

## INTRO TO A LITERAL VIEW

When I hear people speak on end-time prophecy or some difficult passages I am frustrated when they give God an easy way out, claiming certain texts to be figurative language. Scripture must be interpreted so the meaning is not diluted. When God tells us what He is going to do He will completely fulfill all of what He says? Isaiah's prophecy, for example, illustrates this point: when one part of a Scripture is literally fulfilled, the second will also be just as literal in its fulfillment.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given...” Is. 9:6a

This is a prophecy of the incarnation- Jesus Christ's birth to the virgin Mary. It happened historically and is the foundation of the Christian church – Christ's first coming. Isaiah's verse continues,

“...and the government shall be upon His shoulders...” Isaiah 9:6b

The second part of the verse refers to Christ's second Coming, when He will rule the earth with truth and grace, (from *Joy to the World* – concerning the Millennial reign of Christ) [See Revelation 20]. How can anyone know that the first part of the verse was historically fulfilled and not believe that the second should also be literal in its fulfillment? When a verse is yet to come to pass, we believe it to be true by faith. Since God has been eternally faithful to His Word we can trust that what He says He will do. In this section on we examine Nebuchadnezzar's dream as God reveals the future kingdoms of men, which will end when the final Kingdom of God appears and fills the earth.

## A Literal View of Prophecy

Today I want to bring us to the simple discovery that prophecy is literal. Daniel 2 presents Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which demonstrates a pre-history of the Gentiles kingdoms that has been literally fulfilled in our past. History is “His story” – the sovereign working of the will of God.

Nebuchadnezzar had a dream...

### **I. THE KINGS DREAM (DAN. 2:1-13)**

“*I have a dream...*” Nothing was inspiring or motivating about this one.

In 603 B. C. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had a scary dream.

1. He called the wise men together.
2. He gave them a test: First describe my dream; then interpret it.
3. He gave them a warning that if they failed they would be killed and their homes turned into latrines.
4. Pass the test and receive a reward.

Response:

1. "Could you repeat that?"
2. They told him that he was being unreasonable because it was humanly impossible
3. No ruler had ever made such a demand, cried the wise men.

– *"Only the gods could do this," They whined.*

**Results: *Rage*** – the king ordered all his wise men executed.

Daniel and friends were also on the list (So much for job security).

## **II. DANIEL'S REQUEST --DAN. 2:14-24**

Daniel requested time to seek God. Afterwards he would fulfill the king's demand. Daniel called an emergency prayer meeting.

"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know." (Jer. 33:3)

Matt. 7 "Ask, seek, and knock."

Daniel remembered how Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream.

Daniel's prayer answered (vv. 19—23)

"Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever,  
for wisdom and power belong to Him.

And it is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men, and knowledge to men of understanding. It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him.

To thee, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for Thou has given me wisdom and power; Even now Thou hast made known to me what we requested of Thee. For thou hast made known to us the king's matter.”

I. Praise to God for His attributes of wisdom and power

His sovereignty (power)

II. Praise to God that He gives wisdom and power to men

III. Praise to God for answering his personal request

How many of our problems have been appointed by a sovereign God?

If we would only seek Him for their solution, we would then experience his mighty hand of deliverance; as we cooperate with His purposes.

### **III. DANIEL REVEALS THE KING'S DREAM.**

**Intro** – Dan 2:25-30

1. Demand was humanly impossible to fulfill.
2. Only God could
3. The dream was from God.
4. The dream revealed the future and latter days.
5. All credit belonged to God for revealing it to Daniel.

**Content of the Dream** -- Dan. 2:31-35

--Image of human form of great size

1. Head of gold
2. Breast and arms of silver
3. Belly and two thighs of bronze
4. Two legs of iron
5. Feet and toes mixture of iron and clay
6. Stone cut out of a mountain without hands (not of human origin)

7. Stone struck the feet of the image and crushed them.

Then it caused all the rest of the image to disintegrate.

8. Stone became a large mountain that filled the whole earth.

#### **IV. DANIEL INTERPRETATION OF THE DREAM**

Intro: Sovereignty of God --Dan. 2:36-45

##### **1. Head of Gold**

“You are the head of gold. And after you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you.”

- Represents both the Babylonian kingdom and its great king.
  - o Oriental regarded kings and kingdoms synonymous.
- **Gold**
  1. Marduk, the chief god of Babylon, was called the god of gold.
  2. Babylon used gold extensively in buildings, images and shrines.

“Herodotus lived in Babylon 90 years after the era of Nebuchadnezzar was astonished at the amount of gold there. Even walls and buildings were overlaid with the gold.” (Showers)

##### **2. Image’s Breast and Arms of silver (Vs. 39)**

Kingdom of Medo-Persia

“Two distinct people’s, the Medes and the Persians, were united together in 550 B. C. under the same king to form one great power.”

**Silver** – signified money

Standard of value and medium of exchange.

Based their power on money – extensive tax system.

INFERIOR TO BABYLON

Not militarily

Not Size

Partnership empire – lacked absolute unity of Babylon.

Conquered Babylon in 539 B. C.

### **3. Image's Belly and Thighs of Bronze (:39)**

Kingdom of Greece – Alexander the Great and his Successors

“One belly subdivided into two thighs was an excellent way for God to portray the Grecian kingdom ahead of time.”

Alexander the Great died and his kingdom was divided among his four leading generals.

Two played an important role in history – Syria/Egypt.

Bronze – Developed by Greeks and used as implements of war.

Greece was a kingdom characterized by bronze

They conquered Persia in 331 B. C.

### **4. Image's Legs of Iron and Feet and toes of Iron and Clay.**

**ROMAN EMPIRE** “Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces.” (Vv. 40-43)

Conquered Greece in 146 B. C.

Political Division in A. D. 364.

Western Roman Empire with capital in Rome

Eastern Roman Empire with capital in Constantinople.

Iron – excellent designation of Rome

1. Rome used iron in its military weaponry.
2. Iron is stronger than gold, silver and bronze, so Rome would crush and shatter the ancient world, as it did.

“And in that you saw the feet and toes partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the

kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle... they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.”

(Dan. 2:41-43)

“...Daniel’s downward movement on the image represented the passage of time. Thus, when Daniel interpreted the last part of the image – the feet and toes – he was dealing with the final form of Gentile world dominion in time. Since the feet and toes were part of the representation of the fourth or Roman kingdom, they portrayed the Roman Empire in its final stage of existence in contrast with its earlier leg stage.”

Legs of the fourth kingdom consisted of iron,

Feet and toes were a mixture of iron and clay.

Roman Empire in its final stages would be strong militarily.

But there would be a clay-like brittleness – division.

“Different groups of people would combine with one another to form the final stage of the empire, but they would not adhere completely to one another, just as iron and clay do not combine completely with each other.” (sounds like politicians)

This final stage of the Roman Empire is in our future.

1. Consists of a ten nation confederation
  - a. Daniel 7:23-24
  - b. Rev. 17:12-13 “And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. These have one purpose and they give their power and authority to the beast.”
  
2. “Political leaders of several European nations have met within recent years to discuss the formation of such a confederation a confederation which will be united for military and economic strength, but will maintain the identities and distinctives of the

member nations. Western leaders are thinking in that direction.”

Past, fulfilled prophecy prompts us to look confidently to God’s sovereign fulfillment of future prophecies.

### **5. The kingdom of the Stone (vv. 44-45)**

This kingdom would be set up by the God of heaven, not by man.

Characteristics:

1. Would never be destroyed
2. Not other kingdom would ever succeed it;
3. It would destroy and end all the Gentiles kingdoms
4. It would endure forever.

Marduk, the chief god of the Babylonians, was called “The Great Mountain.” They believed that their gods came from the sacred mountain of the earth – the mountain that they called “the Mountain of the Lands.” Babylonian temples were intended to be imitations of mountains – the Babylonian mindset. “For this reason God purposely portrayed His future kingdom first as a stone cut out of a mountain and second as a stone that becomes a great mountain”

1. New kingdom would be divine in origin. (not human)
2. The Stone struck the image on its feet, causing the entire image to disintegrate.
  - a. Coming of the Kingdom of God would take place at the last stage of the Revived Roman Empire
  - b. It would destroy the Revived Roman Empire when it would come.
  - c. Third, when the Kingdom of God would destroy the last stage of the Roman Empire, it would thereby destroy all of the Gentile world dominion.

After the Stone had crushed the entire image, the wind blew away every remnant of it. Babylonians believed that wind was divine activity.

They called Marduk “Lord of the Wind”

Therefore, divine activity would rid the earth of Gentiles world power.

The Stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth (v. 35).

“The Babylonians pictured the earth as a great mountain. They called the earth “Mountain-house.” In light of this Babylonian concept, God portrayed His Kingdom as a great mountain which filled the earth to make one thing clear – although the fifth kingdom would be set up by the God of heaven, it would be a kingdom on earth just as the four Gentile kingdoms had been. It would rule the earth of its day just as the Gentile kingdoms ruled the known earth of their days.” (DR. RENALD E. SHOWERS)

*THE STONE THAT THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE. THIS IS THE LORD’S DOING; IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES. THIS IS THE DAY WHICH THE LORD HAS MADE; LET US REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN IT.” (PS 118:22-24)*

This refers to something that happened in the building of Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem. Stones were quarried far from the Temple site.

Detailed plans by temple architects, transported to the site and assembled without the noise of stone cutting tools. “Early in the construction a stone was sent that did not seem to fit. Since the builders did not know what to do with it, they laid it aside and forgot it. Later when they came to place a large capstone on their now nearly completed structure and sent to the quarry for it, they were told that it was not there, that it had already been sent up. They searched for it, found the stone that had been laid aside earlier, and installed it. It fit perfectly. This “the stone the builders rejected [became] the capstone.”<sup>1</sup>

JESUS APPLIED THIS verse to himself, saying,

“Have you never read in the Scriptures:

‘The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

(Matt. 21:42-44)

PETER QUOTED,

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<sup>1</sup> Renald Showers, The Most High God, (

“See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

(1 Peter 2:6-8)

Jesus is the Stone, the King of the Final Kingdom **{Ps. 2:1-12}**

### **Lessons on Prophecy:**

God is in charge from the beginning to the end. –Sovereignty – History is ‘His story.’

Why is a Literal Fulfillment of all Prophecy important?

To encourage our faith to believe that God will accomplish all that He said He would do.

**Decline of Glory** -- the Kingdoms of Men move from precious metals to less precious. Ultimately only iron, that represents military strength (ability to crush and destroy), becomes the ultimate value.

The Prophetic Picture views each *Piece of the Puzzle* as vital. God will complete all of prophecy and not leave any pieces out.

**IT WILL HAPPEN!**