

## INTRODUCTION

Daniel contains the ABC's of Bible Prophecy. Revelation contains the XYZs. I want to use history and the Bible to show you how this is an amazing book you hold in your hands. If you aren't yet convinced the Bible is a supernatural book, you will be before we complete the study of Daniel.

Daniel 2:31-35, "You looked, O king, and there before you stood a large statue—an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. While you were watching a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth."

Can you imagine Nebuchadnezzar's jaw dropping as Daniel describes in perfect detail everything that Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed? He realizes this young teenager has an amazing gift. But what does this dream mean? Read on:

Daniel 2:36-38, "This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; 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. You are that head of gold."

Nebuchadnezzar is feeling pretty good about now. Wow! I'm the gold!

Daniel 2:39-45, "After you, another kingdom will rise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay."

"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces. The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy."

The dream is of a mighty, multi-metallic statue. Then a Rock comes and demolishes the statue. What does it mean?

## **I. THE KINGDOMS OF THE GENTILES**

The statue represents the history of the world empires. But when it was written 2,600 years ago, it was prophecy. That's what prophecy is, history is reverse. When it comes to world history, Jesus observed there would be a long time of Gentile control over the nation of Israel. Luke 21:24b, "They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." And actually the time of the Gentiles began with the Babylonian Kingdom and continued through the Roman Empire and didn't end until 1967 when once again the Jews established Jerusalem as their capital city.

What does each section of the statue represent?

### **1. GOLD: Babylonian (605-539 B.C.)**

That's the Babylonian Empire and it represents Nebuchadnezzar. He was pleased to hear that. In the next chapter we are going to see old Nebuchadnezzar build a giant statue and guess what it is made of? All gold, no silver, bronze, or iron. Who do you think Nebuchadnezzar was thinking of when he built that statue? But if he thought his kingdom would last forever, Daniel was about to burst his bubble.

### **2. SILVER: Medo-Persian (539-331 B.C.)**

In 539, Cyrus the Great conquered the Babylonians at the Tigris River, just outside modern Baghdad. This happened while Daniel was still alive. This kingdom lasted almost 200 years. King Ahasuerus was one of the kings of this dynasty, and the events in the book of Esther took place during this time. Later, King Artaxerxes was king when the book of Nehemiah took place.

### **3. BRONZE: Greek (331-146 B.C.)**

The Bronze represents the amazing kingdom established by Alexander the Great, who conquered the known world and then wept because there were no more kingdoms to conquer. The Greek armies used bronze, or brass, helmets and shields. The influence of this age of Greek culture is still among us. During this time Hippocrates, the father of medicine, lived. Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato lived during these days.

### **4. IRON: Roman Empire (146 B.C. - 400 A.D.)**

The iron legs represent the great Roman Empire. Only one verse is devoted to the other three kingdoms, but this iron kingdom receives much more attention.

Although the power of Rome was great for 200 years before this, many scholars say when Rome won the Battle of Carthage in 146, that's when they became a true world power. For over 500

years, they ruled the western world. The Roman legions were a thing to be feared. They were known to land their boats on the shores of a land and then burn their boats to indicate they were there to win in battle or die trying. This caused many lands to simply surrender before the battle began.

The Romans were also great builders. They constructed a highway and an aqueduct system that defies description. They built 52,000 miles of road, most of them paved. To give you a point of reference, there are only 46,000 miles of interstate highways in America today. 2,000 years later, some of these Roman roads are still in use. I've driven on some of them and they are smoother than I-20 in Mississippi!

The image has two legs, which some see as the division between the Eastern and Western parts of the Roman Empire. The Eastern part was centered in Constantinople (modern Istanbul) and produced what is called the Byzantine culture. The western part of the Roman Empire remained centered in Rome.

It is hard to date the end of the Roman Empire, because unlike these other kingdoms, no other world kingdom ever took its place. It crumbled from within. That's why we see the unusual feet of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The feet were *iron* and *clay*, which means there was a mixture of the Roman Empire with another divided kingdom.

This prophecy is so precise it is amazing. The book of Daniel like the rest of the Bible has come under fire from liberal theologians. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, liberal theologians said Daniel did not write this book 600 years before Jesus. Instead, it was written about 100 years before Jesus, by a Maccabean scribe who took the name Daniel. That is what has been taught in many of the seminaries. Do you know why they say that? Because they assume someone could only write this *after* these kingdoms were in place. So someone had to write it when the Romans (Iron legs) were in power. However, I believe this was written by Daniel himself, and so did Jesus.

In Matthew 24, Jesus spoke of that which was written by the prophet Daniel. Another reason we know the liberal theologians are wrong: in 1948, when they discovered the Dead Sea scrolls, a portion of the book of Daniel was found that dated back long before 1 B.C.

## **5. REVIVED Roman Empire (??? A.D.)**

The feet represent what the book of Revelation describes as a 10-nation federation that will come to power under the Antichrist during the seven year tribulation after Jesus comes to call His Bride home at the Rapture. It will be a federation of nations resembling the old Roman Empire. The Roman Empire never completely died; it just went into a coma. Charlemagne briefly revived it in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Pope Leo IV crowned him as the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Then Louis XIV claimed to be king of the restored Roman Empire. That was Napoleon's desire in the nineteenth century. And what was Hitler trying to do? Establish the Third Reich, a thousand-year reign of the revived Roman Empire. Just look at the Roman style buildings he built.

All these failed. What's happening now? The nations of Western Europe are acting more and more like states of one superpower rather than sovereign nations. Two years ago, they instituted

the Euro, one currency. Now, citizens of the 12 nations of the EC (European Community) travel within these nations like we pass from Texas to Louisiana. For the prophecy to be true, two of the nations of the European Community will have to drop out, which is not too hard to imagine.

So, this image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream is *still* standing, because we are living in the time of man's kingdoms. But there was more to the dream! There was a stone—a rock that was cut out of a mountain without human hands. That rock came hurtling toward the feet of the statue and demolished it. It became dust and is blown away. What is that all about? Obviously, the rest of the Bible identifies that rock as Jesus.

## II. THE KINGDOM OF GOD

This week, I studied all 154 verses in the New Testament that speak of the Kingdom of God.

### 1. Jesus' present kingdom is spiritual

Before Jesus, John the Baptist preached, "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand."

When Jesus came, He established the Kingdom of God. Now some people notice Jesus said in Luke 17, "The Kingdom of God is within you." That's what the KJV says, but the preposition really means "among you" because he was speaking these words to a Pharisee, and then He went on to announce His Second Coming. When Jesus was on earth, the Kingdom of God was real because the only thing you need for a kingdom is a king and Jesus is the King. When Jesus becomes your personal King and you are His faithful subject, then you are *in* the Kingdom of God.

My life verse is Matthew 6:33, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness..." Why didn't Jesus say, "Seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness?" Because the Kingdom of God is a person: Jesus the King. Remember what we learned in Romans last year?

Romans 14:17 "For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

### 2. Jesus' future kingdom is literal

But you cannot ignore the fact the Bible teaches Jesus will establish a *future kingdom* and it will be a literal Kingdom. It will take place in the future after His Second Coming. There were so many scriptures about Jesus that He didn't fulfill in His First Coming that He will fulfill when He comes again. For instance, when Gabriel announced to Mary that she would give birth to Jesus he said, "You will be with child [that happened]. You will give birth to a son [that happened]. You are to give him the name Jesus [that happened]. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High [that happened]. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David [that didn't happen, but it will] and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever [that didn't happen, but it will]."

What do you think it means when Isaiah predicted "The government shall be upon His shoulders?" Let me ask you: is that happening now? Do the members of Congress, or the President and his cabinet get on their knees and say, "Jesus, our government is on your shoulders, what do you want us to do?" Not yet, but it will happen one day.

Even the night before Jesus was crucified, he notified his disciples there would be a future kingdom.

Mark 14:25, "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew with you in the Kingdom of God."

That's what this dream is all about. Jesus is the Rock that will one day demolish all the kingdoms of man and He will establish His very own kingdom right here on planet earth. That's what the Bible calls in Revelation 20 the millennial reign of Christ.

One of the most beautiful compositions of history is George Frederick Handel's "Messiah." It is said that he wrote the entire oratorio in only 23 days, often weeping as he considered the words right out of the Bible. It was performed for the first time in London in 1743. When the choir reached the finale, the majestic "Hallelujah Chorus," the king stood to his feet, and when the king stands, everyone stands. Thus was born the tradition of standing during the Hallelujah chorus. The climax of that song says, "The kingdoms of this world/have become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ/and He shall reign forever and ever." That's right out of Revelation 11 that speaks of what Nebuchadnezzar sees happening to this statue. The kingdoms of men are replaced with the Kingdom of God. Let's look a little closer at this Rock. Get ready to be blessed.

## **JESUS IS THE:**

### **1. Solid rock of salvation**

What does it mean when Daniel said the Rock was cut out from a mountain without human hands? It means that this Rock was not the product of any human being, not the child of a man and a woman. This Rock, Jesus, was designed and produced by the Hand of God. He is the Rock that the Jewish people have previously rejected.

It is said when Solomon's Temple was built, they used a remote quarry so the sound of hammers striking stone would not be heard. The huge stones were designed, formed, and then transported to the temple construction site. Jewish history tells us that an unusually shaped stone arrived at the construction site and the chief builder didn't recognize it, so he had it dumped in a field. Later when he began to start stacking the stones, he asked the quarry master where the cornerstone was. When was it coming? The quarry master said, "I sent that stone to you months ago, it was the one with the unusual shape." The stone that had been thrown away was the cornerstone or the capstone.

That's why Peter said in Acts 4:11-12, "He is the Stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone [cornerstone]. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under

heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” Sadly, today, many people cast Jesus aside because they don’t recognize Him. My friend He is the Rock of Salvation, the *only* Rock of Salvation. That’s why the hymn writer could sing, “Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee, Let the water and the blood, from thy wounded side which flowed—be for sin the double cure—save from death and make me sure.”

## 2. Strong rock of power

Again, note when the stone hits the statue, it doesn’t hit the head, the chest, the thighs, or the legs, but strikes the feet and toes of iron mixed with clay. I believe this means the stone, which represents Christ coming back to the earth to establish his kingdom, will smash the governments of mankind as they are allied together in the Last Days under the leadership of the person the Bible calls the Antichrist.

The key thing to note at this point is when Christ returns, all earthly empires will be totally destroyed. In the dream not only did the stone smash the statue, it causes the pieces to be blown away like chaff in the wind. Christ’s coming will bring an end to everything built by the hand of man. If man built it, it’s coming down in the Last Days. You can take that to the bank: Every building, every stadium, every house, every monument to man’s bloated ego.

A few years ago, the group Kansas sang, “Dust in the wind...all we are is dust in the wind...” That’s really true. Everything build by human hands will become dust in the wind. In Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, the rock demolished the ten toes and the entire image. This is exactly what the Apostle John saw in the Book of Revelation: “The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.” (Revelation 17:12, 14)

## 3. Supreme rock of authority

Then Daniel says in verse 44 God will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, a Kingdom that will endure forever. He says this kingdom becomes a mountain that fills the whole earth. This is the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Listen how Ray Steadman describes it:

“Jesus is the stone that comes striking suddenly into the affairs of mankind — God once again intervening dramatically in history to destroy all that man has built through the centuries. The entire structure of civilization collapses and crumbles at the impact of this mighty stone, and the stone in turn grows to fill the entire earth. This clearly introduces the millennial kingdom which has been prophesied by the prophets.”

The literal Kingdom of God is described in many places in the Old Testament. Here’s one:

Isaiah 2:2, 4, “In the last days the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords

into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore."

The brother of John Wesley, Charles Wesley, was a great hymn writer. One of his greatest hymns describes this future kingdom. "Jesus shall reign, where're the sun doth its successive journeys run. His Kingdom spread from shore to shore, and moons shall wax and wane no more."

## CONCLUSION

Which of these two kingdoms has your attention? Your money? Your time?

This week I was thinking back on all the high profile deaths the past few years. Princess Diana was a glamorous but troubled celebrity, hounded by the paparazzi. She was the essence of a star who traveled with the jet set. The same year she died, Mother Teresa died. Princess Diana left a large estate behind. When Mother Teresa died, all she owned could fit into a suitcase. Princess Diana married into the kingdom of this world and it only led her to heartache and the loss of privacy. Mother Teresa gave her life in the slums of Calcutta. She invested all she had in another Kingdom. Who do you think was the more fulfilled of the two?

I think about the recent string of Christians who have died in tragic ways. I'm thinking about the children killed in Littleton and the seven people killed at Wedgwood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Payne Stewart and his friends, and now the tragic death of teenagers in our own area. Suddenly people are openly talking about eternal issues. Jesus has returned to the high school.

When death knocks, the world has no answer. When death comes and takes away a man in the prime of life, people without Christ don't know what to say or what to do. Sudden death reveals the emptiness of modern life and the aching void inside every human heart. We can cure almost everything these days, but we can't cure death. Our technological culture can answer every question but the most important one: What happens when we die? Do you know how this world rewards you?

As I walked through the cemetery this week when we laid Hal Kleeburg to rest, I noticed what was written on the tombstones. You know what I mean. There's a name and two dates. It may say "John Doe 1932-1998." I thought, that's not very much to remember about a person. But that's how the kingdom of this world remembers people. When you die, you get a hole in the ground and a piece of granite above your head. On the granite they chisel your name, date of birth, date of death, and guess how they sum up your life? You get a little "CC." That's it. 1924-1999. And the "CC" represents 75 years.

A hole in the ground and a dash. That's it. That's all this world gives you. But what if you're famous? A hole in the ground and a dash. What if you live to be 90? A hole in the ground and a dash. What if you die young? A hole in the ground and a dash. What if you are a good person? A hole in the ground and a dash. What about criminals? A hole in the ground and a dash. Rich, poor, old, young, nice people, total jerks, solid citizens, rock stars, faithful missionaries, axe

murderers. It’s all the same: A hole in the ground and a dash. That’s the way the world rewards you.

And then I thought about Hal who was always the first one to arrive here every Sunday morning to get everything ready, how he visited the hospitals every week, how he loved and served Jesus with one of the sweetest spirits I’ve ever witnessed. And I thought the kingdom of this world never recognizes a man like that. But Jesus said, “The man who is the greatest among you is the *servant* of all.” And I’m confident of that because Hal and many of you have discovered the joy of living in the Kingdom of God that life is found in Jesus.

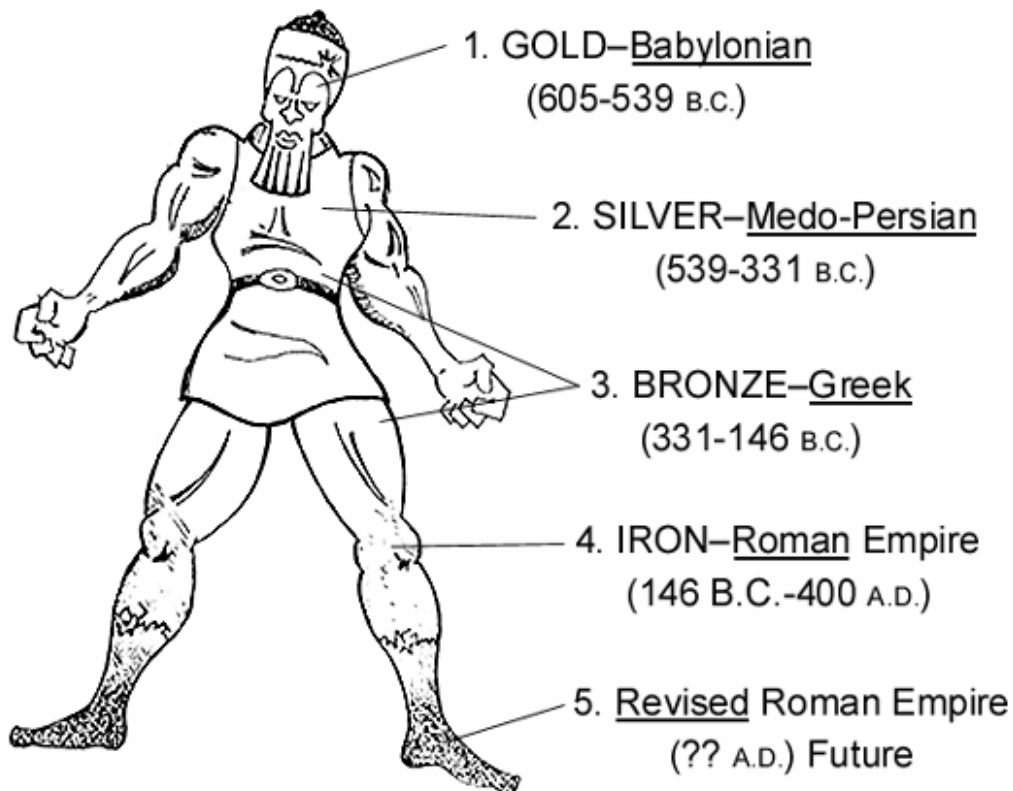
Have you built your life on the Rock—Jesus Christ?



## OUTLINE

### I. THE KINGDOMS OF THE GENTILES

"Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. *Luke 21:24b*



### II. THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Jesus' present kingdom is spiritual

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. *Romans 14:17*

Jesus' future kingdom is literal

"I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God." *Mark 14:25*

### JESUS IS THE:

Solid rock of salvation

He is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is not other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." *Acts 4:11-12*

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"The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast ... They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers. *Revelation 17:12, 14*

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To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...  
Pastor David Dykes