

"The Times of the Gentiles" (Part 1)

Daniel 2:31-49; Luke 21:20-24

Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that troubled him greatly (and, considering who he was and how mighty he was, that wasn't easy to do) but he couldn't remember what it was. So, he called his wise men in to give him the dream and interpretation. They couldn't do that, so the king ordered them all killed. Once the decree went out, they came to Daniel and his friends to execute them, but God had a plan for Daniel, and He intervened through Daniel's wisdom in asking for a little time to pray for the answer. God gave it to Daniel (and his three friends) and the verses before us show us that dream and interpretation.

In these verses we find a very distinct, marked change in the affairs of men, and how God dealt with his people. Up until the point where Nebuchadnezzar came against Israel in 586 B.C. and carried the nation into captivity and destroyed Jerusalem, God's Word, and the history recorded therein, dealt primarily with Israel, God's chosen people. At this point that all changed, and He begins to deal with Gentile people (although there has always been a remnant and God continues to deal with the remnant to some degree). We can even see that in relation to the Gospel message in Acts 13:46 where the Apostle Paul said to the Jews "we turn to the Gentiles."

Acts 13:46

⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

I. THE DREAM – VS. 31-35

A. The image declared – "a great image" – vs. 31

1. Nebuchadnezzar would have immediately recognized Daniel was on the right track when he said "great image" – if not, he would have stopped him and known he was simply trying to save his own neck, so to speak.
2. The word "image" is not speaking of an idol, as some say (and as Nebuchadnezzar built to himself recorded in chapter 3), but rather a statue corresponding to human form of great size – which would account for his spirit being "troubled" (2:1).
3. "Whose brightness was excellent" – the precious metals of the head and torso would have made the image shine and reflective so that the brightness would have been very, preeminently, exceeding bright.
4. "Stood before thee" – it was close at hand – the king didn't see it off in a distance but saw it up close, right there with it.
5. "And the form thereof was terrible" – the entire image that stood before him in the dream was so impressive and of such wonder that he was not only troubled by it, he was terrified by it.

B. The image described – vs. 32-33

1. "Head was of fine gold"

- a) Which would account for its "excellent" brightness
 - b) "Fine gold" was gold that had been purified in the refiner's fire so that it was pure as it could be.
2. "His breast and his arms of silver" – not stated as being refined silver which, as will be seen, is somewhat significant because of the deterioration of the metals in the image.
3. "His belly and his thighs of brass"
- a) "Brass" today is an alloy of copper and zinc but in Bible times they didn't have the ability to combine those two – then, as in all of ancient history, "brass" was an alloy of copper and tin (a widely use practice called "brass").
 - b) The Old Testament calls "brass" what we know of as copper today as being mined – they "dig brass."

Deuteronomy 8:9

- ⁹ A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.
- c) Ezra called it "copper" (only time in the Bible the word is used) – there is no contradiction, and there is no misinterpretation of the word – they were interchangeable during the time period that the KJV was translated and, for the most part, "brass" was in reference to the color, not the metal.

- d) In Daniel, however, the metal is in view, rather than the color – and it is to be seen as that combination of copper and tin – a much less valuable metal than gold or silver.

4. "His legs of iron" – vs. 33a

- a) This word for "iron" is only used in the Book of Daniel because it is an Aramaic word.
- b) It was a metal found in the earth that had to be smelted to be useful (smelting is the process of heating and cooling an ore in order to extract the metal from it).
- c) This metal was extremely strong but of very little value compared to the others.

5. "His feet part of iron and part of clay"

- a) The only part of the image that had a mixture of two components
- b) This doesn't mean they were a mixture of iron and clay in each toe (iron and clay do not mix to form anything), but rather that there were some toes that were iron and some that were clay.
- c) The "clay" would not have been the soft, pliable, unbaked form, but rather the hardened form after it had gone in the oven.

"The preciousness of the metal deteriorates from the top or gold to the clay of the feet, and there is a corresponding lower specific gravity; that is, the gold is much heavier than the silver, the silver than the brass, the brass than the iron, and the clay in the feet is the lightest material of all. The approximate

specific gravity of gold is 19, silver 11, brass 8.5, and iron 7.8. The gold head has twice the weight of similar amounts of the other metals. The weight of brass varies according to the amount of tin or zinc which is added to the copper. While the materials decrease in weight, they increase in hardness with the notable exception of the clay in the feet. The image is obviously top heavy and weak in its feet." (Walvoord)

C. The image is destroyed – vs. 34-35

1. Vs. 34 speaks of "a stone [that] was cut out without hands"
 - a) As we will see later in our study, this stone is the Lord Jesus Christ.

[Psalm 118:22](#)

²² The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

[Isaiah 28:16](#)

¹⁶ Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

[Zechariah 12:3](#)

³ And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

[Acts 4:10-11](#)

¹⁰ Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye

crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

¹¹ This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

1 Peter 2:3-7

³ If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

⁴ To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

⁵ Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

⁶ Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

⁷ Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

b) The stone is seen (vs. 45) as being "cut out of the mountain" – it didn't roll down the mountain but, considering the total destruction seen here, it would have been hurled through the air like a missile.

2. Next, it states that that "stone" "smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces."

Psalms 2:8-12

⁸ Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen

for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Psalm 110:5-6

5 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

6 He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

Revelation 17:14

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Revelation 19:11-21

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

a) The stone didn't hit the head, or the torso,

or the mid-section, or the legs – it hit the feet, the weakest place in the image – at which time the whole image collapsed (vs. 35a).

b) We'll see that this was because of what the feet represent and the fact that they were the only nations left of the image to be destroyed.

3. Vs. 35 records the end of the dream that the king had.

a) The first part records the destruction of the image – starting from the feet and moving upward to the head of gold – it collapsed on itself.

b) Then, after it was broken to pieces, the whole of the image became as "the chaff of the summer threshingfloors."

"Refers to the mode of winnowing grain in the East. This was done in the open air, usually on an elevated place, by throwing the grain, when thrashed, into the air with a shovel, and the wind thus drove away the chaff. Such chaff, therefore, naturally became an emblem of anything that was light, and that would be easily dissipated."
(Barnes)

See video of this in practice here:



<https://youtu.be/QbMWvAnUFz0>

- c) "And the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them" – every remnant of the Gentile powers (as will be seen later in this chapter) will be destroyed and completely dispersed "to the wind."
- d) "And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" – the end of Nebuchadnezzar's dream shows a global, world-wide event that all will be able to see.

Conclusion: We will deal with the interpretation of the dream in the next message from Daniel. Although this has all been somewhat mundane as far as Biblical doctrine and understanding goes, we need to remember what we've seen already in Daniel 2 – that the God of heaven is a revealer of secrets and that He is in control of all that happens (2:19-22). As he revealed this dream to Daniel we can see that God had a plan all along, and that even though we may not see what's ahead like He does, we need to remember that He's got a plan and nothing will change that – not only for humanity in general, but for us as individual believers.