

THE STONE THAT BECAME A MOUNTAIN

Daniel 2:29-49

February 26, 2017

Daniel 2 reports King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, by which God revealed four future, successive empires, and the ultimate overthrow of human civilization by the Kingdom of God. The dream has been fulfilled in part. Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian empire fell to Medo-Persia, which the Greeks conquered, who were overtaken by the Romans. In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, these were all crushed by a stone "cut out without hands," which "became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (2:34, 35).

The stone is Christ Jesus and His kingdom. He was foretold as "the stone which the builders refused [that] is become the head stone of the corner" (Psalm 118:22). Christ rebuffed his enemies by citing this prophecy (Matthew 21:42). From this text, Peter explained the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:10), which were the foundation of the apostles' power and success. He referenced it again when describing God's kingdom with these words, "ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house" (I Peter 2:5-8).

The mountain that filled the whole earth is the kingdom of which Christ is King, including the body of which He is head (the Church); the building of which He is foundation and builder. It is a kingdom that appeared when John the Baptist preached "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (4:2). It is a kingdom for which the disciples were to pray, "thy kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10).

Jesus taught that the kingdom was like a man who sowed seed in his field, whose enemy then sowed weeds, so that grain and weeds grew together (13:24-30). He said it was like the tiny mustard seed, which grows into a massive plant on whose branches birds rest (13:31-32). He described it as a great net cast into the sea, catching many fish, both good and bad (13:47-50). These parables teach that some who seem to be within the kingdom are not truly its citizens.

Christ described the kingdom as being like leaven in dough, affecting the whole (13:33), like a treasure hidden in a field, which a stranger detected, selling all that he owned to buy the field (13:44), and like a valuable pearl, which a discerning merchant found and sold all that he owned in order to purchase. He said it was like an estate manager who hired labors, some early, some later in the day and some late, but paid them all the same amount for their labors (20:1-16). In these parables its gradual expansion is revealed.

From its tiny, despised beginning the Kingdom of God would expand, triumphing over its foes and reaching unto every part of the earth. Christ was born into poverty, the citizen of a downtrodden, failing nation. He was reared in Nazareth, of which it was asked, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). He was crucified by the Roman government and the religious powers of His own nation—utterly powerless by human standards. What could become of such a person or his followers?

Yet these rejections fulfilled Scriptures regarding the King, and through them His dominion began to be demonstrated. It was demonstrated by His resurrection, destroying both death and

the works of the devil, delivering His people from their dominion (Genesis 3:15; Hebrews 2:14-15). At Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended in answer to Jesus' prayer, empowering the apostles for gospel-conquest in human hearts. Today, the church of redeemed souls, some now glorified in heaven, others persevering upon earth, testifies to the ever-expanding church of Christ, reaching to every nation, manifesting His kingdom and His kingship. Ultimately, every foe will be subdued, "for he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet" (I Corinthians 15:25). "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10, 11).