

The Kingdom of God on Earth - 7

King Nebuchadnezzar recognized that Daniel correctly described his dream - and that if Daniel had the power to tell him what he had dreamed, then his explanation would be reliable. We previously noted that the dream consisted of two separate and independent entities - “an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance...You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image...” .

The image is first seen towering in its metallic grandeur, then the stone suddenly appears, not as a passive object, but as a direct menace to the image. There is no peaceful relationship between them. The stone does not sidle up to the image, and gradually join itself with it.

The stone strikes the image in a violent collision, immediately bringing it down in ruins and grinding it to powder. After the wind carries away all the resulting dust, the stone grows into an immense mountain, and keeps growing until it has filled the entire earth. In doing so, there is no incorporating of any part of the image - the stone grows by its own intrinsic force.

Daniel then continued his explanation to the king - “You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory...you are this head of gold.”

“But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters all things; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.”

“Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided...it shall be partly strong and partly fragile...And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever” - Daniel 2:37-45.

This prophecy, sent in the form of a dream to the king, reveals that God was going to oversee the rise of four successive empires which would also rule over the land of Israel, and that they would finally be superseded by an everlasting kingdom, to be established by God. The prophecy presents a picture of the future in, as it were, broad brush strokes.

It provides a general view of the great successive political changes of the world's history, which leads to the ultimate destiny of all nations. That revelation was sent from God more than twenty-six centuries ago. In this day and age we have the advantage of being able to verify how it was carried out during that long period. Seeing how accurately this and other similar prophecies have been fulfilled, we can look with confidence for the magnificent concluding phase of divine government.

The empire which was established by Nebuchadnezzar existed at the time of the visions. It can be seen in the golden head of the image, representing the splendour and magnificence of the empire.

“But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours” and, therefore, represented by the less valuable metal, silver. This was fulfilled in 539 BC when Cyrus attacked northern Babylonia with a large army, defeating Nabonidus, and entered the city of Babylon without a battle.