

Pentwater Bible Church

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Nebuchadnezzar's Dream Artist Unknown

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The Book of Ezekiel

Message Eighty-Three

THE GOG & MAGOG INVASION PART III

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WHEN WILL INVASION THIS HAPPEN?

THE BEGINNING OF THE LAST DAYS:

Only the Biblically illiterate fail to see that we are in the “Last Days.” The Last Days began with the First World War as Christ said in the Olivet Discourse. Nation rising against Nation and Kingdom against Kingdom” is a Jewish idiomatic phrase, which means a conflict in the total region under discussion. In the Olivet Discourse He was discussing the events surrounding His Second Coming, which pertain to the entire world. Matthew records our Lord’s words with respect to the beginning of the end or as the Bible states the beginning of the latter days.

The various symbols and images used in the Bible all have meaning. They are not without explanation in the text. Knowing the whole counsel of God enables one to grasp their usage and therefore their meaning.

Matthew 24:7

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places (KJV).

Matthew 24:8

All these [are] the beginning of sorrows (KJV).

According to all three Gospel writers, the sign of the end of the age is said to be when nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. This act will be coupled with famines and earth quakes in various places and then Jesus clearly stated that this would be the beginning of travail (sorrows). The term travail means “birth pang”. It refers to the series of birth pangs that a woman undergoes before giving birth to a baby. The prophets pictures the last days as a series of birth pangs before the birth of the Messianic Age. The beginning of travail, the first birth pang and the sign that the end of the age has begun is when nation rises against, nation and kingdom against kingdom. It is important to find out just exactly where and how this idiom is used in the Bible. It is used in at least two passages.

First it is found in:

Isaiah 19:1-4

¹Behold, Jehovah rideth upon a swift cloud, and cometh unto Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall tremble at his presence; and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. ²And I will stir up the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbor; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom. ³And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst of it; and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek unto the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards. ⁴And I will give over the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts (ASV, 1901).

Here the land of Egypt is being discussed and the idiom points to a conflict all over the land of Egypt as the nation is engaged in a civil war.

Second it is found in:

II Chronicles 15:1-7:

And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: ²and he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: Jehovah is with you, while ye are with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you. ³Now for a long season Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law: ⁴but when in their distress they turned unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them. ⁵And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in; but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the lands. ⁶And they were broken in pieces, nation against nation, and city against city; for God did vex them with all adversity. ⁷But be ye strong, and let not your hands be slack; for your work shall be rewarded (ASV, 1901).

In this passage it is the general area of the Middle East that is being discussed, and the idiom points to conflict all over the Middle East. In the Olivet Discourse it is the whole world that is in view. This is clear from Matthew 24: 14; 21; 30 and 31. Therefore the idiom refers to a world wide conflict and this world wide conflict is the first birth pang, signifying that the end of the age or the last days have begun.

Jesus had already clearly stated that local wars between a few nations (wars and rumors of wars) would not indicate that the end had begun. But when He said that when there is "nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom," this will mean the end of the age has begun.

To gain a fuller understanding of what the idiom “*nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom*” means, it is necessary to turn to the Jewish usage of these statements. Clearly the Bible passages we just read show the usage and context of that usage. This expression then used in the Olivet Discourse is a Hebrew idiom for a world war. Remember Jesus is Jewish and all the writers of the Bible were Jewish. Even if the New Testament was written Greek, the men were all steeped in the Jewish culture, which they knew and lived in that milieu.

This idiom is also used with the Jewish writings of this same period. One Jewish source known as the “*Zohar Chadash*” states:

“At that time wars shall be stirred up in the world. Nation shall be against nation and city against city; much distress shall be renewed against the enemies of the Israelites.”

Another Jewish source known as the Bereshit Rabbah states:

“If you shall see the kingdoms rising against each other in turn, then give heed and note the footsteps of the Messiah (XLII:4)

The Rabbis clearly taught that a worldwide conflict would signal the coming of the Messiah. Jesus corrected this idea slightly, for He said that when the world war occurs, while it does not signal the coming of the Messiah, it will signal that the *end of the age* has begun. These birth pangs that He talked about are the same as the footsteps the rabbis talked about. The “footsteps of the Messiah” had to do with a series of events that lead up to the coming of the Messiah

World war I, 1914-1918, was the fulfillment of this particular prophecy, for that was the first time the entire world was at war. And World War II is recognized as a continuation of World War I. Furthermore; both world wars had a decisive impact on the Jews returning to their homeland. World War I gave impetus to the growth of the Zionist movement, and World War II led to the re-establishment of the Jewish State. Since WW I, history has entered the last days of the Church Age. However, the last days are quite an extended period of time. We do not know when the end of the “Last Days” will occur. The last days are a period that includes the consummation of the church age and the Great Tribulation. The period of the last days up to the beginning of the Tribulation is unrevealed in Scripture. The Great Tribulation is seven years long.

The sign that the end of the age has begun is the worldwide conflict fulfilled by World War I and World War II. This started on July 28, 1914.

However, Jesus does describe these calamities as the beginning of sorrows, which is literally the beginning of labor pains; the idea is both of giving birth to a new age, and implying an increase of intensity and frequency in these calamities. These are:

1. Beginning of the End Times
2. Restoration of the nation Israel

3. Jerusalem coming under Jewish authority and control
4. The allied attack on Israel by Russia & Islamic Nations
5. The One World Government
6. The Ten Kingdoms
7. The Rise of the Antichrist
8. Peace and Security
9. The Antichrist's Covenant with Israel
10. The Tribulation starts with The Covenant
11. The Lord Jesus Returns

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

Luke 21:20-24

²⁰But when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand. ²¹Then let them that are in Judaea flee unto the mountains; and let them that are in the midst of her depart out; and let not them that are in the country enter therein. ²²For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. ²³Woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress upon the land, and wrath unto this people. ²⁴And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (ASV, 1901)

The times of the Gentiles are that long period of time from the Babylonian captivity (586 B.C.) until the Second Coming of Jesus. During this time the Gentiles have had control over the city of Jerusalem. There have been times of temporary Jewish control over the city.

1. Maccabean Period (164-63 B.C.)
2. First Jewish Revolt against Rome (A.D. 66-70)
3. The second Jewish Revolt (the Bar-Kochba Revolt) against Rome (A.D. 132-135)
4. Since the 1967 Six-Day War, which is temporary, because Jerusalem *will* be trodden down by the Gentiles for at least another 3 ½ years during the Great Tribulation. (Revelation 11:1-2)

Any Jewish takeover of the city before the Second Coming will be temporary, and does not mean that the times of the Gentiles have ended. The Times of the Gentiles can only end when Gentiles can't tread down Jerusalem any more. The Times of the Gentiles, is a period of time when four Gentile empires will follow one another in sequence, with the Fourth Empire going through several different stages. But eventually this will give way to God's setting up His own Kingdom. While the Gentile empires are of human origin; the Kingdom of the Stone (Daniel 2: 35; 44-45) is of divine origin. While the Gentile empires are all temporary, God's kingdom is eternal.

It is necessary to have some basic realization of *power* in human relationships. This power over the world shifts from person to person and empire to empire. All the while though God remains in control affecting His will is expressed in a minimum of two characteristics; Creative Will and Permissive Will. After looking at Daniel chapter seven we will expand on the idea of power.

Since our study is focusing on the coming Allied Invasion of Israel it is important to direct our attention to the Fourth Empire. Both Daniel passages (Chapters 2 & 7) make it clear that the Fourth Gentile Empire begins with the end of the third empire (Greek) and continues until Messiah comes to set up His Kingdom. The Fourth Empire is an Imperialistic Empire. Imperialism is simply a policy of extending a country's influence through diplomacy or military force. This empire is diverse from all the rest. It goes through five distinct stages. Rome is only the first of the stages. Rome is not the name of the successive stages.



In order understand this predominance of Gentile control over, we need to look at a Old Testament passages from the book of Daniel chapters two and seven. Nebuchadnezzar the King has this vision and he goes to his soothsayers the Chaldeans. They were unable to describe the dream and interpret it. Daniel the Jewish prisoner of war interprets the vision. First he tells them what the vision is, then he him the interpretation.

Nebuchadnezzar's Vision, Daniel 2:31-35

Daniel 2:31-35

³¹Thou, 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. ³²As for this image, its head was of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass, ³³its legs of iron, its feet part of iron, and part of clay. ³⁴Thou 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. ³⁵Then 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 (ASV, 1901).

First Daniel provides a general description of the awesomeness of the image (v.31) that Nebuchadnezzar saw, then he moves to a composition of the image. (vv.32-33) The image is described as having a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron and ending with the feet and toes of part iron and part clay. These metals have two important characteristics:

1. They increase in strength as you move from the head to the toes.
2. The metals as you move from the head to the toes decrease in value as they increase in strength. As they go from gold to iron, they decrease in value.

The fulfillment of the image as we move from the head to toe will also be seen in a decrease of their character, authority and rule. Babylon as the head was an absolute monarchy and the monarch was above the law. The king could do anything he wanted even if it broke the laws of the land. As we move down the image from the head we see that the Medo-Persia monarch, the breast and arms of silver, was not above the law and did not have the authority to change his own decrees. The Hellenic kings, the belly and thighs of brass, had no dynastic or royal right to rule, and ruled by force of conquest and personal gifts. Finally Roman Imperialism was a republic, legs of iron, which degenerated into mob rule merging with the imperial form of government.

Finally, a stone destroys the image, and the stone smites the image on its feet (vv.34-35a). Then with the image destroyed, the stone become a great mountain that fills the whole earth (v.35b). The stone cut without hands, emphasizes His divine origin. Christ is

described as the Rock throughout Scripture. (Luke 6:48; Romans 9:33; 1 Corinthians 10:4 etc.)

INTERPRETATION OF THE VISION

After Daniel describes the image to Nebuchadnezzar, which he dreamed, he proceeds to give the interpretation of it in verses 36-45.

Daniel 2:36-45

³⁶This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. ³⁷Thou, O king, art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory; ³⁸and 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. ³⁹And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee; and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. ⁴⁰And 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. ⁴¹And whereas 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 the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. ⁴²And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. ⁴³And 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. ⁴⁴And 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 for ever. ⁴⁵Forasmuch 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 (ASV, 1901).

HEAD OF GOLD

Nebuchadnezzar who destroyed the First Temple and Jerusalem in 586 B.C. is the head of gold. Babylon was the first empire that began the Times of the Gentiles when they dominated Jerusalem. The actual grant given to Nebuchadnezzar included the whole earth but he chose not to take advantage of this Jeremiah 27:5-8; Ezekiel 26:7-14)..

BREAST AND ARMS OF SILVER

The two arms of silver united into the breast of silver represents the two nations of the Medes and Persians, who established the Medo-Persian Empire (v. 39a). It is declared to be inferior to the Babylonians. It lacked the inner unity of Babylon because the Medes

and Persians though united, never fused into one people group. Further their government was not above the mistakes of the law (Daniel 6:12-14).

Medo-Persian King or Monarch was not above the law. We see this in the story of Daniel and the Lion's Den. This is just one example, there are secular examples too, where Darius makes this inept law where people can't pray and Daniel's detractors go to the King and say, "Look, this one's praying." Darius doesn't want the law to apply to Daniel but in essence he says, "We have to follow it; I'm not above the law." So they put him in the lion's den and God miraculously saves Daniel. The issue is that Darius doesn't have the ability to by-pass the law and do what is right. We see that character of absolute authority is decreasing with each subsequent kingdom.

BELLY AND TWO THIGHS OF BRASS

The Greek, also known as the Hellenistic Empire, followed the Medo-Persian Empire. It is symbolized by the belly and two thighs of brass (v.29b) for the third empire territorially embraced both East and West. The two thighs may also represent Syria and Egypt, which arose out of the Hellenistic Empire and controlled Jewish territory and Jerusalem.

We know that Alexander of Macedon went east and he went west from Macedon, which is just north of Greece, and he conquered a huge portion of the world. He set up Hellenistic schools where Greek was taught (The New Testament was written in Greek). The Greek language spread around quickly especially in the whole area where the Apostle Paul went on his missionary journeys.

Finally the Hellenistic Kings didn't have any dynastic or right to rule. Alexander didn't need one. And when he was on his death bed he was asked, "Who will get your kingdom?" He said, "Give it to the strong; Give it to the strong." After Alexander's death his generals struggled with each other for supremacy over the kingdom. There was no divine rule, no legal succession. It was just simply fighting throughout the Kingdom. The generals took it by force and they didn't have the right to it. There weren't any laws, it was simply mob rule.

THE LEGS AND THE TOES

The rest of the image represents the Fourth Gentile Empire (vv.40-43). This Fourth Empire goes through several stages, three of which are presented in this text. First there is the United Stage (v.40). But this United Stage gives way to the Two Division Stage (v. 41), which still has the strength of iron. Eventually, however, the Fourth Gentile Empire gives way to a Ten Division Stage, as seen in the ten toes (vv.42-43) being composed of part iron and part clay. Part of this Ten Division Stage will be strong and part will be brittle and weak. The lack of cohesiveness is especially evident in the toes (vv.42-43) being composed of part iron and part clay. Unity is impossible and the ten divisions take place because the individual elements will not coalesce – they do not come together in unity.

The Fourth Gentile Empire is unique from all the previous ones. It totally subdues and crushes all that precede it. It is the fourth Gentile Empire that is particularly emphasized by the text dealing with the Times of the Gentiles and how the book of Revelation lays out the Roman Empire. It's not the "revived" Roman Empire. It is the imperialistic empire that has taken a different form.

So there is an increase in the strength in these empires we are seeing as we move from the head to the toes: The empires are getting stronger and more war-like than the previous one and is able to conquer more. The empires represented by this image will be successively destroyed, one by one, one by another. They don't disappear from the earth, but their power decreases which, causes them cease to exist as a World Empire.

A SUPERNATURAL STONE

Then this stone comes in and it smites this image on its feet. We see that in verses 34 and 35a. The "stone", as represented in the Bible is the same as the "rock" and it's Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:4 "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." Christ is the stone; Christ is the corner stone. And this Stone, cut without hands (meaning with divine origin) is going to eliminate the last segment of the imperialist empire. The Rock is the Messiah He is going to establish this Kingdom.

Following the Fourth Gentile Empire, God is going to set up his own Kingdom. Two prominent symbols are used in the text, and they are consistent with their usage elsewhere in Scripture. They are the rock or stone and the mountain.

Whenever the word stone is used symbolically it is always a symbol of the second Person of the Trinity, God the Son, the Lord Jesus, the Messiah of Israel. Whenever the word mountain is used symbolically, it is always a symbol of a king, kingdom, or throne. Therefore, following the Fourth World Gentile Empire, God will set up His own Kingdom. The Kingdom is set up during the Ten Division Stage (v 44a), and this brings to an end the domination of the other kingdoms (v.44b). In the end the image of Gentile domination will be smashed at the Second Coming. Once the Messianic stone smashes Gentile domination, the Kingdom of God will be set up by this stone. That's this mountain that takes over the whole world. This should not be viewed as evangelism by the Christian Church, it's God making His statement that, "I'm taking back control of the earth!" That will end Gentile domination.

GOD'S KINGDOM

With God, in Christ, sitting David's throne in Jerusalem a new government is going to be set up. It's going to be an entirely different form of Government. It's going to be a theocracy ruled by the real King and it's going to be a whole lot different than the way things are now. That brings an end to all of Gentile dominion over the planet, particularly Jerusalem. Once the Messianic stone, as we saw in the image, smashes Gentile dominion, the Kingdom of God is going to be established. The earth will be going through a renovation. Everything we know is not going to be as it is now. The

plant and animal life will still be here. But the way people conduct themselves and even the way animals act toward us that will be different. There is going to be universal peace here. The earth will undergo an entire renovation which will last for 1,000 years. The fortieth through the forty eighth chapters of this book will discuss the Messianic Kingdom in great detail.

In summary, the Times of the Gentiles is a long period of time when four Gentile empires will follow one another in sequence with the Fourth Empire going through several different stages. But eventually this will give way to God's setting up His own Kingdom. While the Gentile empires are of human origin; the Kingdom of the Stone is of divine origin. While the Gentile empires are all temporary, God's kingdom is eternal.

The Kingdoms of Daniel 2 Outline

1. The Babylonian Empire starting in 586 B.C. They were conquered by the,
2. The Medo-Persian Empire. Then Alexander conquered the
3. The Hellenistic Empire
4. The Fourth Empire, which is the Roman Empire and its two stages which is
 - a. The United Stage which we have already seen. We sense they have gone away, but they really haven't.
 - b. The Ten Division Stage which is still yet future to us and finally,
5. The Messianic Kingdom

Some Bible teachers believe that there will be a revival of the old Roman Empire but the text never says this. It is man's speculation that leads to that idea. Rome developed imperialism which was a different form of government than all the other empires. It is this form that the Bible speaks of as the Fourth Gentile Empire not just Rome. There is no break or gap in the imperialist form of government on the earth from the initiation of the Roman Empire until Christ returns. This is seen in the manner in which the image moves from the imperialist stage to the Messianic Kingdom stage. Imperialism will go through five successive stages. We need to study those to see where history fits in this exposition

NEXT MESSAGE: THE PROPHECY AGAINST THE GOG & MAGOG INVASION PART IV
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