

Howards Corner

Age of the Gentiles –part one

The Bible which gives us the Word of God has been written by the Hebrew people and little if any has been written by gentiles. The word of God therefore reflects primarily what is happening and will happen to the Jews. So, we find in Daniel the events that are to happen to the Hebrew people and some of the things that happened to Daniel while he was in captivity in Babylon. So, when we study especially in the book of Daniel, we must read it from the Jewish perspective. God has revealed to Daniel the future history of the Jewish people through visions, dreams, and visitations from Angels. He also revealed the structure of the gentile government that will rule the world as it relates to the Jews. The prophecies of this book have been and will continue to be accurate. Revelation and the words of Jesus in the New Testament add to our knowledge of the history of the Jews and how the Church and Christianity are to fit into the history of Jews. When properly understood all these words from not only Daniel but all the other Old Testament prophets add to our understanding. You cannot understand Revelation and all the other prophets without the book of Daniel. So, I start with one event that is recorded in chapter 2.

I will attempt to make clear to the people that are called of God these words of Daniel's book. I will try to use words that the average person can understand. My desire is to give you a big picture view of about 2600 years of history as it relates to the Jewish people and how that relates to Christianity. I will not try to cover all the book of Daniel in detail nor to cover the book in the order they are written because they are not written in chronological order. The book is written in segments of events with some events that compliment other events. I will attempt to give you the big picture first and then go back and add in more detail as I go.

Let us begin our story of the Age of the Gentiles.

The nation of Israel after their failure to worship God and their many rebellions have been given over to captivity into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon. This happened in the year 605 BC when Nebuchadnezzar conquered

Jerusalem and carried away captives. Daniel was one of the captives at a young age. Some believe about 14 years old.

Daniel in the land of Babylon was faced with being under the rule of King Nebuchadnezzar who was foreign to his way of thinking. But he had no choice. He was a captive in this strange land. The Lord gave him favor in the eyes of the King and he was known for having wisdom and insight.

Chapter 2 of the book of Daniel tells us that one night the king had a dream, and it was very disturbing to him. He gathered all the conjurers and seers and wisemen to interpret the dream. He, however, did not reveal the dream to them but insisted that they reveal the dream and the interpretation to him. They replied that no man can reveal the dream. He insisted that they must tell him the dream and the interpretation. They were told that if they did not, they would be sentenced to death along with all the other wisemen in the kingdom.

When they came to Daniel, He asked for time to pray and ask God for a revelation. He prayed and the Lord gave him the vision of what the king had dreamed. He went forward and asked to see the king and say that he had been given an answer to the vision and that the wise men did not need to be killed.

Daniel started to reveal the dream to king Nebuchadnezzar by saying that no man can reveal the dreams of another person but that the God of heaven had revealed the dream to him.

The dream was that of a giant statue. The head was made of gold. The arms and the chest were silver. The belly and the thighs were bronze. The legs were iron, and the feet were iron mixed with clay. Then there was a stone cut out not with human hands that rolled down and destroyed the whole statue crushing the feet and the whole statue until there was no trace left of the statue.

Daniel went on to explain that the head of the statue which was made of Gold was **Babylon**, and that king Nebuchadnezzar was the head and that the other kingdoms would follow him. God had revealed to Nebuchadnezzar the kingdoms that would follow his kingdom. The kingdom of Babylon was the first kingdom of the **Age of the Gentiles** which began when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Israel and carried off captives. The age of the Gentiles is the time when the nation of Israel was given over to gentile nations to control and occupy at different levels until God ends the

age. As we now know by history and by God's Word that that age will not end until Christ's second coming.

With further study in Daniel and with history we get more information to help us understand the rest of the statue. The second kingdom was made of Silver, and it was divided with two arms and chest of the statue. We find in studying that this was the Kingdom of the **Medes and Persians**. During the reign of the Medes and Persians the Jews were released to return to their land after 70 years of captivity but they were not completely free to be an independent nation. They did return to their land and rebuilt the temple and repaired the walls. Read the accounts of Nehemiah and Ezra. They were still under the control of the Medes and Persians until the Medes and Persians were defeated by the next kingdom.

The Medes and Persians were defeated by Alexander the Great of Greece. The nation of **Greece** was then the belly and thighs of the statue which was made of bronze. Alexander was short lived because he died at an early age. His kingdom was divided into four areas and was governed by his four generals. The Kingdom of the North and the Kingdom of the South and the Kingdom of the West and the Kingdom of the East. There is much written in Daniel about these kingdoms and how they affected Israel. I will not try to cover all the details in this writing but at the end I will give you a website that will give you details.

During the Greek reign they were still worshiping God and performing sacrifices in the temple. There was one noticeable event that you should know at this point. The details are in Daniel in Chapter 11. You will find the accounts of a most horrible man that conquered Jerusalem and did great evil things to the Jews of that day. He stopped the sacrifice and set up the "abomination of desolation" in the temple and killed, it is said 40000 Jews. This man was Antiochus Epiphanes who was a foreshadow of the antichrist who is to come in the later days of the Age of the Gentiles. This antichrist will do similar but worse things in the last 7 years which are the tribulation years and the end of gentile reign.

Christ's return will end all gentile rule in the world. Jesus warned the Jews about the "abomination of desolation" in Matthew 24-15 so they would recognize what was happening and flee Jerusalem in the middle of the seven years of tribulation. This was also the time of the Maccabees revolt and the cleansing of the temple and restoring of the sacrifice. (Study details at versebyverseministry.org)

After the Kingdom of Greece, the Romans took control of all the area including Israel. So, the **Romans** became the fourth Kingdom which was made of Iron and the feet with ten toes were of iron mixed with clay. This was a different kind of kingdom which was not ruled by just one nation but continued to exist in different and diverse forms up until today. This kingdom was in rule at the time of Christ's first coming and was the nation that crucified Christ at the insistence of the leaders of Israel. Now all the kingdoms that have evolved from the Roman empire have ruled over Israel and the world up until today.

Although the Roman empire divided into East and West sections when Constantine was emperor with the East being in Constantinople and the West remaining in Rome. Which is what the statue tells us because it has two legs and feet with ten toes. These did not exist until 330 BC so the two legs and feet with ten toes could not have been a part of the original Roman empire until this time. Therefore, the image of the statue is our guide to understanding the history of the fourth kingdom (Rome) and the rest of the Age of the Gentiles and all the kingdoms up until today.

When we look further into this statue, we also see some other things. The feet with ten toes also have not been revealed and are nowhere in sight at that time. They are still in the future. The other thing to note is that the stone cut out not by human hands has not happened yet. Since we do not see the feet with ten toes the rock not cut out with human hands cannot hit them and shatter the whole statue. Many have thought that this happened at Christ's first coming but we must note that the Age of the Gentiles still exist but is changing form at that time in history. With Constantine making the church a state church of Rome the church has now married the fourth kingdom of Rome. God has allowed this marriage to happen for His reasons, but it is a marriage of Gentile nations and the governmental church without the spirit of God.

So, it is safe to say that the fourth kingdom is still alive at that time of history, but we will see it starting to change soon in history with the feet mixed with iron and clay that do not adhere to each other.

Stay tuned until next time and I will try to piece together the rest of the story.

Howard