



THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Lesson Number 9



TRANSLATION LEGEND: ASV=American Standard Version, BBE=Bible in Basic English, DRA=Douay-Rheims KJV=King James Version, NKJV=New King James Version, NAB=New American Bible, NASB=New American Standard Bible, NAU=New American Standard Bible 1995, NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version, NJB=New Jerusalem Bible, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version, RSV=Revised Standard Version, YLT=Young's Literal Translation.

----- Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S FIRST IS DREAM INTERPRETED

Dan2:31-45 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. ³²This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, ³³His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. ³⁴Thou 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. ³⁵Then 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. ³⁶This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. ³⁷Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. ³⁸And 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. ³⁹And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. ⁴⁰And 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. ⁴¹And 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. ⁴²And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. ⁴³And 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. ⁴⁴And in the days of these kings 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. ⁴⁵Forasmuch 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. ^{KJV} (Dan 2:31-45)

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of God for this world will now be declared. God has made known to Nebuchadnezzar what He has

purposed to do in the world. It is an objective that involves the kingdoms of this world, together with their rulers.

However, even though God has made His purpose known, it is not possible for the wisdom of men to decipher it. In fact, the

OUTLINE

- ▶ THE GREAT IMAGE (2:31-33)
- ▶ THE LITTLE STONE (2:34-35)
- ▶ WISDOM AND MIGHT ARE HIS (2:20)
- ▶ THE HEAD OF GOLD (2:36-38)
- ▶ THREE INFERIOR KINGDOMS (2:39-40)
- ▶ THE MOST INFERIOR KINGDOM (2:41-43)
- ▶ AN ETERNAL KINGDOM (2:44)
- ▶ IT IS A SURE THING (2:45)

king cannot even remember it. **The faculties of the human mind are not adequate, of themselves, to hold on to the things of God.** In the case before us, an unforgettable dream is forgotten. It is buried in the recesses of the mind, and cannot be recalled, even though the dream has been given repeatedly. Although the dream was troubling, it still cannot be remembered. Nothing in the king's surroundings can stir him to recall his dream – the scope of it, the subject of it, or even the slightest detail of it. The dream was too large for his small mind to profitably contain it. It was too minute for his disciplined powers of reason to survey.

Even though he has threatened the most astute wise men of his empire with death, they have not been able to present any facet of the dream. They have not even been able to concoct a lie about it. **Here is something from heaven, and it will require someone in touch with heaven to render any assistance to the king.** Nebuchadnezzar was sought repeatedly for the dream to be known. He has struggled to recall something about it over an extended period, and has not discovered so much as a minuscule mote of information. His wise men have also exhausted their reasoning.

None of their diabolical resources could yield anything. Their otherwise productive minds proved sterile in this matter. **Yet, in one single night, Daniel has gained knowledge of the dream itself, and the interpretation of it as well.** The method Daniel chose to

obtain this wisdom was not conventional for the world, but was standard for the kingdom of God. He prayed for wisdom.

THE WORLD'S WISDOM IS VAIN

Thus God has *“made foolish the wisdom of this world”* (1 Cor 1:20). He has, through the circumstances of this chapter, cried out, *“Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age?”*^{NIV} (1 Cor 1:20a), and not a solitary reply was arisen from the sons of men. Truly, *“there is a God in heaven”* (2:28), and He *“makes fools of diviners, who overthrows the learning of the wise and turns it into nonsense”*^{NIV} (Isa 44:25).

The Age of Reason

In reviewing this text, we must allow its light to illuminate our own path. The wisdom of this world has not grown better with age. **The world may boast of the “Age of Reason,” but it has yielded a miserable basket of fruit.** This age was spawned by godless thinkers in the eighteenth century. Historians have called it *“The Enlightenment.”*

The first notions of evolution were introduced during this period by Pierre Louis Moreau de Maupertuis. Later, in the nineteenth century, Charles Darwin would popularize this bit of intellectual vagary. Psychology was also birthed during the aftermath of the “Enlightenment.” It was brought into prominence under the influence of Sigmund Freud, the first person who purported to scientifically explore “the human unconscious mind.”

Higher Criticism

Not to be forgotten is another wretched offspring of “The Enlightenment.” It is “Higher Criticism,” also called “Biblical Criticism.” This is

man's analysis of the Scriptural text. It employs the analysis of various manuscripts, and by that means boldly announces what parts of the Bible are valid, as well as those it deems to be spurious. More recent versions of Scripture provide various footnotes that have resulted from this “criticism” of the Biblical text. A contemporary version of the Bible will have footnotes that refer to “the best and oldest manuscripts,” etc. These are provided as an explanation for text alteration.

Without being unduly distracted by these considerations, there is a point to be made. During the time of our text, the failure of wise men to provide a solution meant they would die. King Nebuchadnezzar had no time for bantering opinions back and forth. What he wanted to know was too important for him to field various persuasions and views from his wise men. Nor, indeed, would it have been in place for some of his counsellors to view his dream with Babylonian higher criticism. Some might have said it was only the result of indigestion or worry, and therefore should not be regarded as important. Others might have conjectured that with the passing of time, the whole matter was becoming too vague. Any later translation of the dream might prove to be too distant from the original occurrence. Still others might have insisted on an infallible dream hermeneutic – a logical method of interpreting the forgotten dream.

Of course, all of this is obviously foolish. However, this is all too often the approach men take to the Word of God. We must learn from this account how utterly inappropriate such approaches really are. God chose to make His will known to the most illustrious ruler the world has ever known. He did it during

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the dominance of the most glorious kingdom among men. In those circumstances, He made known the impotence of the wisdom of this world. We should require no more evidence of the poverty of worldly wisdom than that – even though the history of the world is Divinely strewn with such evidences. Woe to that person who attempts to blend the truth of God with the wisdom of this world. It is an attempt to merge Divine wisdom and foolishness, light and darkness, and truth with speculation. It simply cannot be done.

CONFIRMED IN OUR TEXT

The vanity of worldly wisdom is

loudly proclaimed in our text. If God had not revealed “the secret” and “the king’s matter,” it never would have been known. The world would have passed away, and it all would have remained a secret. Ample opportunity was given to the wisest men of this world to discover the king’s dream and its meaning. Strong incentives were declared to assist them to engage in a hearty effort to do so. However, all of their efforts were vain.

It is a miserable “science, falsely so called,” (1 Tim 6:20) that attempts to critique what has been revealed by God. This, to me, is man’s foolish on parade, wearing the mask of intellect, and

shouting its own praises. **What God makes known is to be believed and proclaimed.** Those who expend their energies to declare what the Lord has revealed, like Daniel, will be given to know what it means. Those who attempt to evaluate whether or not it is true will either be thrown into confusion, or brought to see that God has “made foolish the wisdom of this world.”

In Daniel we see that faith is the principle means of appropriating the wisdom of God, and an understanding of what He has made known. **Faith obtains the most from God, and probes the deepest into His mysteries.**

THE GREAT IMAGE

“³¹ 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. ³² This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, ³³ His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.”

Daniel will first declare the dream itself – the dream the king could by no means remember. God, who had hidden the dream from the king, will cause him to recognize that a true prophet is standing before him. No part of the dream itself will be left out, and no part of it will be obscure. The precision with which Daniel speaks will assure the heart and mind of the king that the meaning he gives is also true.

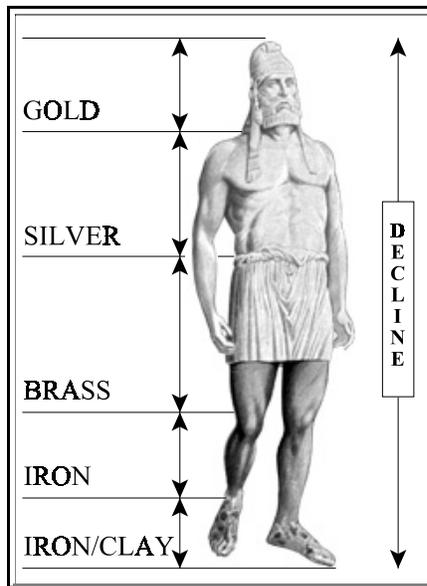
IMPRESSIVE IN APPEARANCE

“Thou, O king, sawest . . . ”

Intense Interest

There is a certain boldness evident in Daniel’s words. He does not venture an opinion, or suggest what the king might possibly have seen. Something had caught the attention of the king – something in his dream. Other visions read, “You, O king, **were watching,**”^{NKJV} “You, O king, **were looking,**”^{NASB} “You looked, O king.”^{NIV} This was not an ordinary dream, but one that had captured the attention of the

king. He surveyed the vision God gave to him, looking upon it with interest and



intrigue. His consideration was extended, and not brief. **Thus Daniel reveals the attitude of the king** – how he had regarded the dream. Like the angels, he desired to “look into” what God had made known (1 Pet 1:12). The idea of the text is that Nebuchadnezzar was not passive in his dream, as though something was simply coming to him. He was attempting to go to what he saw, scanning the vision and looking for its details. Daniel will now make known the details that had so

intrigued the king, but which he could by no means remember.

A Great Image

“ . . . and behold a great image . . . ” Other versions read, “a single great statue,”^{NASB} “a large statue,”^{NIV} “huge,”^{NLT} and “very large.”^{NAB} The king had not seen a body of people, or a panoramic view of nature. He had seen an exceedingly large statue – the sculpture of a man. It was very large, pulling the attention of the king to itself, rather than its surroundings, being of gigantic dimensions.

Excellent in Brightness

“ . . . This great image, whose brightness was excellent, Other versions read, “whose splendor was excellent,”^{NKJV} “of extraordinary splendor,”^{NASB} and “dazzling statue, awesome in appearance.”^{NIV} The impressive image glistened, and was dazzling in appearance. It was not only large, but awesome in its details. From the standpoint of a man, it was an obvious piece of excellent workmanship. There was a certain beauty and majesty that characterized the statue. The reason for this remarkable brightness will be seen when the various materials of the statue are described. At the first, everything about this image is impressive.

It Stood Before Thee

“ . . . stood before thee . . . ” The image was brought to the king – he did not go to it. It became obvious that God

was not showing the king something that was disassociated from his own person. It stood before **him**, in full view, so he could survey its intricacies.

In this vivid description, you must remember that this is what the king saw. **At this point, Daniel is describing the experience of the king.** This is not yet the interpretation. Many of us have heard this account from our youth, and have never been able to forget it. Yet, Nebuchadnezzar, who personally had the dream, and entered zealously into it, could not remember a single detail of that remarkable dream.

The Form Was Terrible

“ . . . and the form thereof was terrible.” Other versions read *“its form was awesome,”* ^{NKJV} *“its appearance was frightening,”* ^{NRSV} *“terrifying in appearance,”* ^{NAB} and *“its form sent fear into the heart.”* ^{BBE}

The word *“terrible”* means the image was so large and formidable that it made Nebuchadnezzar afraid. He saw an imposing image that dwarfed his own person. The statue was dominating, and demanded the king’s attention. The terror that fell upon him did not make him try and get away from the statute, but demanded that he peruse it, giving it his whole attention. The sudden appearance of this vast statue – standing before the king by Divine appointment – seized his attention. He did not dare to ignore it.

IMPRESSIVE IN ITS BEGINNING

“This image’s head was of fine gold . . .” Keep in mind, Daniel is now recounting what the king had already seen in a dream, but was not able to recall. This part of Daniel’s presentation is not new, but will confirm the validity of the revealed interpretation he will also give to the king.

The image was that of a man, and obviously stands for something that has been, and will be, accomplished by man. The head of this massive statue was made of *“fine gold”* – that is, pure and unalloyed gold. Other versions read *“pure gold,”* ^{NIV} *“the best gold,”* ^{BBE} and *“good*

gold.” ^{YLT} Scripture mentions *“fine gold”* several times, referring to the purest and very best gold.

When the tabernacle was build, much of its furniture was overlaid with *“pure gold”* (Ex 25:11,24; 30:3). The mercy seat, covering the ark of the covenant, was made of *“pure gold”* – about 3-3/4 by 2-1/4 feet in size (Ex 25:17). The dishes, spoons, covers, and bowls associated with the table of showbread, were also made of *“pure gold”* (Ex 25:29). The candlestick inside the holy place was made of one solid piece of *“pure gold”* (Ex 25:31-36), as well as *its “tongs and*

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snuffdishes” (Ex 25:38). But these, and other tabernacle items, were very small compared to what Nebuchadnezzar saw.

When Solomon built the temple, he made its main room *“with cypress wood and overlaid it with fine gold”* ^{NASB} (2 Chron 3:5). He also made the “Most Holy Place,” thirty feet by thirty feet (twenty cubits), and overlaid it with *“about twenty-three tons of pure (fine) gold”* ^{NLT} (2 Chron 23:8). But Nebuchadnezzar did not see a statue with a head *“overlaid”* with fine gold. Rather the whole head of this massive statue was a solid mass of *“fine gold”* – something beyond human comprehension.

We will see that this stands for an unusually impressive beginning.

A NOTICEABLE DECLINE IN VALUE

“ . . . 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.” From the head down, there is a noticeable decline in the statue’s value and strength – from the head, downward to the feet. The head stands for the beginning of this image, and the feet stand for its final representation. A special point will be made of this in the interpretation of the dream.

Breast and Arms

“ . . . his breast and his arms of silver . . . ” This part of the body, extending from the base of the neck to the abdomen, is second in importance, the head being first. It is the part of the body containing most of the vital organs. Not only is this part of the statue inferior to the head in function, it is also inferior in value, being made of silver.

Silver is surely a precious metal, but not as precious as gold. It was also a prominent metal in the building of the tabernacle (Ex 26:19-32; 27:10-17). In Solomon’s day, silver became as common as *“stones”* (1 Kgs 10:27). Yet, it remained a precious commodity, and was often classified with gold, although inferior to it (Gen 24:35; 1 Kgs 15:15; Psa 105:37).

Belly and Thighs

“ . . . his belly and his thighs of brass . . . ” As we progress to the bottom of the statue, the values of the materials of which it is comprised are diminishing. The significance of this is seen in Daniel’s special notation of it. The Lord is going to use this circumstance to reveal the appointed destiny of all earthly kingdoms.

Brass is valuable, but far beneath the worth of gold and silver. In Scripture, Tubalcain, great grandson of Cain, was *“an instructor of every artificer (craftsman) in brass”* (Gen 4:22). Brass was also a prominent metal in the construction of the tabernacle (Ex 26:11,37). The large altar of the tabernacle, seven and one-half feet square, was overlaid with brass (Ex 27:2), and was called the *“brazen altar”* (Ex 38:30). The laver was also made of brass (Ex 30:18). No article of furniture **within** the tabernacle, however, was made of, or

overlaid with, brass. Gold was used for the interior furniture (table of showbread, candlestick, altar of incense, and ark of the covenant). That fact alone shows the inferiority of brass to silver and gold, entirely apart from monetary value.

Brass, or bronze, was, as silver and gold, purified by means of heat (Ezek 22:18,20; Rev 1:15). Some consider the word “brass” to refer to copper, while others are of the opinion it is what we call bronze, which is an alloy of copper and zinc. At any rate, it was vastly inferior to fine gold, and of less value than silver.

Legs

“ . . . His legs of iron . . . ”The legs refer to the limbs between the thighs and the feet. These were made of iron, a strong metal. The first one to forge iron was Tubalcain (Gen 4:22). This metal is rarely found in its native state, and required smelting to produce. Iron melts at a temperature of about 3000° Fahrenheit, which tended to make it a very strong metal. Moses told Israel they

would not lack anything in the land of promise, declaring it was a land “*where the rocks are iron*”^{NIV} (Deut 8:9). Og, the king of Bashan, himself a giant, had an iron bed that was thirteen feet long and six feet wide (Deut 3:11). The Canaanites had chariots of iron (Josh 17:16). Sisera, who threatened Israel, had 900 chariots of iron (Judges 4:3,13). Goliath of Gath had an iron head on his spear that weighed eighteen pounds (1 Sam 17:7).

Thus, as the substance of the image became less valuable as it moved toward the feet, it also became more crude, and more related to raw power, or ruthlessness.

Feet

“ . . . his feet part of iron and part of clay.” The feet of the image were not made of pure metal. Not only was there a lessening value to the metals from head to foot, now weakness came into the picture. The strong iron of the legs is now mingled with “*baked clay*,”^{NIV} thus depicting vulnerability. The picture, therefore, is of

something strong and valuable at the beginning, but weak and vulnerable at its end. We will find that these feet will be the point at which a decisive blow will be struck against the whole image.

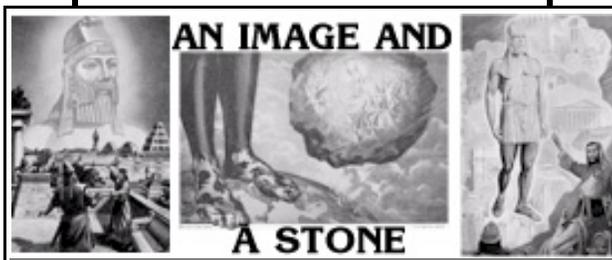
To be more precise, **here, in the feet, is something very strong united with something unusually weak.** You may have a chariot of iron, but you would not think of having one made of clay. An axe may be made of iron (2 Sam 12:31), but no person of sound mind would attempt to make one of clay – or even of iron mixed with clay.

The point to be seen here, and which Daniel will develop, is that whether a statue or a person is considered, **the measure of strength is only as great as the weakest part.** In a container or vessel, the point of rupture is always the weakest point. Whether an image, a man, or a church, defeat always comes at the weakest and most imperfect part. That part is generally an admixture. Blessed is the person who takes hold of this.

A LITTLE STONE

“³⁴ 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.³⁵ 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.”

the remarkably extensive revelation God has given to him. Those who imagine God has no interest in details can learn much from this account. He purposes at the detail level.



statue, something else began to happen. Eventually that “*something else*” will, to say the least, diminish the impressiveness of the statue.

The king is to be commended for continuing to look at the vision sent to him. **Additional matters were made known to him “while” he was looking.** Many a soul has missed great things from God simply because they did not “continue looking.” **Whether in king Nebuchadnezzar, of those who are in Christ Jesus, it is the manner of the Kingdom for more to be made known while we continue looking at what has already been revealed.** A godly focus is the mother of an expanded understanding.

We will at once see that the dream sent from God to Nebuchadnezzar was unusually complex. Every detail is important, and significance is attached to every aspect of the image. Therefore, Daniel goes into much detail about what the king had seen. It is assumed that Daniel was also given to see the image in some way. Moved by the Lord, Daniel covers every detail, preparing the king for

YOU SAW UNTIL

“*Thou sawest till that . . .*” Other versions read, “*You watched while*,”^{NKJV} “*You continued looking until*,”^{NASB} “*While you were watching*,”^{NIV} and “*While you looked at the statue*.”^{NAB} The idea is that Nebuchadnezzar was captured with the greatness and impressiveness of the image – yet, the image itself was not the real point. While he was gazing upon the awful

A STONE CUT OUT WITHOUT HANDS

“ . . . a stone was cut out without hands . . . ” Other versions read, “*a rock*

was cut out, but not by human hands,"^{NIV} "stone which was hewn from a mountain without a hand being put to it,"^{NAB} and "a rock was cut from a mountain by supernatural means."^{NLT}

The image is wholly representative of man and his works. That is why it is the image of a man, with a head, chest, arms, belly, thighs, legs, and feet. For that very reason, we should adduce that it is not intended to be the heart and core of the vision, or dream.

While the king gazes upon the image, something entirely apart from man takes place. Suddenly, there is an intrusion occurring in the world, yet not from the world. Men behold it, but did not cause it. It will impact upon men, yet no part of its origin is from them.

Unlike the image, and at its inception, the stone is not crafted, or made. No human refinement is found in it, as with gold, silver, brass, and iron. Nothing about it is an alloy, like feet made of an admixture of iron and clay. "Without hands" means wholly apart from human activity. This is an **intervention** in the affairs of men – something that is caused outside of man himself. Its origin is not from man in any way. The intervention is deliberate – something that has been purposed, and will be accomplished with objective. This is not happenstance.

The stone comes from a "mountain." While the image stood in a plain, the stone came from something infinitely larger, and of greater duration, than the image. Although the image appeared unusually large, it was dwarfed before this great mountain.

THE STONE STRIKES THE IMAGE

"... which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay..." It is assumed this stone was a rolling stone, moving across the breadth of the earth. This assumption is founded upon the fact that it ultimately became a mountain, suggesting the stone gradually grew as it progressed. For that matter, nothing would prohibit us from seeing the stone as being hurled at the feet of the image from the mountain, as David cast the

destructive stone at Goliath.

I cannot conceive of a seasoned warrior aiming his weapon at the feet of a foe. Normally, as David did with Goliath, the weapon is hurled at the head. But that is not the case here. The stone strikes the image on its feet – the place of vulnerability.

"... and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors..." The statue in its entirety – gold, silver, brass, iron, and iron mixed with clay – "became like the dust on the floors where grain is crushed in summer."^{BBE} None of the gold was retained. No part of the silver remained. The brass was in a worthless condition, together all of the iron. There

THE REMNANTS OF THE STATUE DID NOT REMAIN IN A HEAP UPON THE PLAIN. EVERY VESTIGE OF THE IMAGE WAS CARRIED AWAY WITH THE WIND. "THE WIND SWEEPED THEM AWAY WITHOUT LEAVING A TRACE." NIV IF YOU HAD NOT SEEN THE STATUE BEFORE, THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY EVIDENCE THAT IT EVER EXISTED.

THE IMAGE IS UTTERLY DESTROYED

"... and brake them to pieces."³⁵ 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..." The impact of this supernatural stone is most arresting. It does not effect only the feet, but the image in its entirety. It strikes the image at its weakest point – where an admixture was found.

Broken to Pieces Together

"Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together..." There was a sense in which the different metals were of the same order. Though different in appearance and value, they comprised a single statue. Thus, when the very feet that supported the statue were broken, the entire image, or all of its parts, "were crushed all at the same time."^{NASB} As the various parts became disconnected and fell to the ground, the stone crushed and pulverized them, so they could in no wise be put together again.

It Became Chaff

was no more future for the statue. It could not be maintained in any form, or in any size. Its very existence was terminated.

Carried Away

"... and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them." The remnants of the statue did not remain in a heap upon the plain. Every vestige of the image was carried away with the wind. "The wind swept them away without leaving a trace."^{NIV} If you had not seen the statue before, there was absolutely evidence that it ever existed.

THE STONE BECOMES A MOUNTAIN

"... and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." As for the supernatural stone that struck the image, and ground it to powder, it "became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth."^{NIV} It left no room for anything else, but became the most prominent thing in "the whole earth." leaving no part of the world unaffected by its presence. **Thus, the dream begins with an impressive statue, and concludes with a dominating mountain.** From beginning to ending, it is the work of the Lord.

THE HEAD OF GOLD

“³⁶ This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. ³⁷ Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. ³⁸ 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.”

Thus Daniel has precisely defined the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. No part of it has been omitted, and it is remarkable for its details. There is no chance that Daniel could have not accurately related this dream by himself – a dream which, to this point, was hidden to the very one who dreamed it. As Daniel told the dream, I do not doubt that Nebuchadnezzar’s memory was strengthened, and he began to experience the very terror he had while he was having the dream. There is no question that Daniel now had his attention. Now the young prophet will tell the king things that had been revealed him alone – things that were **not** made known to the king.

KING OF KINGS

“Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.” In blessing God, Daniel had confessed that he saw God both set up and removed kings. Now he will tell the king that God has set him up – that he owes his remarkable power and influence to the God of heaven. It is not something he did in his own strength.

King of Kings

The expression “king of kings” accents Nebuchadnezzar’s global power.

While other kings did exist, they were subservient to him, and paid tribute to him. Artaxerxes, in addressing Ezra, referred to himself as “king of kings” (Ezra 7:12). Ezekiel also referred to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, as “king of kings” (Ezek 26:7). At the very least, the expression meant that his rule extended over many nations, each of which also had kings. In the highest sense, it meant he was the most prominent king of all.

Kingdom, Power, Strength, and Glory

The prestige and influence of Nebuchadnezzar had been given to him by “the God of heaven.” If this were not the case, he never could have risen to prominence, “For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another” (Psa 75:6-7).

The largeness of the dominion given to the king is most remarkable – and we must remember it was given to him by the Living God. The global, or universal, nature of Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom is encapsulated in these words of our text: “in your hands He has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, **He has made you ruler over them all**” ^{NIV} The Chaldean monarchy over which this king presided, at the very least, extended over Chaldea, Assyria, Arabia, Syria, Egypt, and Libya.

Jeremiah spoke similarly of Nebuchadnezzar before he destroyed Jerusalem. His words are most arresting. “I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and **have given it unto whom it**

seemed meet unto Me. And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him” (Jer 27:5-8). The same thing is affirmed elsewhere, showing it is a pivotal consideration (Jer 28:6; 25:9; 43:10-11; Ezek 29:18-19).

This is an aspect of God that is not perceived as clearly as it should be – particularly for those who are in Christ Jesus. It would serve to relieve some hearts of a great deal of unnecessary anxiety if this were embraced by faith.

THOU ART THIS HEAD OF GOLD

“Thou art this head of gold.” The meaning is not that Nebuchadnezzar himself is the head of gold, but that it is the empire over which he presides.

Herein is something that first appears strange. The Chaldeans were not noted for their refinement, as is gold. Jeremiah said they would make the land desolate (32:43). They burned Jerusalem with fire (Jer 37:8). When conquering Jerusalem, the Chaldeans pursued and overtook Zedekiah in the plans of Jericho. Nebuchadnezzar slew Zedekiah’s son before his very eyes, slew the nobles of Judah, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with chains. (The Chaldeans then “burned the king’s house, and the houses of the people, with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem” (Jer 39:5-8). Habakkuk called them “that bitter and hasty nation” (Hab 1:6).

From a human point of view, which is a wrong view, that certainly does not sound like a “head of gold.” It sounds more like a head of iron that hammers the nations into subjection. However, the image is being viewed as a whole, and Nebuchadnezzar represented the most illustrious empire of all. His kingdom was the most magnificent of all kingdoms.

The imposing statue stood for



AS DANIEL TOLD THE DREAM, I DO NOT DOUBT THAT NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S MEMORY WAS STRENGTHENED, AND HE BEGAN TO EXPERIENCE THE VERY TERROR HE HAD WHILE HE WAS HAVING THE DREAM.

world, or global, government. As with everything that is in the world, global empires degenerated in their character and power. Heaven's assessments of the first of these governments places Babylon, or the Chaldean empire, as the first of this degenerative order. It was the most glorious, impressive, and magnificent.

During its domination, the morality of men, while not ideal, was better.

Too, the superiority of the Babylonian empire can be traced to its prominence in the purpose of God, just as Egypt's reason for fame can be traced. Babylon was used to chastise the Lord's

people in a special way for a special sin. Egypt was used to gain a name for God. Thus, it played a more outstanding role. Yet, it would fall with all other governments. Because of the extensive involvement of the Lord with this empire, employing it for His immutable purposes, it is called the head of gold.

THREE INFERIOR KINGDOMS

“³⁹ And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. ⁴⁰ 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.”

As we proceed through this vision, it will become apparent that the statue represents the kingdoms of this world as they relate to the Kingdom of God. Worldly government is placed along side the government of heaven. Kings of the earth are compared with the “*Prince of the kings of the earth*” (Rev 1:5). While there are some respects in which these kingdoms differ, they all share a common destiny. None of them will remain, and all of them will ultimately give way to a greater kingdom.

This is the heavenly view of the very best of human governments. From one point of view, some are superior, and others inferior. From another point of view, they are all vain, and are to be treated as things that are destined to pass away. Both views are proclaimed in our text, and are to be duly noted.

ANOTHER KINGDOM, INFERIOR TO THE FIRST

“*And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee . . .*” At the time Nebuchadnezzar was hearing of his dream, his empire probably appeared invincible to him. I have no doubt that he had not entertained any thought of it being replaced by another kingdom. Rather, he probably thought of those who would succeed him in maintaining the

very kingdom over which he was presiding. Now, however, Daniel declares this will not be the case at all. Another kingdom will rise after his. It will not be a competing kingdom, but will replace the Chaldean, or Babylonian kingdom. It should be apparent that the boldness of faith was required for Daniel to announce this fact to the king.

Ordinarily, it would seem that an inferior kingdom could not take the place of a superior one. The very fact that one kingdom could be put down by another presumes the inferiority of the one being replaced. But that is not the case here. The next kingdom will be “*inferior*” to that of Nebuchadnezzar.

The Medo-Persian Empire

We know from Scripture that this other kingdom was that of the Medes and the Persians, sometimes referred to by historians as the Medo-Persian empire. This dual dynasty is represented by the two arms of silver, joined to a single breast, which stood for the empire itself.

Later in Daniel, Belshazzar, the last of the Babylonian monarchs will be categorically told that his kingdom would be “*divided, and given to the Medes and Persians*” (5:28). That very night, Belshazzar was killed, “*and Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old*” (5:31). The Persian aspect of the rule was fulfilled in “*Cyrus the Persian*” (6:28).

Much is made of this shift of power in the book of Daniel. Some introductory thoughts on the matter will be appropriate here, reserving the greater part until the later chapters. In chapter eight, Daniel saw a ram with two horns

pushing its way “*westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great.*” It was revealed to Daniel, “*The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia*” (8:3-4,20).

“In B.C. 538, Babylon was taken by Cyrus, after a siege of two years, in the dead of the night. Having first, by means of its canals, turned the river into the great dry lake west of Babylon, and then marched through the emptied channel, he made his way to the outer walls of the fortified palace on its banks, when, finding the brazen gates incautiously left open by the royal guards while engaged in carousals, he entered with all his train; “the Lord of Hosts was his leader,” and Babylon, as an empire, was no more.”

McClintok and Strong's Cyclopaedia

Isaiah also prophesied that God would “*stir up the Medes against*” Babylon (Isa 13:17; 21:2), causing Babylon to fall (Isa 21:9). Habbabuk declared this would take place because the Chaldean (Babylonian) king went further than he should have. Not content to be God's servant in chastening Israel, he committed the grievous offense of “*Ascribing this power to his god*” (Hab 1:11). Belshazzar in particular did this (Dan 5:3-4), precisely fulfilling the word of Isaiah. Daniel reminded Belshazzar that Nebuchadnezzar had also provoked God in this manner. “*But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him*” (Dan 5:20). It was not mere happenstance that the kingdom of Babylon fell.

The Medo-Persian Inferiority

The inferiority of the succeeding empire was certainly not due to inferior power or military strategy. Proving the superiority of their stealth, and under the general leadership of Cyrus, the army drained off the waters of the Euphrates, leaving the channel dry beneath the walls of Babylon, through which the devastating army passed.

Further, the description given to Cyrus gives no suggestion of inferiority. *“Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me”* (2 Chron 36:22-23; Ezra 1:2). In what sense, then, was this second empire inferior?

Some students of history point out the noticeable decline in the character of the Persian kings. While Cryus conducted himself in an admirable way, one historian affirms, “The kings of Persia were the worst race of men that ever governed an empire.”^{Prideaux} Others point out the decline in their military exploits. After Cyrus, history records a number of defeats and strategic blunders by Persians kings, who often conducted themselves as madmen.^{Prideaux}

Still others point out the moral degeneracy that accelerated during the dominance of the Persian empire. The historian Lyman wrote, “symptoms of decay and corruption were manifest in the empire; the national character gradually degenerated; the citizens were corrupted and enfeebled by luxury; and confided more in mercenary troops than in native valor and fidelity. The kings submitted to the control of their wives, or the creatures whom they raised to posts of distinction; and the satraps, from being civil functionaries, began to usurp military authority.”

In my judgment, it is this latter circumstance that particularly made the Medo-Persian empire inferior. Their rule, while a formidable one, did not succeed in subduing immorality and all manner of vice and crime – something for which God has ordained government (Rom 13:1-5).

THE THIRD KINGDOM OF BRASS

“... and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.” Continuing the degenerative process, the third kingdom, or the one following the Medo-Persian kingdom, would be inferior to its predecessor. It is

depicted by the abdomen and thighs of brass. This is the Grecian empire, which overthrew the Medo-Persian dominion. You will notice that all of the kingdoms are overthrown, they do not simply die, or fade away.

Later in Daniel, the Grecian empire is depicted as a *“he goat”* which came from the west. He *“was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand”*^{NKJV} (8:7). Later in that chapter a heavenly messenger explained to Daniel, *“the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king”* (8:20). Thus the Medo-Persian empire was violently overthrown, just as the Babylonian one was.

A More Profound Explanation

An even higher view of this

come” (10:12-20). In other words, there was also a wicked principality over Greece, and he would cause the Grecian empire to assume prominence.

Thus, we are provided profound details concerning the overthrow of one kingdom, and the rise of another to power. The real overthrow took place in the heavenly realms, where *“the rulers of the darkness of this world”* reside (Eph 6:12). It is most remarkable that such an understanding was granted to Daniel during the time of the Old Covenant. This was because he was *“greatly beloved”* by God (9:23; 10:11,19), and was thus given extraordinary insight concerning the affairs of this world.

I will only mention here that the first king of the Grecian empire was none other than Alexander the Great. More will be opened concerning his identity when we come to the eighth chapter. He conquered the Persian empire, and annexed it to Macedonia.^{GROLLIER'S ENC}

AN EVEN HIGHER VIEW OF THIS GOVERNMENTAL CHANGE IS ALSO EXPLAINED TO DANIEL. AFTER PRAYING FOR UNDERSTANDING, AND WAITING FOR THREE WEEKS WITHOUT A WORD FROM HEAVEN, AN ANGEL ARRIVED IN ANSWER TO THE PROPHET'S PRAYER.

governmental change is also explained to Daniel. After praying for understanding, and waiting for three weeks without a word from heaven, an angel arrived in answer to the prophet's prayer. The angel explained he was sent from heaven the very moment Daniel's prayer came into the throne room. However, he was detained by a spiritual power called *“the prince of Persia.”* After struggling for three weeks with this principality, Michael, a chief angel came to *“help”* him, freeing him to come to Daniel. As soon as he had delivered his message, however, he would return and resume battle with *“the prince of Persia.”* Following the overthrow of this Satanic principality, the angel said, *“the prince of Grecia shall*

THE FOURTH KINGDOM, STRONG AS IRON

“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.” Keep in mind, the Lord is opening the future regarding world, or global, dominions. In identifying them as a single statue, the Lord confirms they all have something in common, operating upon the same set of worldly principles. Notwithstanding, their wisdom is totally unacceptable, as well as their ways. Thus, all four of them will fall.

The predominate metal in this

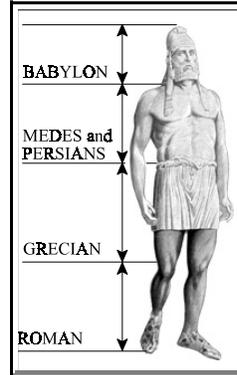
section of the statue was iron, emblematic of great strength: *“for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others.”* ^{NIV} Iron was used for weapons of destruction (Num 35:16), yokes that could not be borne (Deut 28:48), chariots of warfare (Josh 17:16), spearheads (1 Sam 17:7), axes (2 Sam 12:31), and rods that broke the power of the enemy (Psa 2:9). Iron speaks of force – dominating and excessive force that subdues.

Of this kingdom, it is noted that they “subdued and conquered all others; not the Jews only, but the Persians, Egyptians, Syrians, Africans, French, Germans, yea the whole world.” ^{JOHN GILL} Later, when the New Covenant Scriptures were written, the Roman empire was referred to as *“all the world”* (Luke 2:1). They were also crude and hard in their military exploits, and “surpassed the cruelty and barbarity of the Macedonians and the Medo-Persians.” ^{CALVIN}

The fourth global empire is depicted

in its beginning as iron, and as a mixture of iron and clay at its conclusion. It will be characterized by great power, *“subduing all things,”* and breaking its opponents in pieces, and bruising them. Because these are succeeding kingdoms, and not random ones, we know this fourth one is Rome. Because it covers such an extensive period, more is said of it than any of the other kingdoms.

We know from what follows that this kingdom was in place when the Savior came, pictured as a stone cut out of a mountain *“without hands.”* That would make the fourth kingdom the Roman empire, which had a shaky beginning, but extended from 509 BC until 476 AD, when



it fell to the German chieftain Odoacer – after over 1,000 years. During its reign, it beat down the constitutions and independence of all other kingdoms, making them subservient to itself. This circumstance is confirmed in the Apostolic writings (John 11:48; Acts 25:16; 28:17).

Thus, because it intersects with God’s kingdom, additional information is given concerning the Roman empire. For those living centuries before Christ, this would provide a sort of index that would permit them to know the general time when the Lord would set up His kingdom. It would also raise their hope to anticipate better times. For those living after the enthronement of Jesus, it provides a glimpse of how His everlasting kingdom has progressed through history, smashing down all other kingdoms, and destined to ultimately fill the whole earth.

In every way, the kingdom God sets up is superior. That kingdom is the reason for the dream sent to Nebuchadnezzar.

THE MOST INFERIOR KINGDOM

“⁴¹ 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. ⁴² 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. ⁴³ 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 lay.”

The Roman kingdom is the legs, feet, and toes of the statue. From one point of view, it is the final global empire. From another viewpoint, it supports the whole superstructure of global power. Because it moves toward the initiation of *“a kingdom”* which will be set up by God Himself, it will become weaker and weaker, finally giving way to the sway of an eternal kingdom. Just as the Babylonian kingdom was like the sun at

its zenith, the Roman kingdom was like the setting sun at the close of the day.

The Lord has revealed to Daniel the means by which this long kingdom would become weaker. **The two diluting influences were division and mingling, partitioning and amalgamation.**

STRONG, BUT DIVIDED

“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.”

As I have already indicated, *“iron”* speaks of powerfully subduing those who are opposed, so that none are able to resist. Now, the Spirit makes this point once again. However, this not only accentuates the nature of the Roman dominion. It will also serve to highlight the superiority of the kingdom of God, which will grind to powder the *“iron”* of

FROM ONE POINT OF VIEW, IT IS THE FINAL GLOBAL EMPIRE. FROM ANOTHER VIEWPOINT, IT SUPPORTS THE WHOLE SUPERSTRUCTURE OF GLOBAL POWER. BECAUSE IT MOVES TOWARD THE INITIATION OF “A KINGDOM” WHICH WILL BE SET UP BY GOD HIMSELF, IT WILL BECOME WEAKER AND WEAKER, FINALLY GIVING WAY TO THE SWAY OF AN ETERNAL KINGDOM.

Rome, as well as the gold of Babylon, the silver of the Medo-Persians, and the brass of Greece.

From one point of view, therefore, we see the power and majesty of a worldly government. From another, we behold the absolute superiority of the kingdom of God which, by appearance, was only a small stone at its inception.

Division

Now we learn that the first weakening factor was division: “the kingdom shall be **divided**.” The Spirit gets to the root of the matter, showing that this government made an attempt to mingle things that could not truly be united – like clay and iron. The division is not seen in the legs of the statue, but in “the feet and toes, part of potters’ clay, and part of iron.” The division is not primarily depicted by the ten toes, but by the admixture of iron and clay. The “clay” is weakness, and portrays something that could not blend with strength, which was the meaning of “iron.”

From the historical perspective, the preceding three monarchies (Babylon, Medo-Persian, and Greek) were basically homogeneous in their character. They did not allow the intermingling of foreign manners or customs in their kingdom. Conquered nations would conform to the manner of those three empires. This is seen in the Babylonian training of Daniel and his colleagues. They were taught “the literature and language of the Chaldeans”^{NASB} (Dan 1:4). The Romans, however, allowed the subservient nations to keep their manners, even appointing special rulers to assure this took place without any political disturbance. Herod (king of Judea, Luke 1:5) and Pontius Pilate (governor of Judea, Matt 27:2) were such rulers. They were Roman prelates charged with maintaining political order in a Jewish province. This was the Roman manner. However, it would prove to be the very means through which that majestic empire would crumble.

At the Root of the Matter

At its root, division occurs when a single entity contains hostile elements - things that cannot, under any circumstances, blend, or become harmonious. Of such a condition Jesus said, “Every kingdom divided against

itself **is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand**” (Matt 12:25). And again, “And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom **cannot stand**. And if a house be divided against itself, that house **cannot stand**” (Mark 3:24-25). In this circumstance, Jesus spoke of certain hostilities that would surface. “For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, **three against two, and two against three**. The father shall be divided **against** the son, and the son against the father; the mother **against** the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law **against** her daughter in law, and the daughter in law **against** her mother in law” (Lk 12:52-53).

Whether, therefore, in a kingdom, or in an individual household, division is lethal. Division is an environment in which Satan is loosed, and destruction is sure. **The law established by God, that cannot successfully be violated, is that where division exists, desolation is sure.** That law, or principle, is to a moral environment what the law of gravity is to a natural one.

A Vital Application

The people of God must pick up on what is being said in this text. There still exist admixtures – things that cannot be blended together. This is a condition where one thing is weak like clay, and another is strong like iron. Any attempt to unite them will dictate a sure fall. Some examples of these admixtures are provided in Scripture.

Our text is speaking of the governments of this world. However, in it there is a principle that transports to individual lives, households, churches, and even nations.

- ☐ If an individual makes an attempt to blend light and darkness in their life, they will lose their life!
- ☐ If a family has both saved and lost in it, there will be friction.
- ☐ If a church makes an effort to merge the flesh and the Spirit, it will fail.

I do not believe these things are commonly recognized. They certainly are

not preached or taught with any degree of consistency or zeal. Nevertheless, they are true, and are indelibly stamped in the historical circumstances unveiled in our text.

THE MINGLING THAT WEAKENED

“And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men . . . ” Other versions read, “they will combine with one another **in** the seed of men,”^{NASB} “so **the people will be a mixture** and will not remain united,”^{NIV} “so will they mix with one another **in marriage**,”^{NRSV} “they will **give their daughters to one another** as wives,”^{BBE} “they shall seal their alliances **by intermarriage**,”^{NAB} “will try to strengthen themselves by forming alliances with each other **through intermarriage**,”^{NLT} and “so the two will be **mixed together** in human seed.”^{NJB}

IRON	CLAY	TEXT
Righteousness	Unrighteousness	2 Cor 6:14
Light	Darkness	2 Cor 6:14
Christ	Belial	2 Cor 6:15
Believer	Infidel	2 Cor 6:15
Temple of God	Idols	2 Cor 6:16
Spirit	Flesh	Gal 6:17
God	Mammon	Matt 6:24
Spiritual man	Natural man	1 Cor 2:14
Love of world	Love of Father	1 John 2:15
Keep your soul	Gain the world	Matt 16:26
Love God	Hate brethren	1 John 4:20
Law of God	Carnal mind	Rom 8:7
Follow Jesus	Not deny self	Matt 16:24
Escape hell	Neglect salvation	Heb 2:3
Inherit Kingdom	Immorality	1 Cor 6:9
Worldly wisdom	God’s wisdom	1 Cor 3:19

This text could, indeed, be greatly corrupted by imagining it is speaking of a mixing of races. I am careful to point out that nothing could be further the truth. Our text is not speaking on the racial level, and makes no reference whatsoever to races. The emphasis is the merging of conflicting national interests, and the attempted amalgamation of strong and inferior political acumen. The thrust is upon character and ability, not blood lines and family ancestry.

The Romans sought to bring conquered nations into the fold through

intermarriage, a tactic that has often been used. Thus Pharaoh gave Joseph an Egyptian wife (Gen 41:45). Another Egyptian Pharaoh gave Hadad the Edomite a wife, who was the sister of his own wife (1 Kgs 11:19). The Romans made a practice of this, supposing it would add stability to their government. It proved to be their undoing.

Intermarriage

In Christ, believers are solemnly warned not to be “*unequally yoked*” to unbelievers (2 Cor 6:14). This is of particular importance in the matter of marriage. The Scriptures recognize that some are caught in such a yoke because of grievous circumstance, and graciously addresses the situation in the seventh chapter of First Corinthians. The believer is not to seek to undo such a marriage, particularly when the unbeliever is pleased to dwell peaceably with him/her (1 Cor 7:13-14). However, even in that circumstance, the fact of unavoidable and irreconcilable differences is addressed (1 Cor 7:15-16).

It is not the purpose of either this lesson, or the Word of God itself, to address and resolve marital differences – and that is not the point of our text. We must treat considerably and lovingly those who are experiencing conflicts in their marriage. Those who are in such a case must seek peace, and heartily endeavor to save their husband or wife, knowing that the marriage is acceptable because of the believer (7:14,16).

A note of warning, however, must be sounded to those who are not yet married, or who are in a widowed state. The word of our Lord is quite clear on this matter, even though it is not fashionable to declare it. Those who are eligible for marriage can marry whom “*they will, only in the Lord*” (1 Cor 7:39).

The Example of Solomon

You may recall that the fall of Solomon was traceable to the heathen wives that he married. “*Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love . . . For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods*” (1 Kings 11:2,4). Moses had warned this would

something that was destructive. If the law against mingling was so powerfully demonstrated in the fall of an empire, it will be even more firmly confirmed in the realm of the Spirit. It is a fact of the Kingdom that principles, or laws, that are operative in nature and social matters, are made stronger and more firm in the Spirit. That can be seen in things like light, infection, and conflict. The higher you move in environment, the more pronounced these laws become.

IT IS A FACT OF THE KINGDOM THAT PRINCIPLES, OR LAWS, THAT ARE OPERATIVE IN NATURE AND SOCIAL MATTERS, ARE MADE STRONGER AND MORE FIRM IN THE SPIRIT. THAT CAN BE SEEN IN THINGS LIKE LIGHT, INFECTION, AND CONFLICT. THE HIGHER YOU MOVE IN ENVIRONMENT, THE MORE PRONOUNCED THESE LAWS BECOME.

happen, yet Solomon ignored those words. “*Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly*” (Deut 7:3-4). Of this circumstance Nehemiah said, “*Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin*” (Neh 13:26).

This Is Relevant

Although unworthy of an extended commentary, these words are, indeed, pertinent to the exposition of this text. What God gives can be joined together, whether it is the saints themselves, or the various gifts and abilities they possess. But the fourth kingdom sought to mingle

UNITY IMPOSSIBLE

“*. . . but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with lay.*” By mingling the weak and strong, the enemy and the friend, the ignorant and the wise, and the defeated and the conquerors, Rome set itself up for a fall. Just as clay could not remain united to iron, so the compound of peoples Rome sought to accomplish could not remain together. What they thought to be a strength was actually a weakness.

Let the people of God learn to forever cease from any attempt to unite themselves with irreconcilable differences. This cannot even be accomplished in the matter of our salvation. There has to be a change in people, a new birth, or a new creation, before they can be joined to the Lord. **Nature is like clay that cannot mix with the iron of Divinity.** This unalterable principle is seen in our text. Much can be learned from it that will profit the saints of God. It is good to thoughtfully consider these things.

AN ETERNAL KINGDOM

“⁴⁴ **And in the days of these kings 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.” Now we come to the heart and core of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. At

the first, the focus seemed to be upon a large and imposing statue. But as the dream progresses, the attention is shifted to a seemingly unimportant stone, with which man had absolutely nothing whatsoever to do.

In his dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw “a stone was cut out of a mountain without hands: and it struck the statue upon the feet thereof that were of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.”^{DUOAY} Something small became destructive of something exceedingly large. Something small became larger than the thing it crushed, eventually filling all the earth. Now the Spirit will interpret the meaning of this aspect of the dream.

THESE KINGS

“And in the days of these kings . . .”

human kingdom could exist, regardless of its seeming greatness and power.

A KINGDOM SET UP

“ . . . shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom . . . ” Here the setting up of a kingdom is related to the demise of competing kingdoms. Before it reaches its apex, other kings must first be defeated. This is the principle the Lord enunciated to Jeremiah when He appointed him to be a prophet. “See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant” (Jer 1:10). God will set up a seemingly unimposing kingdom “in the days of these kings.”

The Kingdom that Was At Hand

When mighty John the Baptist

to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: **but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof**” (Matt 13:31). And again, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, **till the whole was leavened**” (Matt 13:31).

Some have imagined that these texts refer to the church, or to something that purports to be the kingdom of heaven, but is actually not. However, this is an utterly false notion. Jesus said “kingdom of heaven” because that is what He had announced was at hand. He was not preparing men for the expansion of the flesh, but for the working of the Spirit. He was affirming exactly what Daniel said: the kingdom God was setting up would be small and unimpressive at the first, but large and dominating in its consummation.

The phrase “kingdom of heaven” is used thirty-two times in Scripture (Matt 3:2; 4:17; 5:3,10,19,20; 7:21; 8:11; 10:7; 11:11,12; 13:11,24,31,33,44,45,46,52; 16:19; 18:1,3,4,23; 19:14,23; 20:1; 22:2; 23:13; 25:1,14). In addition to being “like” a mustard seed and leaven, it is said to be “like” a number of other things. Each one describes a facet of the heavenly kingdom.

SO FAR AS THEIR DESTINY WAS CONCERNED, THE PARTS WERE NOT DIFFERENT. THEY WERE ONLY DIFFERENT IN APPEARANCE AND CONTINUANCE, BUT NOT IN NATURE. FROM THE HEAVENLY PERSPECTIVE, WHICH IS THE TRUE ONE, THEY WERE ALL THE SAME – A SINGLE ENTITY.

The term “these kings,” in general, refers to the whole statue, and the four kingdoms it represented. “These kings” means the image was to be considered as a whole, even though it was comprised of differing parts. So far as their destiny was concerned, the parts were not different. **They were only different in appearance and continuance, but not in nature.** From the heavenly perspective, which is the true one, they were all the same – a single entity. Thus, although what follows occurred during the time of the fourth kingdom (as depicted by the feet and toes), yet it was a judgment against all of the kingdoms. **Although the three previous kingdoms were toppled centuries before the last one, yet their demise was really owing to the stone, cut out of a mountain without hands.** The phrase “these kings,” then, refers to the time of global empires, when no other

came preaching, he said, “Repent ye: for **the kingdom of heaven is at hand**” (Matt 3:2). Mark adds that John said, “**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand**” (Mk 1:15). This was the kingdom of which Daniel spoke. Immediately following his baptism and temptation in the wilderness, “Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: **for the kingdom of heaven is at hand**” (Matt 4:17). The “God of heaven” was about to set up “the kingdom of heaven.” When Jesus first sent out the “twelve,” He told them, “And as ye go, preach, saying, **The kingdom of heaven is at hand**” (Matt 10:7).

Jesus Clarifies the Matter

Jesus declared the Kingdom God was setting up was precisely like the “stone” Nebuchadnezzar saw – it would unimposing at the first, and dominating at the last. “The kingdom of heaven is like

- ▣ A treasure hid in a field (Matt 13:44)
- ▣ A merchant man seeking goodly pearls (Matt 13:45)
- ▣ A net cast into the sea, gathering all manner of fish (Matt 13:47)
- ▣ A man that is a householder, who brings things from his treasury that are both old and new (Matt 13:52)
- ▣ A householder who hired laborers for his vineyard (Matt 20:1)
- ▣ A certain king who made a marriage for his son (22:2)
- ▣ A man who sowed good seed in his field (Matt 13:24)
- ▣ A certain king who took account of his servants (Matt 18:23)

- ▶ Ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom (Matt 25:1)

In the days of *“these kings,”* God began doing all of these things to which Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven. This is how he began setting up His kingdom.

- ▶ Something was deposited in fields accessible to men – that is, treasures of heaven were brought within the grasp of men.
- ▶ A good pearl, and one of great price, was placed in the domain ruled by Satan.
- ▶ The Lord began to gather workers for His kingdom, collaborators together with God, and reapers for His harvest.
- ▶ He began preparing a bride, who would be adorned for her husband, the Lord Jesus Himself.
- ▶ The good seed of the Gospel began to be sowed among men.
- ▶ The Lord began to prepare men to give an account to Him by granting them a stewardship – responsible positions in His kingdom.

- ▶ The sons of men were told of a coming bridegroom, for whose appearing they must prepare.

“The God of heaven” was setting up His kingdom. He was doing so while Daniel’s image was still standing, and appeared powerful and invincible! A climactic change began to take place in the world, unnoticed by men, but keenly observed by angelic hosts.

At the threshold of His ministry, Jesus returned to His home town. As His custom was, He entered into the synagogue, and stood up to read. No doubt He had often done this prior to His baptism and temptation – but this day was different. On this occasion, He has handed the book of Isaiah, and He read with such power and passion that He arrested the attention of all who were there. *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to*

heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18-19). He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. There was not a single distraction in all of the synagogue! It is written that *“the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him”* (v 20). Suddenly the thickness of inquiring silence was broken, and Jesus said, *“This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears”* (v 21). **GOD WAS SETTING UP A KINGDOM** – the very one of which Daniel prophesied. It was a kingdom that would devastate all competing forces, rescue man from a state of death and condemnation, and, and bring life and hope to those who sat in great darkness!

JESUS IS TO THIS KINGDOM WHAT NEBUCHADNEZZAR WAS TO BABYLON, CYRUS AND DARIUS WERE TO THE MEDO-PERSIANS, ALEXANDER WAS TO GREECE, AND THE CAESARS WERE TO ROME. HE STOOD FOR THE KINGDOM, AS THOSE KINGS STOOD FOR THEIR KINGDOMS.

Jesus is to this kingdom what Nebuchadnezzar was to Babylon, Cyrus and Darius were to the Medo-Persians, Alexander was to Greece, and the Caesars were to Rome. He stood for the kingdom, as those kings stood for their kingdoms.

After the Kingdom was *“set up,”* and the King coronated, the official inauguration took place when *“the day of Pentecost was fully come”* (Acts 2:1). With the King in place, enthroned in glory with all power in heaven and earth delivered to him (Matt 28:18), He sent the Holy Spirit through the very domain of the devil, into the region of moral and spiritual darkness. Suddenly, those who were afraid became bold. The Scriptures came alive. Holy men were able to correlate what the holy prophets had said with what Jesus was doing in their very presence. Insight into the death and resurrection of Jesus was granted. Men were able to preach with convicting

power. The door of salvation was thrown open to anyone who would call upon the name of the Lord. The means of entrance were proclaimed, and gladly received and obeyed. The Lord began adding to the church every day those who were being saved (Acts 2). **God had set up a kingdom – the very one Daniel declared.**

This was not a military kingdom. Rather, it was a kingdom of salvation. The king of this vast empire, Jesus Christ, commenced a reign that would conclude with all competing and temporal authority and power *being “put down”* (1 Cor 15:24). He would bring many sons to glory (Heb 2:10), right through the enemy’s territory, losing none of them. He would feed them (Isa 40:11), lead them

(John 10:3), and empower them (2 Tim 1:7). He would make them stand (Rom 14:4), keep them from falling (Jude 24), and present them faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude 25).

That is the kingdom God has *“set up,”* and it is effectively undoing the work of Satan, giving life to those who were dead in trespasses and sins, and ministering everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.

NEVER DESTROYED

“ . . . which shall never be destroyed . . . ” The Kingdom God set up *“in the days of these kings,”* or during the dominance of the Roman empire, will *“never be destroyed.”* This is not a temporal kingdom, designed only for a brief period of time. It is, as Peter put it, *“the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”* (2 Pet 1:11).

Isaiah prophesied this would be the nature of the government of Jesus. *“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. **Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD**”* (Isa 9:6-7). This prophecy correlates with our text.

Associated With His Saviorhood

This kingdom, set up by God, and

that is subduing His enemies.

But there is more on this subject, which has been greatly garbled by men who do not know whereof they speak. **On the day the Kingdom was inaugurated, Peter declared Jesus had been exalted to the throne of David**, which Isaiah declared was the seat of the Son’s rule, or government (Isa 9:7). Peter relates that enthronement to Christ’s resurrection. *“For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did My heart rejoice, and My tongue was glad; moreover also My flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou*

*right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that **God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ**”* (Acts 2:25-36).

Some things of especial interest in this insightful proclamation are worthy of further remarks. This was not a casual commentary upon Scripture, but the illumination of something formerly concealed to the sons of men.

- ▣ The promise has to do with Jesus being raised up to sit on David’s throne, according to God’s promise (v 30).
- ▣ The promise to David was fulfilled by Jesus being exalted to the right hand of the Father (v 33).
- ▣ David is speaking of the coming Messiah, whom He, by faith, considered his own Lord, even though he had not seen Him (v 34).
- ▣ God has made Jesus “*Lord*” – i.e. the “*Lord*” of whom David spake when He said. *“The Lord said unto MY LORD, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make thy foes Thy footstool.”*(v 34, 36).
- ▣ God has made Jesus “*Christ*” – the Christ promised to David in the words, *“knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up **CHRIST** to sit on His throne”* (v 30,36).

THESE TERMS RELATE TO THE BEGINNING OF HIS KINGDOM, NOT ITS CONCLUDING PHASE, AS SOME SUPPOSE. NOWHERE IS CHRIST’S SECOND APPEARING REFERRED TO AS A CHILD BEING BORN, OR A SON BEING GIVEN. THAT IS SIMPLY TOO APPARENT TO SPEND ANY FURTHER TIME ON IT.

administered by Jesus, is not one to be unveiled in the future. Rather, it is related to Christ’s being the Savior. The phrases “*Child is Born*” and “*Son is given*” can only apply to Christ’s role as the Savior of the world. These terms relate to the beginning of His Kingdom, not its concluding phase, as some suppose. Nowhere is Christ’s second appearing referred to as a Child being born, or a Son being given. That is simply too apparent to spend any further time on it.

Further, His “*government*” and “*peace*” are related to the day of salvation. His reign commenced when He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. As it is written, *“But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool”* (Heb 10:12). If some imagine He is waiting to reign, the Spirit declares, *“For He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under His feet”* (1 Cor 15:25). **It is His reign**

*wilt not leave My soul in hell [Hades], neither wilt thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to Me the ways of life; thou shalt make Me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, **He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell [Hades], neither His flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on My***

Thus, the Kingdom of the second chapter of Daniel and the ninth chapter of Isaiah are the same. Further, that Kingdom is presently being administered by the “Child” and “Son” of Isaiah 9:6, the “Lord” of Psalm 110:1 and Acts two, and the “Christ” of Second Samuel 7:11-16 and Acts 2:36.

Saints Receive in this Kingdom Now

This is a Kingdom that will never end. It will transport from time to eternity, and from earth to glory. Actually, it is eternal now, and is experienced by faith while we are in this world. Under the administration of Jesus, it is a kingdom that consists of “*righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit*” (Rom 14:17). It is

not made known in words, decrees, and rules, like the kingdoms of men, but is “in power” (1 Cor 4:20). It is a kingdom those who are in Christ Jesus are presently receiving. As it is written, “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire” (Heb 12:28-29). “Cannot be moved” equates to the “never be destroyed” of Daniel. That is the precise kingdom of which our text speaks.

One of the vivid descriptions of being justified by faith is provided in Colossians 1:13. It mentions the kingdom referenced in our text. “For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to **the kingdom of His beloved Son**, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Col 1:13-14).

Satan Powerless to Stop It

Now, in our text, over six hundred years before this Kingdom is to be set up, God makes the matter known. I do not doubt that the devil and the hosts of darkness, perhaps even “the prince of Persia” and “the prince of Grecia,” overheard, as it were, this marvelous prophecy. If that is the case, it is as though God is challenging the hosts of darkness to do their best to stop this kingdom from being set up. Let them seek to develop some dark strategy that will keep the kingdoms of this world going on, and stop the God of heaven from setting up this kingdom! As the very effectiveness of salvation loudly testifies, “the great red dragon” could not stop the Ruler from being born, being caught up to God, or enthroned in glory (Rev 12:4-5). He could do nothing about the redeemed being nourished by King Jesus as they were receiving His unmoveable kingdom (Rev 12:6). In spite of his anger, fierce and cunning opposition, and aggressive spirit, those in Christ’s kingdom still overcome him “by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Rev 12:11).

NOT LEFT TO OTHER PEOPLE

“... and the kingdom shall not be left to other people . . .” The idea is that the kingdom will not be succeeded by another kingdom. This government will never pass into the hands of another

people, like Babylon passed to the Medo-Persians, the Medo-Persians passed to the Greeks, and the Greeks passed to the Romans. Thus the New Jerusalem Bible reads, “and this kingdom will not pass into the hands of another race.”

Other versions read, “no one will ever conquer it,”^{NLT} “a kingdom that shall never be destroyed or delivered up to another people,”^{NAB} “and its power will never be given into the hands of another people,”^{BBE} and “and the sovereignty thereof shall not be left to another people.”^{DARBY}

The Saints and this Kingdom

The idea here is that this kingdom will not pass to “another,” or “strange,” people. The Medo-Persians differed in both culture and manner from the Babylonians. The Greeks also were different than the Medo-Persians in culture and manner. The Romans differed from the Greeks in those areas also. Each succeeding kingdom bore

strengthen our hope.

▣ “But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever” (Dan 7:18).

▣ “Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom” (Dan 7:22).

▣ “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him” (Dan 7:27).

A Marvelous Circumstance

Briefly, this is a most amazing circumstance, sharply conflicting with both the nature and purpose of earthly

THE IDEA IS THAT THE KINGDOM WILL NOT BE SUCCEEDED BY ANOTHER KINGDOM. THIS GOVERNMENT WILL NEVER PASS INTO THE HANDS OF ANOTHER PEOPLE, LIKE BABYLON PASSED TO THE MEDO-PERSIANS, THE MEDO-PERSIANS PASSED TO THE GREEKS, AND THE GREEKS PASSED TO THE ROMANS.

a different kind of nature, as depicted in the various substances that represented them: gold, silver, brass, iron, and iron and clay.

To Be Given to the Saints

In the grand scheme of things, this everlasting kingdom will be given to the saints of the Most High God. They will not replace Jesus, but will be “joint heirs” with Him (Rom 8:17). They will not supercede the reign of Jesus, but will reign with Him (2 Tim 2:12).

Thus, before the close of his book, Daniel proclaims this very fact – that this kingdom will be given to the saints of the Most High God. Again, this text will

kingdoms. In Christ, what was a mark of inferiority in the world, becomes a mark of blessing and benefit. You will recall that the image represented the passing of power to inferior kingdoms – each one being inferior to the one preceding it. This was seen in the metals representing the kingdoms.

This inferiority was confirmed in a number of ways. However, I draw your attention to one facet of that inferiority that is particularly applicable here.

▣ In the Babylonian empire, there was really only one free man – Nebuchadnezzar, or the king. All others were his servants, and none of

them were totally free.

- ▣ In the Medo-Persian empire, there were additional nobles that made the king less powerful. More people, so to speak, were free, and able to execute their will.
- ▣ In the Grecian empire the circumference of freedom continued to expand, as authority was more and more delegated to people other than the king.
- ▣ In the Roman empire, with its senate and elaborate form of government, this principle was expanded even more, bringing more people into the circle of power – people of divers manners, culture, and views.

This ever expanding nucleus of political power tended to weaken the

When God set up His kingdom, it had one Ruler, one absolute Sovereign. Every knee will bow to Him, and every tongue will confess that He, and He alone, is “*Lord*” (Phil 2:10). This type of rule was seen in Nebuchadnezzar, although he himself was not righteous. It was NOT seen in the Medo-Persian, Grecian, or Roman kingdoms. That is another reason why they were “*inferior*.”

At this point, however, there is another significant difference. Christ’s kingdom will not be overtaken and replaced by an other kingdom, and is eternal in nature. Yet, it will be “*given to the saints of the Most High God*,” who themselves have been translated into this kingdom. **On the fleshly plain, this would make the kingdom an inferior one. However, on the spiritual plain, it demonstrates its superiority.**

KINGDOMS

“ . . . *but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms . . .* ” Other versions read, “*it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms,*”^{NASB} “*It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end,*”^{NIV} “*it will shatter and absorb all the previous kingdoms,*”^{NJB} “*It will shatter all these kingdoms into nothingness,*”^{NLT} “*But it shall beat to pieces and grind to powder all other kingdoms,*”^{SEPTUAGINT} and “*it beateth small and endeth all these kingdoms.*”^{YLT}

This utter destruction was represented by the supernatural stone striking the image on the vulnerable feet of iron and clay, breaking them to pieces. “*Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found*”^{NASB} (2:35).

These kingdoms will **not** rise from the ashes of defeat. Their dynasties will end absolutely. They will never be able to regain their power. This utter destruction can be accounted for in two ways.

- ▣ First, the vastly superior and eternal kingdom of Christ has supplanted them.
- ▣ Second, their purpose has been served, and no further reason can be adduced for their presence.

The basic spiritual principle that accounts for the destruction of worldly kingdoms by Christ’s kingdom is this: “*the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*” (Rom 8:7). However illustrious and efficient the kingdoms of this world may appear, they are still driven by “*the carnal mind*” – the unregenerate mind. By its very nature, there are no heavenly interests in earthly government. It is designed for this world, and this world alone. The earth is the terminal point of all of its interests and objectives. There is not a solitary point in which the governments of this world can extend their thoughts, purposes, or goals beyond “*this present evil world*” (Gal 1:4). That makes them temporal, and hence, by their very nature, destined to failure.

WHEN THEY ARE PERFECTED, AND HAVE APPREHENDED THAT FOR WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN APPREHENDED, THERE WILL BE NO DIFFERENCE IN THEIR CHARACTER AND THAT OF THE LORD. NO SEED OF COMPETITION WILL REMAIN IN THEM, BUT THEY WILL “BE LIKE HIM”

kingdoms, for it allowed for competition, strife within the ranks, and inner conflicts. When power is distributed to all of the people, degeneracy tends to expand, and chaos is brought more to the forefront. Thus, Moses upbraided the Israelites for seeking to do their own thing. “*You shall not do at all what we are doing here today, every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes*”^{NASB} (Deut 12:8). Again, during the time of the Judges, when there was no king in Israel, “*every man did that which was right in his own eyes*” (Judges 17:6; 21:25). The results were not good, and moral and spiritual degeneracy grew. In our very own nation, this sort of attitude is heavily promoted, and it has not produced good results. However a person may view our form of government, if the people are not righteous, it cannot be good.

The reason for this superiority is most evident. In Christ Jesus, the constituents of the Kingdom are being conformed to the image of its Ruler (Rom 8:19). **When they are perfected, and have apprehended that for which they have been apprehended, there will be no difference in their character and that of the Lord.** No seed of competition will remain in them, but they will “*be like Him*” (1 John 3:2). That is why the kingdom can be given to them without any measure of inferiority occurring.

This glorious circumstance confirms the relevance of the passage before us. It is a text that fuels hope and strengthens faith.

IT WILL DESTROY ALL THESE

This does not suggest a believer cannot be involved in politics. Joseph was a political ruler (Gen 41:40), and Daniel as well (Dan 6:2-3). Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were also political entities (Dan 2:49). The Ethiopian eunuch was (Acts 8:27). Erastus also was in a governmental office (Rom 16:23). In these positions, these godly men lived by faith, refusing to do anything that was displeasing to their Lord. **Their faith** made them superior, not the government in which they participated. There was not a single aspect of their persons that was better because they played a role in governmental affairs. It was their relation to God, and solely that relation, that gave them true advantage.

Jesus Will Not compete!

It was foretold that the Messiah would utterly decimate all worldly kingdoms. The kings of the earth are admonished to give due heed to this word. *“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth”* (Psa 2:8-9). The sixtieth chapter of Isaiah speaks of the glorious reign of Messiah. It is depicted as destroying the gross darkness that covered the people (verse 2). The Gentiles will be illuminated, volunteering to come to the light (verse 3). The gates of salvation will be opened day and night for whosoever will (verse 11). The prophet then adds, *“For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted”* (verse 12). This is more precisely declared in our text. Paul adds this word, *“when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. **For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet**”* (1 Cor 15:24-25).

The Lord Jesus will NOT compete with other leaders, whether they are among men, or in the spirit world. In the end, *“He shall have put down **all rule and all authority and power**”* (1 Cor 15:24). If these rulers, authorities, and powers seem to be invincible now, or intended to last forever, it is only a delusion. **Every worldly government, regardless of its noble beginnings, eventually comes out against Christ and righteousness.** We have seen this come to pass in our own country, with its laws

against prayer, Christian representations, and teaching the Word of God in public schools. This does not mean no godly people have ever, or presently do, exist in government. It does mean that all earthly power contains within itself the seeds of pride and self-exaltation.

But Jesus will not compete with other authorities and powers. Rather, He will crush them, bringing them to nought. He may use them, as He did with Babylon, chastening Israel through the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, his *“servant”* (Jer 27:6). Or He may employ Persia to underwrite the rebuilding of the Temple, as He did with Cyrus, also His servant (2 Chron 36:22-23). But in the end, both Babylon and Persia were crushed by the kingdom of Christ. His Kingdom is why they fell.

IT WILL STAND FOREVER

“. . . and it shall stand for ever.”

Note, our text does not say it will merely exist for ever. Rather, it will *“stand,”* maintaining its dominance and spreading

(Psa 22:27).

- ▣ *“Beautiful for situation, **the joy of the whole earth**, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King”* (Psa 48:2).
- ▣ *“And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and **let the whole earth be filled with his glory**; Amen, and Amen”* (Psa 72:19).
- ▣ *“**All nations** whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name”* (Psa 86:9).
- ▣ *“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea”* (Isa 11:9).
- ▣ *“**The whole earth is at rest**, and is quiet: they break forth into singing”* (Isa 14:70).

EVERY WORLDLY GOVERNMENT, REGARDLESS OF ITS NOBLE BEGINNINGS, EVENTUALLY COMES OUT AGAINST CHRIST AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.

its borders, for of its *“increase,”* there will be no end (Isa 9:6). This is a kingdom that extends into eternity, and we have been translated into it!

This is the circumstance to which the dream referred when it depicted the supernatural stone becoming a mountain and filling all the earth (2:35). This kingdom will leave no place or opportunity for any competing kingdom.

The prophets alluded to this prophecy in yet another way. It is refreshing, yet challenging, to read their words.

- ▣ *“All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and **all the kindreds of the nations** shall worship before thee”*

- ▣ *“For **the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD**, as the waters cover the sea”* (Hab 2:14).

Whatever a person may choose to believe about these stirring texts, it must be acknowledged that they postulate the total overthrow of all enemies. They require the complete removal of all competing powers and kingdoms.

These were written in view of the nature of Christ’s kingdom, which is one of salvation and redemption from the fall, not military power. That is precisely why His kingdom is superior. It is *“not of this world”* (John 18:36). **Now Daniel will affirm the sureness of what he has declared to the king.** He will confirm there is no way this will not happen.

IT IS A SURE THING!

“⁴⁵ 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.”

Daniel has presented the

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 . . .” **In Daniel’s summarization of the dream, he turns the attention from the image to the stone.** In relating the dream, he began by describing a marvelous image, then declaring the stone. In his conclusion, he begins with the stone, and ends with a demolished image. Thus, he is making sure the king is left with the

translation “*showed before, “signified,” and “testified beforehand.”*” The word used in Scripture means to declare beforehand. That is, something God has determined, and will accomplish, is announced.

While the word “*prophecy*” is not used in our text, the sense of it is affirmed. By saying “*what shall come to pass,*” “*certain,*” and “*sure,*” Daniel is confirming this is NOT a prognostication, which is based upon observations made under the heavens, or information received from nether sources. The God of heaven has shown Nebuchadnezzar what HE HIMSELF is going to do. This was not a prediction of some fateful event that was going to occur. Rather, it was the announcement of determinations made in heaven, and that would be carried out without a smallest deviation.

CERTAIN DREAM, SURE INTERPRETATION

“ . . . and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.” This is a declaration of Divine intention. Herein is the difference between a prophecy and a prediction. It is an example of what the Lord has elsewhere declared. “*Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure*” (Isa 46:9-10).

I want to be emphatic about this. God has not declared what He has seen men doing in the future – peering into the future, as it were, and gaining a knowledge of what is coming. He is, of course, fully capable of this. But that is not the declaration of our text. God has made known what He has determined, and that is precisely why it will come to pass. It will not come to pass because He sees it, but because He has so determined. That is the reason for the interpretation being sure.

There is a reason why such an accent is placed upon this by Daniel. Man, by nature, is prone to doubt. Even after God reveals what He is going to do, flesh shouts back, “*Where is the promise of his*

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revelation he received in a most excellent manner. He first told the king that the thing he demanded could not be made known through “*the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers.*” Next, he brought the mind of the king to a consideration of the God in heaven who reveals secrets – like the one with which the king was wrestling. . Then Daniel told the king God had revealed things to him that would come to pass in the latter days. He explained the circumstances under which these things were made known to Nebuchadnezzar: “*thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed.*” Daniel then confessed to the king that these things had not been revealed to him because of any superior natural wisdom he possessed. He then made known the dream, furnishing every detail of it. The inspired interpretation of the dream was then declared. It too was in the finest detail. Now the prophet concludes his presentation, making sure Nebuchadnezzar precisely remembers what he dreamed, who sent the dream to him, and that is was certain. There was no chance the things revealed to him would not come to pass in their entirety.

HOLY REHEARSAL

“Forasmuch as thou sawest that

correct perspective. **What was done without human intervention utterly destroyed the best of human innovation.** That is a reality upon which we must continually rely.

IT WILL COME TO PASS

“ . . . the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter . . .” Other versions read, “*the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future,*” ^{NASB} and “*The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future.*” ^{NIV} The three references made to this dream accent that, for Nebuchadnezzar, it is up ahead and at the end of time: “*what shall be in the latter days,*” ^{2:28} “*what shall come to pass,*” ^{2:29} and “*what shall come to pass.*” ^{2:45}

This is not a prediction, which things magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers make. Scripture refer to such things as “*prognostications*” KJV or “*predictions*” ^{NASB/NIV} (Isa 47:13; Acts 16:16). Later versions of Scripture use the words “*predict,*” “*predicted,*” or “*prediction,*” when referring to prophecies (1 Sam 28:17; Acts 7:52; 11:28; 1 Pet 1:11). ^{NIV/NASB} This is a very loose translation of the word. I prefer the

coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Pet 3:4). Thus God sends His messengers to nail the truth in men's conscience. Not only do

they make known what is coming, they repeatedly affirm that God will also do it.

We do well to turn our ears, hearts, and minds toward the words of

Daniel, taking them into our thought processes. They speak of things that concern us, and assure our hearts of the glorious triumph of our Christ, and of our future as well.

CONCLUSION

The prophesy we have just considered is one of the central ones in the Prophets. It is remarkable for both detail and scope. By the grace of God, we are presently participating in the very kingdom Daniel announced. It is such a grand Divine enterprise, that much more will be said of it throughout this book. This is where the Divine focus has been placed – **on the kingdom God Himself has set up.** The focus of God has never been upon the kingdoms of men. **What He declares to us, whether it is in the area of human conduct, or that of Divine purpose, His concentration is always upon what He is doing.**

If men insist upon forming their own agenda, or making their own will the center of their attention, they will become blind to the working of the Lord, and deaf to His Word. It is only to the degree that we "lose" our lives for Christ's sake, that we will find them (Matt 16:25). The

unvarying requirement of the Kingdom is, "If any man will come after Me, let him **deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me**" (Matt 16:24). Again, Jesus said, "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, **and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple**" (Luke 14:26).

These are not simply a harsh and inconsiderate requirements. They have been delivered to men with the predetermined purpose of God in mind. Anything that is anchored to the temporal realm, whether it be a government or a single personal desire, is destined to pass away. That does not mean men are to be simpletons, living out their lives without any attention at all being given to their needs or the needs of others. It does mean we are to live with the purpose of God in mind – with His will dominate in our thinking. We have been saved to "live

unto God" (Gal 2:19).

Such a posture of life brings no disadvantage to those who embrace it. The will of God is, in every way, and from every perspective, "good and acceptable, and perfect" (Rom 12:2). It brings us the greatest advantages, the most abundant joy, and the only peace that can keep our hearts and minds. No one is ever put to a disadvantage for preferring God's will.

If you will take hold on the word that was delivered to Nebuchadnezzar, you will find it is altogether good. Weep not that great empires and dynasties like Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome have fallen. Rejoice that when they fell it was because of the greater kingdom that God Himself set up. That is the kingdom into which you have been translated. It is the one you are in the process of receiving. It is the one into which an abundant entrance will at last be ministered to you!

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 5/17/2002. We will continue in our overview of Daniel, covering verses 46-49 of the second chapter. The lesson is titled, "**NEBUCHADNEZZAR RESPONDS TO THE INTERPRETATION.**" The message that has been delivered to the king is a weighty one, telling of the demise of his own kingdom, and those that follow it. The response of the king will confirm the heart of the king is in the Lord's hand, and he turns it like a river of water, wherever He wants. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR THIS MINISTRY

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COMMENTARY on Romans: <http://wotruth.com/Romans.htm>

COMMENTARY on Romans: <http://wotruth.com/Daniel.htm>

Have you made plans to attend the next REFRESHING WATERS RENEWAL? It will be held in Crown Point, Indiana, July 16-18, 2002. The theme will be "THE WILL OF GOD." Numerous speakers from around country will develop this theme, and the unity of the Spirit will be perceived in the bond of peace. Further information including speakers, motel accommodations, and directions can be found on the Refreshing Waters webpage: <http://wotruth.com/RENEWAL.htm>