

## The Kingdom of God on Earth - 5

The prophecy of Daniel provides a revealing picture of what the long-term plan of God has been with the governing of the nations. Ironically, it has been the prevailing attitude among men connected with modern Christianity - Professors of Old Testament Theology, etc.- to regard the book of Daniel as a thoroughly human production.

We need to keep in mind that these rejecters of the book of Daniel, by their connection with the Christian church, must be assumed to have been believers in Jesus Christ. This raises the question whether these men were aware that the authority of Daniel as an authentic prophet is fully supported by Christ, who said to his disciples,

“When you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (let the reader understand)...” - Mark 13:14, and Jesus proceeded to give his instructions which in AD 70 allowed the believers to escape Jerusalem before the Roman armies destroyed the city and killed many of the inhabitants.

In so saying, Jesus was commending Daniel’s book as a part of the Scripture which the apostle Paul later stated, has been “given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” - 2 Timothy 3:16. Of these divinely inspired writings, which include the book of Daniel, Jesus declared, “the Scripture cannot be broken” - John 10:35.

With such endorsement of Daniel’s prophecy the disciples of Christ can have every confidence to “read and understand” his message. His book contains seven references to the kingdom of God. The most revealing information is given in chapter 2, in which is related a prophecy of world history, given by God, ironically not to his wayward people Israel, but to the pagan emperor of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar reigned about 605-561 BC. He was known for his military might and the splendour of his capital, Babylon. He made Babylonia one of the richest lands in western Asia, after it had been rather poor while being ruled by the Assyrians. Babylon was the largest city in the vicinity of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Nebuchadnezzar maintained the existing canal systems and built many supplementary canals, making the land even more fertile. Trade and commerce flourished during his reign.

The history of Babylon had been chaotic, but this highly gifted monarch had brought stability and prosperity to its people. His mind turned to the future - what could he do to ensure that it might continue after his death? In the words of Daniel to the king, “As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this” - Daniel 2:29.

With these thoughts on the king’s mind he fell asleep, and God, who exercises control over His own creation, sent an answer to his questions. In sending the dream God was revealing an outline of how He would be controlling events which would bring about His purpose with mankind.

The king awakes; the dream he remembers was vivid and shocking and it surely was conveying some message to him. He commands that the intelligentsia of the realm - all of them - “the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans” be brought before him immediately to explain the meaning of his dream.