

THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL

In the Light of
PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE EVENTS

by

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CHAPTER TWO

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM— A PROPHETIC OUTLINE OF "THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES"

IN THE second chapter of the Book of Daniel we find the most complete, yet the simplest prophetic picture in all the Word of God, a remarkable outline of Gentile world dominion, from beginning to end. It is, therefore, a graphic presentation of the theme of the book—"The Commencement, Character, Course, and Consummation of **'the Times of the Gentiles.'**"

It is interesting to note that from the fourth verse of this chapter through the seventh chapter Daniel wrote in the Aramaic language, the vernacular of the Chaldean court in which he was a captive.

Except for "fifteen Persian and three Greek words," the rest of the Book of Daniel is written in Hebrew.

The destructive critics have sought to attribute the authorship to someone other than Daniel, on the basis of this use of other languages. However, this fact only verifies the Scripture that God used Daniel to write the record. What could be more natural than that, in the parts which have to do with these Gentile kings, he should use the language they spoke and understood? Surely it was known to Daniel, for he had received an intensive three-years' course in "**the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans**" (1:4).

His presence at the court of Darius would surely cause him to know more than "fifteen Persian" words, as well as the "three Greek words," which he could easily have learned from "emissaries" of that country. What could be more natural than that, when Daniel's prophecy had to do with Israel, he should write in the Hebrew tongue? It is always easier to believe God's Word than to try to disprove it.

Before we begin to study the chapter, verse by verse, let us read it through, with our chart before us, to get the complete picture. It is the story of a forgotten dream, which God gave to the first Gentile world-ruler, then revealed to Daniel with the interpretation thereof.

That first Gentile world-ruler was Nebuchadnezzar, the man who interrupted the times of the Jews when he took the children of Judah as captives to Babylon.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S FORGOTTEN DREAM AND HIS THREAT TO THE WISE MEN OF BABYLON

It was God who gave Nebuchadnezzar that dream, and it was God who caused him to forget it, in order that He might reveal through Daniel His plans and purposes of many centuries. In verses 1-13 we read that, when he awoke from his dream, Nebuchadnezzar tried in vain to recall it; then he tried to throw off the disturbing impression it had made upon him. At last, according to the custom of the times, he sent for the wise men of Babylon and commanded them to make known unto him the dream with its interpretation.

This the helpless “**magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans**” were unable to do. They protested that no king had ever made such a demand of his wise men. Nebuchadnezzar was “**angry and very furious,**” and commanded that all of them should be put to death. Being an absolute monarch, he had this power.

Now the reason these wise men, schooled though they were in all the wisdom of the Chaldeans, were unable to help Nebuchadnezzar out in this matter, is found in I Corinthians 2:14:

But the natural man [no matter how wise he may be] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

“**The natural man**” is the unsaved man; he has not been born again by the Holy Spirit of God. The wisest of men, by human wisdom, are unable to reveal God or make known the things that pertain to God. This is as true today as it was in Nebuchadnezzar's time. Please remember this and bear it in mind always.

Many young men and women are being led into infidelity today because they fail to see that all the learning in the sciences does not give a man spiritual perception. A knowledge of the sciences may qualify a professor to speak on things material and physical, but spiritual things can be revealed only to the man who is endued with the Spirit of God. The Chaldean wise men were dumb before Nebuchadnezzar because this matter pertained to the things of God.

Nebuchadnezzar had to learn that, before he could know anything of the wisdom of God, he had to reach the end of all human resources.

It was a cruel and an unreasonable threat that Nebuchadnezzar made to the wise men of Babylon, saying in verse 5,

If ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.

But Nebuchadnezzar was a heathen monarch, with absolute power, probably “**the basest of men**” (Daniel 4:17). Something of his cruelty is seen in his ruthless treatment of the Jewish captives; for he “**slew the sons of Zedekiah . . . before his eyes . . . Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains to carry him to Babylon**” (Jeremiah 39:6, 7). And we know the tragic story of his destruction of Jerusalem, with its beautiful, sacred temple. Again, his causing Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be thrown into the fiery furnace is evidence of his cold cruelty.

We shall see, as we go on in this study of the Book of Daniel that Nebuchadnezzar is a type of the Antichrist, whose cruelty and wicked devices will be Satan-inspired.

So eager was Nebuchadnezzar to know the dream and the interpretation thereof that he offered “**gifts and rewards and great honour**” (v. 6) to any who could tell him his dream and the interpretation thereof. But he found none among his heathen wise men who could tell him the forgotten dream. And they admitted their helplessness, saying in verses 10 and 11,

There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter . . . there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

You see, they believed in pagan gods, not knowing Daniel's God, who was to be “**made flesh**” and dwell among men, even “**the only begotten Son**” of the Father in heaven. (See John 1:1, 14.) Verse 13 states:

And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

These words and the verses (14 and 15) which follow tell us that up to this time Daniel and his Hebrew friends had not been told of the king's forgotten dream or of his stern demand.

Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain (or 'executioner') of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon: he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the tiring known to Daniel.

THE PRAYER OF DANIEL AND HIS FRIENDS ANSWERED

Having requested time of the king, Daniel “**went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions.**”

We note here that, in the inspired Record, he uses the God-honoring, Hebrew names of his friends, not their Chaldean names that honored pagan gods. Their prayer was one such as we should expect from these four young Hebrews, for Daniel asked his friends in verse 18:

That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

We learn many practical lessons from the example of these four young men, lessons which we dare not neglect.

If you ever need wisdom and guidance, my Christian friend, then have a prayer meeting. Seek the face of God. There is a **“God in heaven”** who not only reveals secrets, but who also hears the cry of those who desire to do His will and live for His glory. Daniel had separated himself from the evils of Babylon and had dedicated himself to God, and the great God would not fail him in his hour of need. The Lord God gave to him not only the dream but the interpretation, for **“the secret”** was **“revealed unto Daniel in a night vision”** (v. 19).

Moreover, there is power in united prayer, even as our Lord Jesus said to His disciples long ago in Matthew 18:19, 20:

If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

DANIEL'S THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR ANSWERED PRAYER

Do you sometimes forget to thank God, my friend, when He answers your prayer? Daniel did not forget. Let us read verses 19-23, noting Daniel's praise, worship, and thanksgiving to the God of his **“fathers.”** He ascribes to Him all wisdom and power and light. We might stop and preach a sermon, just on this beautiful paean of praise:

Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: he revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

DANIEL'S TESTIMONY BEFORE NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Nor did Daniel hesitate to give all the glory to his God when he stood before that heathen king to tell him his dream and the interpretation thereof. When **“Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste,”** Daniel took no credit to himself, but said to Nebuchadnezzar (vs. 28, 30):

There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets. . . . As for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living. . . .

When Paul stood before Felix and Festus and King Agrippa, like Daniel, he told those heathen rulers of the **“God in heaven.”**

Every devout child of God is glad to have occasion to bear witness to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, and the One **“in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”** (Colossians 2:3).

How we need such a testimony today! And how we need more Christians in the Lord's work who have Daniel's humility!

THE FORGOTTEN DREAM MADE KNOWN TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Before we consider the dream itself, let us note the very significant words of Daniel in verses 28, 29, when he told the king that God was revealing to him **“what shall be in the latter days . . . what should come to pass.”** It would be well for us to underscore these words in our Bibles for they give us the key to the God-given interpretation of the dream. As the following verses explain, they tell us that Nebuchadnezzar's dream outlined what was then future history, most of which has now been literally fulfilled, and all of which will be literally fulfilled—perhaps very, very soon.

Let us pause just here to say that, when God spoke to Nebuchadnezzar through this dream, and later to Daniel through visions, these men did not have the complete Word of God in written form. People living today often ask me about their dreams. Let me tell you, my friend, God is not speaking to men today in dreams and visions. Why? Because it is not necessary. He has spoken “once for all” in His written Word and in the Living Word of God, even our Lord Jesus. (See Hebrews 1:1, 2.) We have Daniel's prophecy and the Book of Revelation and all the sacred Scriptures. We have in the New Testament added light, above that which God gave to Daniel.

The more shame to us if we close our hearts and minds to it, not even seeking to find out what God has revealed to us in His Word!

Daniel reminded Nebuchadnezzar that his thoughts came into his mind upon his bed, as he wondered **“what should come to pass hereafter”** (v. 29). Would to God the people of our own generation were as concerned about the future as Nebuchadnezzar was! He was the most powerful monarch the world had ever known; and doubtless he wondered what would become of Babylon when he was gone. But he was a pagan, whereas we have God-given prophecy.

Therefore, we need not wonder about the future as he did. Nebuchadnezzar had to learn his own ignorance, his own nothingness before the **“God in heaven,”** even as we have to learn the poverty of our own resources if we would learn of Him.

Now we must not miss a single word of verses 31-35, if we want to get the message God has for us in this forgotten dream, made known by God to Daniel:

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; 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 sawest 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 threshingfloors; 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.

Note Daniel's utter faith in God's Word: **"This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king"** (v. 36). He did not ask, "Is this the dream?" He believed the **"Thus saith the Lord."** And from the conviction of his faith, he spoke with authority and assurance. We need more men like Daniel, men who will believe and proclaim the eternal, infallible Word of God!

THE INTERPRETATION— A PROPHETIC PICTURE OF ALL GENTILE WORLD POWER AND THE RETURN OF CHRIST IN GLORY

NOW let us read verses 37-45 to learn the God-given interpretation of the dream. Here we find that the image of the man, whose **"form . . . was terrible,"** represents four Gentile world-empires, each indicated by different materials.

1. The Image of a Man.

Had you ever wondered why all Gentile world power is outlined here by the image of a man? I think it is because this period represents **"man's day."** God's authority has been repudiated by the world, and governmental affairs are now in the hands of man.

This fact explains why the world today is in a state of political, social, and economic chaos. Man, both Jew and Gentile, has repudiated the sovereignty of God, virtually saying, **"We will not have this man to reign over us."** That has been the attitude of mankind toward God both before and since Christ came. Consequently, the history of the world has been written in blood and tears. Wars, anarchy, graft, lawlessness, have characterized **"man's day."** Man cannot govern himself; and as we proceed in our study of the Book of Daniel, we shall see how God had prophesied the utter breakdown of government in the hands of man. Thus we see that there is a significance attached to the fact that the image, which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, was in the form of a man.

Again, Nebuchadnezzar, a powerful, heathen king, viewed all Gentile dominion as man sees it, even as the **"great image"** of a man. When God gave to Daniel His view of this same period, in chapter seven, He showed Daniel four wild, ravenous beasts. That is how Gentile cruelty and lawlessness and greed appear to God.

2. Four Powerful Gentile World-Empires.

To Nebuchadnezzar Daniel said (vv. 37, 38):

Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

We see from this that the head of gold represented the Babylonian Empire, of which Nebuchadnezzar was the head, the supreme ruler.

In other words, “**the times of the Gentiles**” began with Nebuchadnezzar. But mighty though that empire was, it was to pass away and others were to arise according to verses 39 and 40:

And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

The names of the Medo-Persian and Grecian empires that were to arise successively, after the fall of Babylon, are given later in the Book of Daniel. Here they are represented by the silver and the brass. And there is no mistaking the identity of Rome, represented by the iron. A glance at our chart just here will help us to get the picture; it will also show us that only the revived Roman Empire, represented by the feet and the ten toes of the image, remains yet to be fulfilled—“**in the latter time.**”

Secular history also tells us the names of these four world-empires. Our high school boys and girls know their records. But before these Gentile powers came into being, God gave Daniel this prophecy.

- In chapter five we read that Medo-Persia succeeded Babylon;
- In chapter eight, that “**the king of Grecia,**” known to us as Greece, conquered the Medes and the Persians.

Under Alexander the Great this Graeco-Macedonian Empire became mistress of the world.

Greece, in turn, was overthrown; and fifty years before the birth of our Lord the Roman Empire came into existence and continued in power during the time the Son of God was on earth. All of this is confirmed by secular history, just one more proof of the fact that the Bible is, indeed, the Word of God. This, then, is the meaning of what Nebuchadnezzar saw in the “great” and “terrible” image of a man:

- Babylon—the head of gold.
- Medo-Persia—the breast and arms of silver.
- Greece—the belly and thighs of brass.
- Rome—the legs of iron.
- Rome Revived—the feet and toes of iron and clay.

What God did not reveal to Nebuchadnezzar and to Daniel was this present church age, represented on our chart by the strip of blue. But God did reveal to Nebuchadnezzar and to Daniel the last form of the Roman Empire, which will be revived “**in the latter time,**” and which is represented in the image by the feet and toes, “**part of potters' clay, and part of iron.**” Over this last form of the Roman Empire the Antichrist will rule. Let us read the description of it in verses 41-43:

And whereas thou sawest 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 thou sawest the iron mixed with 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. And whereas thou sawest 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.

3. The Smiting Stone—Christ's Kingdom on Earth.

We shall have more to say about these four Gentile world-empires later, but just now let us read to the end of the God-given interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. In verses 44, 45 we see the end of Gentile dominion, which will be brought about when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory, smites the image on the feet, and brings to a close “**the times of the Gentiles.**” For Christ is the smiting Stone.

And in the days of these kings [represented by the ten toes] 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 thou sawest 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.

In that day the Lord Jesus, the righteous King, shall rule “**from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth**” (Psalm 72:8). We shall also have more to say about this part of Nebuchadnezzar's dream later on in this study. But just now let us try to see what God is teaching us through this “**great**” and “**terrible**” image.

GENTILE DOMINION— FROM ABSOLUTE AUTOCRACY TO DICTATORSHIP AND COMMUNISM

Let us note the lesson which the Spirit of God intends to convey by the metals of the image. Most valuable was the “**head of gold**”; and from the head to the feet each succeeding metal was of a baser kind:

**GOLD
SILVER
BRASS
IRON
CLAY**

This indicates a gradual deterioration in the affairs of man, as “**the times of the Gentiles**” run their course, from an absolute monarchy to dictatorship accompanied by Bolshevism, Communism, and finally chaos.

There is no evolution theory taught here!

According to man's fallacy that the world is getting better and better, the head of Nebuchadnezzar's image should have been made of iron mixed with clay; the feet, of gold. There is only deterioration, not improvement, in Gentile world-dominion, according to the God-given dream and the meaning thereof.

1. The Head of Gold—The Babylonian Empire.

Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom was likened unto gold because it was an absolute monarchy, God's ideal government. Nebuchadnezzar was not, however, God's ideal monarch! God's ideal Monarch is sitting at His right hand, and His kingdom is yet to be set up. One of these days, the ideal Monarch will rule over the ideal monarchy, and He will be “**KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS**” (Revelation 19:16).

We have already seen from our study that Nebuchadnezzar, as an absolute monarch, had the power of life and death. “**Whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive**” (Daniel 5:19).

He was not held responsible to a senate, parliament, jury, or judge. Just a word from him put the three friends of Daniel in the fiery furnace; yet Darius, king of the next world-empire of Medo-Persia, could not save Daniel from the den of lions, even though “**he set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him**” (Daniel 6:14). By the time Darius ruled, the “**gold**” had deteriorated to “**silver**,” and there was less concentration of power. Darius was bound by the law of the Medes and Persians.

The “**gold**” of monarchy would be the right kind of government now if we could only get the right kind of ruler.

My friends, I am trying to show you God's view of these things.

I am glad to live in this democratic country. I am a naturalized citizen; and as I once paid allegiance to Great Britain, so now I love and pay allegiance to the United States of America. But why all the Communists, Fascists, and “fifth columnists,” even in our own country today? Because democracy reverts to the “**iron**” of dictatorship mingled with the “**clay**” of the will of the people.

If everyone in our democracy were God-fearing and law-abiding, there would be no need to fear that the very foundations of our own government might be undermined by cunning lawless ones from within.

A few generations ago the average American would have belittled such fears, but today our newspapers and magazines are filled with the threat of such danger. And God, who knows the end from the beginning, told Daniel 2500 years ago that the feet and toes of the image, part of iron and part of potter's clay, represented dictatorship and extreme democracy so-called; we know it as Communism today.

Moreover, I believe we are living in the period of the world's history when this final form of Gentile world-power will soon fill the stage of this drama which God calls "**the times of the Gentiles.**"

2. The Breast and Arms of Silver—The Medo-Persian Empire.

As silver is inferior to gold, so the Medo-Persian Empire was less powerful, less autocratic, than that of Babylon. It was not that the army was inferior; it conquered Babylon. It was not that it controlled less territory; indeed, it covered more. But although the ruler of the Medes and Persians was made king because of his nobility of birth, yet his nobles were equal to him in rank, though not in office. His power, therefore, was limited, not absolutely sovereign as was that of Nebuchadnezzar.

3. The Belly and the Thighs of Brass—The Grecian Empire.

Alexander the Great was ruler over the third, yet more inferior, empire. He was the "king" of Greece, not because of what history calls "the divine right of kings," but because of his personal power and influence. Swiftly he conquered a vast amount of territory, vast for the days in which he lived, and wept because there were no more worlds to conquer.

Greece had a high form of art and culture, producing some of the greatest philosophers the world has ever seen. But it was a military government, with the power given to military leaders. Upon the early death of Alexander, his kingdom was divided. It was inferior, in concentration of power, both to Babylon and to Medo-Persia.

4. The Legs of Iron—The Roman Empire.

Not only was the emperor of Rome chosen by popular, military election, but the empire was later broken up into the Eastern and Western divisions, as represented by the two legs of Nebuchadnezzar's image. There was no royal family; the rulers came up from the ranks of the common people. Yet they governed with an iron rule.

History tells us of "The Iron Legions" of Rome. And Imperial Rome held universal sway when our Lord was born in Bethlehem and when He was crucified on Calvary.

The iron, most common of all these metals, was represented by the stern rule of the Caesars. The clay, even more common than iron, began to be in evidence more and more as the old Roman Empire went to pieces. And in the revived Roman Empire the clay will be even more in evidence, yet held in check by the “**iron**” of the last Caesar—a world-dictator, even the Antichrist.

5. The Ten Toes of Iron Mixed with Clay—The Revived Roman Empire.

As iron will not mix with clay, “**so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken . . . they shall not cleave one to another**” (vv. 42, 43). The Antichrist will be a dictator, indeed! But the will of the people will be in evidence, too. His reign will be far from that of which the “head of gold” speaks.

In the French Revolution the world saw the “**clay**” in a marked degree.

Chaos and terror reigned. The Lord's Day was set aside. Ever since that time, extreme democracy, in the form of Socialism, Annihilism, Bolshevism, and Communism, has swept over the earth. With what result? That today 70 Per cent of the world's population is subject to dictators!

I remember, when I was a lad in Australia, people were saying that woman suffrage would cure all the world's evils. Now I am not opposing women's rights; I am only saying that here was another appearance of “**the clay,**” the will of the people.

Think of the many dynasties that have been swept aside within the last score of years and more!

The Kaiser of the House of Hohenzollern, the Hapsburgs of Austria, the Sultan of Turkey, the Czar of Russia, the Emperor of China, to say nothing of many others of smaller countries! Think of the diabolical will of Hitler and his Gestapo; of Mussolini's attempt at world rule; do not forget their dreadful fate. The old ruling families have toppled from their thrones. The first president of Germany was a boilermaker, and a onetime paper hanger nearly dominated Europe. Thus the clay has been poured in!

Let me repeat it: If the people love God, then democracy is fine; but if they are anti-God, then democracy falls into the hands of the devil. And what a God-defying mass of humanity lives today in countries that, only a few years ago, had the gospel of our crucified and risen Lord!

Karl Marx, a German Jew and the founder of Communism, set out to get rid of “four abominable things”:

- (1) The idea of God;
- (2) the superstition of religion;
- (3) the dictates of conscience;
- (4) the sanctity of the home.

I need not tell you the awful fruition of this seed-sowing, in the world today. One illustration will suffice. Recently a group of students of the Moscow University made an effigy impersonating our Lord Jesus; hanged it on a gallows; and burned it, dancing around it in fiendish glee all the while. I need not tell you that in the land of Martin Luther Christians were tortured in unspeakable prison camps; or that Mussolini's Fascist Creed was a blasphemous parody of our sacred Apostles' Creed. In Communist Russia today God is completely ruled out.

Surely the patience of our long-suffering God cannot tolerate much further these insults to His Word. Nor can Christendom, so-called, boast. With one-half largely pagan, and with a large part of the other half having repudiated God's Word, seeking to amuse instead of preaching the message of salvation by faith in the Christ of Calvary—with these flagrant insults to God, surely there must be a day of reckoning not far distant.

Of the 150 million of our population today, 80 per cent never darken the door of a house of God. Only the long-suffering of our loving Lord, who is “**not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance**” (II Peter 3:9), delays the swift execution of His righteous judgment upon the God-defying millions.

But let us look again at verse 44 of our chapter, “**And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom . . .**” “**In the days**” of what kings? The ten kings represented by the ten toes of the image.

People often ask, “Why do you say that the Roman Empire will be revived in the days of the Antichrist?” Here is one of the clear answers of Scripture to that question; and it is enlarged upon and made even more plain in such related passages as Daniel 7:7, 8, where the “**ten horns**” of the Roman “**beast**” are identical with the “**ten toes**” of Nebuchadnezzar's image; and the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, where the same ten kings are foretold.

Although today the old Roman Empire, represented by the legs of iron, is non-existent, the integral parts of that empire remain to this present time, though broken up into separate states. Out of the territory of the Old Roman Empire ten kings will form a confederacy, over which the Antichrist will rule. That is the meaning of Daniel 2:44, “**In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom . . .**” For the Lord Jesus Christ, the smiting Stone, will return in glory to end the rule of “**these kings**” and of their dictator, the Antichrist.

This, in brief, is what the Scriptures teach about the revival of the Old Roman Empire “**in the latter time.**” When “**the man of sin**” is revealed, he will seem to the blinded world to bring peace to the warring nations that have fought one another ever since the Old Roman Empire fell apart. Into one great confederacy he will weld them—ten kingdoms with their ten kings, over which the Antichrist himself will be dictator.

THE TRANSLATION OF THE CHURCH— TO PRECEDE THE MANIFESTATION OF THE ANTICHRIST

It is a significant thing that the would-be world rulers have had as one of their ambitions the revival of the old Roman Empire.

Napoleon had that ambition. Mussolini set his hand to that task. We do not know who will make the next attempt.

Ambitious rulers do not realize, however, that the revival of the Roman Empire will not take place until after God has taken the church out of the world. And surely, my friends, all signs point to the imminence of that glorious event!

Our Lord warned us against setting dates for His return, and we must not do that Yet His prophetic Word tells us much that causes us to look up, knowing that our **“redemption draweth nigh”** (Luke 21:28).

It is the restraining power of the Holy Spirit in the world that is hindering the manifestation of **“the man of sin.”** (See II Thessalonians 2:1-12).

Some years ago, when I was pastor of a church in Keokuk, Iowa, one of my elders took me over the power house and locks of the big dam that spans the Mississippi at that place. As I looked at that great wall of concrete, and the lake above it, I thought to myself, “What if a mighty hand should reach down and lift that wall?” Flood, devastation, and ruin would be rampant.

My friends, in II Thessalonians 2:7, 8 it tells that something of that nature will happen when the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit, working in and through the church, is taken away.

He who now letteth [hindereth] will let [hinder] until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked [“Lawless one”] be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

CHRIST—THE SMITING STONE

It is our Lord Jesus Christ who will suddenly and surely put to an end the wicked rule of the Antichrist; He is **“the stone cut out of the mountain without hands,”** which will smite the image on the ten toes, as it were. Thus He will end **“the times of the Gentiles”** and usher in His own glorious kingdom. Then every vestige of Gentile power and misrule will forever pass away. Then the words of God, the Father, in Psalm 2:6, will be literally fulfilled,

Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.

You will hear all kinds of false interpretations, my friend, concerning the smiting stone of this dream. Anglo-Israelism, a cult of our own day, holds that the smiting stone is the British Empire. However, those who teach this fallacy are having a difficult time at this present hour, trying to harmonize their theory with the events that are taking place all over the world. I heard one man say that the smiting stone is the Baptist Church!

The Word of God speaks plainly and finally: **“In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.”** (See Daniel 2:44, 45).

The “**stone**” in Scripture is often used to speak of:

1. Christ—The Smitten Rock.

Moses smote the rock in the wilderness, and the life-giving water gushed forth for Israel. Paul tells us that “**they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ**” (I Corinthians 10:4; cf. Exodus 17:5, 6). As the “*Rock of Ages*,” our Lord was “**smitten of God, and afflicted**” (Isaiah 53:4) when He died for us on the cross. And from His finished work on Calvary there flows a life-giving stream for all who will accept His salvation.

2. Christ—“The Stone Which the Builders (Israel) Rejected.”

Again, when Christ came to present Himself to Israel as their Messiah and Lord, He was “**the stone which the builders rejected**” (Psalm 118:22; Matthew 21:42).

As the Stone rejected by Israel, He was also smitten by “**the image**,” for He was crucified on a Roman cross. But when He comes again, He will smite—not be smitten by it!

It is necessary that we bear this in mind because some have erred in teaching that the falling Stone represents the first coming of Christ. This cannot possibly be the true meaning, for when Christ was on earth, Rome was an undivided empire— not, as it were, the two “**legs of iron**.”

Moreover, He was crucified by Roman soldiers; Pilate and Herod delivered Him into the hands of the Jews. The image smote Him at the cross; He will smite the image when He comes to purify the earth of wickedness and misrule, and to reign in righteousness and peace.

3. Christ—“The Chief Corner Stone” of the Church.

And “**the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes**” (Matthew 21:42).

To Israel “**a stumblingstone and rock of offence**” (Romans 9:33),

He is to the church, composed of both Jew and Gentile, the “**chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded**” (I Peter 2:6). “**For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ**” (I Corinthians 3:11).

4. Christ—The Smiting Stone, to Fall Upon Gentile Dominion.

Now Nebuchadnezzar said to Daniel, “**A stone was cut out without hands . . . and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth**” (vv. 34, 35).

A mountain in the Bible represents a kingdom. Here the reference is to the kingdom of Judah from which Christ came. The cutting out of the stone without hands speaks to us of His marvelous birth as the “**seed of woman**,” born of a virgin, without a human father.

And one day He will come as **“KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”**

As the stone in Nebuchadnezzar's dream **“smote the image”** and **“became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth,”** so shall the Son of God who was rejected 1900 years ago, return to this earth in power and great glory. With His coming all earthly governments shall pass away, the dominion of the Gentiles shall come to an end, and He shall be all in all.

My dear brother, are you ready to meet the Lord? Do you know Christ as your Saviour? Or are you among those who cry, **“We will not have this man to rule over us”**? Will you not humble yourself, fall at His feet, and put your trust in His redeeming grace, lest you be among those who shall be swept away as chaff when He shall return?

During the reign of Queen Victoria, Handel's “Messiah” was being rendered at the Crystal Palace in London. When the great Hallelujah Chorus was reached, the audience rose to its feet. To the astonishment of everyone, the Queen, contrary to all royal custom, stood also.

Monarch though she was, she instinctively rose to honor Him, whom she loved. She crowned Him Lord of all, even as the wonderful chorus rang out,

For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; King of Kings, and Lord of Lords!

May God help us to realize that all honor is due Him, who died that we might live. May we give Him the adoration that is His due!

DANIEL MADE “CHIEF OF THE GOVERNORS . . . OF BABYLON”

As we bring this lesson to a close, let us read the remaining verses of this second chapter of Daniel to see what effect this dream and its interpretation had upon Nebuchadnezzar, and how he promoted and honored Daniel. In verse 46—

Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him.

You see, he was a heathen king, and **“worshipped Daniel.”** But we may rest assured that Daniel quickly forbade his worshipping him. Indeed, the next verse (v. 47) indicates that Daniel pointed Nebuchadnezzar to his God; for we read that—

The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret.

Later on Nebuchadnezzar came to know Daniel's God, but here he refers to Him, in speaking to Daniel, as **“your God,”** not *“my God.”* And because he afterwards set up the image to be worshipped, we realize how little the God-given dream meant to him, how little he profited from its searching message.

He had not repented; he had not humbled himself; he had no heart for Daniel's God, even though he acknowledged the source of Daniel's wisdom.

In this he was a picture of thousands living today who listen to marvelous gospel truth for years, yet are not receptive to its life-giving message.

My unsaved brother, every gospel sermon you hear, every radio Bible lesson that tells you the way of salvation, will increase your condemnation before the judgment bar of God.

But Daniel's Lord was guiding his life, and He put it into me heart of Nebuchadnezzar to promote Daniel to be his chief counsellor. Without doubt, God so planned it, in order that He might continue to have the faithful witness of Daniel and his three friends at this heathen court. In verse 48—

Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel did not forget his friends, for he **“requested of the king”** (v. 49); **“he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king”**—the seat of justice, the place of great authority. (See verse 49).

My Christian friend, even though you bear a faithful testimony to your Lord, you may not receive in this life the honor and glory which God bestowed upon Daniel for his faithfulness. God may have a different plan for your life. But you may rest assured that He will not **“forget your work and labour of love”** (Hebrews 6:10). He speaks to us plainly, saying in Revelation 22:12: **Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.**

What is the Lord Jesus Christ to you, beloved? If He is not your Saviour, the Foundation Stone of your new life in Him, look to Calvary before He comes again as the smiting Stone to grind to powder a godless world. Put your faith in His finished work on the cross; and then you can sing, from a heart filled with praise:

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save me from its guilt and pow'r.

~ end of chapter 2 ~

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