

IMMERSE: CHRONICLES

Week 8 – The Times of the Gentiles

August 18, 2024

The King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, took control of the city of Jerusalem in the Kingdom of Judah in 605 BC.

Dan. 1:2 - the Lord gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into Nebuchadnezzar's hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar carried into the land of Shinar to the house of Neb's god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god.

Dan. 1:3-7 - *Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles, ⁴ young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans. ⁵ And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king. ⁶ Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah. ⁷ To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishaël, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego.*

This was a fulfillment of a word given by Isaiah the prophet to King Hezekiah a century earlier. *And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be officials* (important servants [Merrill Unger]) *in the palace of the king of Babylon* (Isa. 39:7).

Qualifications of the trainees/hostages

No defects – they had to be outwardly perfect with no physical deformities.

Good looking - it was well known that only the beautiful people were allowed in the courts of the kings in the ancient Middle East.

Intelligent and capable of learning – well-versed in wisdom but also capable of learning and mastering knowledge. They were to be taught the literature and language of the Chaldeans. Aramaic was the language of normal communication in Babylon.

Evidence maturity – having poise that enabled them to carry themselves well in the court of a king.

Changing the names of individuals being brought into the court was a type of brainwashing. The Hebrew names of the four young men (thought to have been 15 years olds), reflected their relationship with the Lord God of Israel. Their names were changed to identify them with Babylonian deities in an attempt to develop new allegiances, new loyalties, and new directions for their lives:

Daniel/God is my judge ...Belteshazzar – May Bel Protect his life

Hananiah/Jehovah has been gracious...Shadrach – Command of Marduk

Mishaël/Who is as God?...Meshach – Who is what Aku is?

Azariah/Jehovah has helped...Abednego – Servant of Nebo

Dan. 1:8 – “Daniel purposed in his heart....” There was something so clearly defiling about the “king’s choice food” that the young men determined not to partake of it. The king’s food was offered as a sacrifice to the Babylonian gods before it was eaten. To eat that food was to participate in the worship of their gods.

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Dan. 1:9-21 (READ)

Daniel 2 is one of the more significant chapters in the Hebrew Scriptures because it reveals the absolute sovereignty of God as we are given such a clear revelation from God re: His plans for this earth. Daniel 2 speaks of the rise and fall of Gentile empires, the major Gentile empires.

Daniel 2 introduces us to what is known as the Times of the Gentiles of which Jesus spoke in Lk. 21:24 – re: a period of time beginning with the Babylonian Captivity (605 BC) and ending with the physical Second Coming of Jesus to the earth at the end of the tribulation (Rev. 11:1-2).

Jesus defined the Times of the Gentiles as the time when Jerusalem would be controlled by Gentile world powers! We are currently living in the Time of the Gentiles.

Rev. 11:1-2 – in his visions, John the Apostle was given a reed like a measuring rod. The angel with John said, *Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there.* ² *But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.* In Revelation, forty-two months equates to the last 3.5 years of the tribulation.

Dan. 2:4b-7:28 – written in Aramaic – speaking of the Times of the Gentiles. The rest of the book of Daniel was written in Hebrew. Aramaic was an international language. It was the common diplomatic and business language of the nations, understood by Gentiles and Jews. Because Dan. 2:4b-7:28 addresses the Gentile empires, it appears that the Holy Spirit inspired Daniel to write in Aramaic so that the Gentile nations could understand.

Dan. 2:1-13 – (Turn to) Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which greatly disturbed him. He demanded of his wise men, the Chaldeans, that they first convey his dream and then follow through with the interpretation. If they failed to do so: death! The Chaldeans told the King that there was not a man on earth who could tell the King his dream. Nebuchadnezzar became infuriated and he commanded that the wise men be destroyed...and they sought out Daniel and his companions as well. Daniel requested time. God gave Daniel “the secret” in a night vision. Daniel blessed the God of heaven and proceeded to tell the King that there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these:

Dan. 2:31-35 (Turn to) – Daniel told the King that the dream consisted of an image and a stone. The image was human in form, it was great, and it was extremely brilliant (due to its shining metals)

Its head was made of gold; its breast and arms consisted of silver; stomach and thighs of bronze; legs that were made of iron; and feet composed of a mixture of iron and clay (pottery).

The metals that made up the statue clearly decline in value.

The stone in the dream had been cut out of a mountain without hands (vv. 34-35). The stone was not human in origin. In the dream, the stone appeared immediately and struck the feet of the image with such force that the feet were crushed. The entire image disintegrated into the consistency of chaff. The wind blew away every remnant of the image. The stone then became a large mountain (kingdom) that filled the entire earth! NOTE: The Babylonians believed that their gods came from the sacred mountain of the earth. Mountains were associated with deities. Daniel made it clear that the God of heaven will establish this last Kingdom!

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Dan. 2:36-45 – The interpretation:

Babylon – Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold. Marduk, the chief god of Babylon, was called the god of gold. Babylon used gold extensively in its buildings, images, and shrines. Walls and buildings were overlaid with gold.

Medo-Persia – conquered Babylon (circa 539-536 BC). Medo-Persia - breast and arms of silver. Silver signified money; silver was the standard of value. Medo-Persia was noted for basing its power on money. Medo-Persia was inferior to Babylon as it was a partnership empire and lacked the absolute unity that Babylon had enjoyed.

Greece – conquered Persia in 331 BC. Greece under Alexander the Great – belly and thighs of bronze. After Alexander had unified his kingdom, he died. His kingdom was divided among his four leading generals. However, only two of the divisions played an important role in history: two divisions headquartered in Syria (Seleucids) and in Egypt (Ptolemis). The Greeks developed bronze and used it extensively in their implements of war. Greece extended its power “over all the earth” (v. 39).

Rome – conquered Greece by 146 BC. Rome – legs of iron. The two legs – in 364 AD the Roman Empire was divided politically into two divisions – the Western Roman Empire with Rome as its capital and the Eastern Roman Empire with Constantinople as its capital. Rome was noted for its use of iron in its military weaponry.

Final stage of Roman kingdom (vv. 41-43) – feet and toes of image made of iron and clay. The Roman Empire would experience two distinct stages – an earlier and a later stage. The feet of iron and clay – iron is strong and clay is brittle. Feet/toes – this later stage will be characterized by division. The final stage of the Roman Empire could consist of a ten nation confederation (Dan. 7:23-24 – ten kings or kingdoms). A revived Roman Empire that will take place in the future.

The Kingdom of God – represented by the stone in the dream (vv. 44-45). This Kingdom will be established by God, not by man! Characteristics: it would destroy and end all the Gentile kingdoms portrayed by the image in the dream. No other kingdom would ever succeed it.

Since the stone represented both Jesus (Psa. 118:22; Lk. 20:17-18) and the Kingdom of God (Dan. 2:34-35; Dan. 2:44-45), its appearance in the dream portrayed the coming of the Messiah to establish that kingdom.

Jesus will come to establish the Kingdom of God when Rome will be in its foot and toe stage – in the future. Jesus will come to establish the Kingdom of God at His Second Coming

(Matt. 25:31 - *When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, THEN He will sit on the throne of His glory* (King David's throne [Lk. 1:32-33; currently – seated at the right hand of God. There are 100 verses noted via this link telling us that Jesus is now seated at the right hand of God interceding for us - https://www.openbible.info/topics/jesus_sitting_at_the_right_hand_of_the_father

Dan. 2:44 stated that the Kingdom of God will be set up “in the days of those kings” – the kings who will rule the ten nation Revived Roman Empire in the future. The Kingdom of God would come in conjunction with Jesus' Second Coming.

There will be no coexistence of the Roman Empire and the actual Kingdom of God. After the stone crushed the image, every remnant of the image was blown away before the stone became a great mountain and filled the earth (vv. 34-35).

The view that the Kingdom of God was established during Jesus' first coming would require several centuries of coexistence of the Roman Empire and the actual Kingdom of

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God. The Western Roman Empire lasted more than 400 years after Jesus' first coming. The Eastern Roman Empire lasted more than 1400 years after that coming.

In Rev. 19 and 20 John spoke of when Jesus will appear in His Second Coming – that He will crush Gentile world power and then would rule the earth for 1,000 years.

This Millennial rule will be the first phase of the future Kingdom of God – the phase for this present earth. After the Millennium, the Kingdom of God will continue forever on the new eternal earth (Rev. 21-22) in which God reigns forever over a new heaven and new earth that is free from all opposition to His rule.

Since the Kingdom of God will take the place of the four Gentile kingdoms, it will be a literal earthly kingdom. As Jesus experienced humiliation on this earth, His victory in His death must see Him as exalted and magnified on this earth.

In Daniel 2 we see God's absolute sovereign rule in the affairs of men and His superiority over the pagan gods. We see the destruction of Gentile dominion by God and the replacement of it with His kingdom that will last forever. The Kingdom of the God of heaven will conquer all Gentile world dominion. The Kingdom of God exalts and magnifies the God of heaven alone!