

## CHAPTER V

### The Prophecy of the Great Metallic Image and of the Stone Which Struck It

DANIEL 2:28, 29, 31-45

The Aramaic portion of the Book of Daniel begins in the midst of verse four of chapter two and extends to the end of chapter seven. So the verses now before the reader are in the Aramaic language. The writer has prepared a translation of the entire Aramaic section. Occasional references, with proper notice, will be made to this translation. The principle quotations, however, will be made from the American Standard Version. Where there is real advantage in doing so, recourse to the original Aramaic will be made.

#### *The Scope and Nature of the Prophecy*

28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and he hath made known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed are these: 29 as for thee, O king, thy thoughts came *into thy mind* upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter; and he that revealeth secrets hath made known to thee what shall come to pass (Daniel 2:28,29, A.S.V.).

Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which he used to test the ability and willingness<sup>1</sup> of his staff of wise men to interpret. When none of them could either tell him what his dream was or reveal what it meant, opportunity was finally given Daniel to tell and interpret the dream. This he did, the record relates, by the power of God working on his behalf.

These two verses are among the opening words of the prophet in telling the dream and interpreting it.

These verses are of importance to this study because of the fact that they indicate what the *nature* and *scope* of the revelation to follow would be.

The first significant statement is that it was the purpose of God to make "known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days." This means that the scope of this dream-revelation of the future includes at least some events within that period of time known as "the latter days," and there is at least a possibility that all will take place in that period.

The actual Aramaic expressions translated "in the latter days" is

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<sup>1</sup> The linguistic evidence, supported by rational arguments, is to the effect that Nebuchadnezzar did not forget his dream at all, as the Authorized Version indicates. Rather, because he had not forgotten the dream he could use it as a test of his wise men. One may imagine what a story the king might have heard if the wise men had supposed he had forgotten the dream! So agree most critical commentators and A.S.V. margin.

(*be'achraith yomayya*). A literal translation is "in the latter part of the days," though it is doubtful that the usual translation can be much improved. About this phrase as used here there are several important observations to be made.

*First*, this phrase is an exact Aramaic translation of the Hebrew *be'acharith hayyamim*, and is an idea lifted *en toto* out of the general prophetic literature of Israel. It is spoken by a Jew who was versed in that literature. Hence, its meaning is to be determined by its usage in that literature, not by its meaning in any other.

*Second*, "the latter days" cannot be restricted in meaning to the understanding which the heathen king Nebuchadnezzar may have had of it. This restriction some have tried to make, but the very phrase selected by Daniel was one already pregnant with meaning for any informed Jew.

*Third*, "the latter days" in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament refers to the future of God's dealing with mankind as to be consummated and concluded historically in the times of the Messiah. Some commentators have sought to prove that the term refers to the future in general (Havernick, *et al*), but without success. Whenever the scope of an Old Testament prophecy is measured by these words, either in the Hebrew or Aramaic sections, the times of Messiah are always within the scope of that prophecy.

The expression appears in the following passages, each one a predictive prophecy: Genesis 49:1; Deuteronomy 4:30, 31:29; Numbers 24:14; Jeremiah 23:20, 30:24, 48:47, 49:39; Ezekiel 38:16; Daniel 2:28, 10:14; Hosea 3:5; Micah 4:1. An examination shows that while many events previous to eschatological times are within the scope of the prophecies limited by the expression "latter days", in not one is the conclusion of all human history in the consummating events connected with the yet future establishment of the Messianic Kingdom on earth out of sight. Otherwise, the events would be only in *future time*, not necessarily in "the latter days."

It is not true that Messianic times alone are denominated thus. Many events of what is now Old Testament history are placed "in the latter days" (as e.g., the tribal divisions of Israel in Canaan. Cf. Gen. 49:1 ff.), but the reach is always beyond those times to Messiah's times. And let it never be forgotten that the Old Testament prophecies of Messiah always have in view the consummation of things in what we now know as Messiah's second advent. The importance of this fact cannot be overemphasized in relation to the interpretation of the second chapter of Daniel.

*Fourth*, this term in Greek translation is used by the New Testament writers with the same meaning. Peter regarded the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost next after Jesus' resurrection as an event of "the latter days" (Acts 2:17-21. Cf. Joel 2:28 ff.). Again, in his second Epistle (3:1-4), Peter prophesied of the coming of men who would *in this present church age* scoff at Biblical eschatology. This, he said, using a very literal Greek translation of the Hebrew words, would take place "in the last days."

*Fifth*, interpretation of "the latter days" must allow it to include not only the first advent and the second advent with the coming of Messiah's future kingdom, but also the age intervening between the advents in which we now live. We are now, and have been since Jesus came, in the latter days (cf. passages under *fourth*, above).

*Sixth*, and finally, the term, "the latter days," is to be distinguished from "the time of the end," which is mentioned in Daniel. The ideas are related but not identical, as will be seen later.

Now, there is no reason whatsoever for believing that Daniel was using this technical term in any other than its usual meaning. So eschatological prediction is to be expected in the prophecy of chapter two.

The second significant statement of Daniel in preparing the mind of the king to receive the prophecy was that the contents of it would relate to "what should come to pass hereafter." The Aramaic is *Mah di lechewe' 'achare denah*. More literally translated, it is "what things [thing] should be which are after these things [this thing]."

The best explanation, that elaborated by Keil (*op.cit., in loco*), is that the king had gone to sleep with the affairs of his kingdom on his mind. He wondered, what any thoughtful king like the great Nebuchadnezzar might have wondered, how his reign would end, and how his dynasty, founded by his father, Nabopolassar, would fare. Nebuchadnezzar's own affairs of state were "these things" after which other "things" would take place and concerning which God was to make revelation. Hence, a recital of the succession of rulers and kingdoms to follow Nebuchadnezzar was to be expected.

To sum up, Daniel 2:28,29 leads us to expect, in the prophecy to follow, a recital of the course of the nations from Nebuchadnezzar's own time down to the setting up of the final Messianic kingdom.

#### *The Details of the Dream*

31 Thou, O king, sawest, and, behold, a great image. This image, which was mighty, and whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the aspect thereof was terrible. 32 As for this image, its head was of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass, 35 its legs of iron, its feet part of iron and part of clay. 34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon its feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces. 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken in pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, so that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth (Daniel 2:31-35, A.S.V.).

These five verses are a recital of the actual dream of Nebuchadnezzar, evidently shown by divine revelation to Daniel also. The objects seen

consisted of a great image of a man "mighty" in size, "bright" in color or sheen, and "terrible" in aspect. Details of the image specifically mentioned were the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass (or copper), the legs of iron, the feet of iron and clay mixed. (No toes are specifically mentioned at this point.) Also, a stone was seen--a stone cut out from a mountain by no human hands; "the wind" is mentioned, and finally, the earth.

The action involved in the dream was simple but very impressive. The polymetallic image did nothing--it simply stood where set, shining and terrible to behold--and the king look and continued to look at it. Then, quite dramatically, the stone appeared. Some commentators speak of it as a rolling stone, but it is not said to be such in the text. It is simply related that the stone struck the image upon the feet. Upon this, the image collapsed, disintegrated into fine particles like chaff, and then "the wind" (it is not said what wind) removed the particles. The stone which struck the image then expanded into a "great mountain and filled the whole earth."

#### *The Noneschatological Portion of the Interpretation*

36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. 37 Thou, O king, art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory; 38 and wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens hath he given into thy hand, and hath made thee to rule over them all: thou art the head of gold. 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 crusheth all these, shall it break in pieces and crush. 41 And where as thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but there shall be in it of the strength of 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 the 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 doth not mingle with clay (Daniel 2:36-43, A.S.V.).

The terms eschatology and eschatological have been used several times in this dissertation, and now appears "non-eschatological." The basic term "eschatology" refers to the study or science of last things, that is, the last events in connection with the current age. From the standpoint of the present church age, all eschatological events are yet future. From the standpoint of the Old Testament believer, all events connected with Messiah's coming--whether the first one or the second (as we now discern)--were eschatological. To us the events of the first advent are historical and only those of the second are eschatological. When I refer to non-eschatological portions, therefore, I refer to portions relating to events previous to the second advent and previous

to other events associated with the close of this present age.

There are problems aplenty and disagreements many about the details of interpretation in this portion. However, most of the differences of opinion are between the interpretation of evangelical believing Christians and that of the unbelieving, anti-supernatural, higher criticism. I am speaking particularly of the contemporary situation, though, historically, the lines of battle usually have been so arrayed.

Among Christian interpreters, as long as there has been any record of opinion, the almost uniform identification of the four successive kingdoms has been Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

The unbelieving higher criticism always has taken exception to this, owing to the fact that if Rome is the fourth kingdom, then even by the latest date any scholar has ever dared to propose for the composition of Daniel (ca. 165-164 B.C.), the book still contains valid, supernatural, predictive prophecy.

This paper is addressed to men who believe that the Bible is the Word of God, hence we shall not labor extensively to answer the arguments of unbelief. As Tregelles has written, "To understand the Scriptures aright, we have no occasion to go beyond the limit of the Scriptures themselves" (*Remarks on the Prophetic Visions in the Book of Daniel*, pp. 11,12). The primary Biblical evidence for the view that the four historical kingdoms are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome is herewith presented. It is clear and unmistakable, notwithstanding the learned obscurantism of the unbelieving attempts to render it inconsistent and incomprehensible.

The head of gold represented the king Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom. "Thou art the head of gold" (Daniel 2:36) settles that matter. Verses 37 and 38 specify that Nebuchadnezzar's was a world-wide kingdom--in divine grant--even though this energetic king, during a long reign, never got to the point of taking possession of all of it. It is also certain that the symbolism of the head of gold included the kingdom of Babylon as well as Nebuchadnezzar its king, for in verse 39 the expression, "another kingdom," requires this, as well as the well-known fact that all Assyro-Babylonian kings were considered identical with the state. Further evidence that Babylon is symbolized is the fact that in other prophecies gold symbolizes that kingdom (e.g. Isa. 14:4). Also Jeremiah 27:5,6 specifies that world dominion was given to Nebuchadnezzar at that time.

The breast and arms of silver symbolize Medo-Persia. It is the favorite claim of unbelieving higher critics that Daniel's author, presumed to have lived in the second century B.C., had an entirely mistaken view of the history of the Middle East and the Near East during the sixth to third centuries B.C., and ignorantly supposed that the Medes were a separate second kingdom which supplanted Babylon (they cite Daniel 6:1), the Persians a separate third kingdom which supplanted the Medes (they cite Daniel 10:1), the fourth and last being the Greek. During the Greek prevalence, according to this theory, Daniel was written, and hence the Roman could not have been foreseen. It is said that

the author expected the Messianic age to follow immediately after the Greek.

However, the facts of Daniel are plainly otherwise. A kingdom containing two elements, known respectively as Medes and Persians, succeeded the Babylonian kingdom. Darius the Mede took the kingdom from the last Babylonian king (Daniel 5:30), but the Median king is said to represent the "Medes and Persians" (Daniel 5:28) and he ruled his kingdom by "the law of the Medes and Persians" (Daniel 6:26). Furthermore, Daniel 8:20 speaks of Media and Persia as parts of one realm rather than two separate realms. Not only so, II Chronicles 36:20 shows that the Bible writers thought Persia followed the Babylonian kingdom without any intermediate Median kingdom. The Medo-Persian kingdom was frequently called simply Persian because of the ascendancy of that side of the coalition. The so-called Median kingdom has its fictional existence not in the mind of the author of Daniel, but only in the minds of those Biblical critics who for *a priori* reasons must find historical inaccuracy in Daniel. History knows of no Median empire, and neither does the Bible.

The belly and thighs of copper symbolize the Graeco-Macedonian empire, founded by Alexander and continued by his successors. Attempts to identify this with Persia have failed--and the latest, by Rowley (*Darius and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel*, University of Wales Press Board, Cardiff, 1935) is no less a failure than the others. Correspondence between the Medo-Persian empires of chapter two, symbolized by the breast and arms of silver, and the two-horned ram of chapter eight is unmistakable. That ram is specifically said to be "Media and Persia," and the he-goat kingdom of chapter eight, which succeeded it, is said to be Greece. The Bible clearly identifies the third kingdom as Greece.

The fourth kingdom is Rome. It is symbolized by the legs of iron with the feet of iron mixed with clay. This cannot be proved by citing references in the Bible which say that Rome succeeded to the empire of Greece, for there are no such references. Rome probably did not exist in the sixth century B.C. At least, no extensive kingdom of that name existed. However, there is sufficient evidence that the Rome which history informs us followed the last stage of the Grecian period is at least included in the fourth empire envisioned in this prophecy. This evidence owes its existence to the fact that this one empire, which had no existence at all in Daniel's time, is given most detailed treatment herein. This is surely a divine providence.

Observe that though parts, such as the legs, feet, and toes, are mentioned in the interpretation, they together symbolize only one "fourth kingdom."

Every detail speaks unmistakably of Rome.<sup>2</sup>

It is "strong as iron"--iron being the strongest known metal in Daniel's day. At its height, Rome stands in history as the strongest of all imperial powers. The short sword of the Roman soldier and of the Roman mercenaries, was

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<sup>2</sup> By "Rome" I do not mean necessarily the specific government with headquarters in Italy, but simply that system which Rome began and which became imbedded in what is today called "the West."

then the symbol of the greatest power of all time.

Like iron, it "breaketh in pieces." Iron was also the hardest known metal in Daniel's time, and could be used to cut copper, silver, or gold. And, Rome not only *could* but *did* break up all the other conquered kingdoms and erased the national and political character of the other kingdoms of the world. Rome was unique in this respect. Babylonian institutions and culture, to a great extent, conquered both the Medo-Persians and the Greeks. But when Rome took over, the world became a Roman world--so Roman, in fact, that the expanding Western world today still bears the plain mark of its Roman origin. It is still markedly Roman in character.

Furthermore, of this iron kingdom it is said that it "subdueth all things." This also is characteristic of Rome. Gibbon wrote: "The empire of the Romans filled the world, and when the empire fell into the hands of a single person, the world became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies. To resist was fatal and it was impossible to fly." Two millennia ago, Rome gave the world the ecumenical unity which the League of Nations and the United Nations organizations have sought to revive in our time. The modern attempts are not original at all (as many of our contemporaries suppose), but are revivals of the ancient Roman ideal which never since the time of Augustus Caesar has been wholly lost. It is probable that the *Pax Romana* (Roman peace), the peace of a well-ordered prison with plenty of iron gates, steel doors, trained guards, and high walls is the best the world will ever achieve till Jesus comes.

Of great significance, also, is the fact that the iron of this kingdom is in its later stages mixed with clay. This is interpreted to mean that "they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron does not mingle with clay" (v. 43).

This interpretation, however, requires some interpretation. Who are "they" who mingle themselves? The Aramaic word translated "they shall mingle themselves" will furnish part of the answer. It is *mitharbim*, a reflexive participle. Aramaic participles have gender and number, this one being masculine plural. It appears to be so in agreement with the two masculine singular nouns of the preceding clause--*parzel* (iron) and *chasaph* (clay). Hence, the conclusion (the only possible one, I think) is that the participle modifies the two nouns. So the best interpretation is that the "they" of our English version refers to the iron and clay, and that the whole sentence means that whatever the iron symbolizes in the fourth kingdom shall be thoroughly but incohesively mixed with "the seed of men" (clay) in that kingdom. "The seed of men" can hardly refer to anything other than mankind in general as opposed to some king or dynasty within the kingdom.

Anyone who is acquainted with Roman history can hardly avoid the conclusion that this refers to the influences of the masses which grew in the Roman state. During the days of the Republic it was an orderly and lawful influence. As the nature matured and grew more corrupt, it became something close to mob rule. This was something that Daniel could hardly have named. It could be described only if it was to have meaning.

*The Salient Principles of Interpreting History of the  
Nations to Be Seen in the Great Dream-Image*

Before moving on to the last, the eschatological portion of the dream-image and its interpretation, some attention must be given to some general conclusions and principles which seem to prevail in proper interpretation of the whole. We may expect that conclusions regarding earlier portions will hold for the later portions, and thus some light from that which is now history will shine on what is partial fulfillment and yet future fulfillment of predictive prophecy in the final stage of the dream. The writer discerns four principles which prevail.

(1) *A continuous succession of world dominions down to the coming of Messiah's kingdom*

As previously noted, the prophecy covers the "latter days," inclusive of all time from Daniel's own down to the consummation. Verse 44 speaks of the "kings," obviously in the sense of the realms they ruled, as being destroyed at the end. If this refers to the four, then in some sense the four kingdoms endure to the consummation. There is no hint of any gap or hiatus in the picture. And if Jesus' reference to the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24) is to the same period and aspect of history as this prophecy (and it can hardly be doubted), then no other kingdom than these four is to be expected before the final kingdom of Christ.

Now, this writer recognizes that in some prophecies of the future of a people, an unseen gap or hiatus does sometimes interrupt the continuity. He is convinced, however, that this occurs only in the case of the prophecies of Israel, and that in relation to a period when that people is out of national favor with God. The writer does not refer to that "lack of perspective" present in prophecies where *continuity* is not a subject of revelation. He insists that continuity is a part of the subject of revelation here--that the continuity of Gentile world dominion down to the end of it in the establishment of an Israelitish dominion under King Messiah is predicted.

That the Roman power shall assert itself in a more active way at the end, and that the old headquarters at Rome may even be restored, may very well be. But, from the standpoint of this prophecy, that will not be a resurrection of something now dead but rather a strengthening of something which even now lives. Many of the most honored names of Premillennial scholarship are of men who shared this view, among them Tregelles, Seiss, and Ironside.<sup>3</sup>

Observe that this truth is supported by the division of Daniel advocated in this paper. A gap that pertains primarily to a period of time when Israel

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<sup>3</sup> Since completing the manuscript of this book, there has come to the writer's hands a fine work on Daniel, in the British Premillennial tradition, by Mr. G. H. Lang. In this work of 238 pages (*The Histories and Prophecies of Daniel*, Third edition, 1942), the author adopts the same views of the continuity of succession, and very much the same view of the nature of the fourth kingdom. His views on this point are to be found on pages 24-38 of his book. The writer of this book is grateful for this confirmation, coming from a quite independent source. He is sorry that it was not known earlier in the preparation, that full attention might have been given to it.

is out of divine favor would be totally out of gear in a prophecy relating to a period when Gentiles enjoy the divine favor of world dominion and of which the subject is Gentile succession.

The force of these facts will grow on the reader as the argument proceeds.

(2) *A progressive division of sovereignty, reaching a climax in the ten-toed stage of the image prophecy*

This is to be seen not only in the symbolism of the image, but also in the events and movements of which it is a prediction. The details of the image reveal progressive multiplication of the significant parts. There is, first, *one* head symbolizing one absolute ruling element. There is, next, a division into *two* arms and *two* breasts--reflected historically in the coalition of Medes and Persians in the empire of Cyrus. The belly and thighs reveal more plurality in the Aramaic original than in the English translation, for *miohi*, belly, is a plural word, possibly better translated, bowels. In the Grecian kingdom there was further division of sovereignty--traditionally considered to be fourfold. In the Roman stage, symbolized the legs, feet, and toes, there is, first a twofold and then a tenfold division, that is, two legs, two feet, then ten toes. Taking the key of progressive division of sovereignty within the world-kingdom, this must refer to the twofold division of the Roman empire which prevailed after the division into East, with capital at Byzantium, and West, with capital at Rome. Further, there is the manifold division into ten<sup>4</sup> indicated by the toes. This might be thought to refer to the present divided state of the Old Roman Empire, but it seems more likely to refer to some situation at the end of Gentile dominion.

(3) *A progressive deterioration in the character of the authority of the ruler*

A deterioration is indicated by four things in the image and interpretation--at least one of them of unquestionable divine intention. They are, first, deterioration in the worth of the metals: gold, silver, copper, iron (and clay); second, deterioration in position from the head to base of the image; third, a divinely certified indication of growing deterioration in the words of verse 39, "and after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee." A fourth is suggested by Tregelles from the fact that the specific gravity (or mass per unit of volume) decreases from head to foot. His words are:

It may be worthy of observation that the metals in the image lessen in their *specific gravity* as they go downwards: iron is not so heavy as brass, and thus their weight is so arranged as to exhibit the reverse of stability,

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<sup>4</sup> I derive "ten" as the number of toes on the image. There is not absolute proof that "those kings" of verse 44 refers to ten toes, but it seems likely. Mr. Young (*The Prophecy of Daniel*) objects that "this view must be rejected as exegetically untenable. It makes too much of the symbolism" (p. 78). However, Mr. Young does not think it making too much of the symbolism to arbitrarily introduce "the true Israel of God, the church," for which there is no exegetical basis whatsoever in this chapter. There is real evidence for the ten kings, but certainly none at all for Dr. Young's church.

even before we reach the mixture of clay and iron (*op.cit.*, 15).

These four phenomena I take to be indicative of the importance of this aspect of the prophecy, even granted that some of them may be accidental.

One may well wonder just what elements in Gentile history were to grow progressively inferior. Extent of territory could not be meant, for each of the four kingdoms grew progressively larger in area. And if the view advocated herein (see later exposition) is correct, it continues to grow. Neither is the deterioration with respect to strength, for that also grew with each kingdom.

Several considerations lead to the conclusion that it is the character or quality of the authority in rulership that is intended.

In the first place, the deterioration of the metals is primarily in quality or value. This would be matched by quality of value in the kind of the ruler's authority.

In the second place, the Bible elsewhere describes the kind of rulership exercised by Nebuchadnezzar as something unique, not likely to appear again in the non-Babylonian successors to the world rulership. The words follow:

*I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my 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 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, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him. And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the LORD (Jeremiah 27:5-8).*

In the same vein are the words of Daniel to Belshazzar:

*The Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father the kingdom, and greatness, and glory and majesty: and because of the greatness that he gave him, all the peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he raised up, and whom he would he put down (Daniel 5:18,19, A.S.V.).*

In the third place, the very language of Daniel 2:39 indicates a deterioration in relation to the position or authority of the king. The kingdom of silver was to be "another kingdom inferior to thee." It was not to be a kingdom inferior to *his kingdom*. That it was not, for Persia outreached Babylon by far. But in the character of the sovereignty of its rulers, Persia was inferior to Nebuchadnezzar--and so also with the remaining two kingdoms.

A resumé of the history of world dominion from Nebuchadnezzar onward will

present to the reader's mind precisely what is involved in deterioration of character of authority and also support the conclusion that such is the kind of deterioration involved in the imagery.

Nebuchadnezzar ruled by divine right as an absolute monarch. The Medo-Persian kings who succeeded the Babylonians were not above the law as Nebuchadnezzar was, but were subject to the laws of their own realm--bound by the legal entanglement of their own decrees (cf. Daniel 6:14,15). Alexander and his Greek successors ruled by no dynastic or royal right at all, but solely by virtue of great personal gifts and powers which enabled them to organize and control great armies. The Roman emperors, and even the early kings who reigned before the republican and imperial periods, ruled largely by the will and choice of the populace. Republicanism, which followed the monarchial period, soon degenerated into something like mob rule, especially after it merged into the imperial period. Some of the greatest emperors were affected by the passing opinions of the Roman mobs. In our own times, which if they appear in the prophecy must be in the fourth period, government in the West has tended to become nearer to the dead level of socialism, and even "the dictatorship of the proletariat." Our American republic (ofttimes miscalled democracy) is based on the supposition that sovereignty rests in the people--that government is only by the consent of the governed. As Lincoln so eloquently put it, it is "government of the people, for the people, and by the people." Tregelles discerns the deterioration in the character of the authority of the rulers, but does not clearly distinguish it from the division of sovereignty in Rome (*op.cit.*, pp. 14-18).

(4) *A progressive improvement in the hardness of the metals and in their strength*

The one seeming exception is the clay, which, though in a vitrified form, is harder than iron, but is not very strong. However, this element is introduced as an extraneous element in an otherwise unbroken progress in strength. This is reflected in the increasing strength and prevalence of each of the kingdoms. I take it that while the clay represents the ultimate in debasement of the character of sovereignty, it does not represent the ultimate in the strength of the kingdoms.

#### *The Eschatological Portion of the Interpretation*

Now comes the dénouement. The last, or eschatological portion of the prophecy is reached. When the final, that is, the Roman, age of Gentile history is prevailing, when a climax of division of sovereignty has been reached, presumably many nations being organized into some kind of a loose union in which all men give *their* authority to a ruler or head of some kind, when Gentile power is at its height of strength (though dangerously brittle by reason of a low grade of sovereignty, *then* the end comes.

44 And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all

these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that a 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 2:44,45, A.S.V.).

It is in this section of the oracle that the Premillennial system of eschatology makes its initial challenge and shows its superiority.

All students, whether believing or unbelieving, recognize this as prophecy of the founding of the Messianic kingdom. Believing students in recent times have been divided in interpretation between the Premillennialists, who see the fulfillment in the final establishment of the kingdom of Christ at his second coming, and Amillennialists and Postmillennialists who see the fulfillment in the first advent and the events of the present age. The chief differences between the Amillennialists and Postmillennialists being that the Amillennialists place more emphasis on the place of Christ's judgment on the nations at the end of this age.

Thomson pretty well sums up the view of our Postmillennial opponents when he writes: "Whenever the setting up of this Messianic kingdom is placed, whenever it is held as occurring, it is certain it fits most naturally the Christian Church" (*Pulpit Commentary*, Daniel, p. 73).

Leupold makes the Amillennial position quite plain when he says of the kingdom of the stone:

It shall, in fact, be a force that will be operative in the overthrow of all the kingdoms that the world produces--"All these kingdoms," for it "shall crush and bring to an end." The kingdom of God does that in part by the overthrow of the ancient and entrenched wrongs that are characteristic of all the world powers. Note how feudal systems, slavery, and caste systems--institutions of the world powers--yield before the Spirit of Christ in His Church. To some extent this overthrow is still future, for the final victory of the church coincides with the day of judgment. Then Christ and his saints shall judge and overthrow whatever of sin or wrong still remains. In this overthrow there must be included also the gentle victory of the gospel, which makes its gracious influence felt and conquers, but not with violence and bloodshed. Though thus engaged in continually overthrowing what the world constructs, such effort shall not wear out God's kingdom: "but it shall stand forever" (*Expositions of Daniel*, pp. 125,126).

The discerning reader will readily observe that both of these systems (Postmillennialism and Amillennialism) rest on a theory of church-kingdom identity--that the kingdom of God and the church are precisely identical. This is a position which cannot be sustained by Scripture, despite valiant attempts to make the Bible support it. This subject has been treated in the first section of this dissertation, and the views of Amillennialism and Postmillennialism will not be refuted at this juncture, except to observe some inconsistencies which would seem to be introduced into the Scripture if their theories were to be adopted.

If, as it is contended, the smiting of the image by the stone, and the subsequent actions predict the establishment and growth of the Christian Church in the present age, observe what inconsistencies and objections follow.

(1) *The church, which clearly is not a political establishment, is made to be a political establishment just as were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Macedonia, and Rome.* Even in its outward organization, the church's members are to be subject to "the powers that be" and to "render unto Cæsar." To adopt the church-kingdom theory in interpreting this passage, one ought rightly to adopt the Roman Catholic religion, which claims that the church is a political establishment.

(2) *It substitutes a quiet imperceptible growth of the church in gradual conquering of the fourth kingdom for a violent, catastrophic sudden destruction of the kingdom of the Gentiles.* Some of our opponents speak occasionally of the stone as a rolling stone, and suppose a progressive destruction of the image. Others speak of quiet growth of the stone in replacing the kingdom of the image. But in the Scripture (and let all interpreters stick by it) the stone smites the image with a single, violent, catastrophic blow; forceful winds remove the fragments, and the stone *then*, after the removal of the Gentile kingdoms, becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth. If it is possible for words to describe violence, these are they!

(3) *It postulates that the church either has overcome the Gentile kingdoms or will yet do so, when, as a matter of fact, it never has done so, and, according to the Bible, never will.* Postmillennialists may consistently claim to believe that the church will yet conquer the world. But Amillennialists who share with Premillennialists the view that good and bad will grow together throughout this age, and even with them (though on the basis of some different Scripture passages) expect great apostasy at the close of the present age.

(4) *The view that the smiting act is the spread of the gospel is utterly out of harmony with what is known of the Christian ethics of the New Testament.* Christians are not to supersede the authority of those that rule, but are to be subject to them. Their place is to suffer, if necessary, at the hand of rulers rather than to destroy and replace them.

Recent history, with the downward trend of human events, has all but destroyed Postmillennialism, leaving only Amillennialism to challenge the Premillennial view seriously.

Dr. Seiss, who wrote in a day when Postmillennialism was a serious challenge, has well summarized the arguments against that view to be found in this passage (*vide Voices From Babylon*, 84-86). Auberlen also has shown the failure of Postmillennialism to interpret this passage on account of its wrong view of the present age (*op.cit.*, 216-233).

Amillennialism, on the other hand, except for the church-kingdom theory

adopted by many of its advocates, is less out of harmony with the Scriptures at this point and hence the present writer's duty is less with respect to its refutation.

I add only that Young's argument that the teaching in verse 44 (that the kingdom is eternal excludes the doctrine of a one-thousand-year kingdom) has no weight at all against the view of the millennium adopted herein. The view of this writer is that the millennium is only an initial stage of an everlasting kingdom (*vide* Appendix I).

The Premillennial view alone permits a natural interpretation of this chapter. There is to be no Messianic kingdom established on earth until the governments of Gentile nations have run their course. When the kingdom comes, it will be entirely of divine establishment, without human agency; it shall replace the Gentile political establishment with a divine political establishment, and shall stand forever.

Any other system of eschatology must spiritualize the passage or else ignore the plain facts of it.