniel was read aloud in translation, and thereafter the whole sermon was delivered as follows, to explain the text:

You should know that the poor, miserable, crumbling Christian faith can neither be succoured or helped unless the busy and unstinting servants of God explain the Bible every day by singing, reading and preaching. But this will mean that our tender priests will always have to suffer great thumps about the head, or else they will have to give up their employment. But how can one treat them otherwise since the Christian faith has been laid waste so terribly by the ravening wolves, as is written in Isaiah 5 and Psalms 79 <sup>1</sup> concerning the vineyard of God? St Paul teaches how we should train ourselves in godly songs of praise, Ephesians 5. For, just as it was in the time of the beloved prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah,

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<sup>1</sup> In the original text, the numbering of Psalms follows the Vulgate version of the Bible; in modern times, we are more used to the Hebrew-Masoretic numbering version. As a general rule, from Psalm 9 and 10 onwards, the numeration is one different: where Müntzer cites Psalm 79, for example, we should consult Psalm 80; where he cites 18, we should check 19; and so on. Müntzer’s original numbering has been retained in this translation.

Ezekiel and the others, the whole congregation of the Elect of God had tumbled so far into the paths of idolatry that not even God can help them; instead, they had to suffer being led away as prisoners to languish among the heathens until they at length recognised his holy name once more, as is written in Isaiah 29, Jeremiah 15, Ezekiel 36 and Psalms 88. In exactly the same way, in the times of our fathers and in our own time, the poor Christian faith has shown even greater obstinacy and gilded itself unspeakably with a divine name, Luke 21, 2 Timothy 3; the devil and his servants decorate themselves prettily with jewels, 2 Corinthians 11, aye, so attractively that true friends of God are seduced by them and cannot be persuaded to recognise their error even after the utmost effort, as Matthew 24 clearly states. All this is caused by a fraudulent saintliness and a hypocritical absolution from sin by the godless enemies of God, who say that the Christian church cannot go astray, although in truth – in order to avoid such errors – the church should continually be built up by the word of God and kept free from error, aye, she should even recognise the sin of her ignorance, Leviticus 4, Hosea 4, Malachi 1, Isaiah 1. But it is quite true that Christ the son of God, and his apostles, indeed before them his holy prophets, have all established a truly pure Christian faith, have sowed only the pure wheat in the field – that is, planted the dear word of God in the hearts of the Elect, as is written in Matthew 12, Mark 4, Luke 8 and Ezekiel 36.

But the lazy negligent servants of those same churches did not want to guard their charge with zealous watchfulness nor preserve it, but instead they wanted to do what suited them, not what was due to Jesus Christ, Philip 2. In so doing, they allowed the godless, that is the weeds, to wreak havoc, Psalms 79, for the corner-stone mentioned in our text was still small, as Isaiah 28 says. Aye, it had not yet filled the whole world, but it will very soon fill it and make it full, right full. That is why the foundation-stone laid at the very start of the Christian era was soon thrown away by the builders, that is the rulers, Psalms 117 and Luke 20. So, I tell you, the newly-begun church everywhere fell into disrepair until the time of the divided kingdom, Luke 21 and here in Daniel 2, Ezra 4. For Egesippus and Eusebius say, in the 22<sup>nd</sup> chapter of their fourth book of church histories, that the Christian community remained a virgin no more after the deaths of the pupils of the Apostles. And soon after that she became an adulteress, as was already prophesied by the dear Apostles, 2 Peter 2. And in the histories of the Apostles, St Paul said to the shepherds of the flock of God, with clear and illuminating words, Acts 20: ‘Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over

which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing grievous wolves shall come among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves men shall arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch and remember!’ The same message is given in the epistle of the holy apostle Jude. Revelations 16 says the same thing. So too does our lord Christ warn us to beware of false prophets, Matthew 7.

Now it is as clear as daylight that there is nothing – God help us ! – nothing so terrible and despised as much as the spirit of Christ. And yet no one can be saved unless that same Holy Spirit has already assured him of his salvation, as is written in Romans 8, Luke 12, John 6 and 17. But how are we, miserable worms that we are, to achieve that if we consider the godless to be so worthy that – alas – Christ the tender son of God appears no better than a scarecrow or painted puppet beside such grand titles and lords of this world? And yet he is the true stone which is cast down from the mountain into the sea, Psalms 45, into the proud magnificence of this world. He is the stone, torn by no human hand from the mountain, who is called Jesus Christ, 1 Corinthians 10, who was born at precisely the time when wickedness was reaching its climax, Luke 1 and 2, at the time of Octavian, when the whole world was travelling across country in order to be taxed. At that time a man with no spirit, a filthy sack of shit, wanted to possess the whole world, although it was of no use to him than for ostentation and pride. Aye, he let himself believe that he alone was great. Oh, how very small was then the corner-stone Jesus Christ in the eyes of men. He was directed to the cow-shed like some cast-off of humanity, Psalms 21. Later on, the scribes repulsed him, Psalms 117, Matthew 21, Mark 12, Luke 20, just as they still do today. Aye, in the end they even made a game out the Passion, after the death of the disciples of the dear Apostles. They turned the spirit of Christ into a laughing stock and continue to do so today, as was written in Psalms 68. They have made off with him quite openly like thieves and murderers, John 10. They have robbed the Lamb Christ of his true voice and have turned the true crucified Christ into a quite ludicrous idol.

How did all this happen? Answer: they threw away the pure knowledge of God and in its place they have installed a pretty, fine, gilded god before which the poor peasants smack

their lips, as Hosea clearly stated in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter and Jeremiah in the Book of Lamentations 4: 'They that did once feed on spiced dishes now have only filth and shit set before them.' Oh woe! for the pitiful gruel, of which Christ himself speaks in Matthew 24, with which he is so cruelly mocked in the devilish Masses, with all that idolatrous preaching, gestures and conduct, for when all is said and done, there is nothing there except a simple idol made of wood. Aye, a wooden idolatrous priest and a coarse, stupid and boorish people incapable of having the slightest recognition of God. Is that not a calamity, a sin and a shame? I now consider that the beasts of the belly, Philippians 3, and the swine, of whom is written in Matthew 7 and 2 Peter 2, have utterly and completely trampled down into the mire the pure stone of Jesus Christ. He has become the mat for the whole world to wipe their feet on. That is why all the unbelieving Turks, heathens and Jews mock us mercilessly and take us for fools, as if we were all mad, since we refuse to listen to the spirit of our faith. And so the suffering of Christ has become nothing more than some fairground attraction for these desperate rogues who are worse than any mercenary. As the 68<sup>th</sup> Psalm says. Therefore, dear brothers, we must raise ourselves above this muck and become good pupils of God, taught by God alone, John 6, Matthew 23, for we need his great and mighty strength, sent down to us from above, in order to punish and weaken such unspeakable wickedness. That is the very clearest wisdom of God, Wisdom 9, which springs only from the pure, faithful fear of God. This alone will furnish our hands with the weapons to take revenge on the enemies of God, with the utmost zeal for God, as is written on Wisdom 5, John 2, Psalms 68. There is no excuse to be sought in human or reasoned arguments, for the appearance of the godless has grown marvellously attractive and cunning, like the beautiful cornflowers among the golden ears of the wheat, Ecclesiastes 8. But we need to wisdom of God to recognise this.

SECONDLY, we must take another and closer look at this abomination which despises the stone. But if we are recognise it in its true shape, then every day we must expect God's revelations. Oh, but that has become so unusual and rare in this villainous world ! For the cunning attacks of the guileful overwhelm us at every moment and prevent us from attaining a higher understanding of the true knowledge of God, Wisdom 4 and Psalms 36. This can only be resisted by the fear of God. When that alone is nurtured in us, exclusively and unadulterated, then holy Christendom can easily be brought back to the spirit of wisdom and

the revelation of the divine will. All this is set out in the scriptures, Psalms 145, Psalms 110, Proverbs 1. But the fear of God must be pure, without any fear of Man or of Creature, Psalms 18, Isaiah 66, Luke 12. Oh, how desperately do we need this fear. For just as a man cannot serve two masters, Matthew 6, so little can a man truly fear both God and creatures. God cannot be merciful to us (as the mother of Christ our Lord said) unless we fear him alone with all our heart. So God says, Malachi 1: 'If then I be a father, where is my honour? And if I be a master, where is my fear?' So, my dear princes, in these dangerous times it is necessary for us, 1 Timothy 4, to set out with the utmost energy to challenge such sly wickedness, as did all the dear fathers from the beginning of the world, as is shown in the Bible. For the times are now dangerous and the days are evil, 2 Timothy 3, Ephesians 5. Why? Simply because the noble strength of God has been so horribly shamed and dishonoured that the poor coarse people are now led astray by the unholy scribes with their great chatter, as the prophet Micah said in his third chapter; for such is the behaviour of almost all the academics, with very few exceptions, that they teach and say that God no longer reveals his divine secrets to his dear friends through clear visions or his spoken word etc. So they stick mired in their inexperienced ways, Ecclesiastes 34, and poke fun at those who have experienced the revelation of God, as the godless did in Jeremiah 20. 'Hey, has God spoken to you lately? Have you had a chat with him recently? Have you got the spirit of Christ, eh?' They do this with great derision and mockery. But what happened in the time of Jeremiah was a great thing, was it not? Jeremiah warned the poor blind people about the pain of the captivity of Babylon just as pious Lot warned his sons-in-law, Genesis 19. But they all thought it was foolishness. They said to the dear prophets: Yes, yes, it is very good of God to issue these fatherly warnings. But what then befell this mocking crowd when they were in Babylonian captivity? Only that they were put to shame by the heathen king Nebuchadnezzar. Have a look at the text! He accepted the spoken words of God and was a mighty tyrant and scourge on the people of the Elect who had sinned against God. But because of the blindness and stubbornness of the people of God, the very greatest goodness was revealed to the world, as St Paul says in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter and Ezekiel in the 23<sup>rd</sup>. And so I tell you now, in my lesson, that God the Almighty revealed to the heathen king not just those things which were many years in the future, to the inexpressible humiliation of those intractable members of the people of God who refused to believe any prophet. It is just the same with the inexperienced people of our time. They are not aware

of the punishment of God even when they see it right before their very eyes. What is God the Almighty then to do with us? He can only withdraw his goodness from us.

Now follows the text: 'King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, whose meaning was hidden from him etc.'

What are we to say about this? To discuss men's dreams is a marvellously difficult thing, unusual and even abhorrent, for this reason that, from the very beginning until today, the whole world has been deceived by those who claim to interpret dreams, as is written in Deuteronomy 13, Ecclesiastes 34. So in this chapter under discussion it is explained that the king did not want to believe the clever soothsayers and interpreters of dreams, since he said: 'Tell me my dream, and then the interpretation thereof, otherwise you will have prepared lying and corrupt words!' What did they do? They tried their best but could not tell him his dream, but said rather: 'O dear king, there is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's dream, excepts the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.' Aye, according to their own lights, they spoke quite reasonably on this. But they had no faith in God. They were godless hypocrites and flatterers, since they said only what the lords wanted to hear, just as our academic scribblers do nowadays, for they have a taste for the choicest morsels at court. But the words of Jeremiah, chapters 5 and 8, stand against them.

And what else is written here? Here the text states that there must be people who have communion with heaven. Oh, but that is a bitter drink for the clever-clogs to swallow, even though St Paul also said this to the Philippians in chapter 3. Despite this, such learned gentlemen still claim to be able to interpret the mystery of God. Oh, the world is full of those rogues who presume so much ! And Isaiah says of them in Chapter 58: 'Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that did righteousness.' Such scholars are like those soothsayers who openly deny the revelation of God and obstruct the work of the Holy Spirit, and yet still want to instruct the whole world. And anything which does not fit in with their understanding has to be condemned as the devil's work. But they are by no means assured of their own salvation, which is so necessary, Romans 8. They can chatter ever so nicely about faith and brew up an intoxicating faith for poor, confused consciences. All this is caused by their mistaken judgements and abominations, which they found in the hateful deceptions of those damnable, poisonous dreams of monks, in which

the devil manages to carry out all his work; aye, he has even been able to deceive many pious people amongst the Elect when, without batting an eyelid and with no thought whatsoever, they give credence to the visions and dreams and all those insane beliefs. On top of this, they have all their rules and all that goat-worshipping hypocrisy which is whispered in their ears by the devil, against which the Colossians were sternly warned by St Paul, in Chapter 2. But the damned monkish dreamers did not know how they should become aware of the power of God. So they have become mired in their perverse belief and are now paraded before the whole world as sinful and shameful as the idle wretches that they are. And they are still blind in their madness. This superstition alone has seduced them and continues to seduce them more even today, for they are without any experience of the Holy Spirit, of the mastery of the fear of God, and – since they despise divine wisdom – cannot use distinguish good from evil (that which pretends to be good). God himself cries out, through Isaiah in Chapter 5: ‘Woe unto them that call good evil, and evil good !’ For it is not the way of pious people to reject the good with the bad. As St Paul said to the Thessalonians, chapter 5: ‘Don not despise prophecy, but be sure to prove all things and hold fast to that which is good in it etc.’

THIRDLY, you must realise that God loves his Elect wholeheartedly, for, if he can warn them in the smallest matters, Deuteronomy 1 and 32, Matthew 23, then he will also do so in the greatest affairs, if they are capable of receiving such warnings. For here the text of Daniel agrees with St Paul in Corinthians 2, and that is also taken from the holy Isaiah in chapter 64, where it says: ‘Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His spirit; for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God etc.’ Therefore our most earnest message is, in short, that we must all have a sound knowledge – and not simply clutch at passing straws – of what has come to us from God and what has come from the devil or from nature. For if our natural understanding itself is to be brought into the captivity of faith, 2 Corinthians 10, then it must be pushed to the very limits of its own judgement, as is shown in Romans 1 and Baruch 3. But a person cannot make any decision with a clear conscience without God’s revelation. For a person will find quite clearly that they cannot come into Heaven by reason alone, but must first become a fool in themselves, utterly and completely, Isaiah 29 and 33, Obadiah 1, 1 Corinthians 1.

Oh, but that is surely a strange feeling for the clever, flesh-loving, lusting world. For straight away the pains begin, like those of a woman in labour, Psalms 47, John 16. Thus Daniel, like every other pious person, finds that he is just as incapable as anyone else of questioning God. That was what the wise man said in Ecclesiastes 3 : 'He who sets out to discover the magnificence of God will be crushed by his splendour.' For the more that our human nature strives after God, the further away from us will the working of the Holy Spirit move, as is clearly shown in Psalms 138. Aye, if a person understood the presumption of natural understanding, they would without a doubt no longer seek the aid of stolen scripture, as the scholars do with one little bit here and another bit there, Isaiah 28, Jeremiah 8; rather, they would soon experience the working of the divine word from the very depths of their heart, John 4. Aye, they would no longer carry stagnant water to the well, Jeremiah 2, as our scholars do nowadays. They confuse nature with grace, without making any distinction. They obstruct the working of the Word, Psalms 118, which flows up from the abyss of the soul, as Moses said in Deuteronomy 30: 'The word is very nigh unto thee. See, it is thine heart etc.'

Now, you might ask how it comes into the heart? Answer: it comes down from God in a great state of anguish – but I will explain that at a later time. And this anguish, wondering whether something is God's word or not, begins when one is a child of 6 or 7 years, as is suggested in Numbers 19. Thus, St Paul quotes Moses and Isaiah to the Romans in the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter, and speaks there about hearing the inner word in the abyss of the soul through the revelation of God. And if any person has not become aware and receptive of this through the living testimony of God, they will have nothing at all to say about God, even if they were to gulp down one hundred thousand Bibles. From this it should be perfectly clear to anyone how far the world is removed from true Christian belief. But no one wants to see it or hear it. If a person is to become aware of the Word and be receptive of it, then God must take from them their lusts of the flesh, and then, when the movement of God appears in their heart and all pleasures of the flesh are killed off, room will be made for the working of God. For a person who behaves like a beast will not understand what God says in the soul, 1 Corinthians 2; on the contrary, they must be directed by the Holy Spirit towards a serious consideration of the pure and unalloyed understanding of the law, Psalms 18; otherwise they remains blind in their heart and will invent a wooden Christ for himself and deceive

themselves. Just look at the text, how painful it was for our dear Daniel to explain the vision to the king, and how tirelessly he beseeches and prays to God to help him ! In just the same way, a person who wishes for the revelation of God must put away from themselves all pastimes, and resolutely and earnestly seek the truth, 2 Corinthians 6, and by the continual testing of such truth be able to distinguish a false vision from an authentic one. As Daniel says in chapter 10: 'A man must have a clear understanding of visions, so that they are not all rejected etc.'

FOURTHLY, you should realise that when one of the Elect wishes to know which vision or dream comes from God, or from Nature or from the devil, he must remove his will and his heart, indeed all of his natural reason, from all temporal comfort of the flesh and he must suffer as did dear Joseph in Egypt, Genesis 39, and as Daniel in this chapter. For no voluptuous person can accept the Word of God, Luke 7: the thistles and thorns – those are the lusts of this world, as the Lord says, Mark 7 – choke the effect of the words which God speaks into the soul. Thus, even when God speaks his words into the soul, a man cannot hear them if he is unused to it, for he has no introspection and no insight into himself or into the abyss of his soul, Psalms 48. A person does not want to crucify their life with all its affections and lusts, as the Holy Apostle Paul says. In this way, the fields of God's word are choked full of thistles and thorns and thick bushes, all of which need to be cleared away to allow this work of God to flourish, so that the person does not become neglectful or lazy, Proverbs 24. Thereafter, one can see how fertile the field is and finally the good crop will grow. For only then does the person become aware that they are the dwelling-house of God and the Holy Spirit, for all the days of their life. Aye, they see that they have only been created so that they might seek out the signs of God's work in their life, Psalms 92 and 118. On occasion they become dimly aware of this through images, on occasion they might even see completely when they peer right into the abyss of the heart, 1 Corinthians 13. Secondly, they must make sure that those images which appear in visions or dreams are fully supported in every detail by the holy scriptures, so that the devil does not sneak in and corrupt the sweet balm of the Holy Spirit, as the wise man says of the flies which die there, Ecclesiastes 10. Thirdly, the Elect must pay attention to the effect of visions, that they are not conjured up by human actions, but arise simply through God's unalterable will; and they must take every care to see that not the smallest detail of what they saw is missed out, for every single

thing must be put boldly into action. But when the devil wants to undertake something, he will eventually be betrayed by his ugly mug and his fabrications, for he is nothing other than a liar, John 8.

All this is clearly set out in this chapter about King Nebuchadnezzar and also made clear in the third chapter. For he immediately forgot God's commandment. Without a doubt, this was caused by his fleshly desires, his lusts for creature comforts. That is what happens when a person continually looks after their lusts and wants to have nothing more to do with God's work and wishes never be despondent: the power of the word of God cannot then overshadow them, Luke 9. When his faithful friends are in their greatest torment, that is when God the Almighty sends true visions and dreams to them, as he did with the pious Abraham, Genesis 15 and 17. For then God appeared to him, when he was in great fear. Similarly, dear Jacob, when he fled from his brother Esau in great distress, received a vision of ladders leading up the heaven and saw the angels of God climbing up and down them, Genesis 28. And when he later returned home, he was still greatly in fear of his brother Esau. But then the Lord appeared to him in a vision, putting his hips out of joint and wrestling with him, Genesis 32. Similarly, pious Joseph was hated by his brothers and in such torment he was given two portentous visions, Genesis 37. And afterwards, during his heartfelt tribulation in the prison in Egypt, he was so greatly enlightened by God that he could interpret every vision and dream, Genesis 39 and 40 and 41. Surpassing all of this, however, is the example of the other St Joseph, Matthew 1 and 2, which will silence all those untested, pleasure-seeking pigs, those clever-clogs who doubt this: Joseph had four dreams when he was full of anxiety and dismay, and he was comforted by these dreams, just as the wise men in their sleep were instructed by the angels not to return to Herod. Similarly, the dear apostles had to pay the closest attention to visions, as is clearly set out in their histories.

Aye, it is in the true apostolic, patriarchal and prophetic spirit that one waits for visions and overcomes them with painful sorrow. Therefore we should not be astonished that Brother Fattened Pig and Brother Soft Life rejects them, Job 28. For when a man has not learned the clear word of God in his soul, then he needs visions. St Peter, in the histories of the Apostles, did not understand the law, Leviticus 11, he had doubts about what he was allowed to eat and whether he could keep company with heathens, Acts 10; but then God gave him a

vision in the ecstasy of his feelings. For he saw a linen cloth let down from heaven to earth by its four corners, full of four-footed animals, and he heard a voice saying; 'Kill, and eat !' The same thing happened to pious Cornelius, when he did not know what he should do, Acts 10. And when Paul came to Troas, a vision came to him in the night; it was a man from Macedonia who stood and begged him saying: 'Come over to Macedonia and help us !' And when he had seen this vision, Paul says, according to the text of Acts 16, it was our intention to travel without delay to Macedonia, for we were certain that the Lord can summoned us there. Similarly, when Paul feared to preach in Corinth, Acts 18, the Lord spoke to him in a vision in the night, saying: 'Be not afraid etc. No man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have many people in this city.'

Do we need to continue listing examples from the scriptures? In such far-reaching and dangerous matters, it is impossible for true preachers and dukes and rulers to act on every occasion correctly and without blame, unless they live by the revelations of God, as Aaron heard from Moses and David from Nathan and Gad. Therefore the apostles were quite accustomed to visions, as the scripture confirms in the twelfth chapter of the Acts. When the angel came to Peter and led him out of Herod's prison, he thought he had only had a vision, but did not know that the angel really was bringing about his release. But if Peter had not been accustomed to visions, how would he have even thought it was a vision? From this I now conclude that whoever ignorantly wishes to be an enemy to visions, out of worldly understanding, and rejects or accepts them all without distinction, claiming that false dreamers have done great harm to the world by ambition or pleasure-seeking – then he will come to a bad end and stumble over the Holy Spirit, John 2, where God clearly speaks (as in this text of Daniel) of the transformation of the world. He will judge them in the last days, so that his name will be rightly praised. He will free them of their shame and pour out his spirit over all that is flesh, and our sons and daughters will prophesy and will have dreams and visions etc. For if Christians are not to return to the purity of the time of the Apostles, see Acts 27 where Joel is cited, then why should anyone bother preaching at all? What purpose is served by scriptures and visions? It is true, and I know this for certain, that the spirit of God now reveals itself to many elect pious people, showing us that a vital, unconquerable and future reformation is of the greatest urgency, and that it must be carried out. However much anyone wishes to oppose it, the prophecy of Daniel has lost none of its

strength, whether anyone believes it or not, as Paul also says in Romans 3. This text from Daniel is as clear as the midday sun, and the task of ending the fifth empire of the world is in full swing.

The first empire is depicted by that great golden bonce on top, that was the empire of Babel; the second is the silver breastplate and arms, that was the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. The third was the empire of the Greeks, which dazzled by its cleverness, depicted by bronze; the fourth, the Roman Empire which was won by the sword and was an empire of oppression. But the fifth is what we now have before us which is also of iron and would like to oppress, but it is also made of muck, as we see, stuck together by that plain hypocrisy which creeps and crawls over the whole earth. For anyone who does not practise deception is treated as a madman. We can now see quite clearly how the eels and snakes couple together in one writhing mass. The priests and all evil clerics are the snakes, as John, baptiser of Christ, calls them in Matthew 3, and the secular lords and rulers are the eels, as is symbolised by the fishes in Leviticus 11. Thus the kingdoms of the devil have daubed themselves all over with clay.

Oh, dear sirs, how splendidly will the Lord shatter the old pots with an iron bar, Psalms 2. Therefore, dearest, most beloved rulers, learn how to give judgement from the mouth of God and do not be misled by your hypocritical priests, or behave with a fraudulent patience and goodness. For the stone from the mountain has grown large. The poor laymen and peasants see it much clearer than you. Aye, God be praised, it has become so large that if other lords or neighbours tried to persecute you for the sake of the gospel, then they would be driven out by their own subjects. This I know for certain. Aye, the stone is grown large and is what the foolish world long feared. It overwhelmed the world when it was young; so what shall it now do that it is so great and mighty? What, when it is so powerful that it strikes unstoppably against the great statue and shatters it right down to its clay pots? So, my dear rulers of Saxony, stand firmly on the corner stone, as St Peter did, Matthew 16, and seek out the true unalterable will of God. He will keep your feet firmly on the stone, Psalms 39. Your ways will be just if only you seek to follow God's righteousness and take up the cause of the gospel. For God stands so near to you that you would scarcely believe it. Why should you be afraid of the spectre of human powers, Psalms 117? Take a look at the text

here. King Nebuchadnezzar wanted to kill the wise men because they could not explain his dream. That would have been what they deserved. For they wanted to rule over his whole kingdom with their cleverness, but could not even do what they were appointed to do. It is exactly the same today with our clerics. And I tell you in truth that if you really understood the plight of Christianity today and considered it carefully, then you would work up the same zeal as Jehu the king, witnessed by 2 Kings 9 and 10 and the whole book of the Apocalypse. And I know for certain that you would have barely restrained yourselves from taking up the power of the sword to deal with this. For the pitiable damage to holy Christianity has become so great that even now no tongue may describe it.

Therefore a new Daniel must arise and explain to you your revelations, and he must march in the forefront, as Moses teaches, Deuteronomy 20. He must reconcile the wrath of the princes and of the enraged people. For once you truly understand the damage to Christianity and the deceitfulness of the false clerics and the depraved evil-doers, then you will be enraged against them beyond all imagining. Without a doubt, it will gall you and hit you hard in the heart that you have been benevolent to them when they urged you, with the very sweetest of words, to the most shameful of judgements, Wisdom 6, in the face of all truthful righteousness. For they have made such fools of you that everyone swears to all the saints that the princes act only as heathens in their official capacity, that their only role is to maintain civic order. Oh, my dears, verily will the great stone soon crash down and smite down to the ground such rational conclusions, as is written in Matthew 10: 'Think not that I am come to send peace of earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword.' But what are you supposed to do with the sword? What you must do is this: do away with the evil men who obstruct the gospel, cast them down, if you wish to be the servants of God and not devils yourselves, as Paul says in Romans 13. You need not doubt that God will crush to dust all those enemies who attempt to persecute you. For his hand is not yet shortened, Isaiah 59. And so he can still help you, he wants to do so, just as he stood by the elect king Josiah and others who defended the name of God. Thus you will be as angels when you want to act righteously, as Peter says, 2 Peter 1. Christ commanded very solemnly, Luke 19, saying: 'Bring my enemies and strangle them before my eyes !' Why? Well, because they are ruining the kingdom of Christ and even attempt to defend their wickedness under the guise of Christian faith and anger the whole world with their deceitful fig-leaf. Thus Christ our Lord

says, Matthew 18: 'But whosoever shall offend one of these little children which believe in me, it were better that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.' Just let anyone try to explain that judgement in any other way. These are the words of Christ. So if Christ can say that about someone who injures one of the children, then what should we say when the faith of a great mass of people is injured? That is what these arch-criminals do, when they injure the whole world and drag it away from the true Christian faith and state that no one should know the mystery of God. Everyone should simply observe what they say and not what they do, Matthew 23. They say that it is not necessary for faith to be tested in the fire like gold, 1 Peter 1, Psalms 139. But that is how the Christian faith becomes worse than a dog's, hoping for a crust of bread when the table is laid. That is the kind of faith which the false academics present to the poor, blind world. They do not find it strange that they are only preaching to fill their bellies, Philippians 3. With suchlike hearts, they cannot say anything else, Matthew 12.

If you now wish to be righteous rulers, then you must grasp the government by the root, and act as Christ has commanded. Drive his enemies away from the Elect, for you are the instrument for that. My dears, do not give us any cheap tricks and say that the strength of God should manage without recourse to your swords, or else they will rust in your scabbards. If only that could happen ! These academics can say what they want, but Christ states it clearly in Matthew 7 and John 15: 'Every tree which does not bring forth good fruit should be uprooted and cast into the fire.' If you tear away the mask of the world, then you will soon be able to see it with clear judgement, John 7. Make righteous judgements, as God commands. You have enough help to do so, Wisdom 6, for Christ is your master, Matthew 23. Therefore do not let the evil-doers live any longer, those who turn us away from God, Deuteronomy 13, for a godless man has no right to live when he obstructs the pious. In Exodus 22, God says: 'You should not let the evil-doers live.' St Paul also said this, when he says that the swords should be given to the rulers to take revenge on evil-doers and protect the pious, Romans 13. God is your shelter and will teach you to fight against his enemies, Psalms 17. He will make your hands eager for battle and will support you. But you will have to endure a heavy cross and much tribulation before the fear of God is revealed to you. That cannot happen without some suffering, but it will cost you no more than some dangers undergone for the will of God and the useless chatter of your enemies. For

although pious David was driven from his castle by Absalom, he eventually returned when Absalom was hanged and stabbed.

And so, you dear fathers of Saxony, you must take the risk for the sake of the gospel; God will chastise you sparingly as if you were his dearest sons, Deuteronomy 1, when his wrath rages. For all who put their faith in God are blessed. Just say fearlessly in the spirit of Christ: 'I will not be afraid of a hundred thousand, though they have set themselves against me round about.' I expect, however, that our academics will criticise me by pointing out the clemency of Christ, which they like to refer to in order to cover up their hypocrisy; but they should also consider the zeal of Christ, John 2, Psalms 68, when he destroys the roots of idolatry, as Paul says in the third chapter of Colossians, that the wrath of God cannot be deflected from the congregation. If he overthrew those things which we consider minor, then without a doubt he would not have spared the idols and graven images which had been there, commanding through Moses in Deuteronomy 7, saying: 'You are a holy people. You shall not show mercy to the idolators. You shall destroy their altars! You shall break down their images and burn them with fire, that I will not be angry with you.' These words were not contradicted by Christ; instead, he wants to help us to fulfil them, Matthew 5. All of these examples were explained by the prophets, but these are bright, clear words which must stand in all eternity, Isaiah 40. God cannot say 'yes' today and tomorrow say 'no', for he is unchangeable in his words, Malachi 3, 1 Kings 15, Numbers 22. But the fact that the apostles did not destroy the idols of the heathens can be explained thus: St Peter was a fearful man. In Galatians 2, he dissembled among the heathens. He was a symbol of all the apostles, for Christ also said of him, in the last chapter of John, that he was greatly afraid of death. And it is easy to see that, for that very reason, he did not want to give them any reason for killing him. But St Paul spoke out very severely against idolatry, Acts 17. If he had been able to enforce his teachings among the people of Athens, he would without doubt have cast down idolatry, as God commanded through Moses, and as later took place with the martyrs, as trustworthy histories have told us.

So the shortcomings or negligence of the saints are no excuse for us to let the godless have their way. Since they confess the name of God, just as we do, they need to choose one of two things – either completely reject Christian belief, or do away with idols, Matthew 18.

But along come our academics and, in their godless, fraudulent way, tell us what Daniel means is that the Antichrist will be destroyed without human intervention. But the Antichrist is already disheartened, as the Canaanites were when the chosen people came into the promised land, as Joshua describes. But Joshua did not spare them the sharp edge of his sword. Look in the 43<sup>rd</sup> Psalm and 1 Chronicles 14, and there you will find the explanation: they did not conquer the land by the sword, but by the strength of God; and the sword was the means, just as food and drink is a means for us to live. So the sword is also necessary for the destruction of the godless, Romans 13. But in order for this to happen properly and effectively, our dear fathers the princes, who confess Christ with us, must use the sword. If they do not act thus, then the sword will be taken away from them, Daniel 7, for they accept him in words but deny him in deeds, Titus 1. The kind of peace which should be offered to their enemies is seen in Deuteronomy 2. If they want to be spiritual, but give no account of their knowledge of God, 1 Peter 3, then they should be overthrown, 1 Corinthians 5. But like the pious Daniel, I will intercede for them if they do not resist God's revelations. But if they do the opposite, then let them be strangled without mercy as Hezekiah, Josiah, Cyrus, Daniel and Elijah destroyed the priests of Baal. If this does not happen, then the Christian church will not get back to its origins. The weeds must be uprooted from the vineyard of God in the time of the harvest, and then the beautiful golden wheat will gain firm root and grow straight, Matthew 13. But the angels who sharpen your sickles for the harvest are the true servants of God who refine the zealotry of God's wisdom, Malachi 3.

Nebuchadnezzar heard the divine wisdom through Daniel. He fell down before him, after the mighty truth had overcome him, but he was like a reed blown hither and thither by the wind, as the third chapter shows. Countless numbers of people today are just like that: they welcome the gospel with great joy, because it is all nice and easy for them to do so, Luke 8. But when God wants to test such people in the crucible or place them in the refining fire, 1 Peter 1, oh ! – then the very slightest word gets them all annoyed, as Christ prophesied in Mark 4. Without a doubt, there will be many untested people who will be outraged by this little pamphlet, since I say with Christ, Luke 19 and Matthew 18, and with Paul in 1 Corinthians 5, and with the backing of the entire divine law, that we should kill the godless rulers, and especially the priests and monks who denounce the holy gospel as heresy and yet still present themselves as the very best Christians. Then their hypocritical, fraudulent

goodness will turn to fury and bitterness without limits. Then they will defend the godless and say that Christ never killed anyone etc. And since the friends of God can only spout hot air, so the prophecy of Paul, 2 Timothy 3, will be fulfilled. In the final days, the lovers of worldly pleasure will appear compassionate, but they will have no power. There is nothing in the world with a better figure and more cunning mask than fraudulent compassion. That is why every corner is full of vain hypocrites, amongst whom none is courageous enough to speak the real truth. If the truth is to be brought to the light of day, then you rulers must (God willing, whether you want to or not) conduct yourselves according to the conclusion of this chapter, where Nebuchadnezzar appointed Daniel to an office where he might judge fairly and well, as the Holy Spirit dictated, Psalms 57. For the godless have no right to live, unless the elect grant them this, as is written in the book of Exodus, chapter 23. Rejoice, you true friends of God, that the hearts of the enemies of the cross have tumbled into their breeches, and they have no choice now but to act righteously, even if they never once dreamed of doing so. If we now fear God, why should we be terrified by rootless good-for-nothings? Numbers 14, Joshua 11. So be bold ! He, to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth, will have government to himself, last chapter of Matthew. And may he keep you, dearest, safe for ever. Amen.

*(Translated by Andy Drummond,  
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