Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Rise and Fall of the World, Part 2
Scripture: Daniel 2:41-43
Code: 27-08

Tonight we come back to our study of Daniel. Take your Bible if you will and if you don't have one of your own, you can take one out of the pew. You can put it back when the service is over too for someone else next week. Sometimes I don't say that but anyway, if you need it, take it, believe me. But we're looking at Daniel 2. Daniel is one of the great Old Testament prophets. He prophesized 600 years before the birth of Christ. Great man of God in his early teenage years.

As we have learned about Daniel, when he came into Babylon and he began to be used of God to reveal the plan of the ages, the history of mankind to its consummation in the kingdom of Christ, he was a just a teenager but a remarkable one at that. So we come back again to hear this first and perhaps most monumental prophecy of all of those in Daniel or in the Old Testament, the one in chapter 2.

As a setting for our look at this tremendous prophecy, let me just begin by mentioning an experience I had this week. I had the opportunity to hear Dr. Charles Malikspeak. Dr. Malik is a native of Lebanon. He was raised in the Eastern Orthodox Church in the midst of an Islamic world. He was one of the founders of the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948. He has been his country's ambassador to the United States and to the United Nations. In the United Nations, Dr. Malik has served as president of the general assembly and president of the security council. He's a graduate of Harvard University where he has a master's and a Ph.D. and he's a visiting professor at Harvard as well as a resident professor at the American University in Beirut.

And Dr. Malik was trying to give us an analysis of the world and how he perceived the world. He said in effect that the world is on the brink of disaster. Those are not his exact words but in effect that's the summation of what he was saying. And unless some rather dramatic things happen to change that we're entering into what may be the chaotic period of our history. He gave a rather lengthy list of issues that are the crucial issues facing America and the Western world as well. And consequently not only America and the Western world but because we are the influence for the whole world, he sees the whole world affected by these things.

Let me just give you maybe six of the things that he mentioned. Number one is the nuclear arms race. Dr. Malik said that he calls this the balance of terror. And you probably that Russia supposedly now has a 6-1 edge over United States in nuclear armament. Dr. Malik said the SALT talk, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks are the most important events since - I think he put it this

way: this is the most important thing to happen to the world since the angel gave the enunciation of the birth of Christ to Mary.

And I was pretty taken aback by that frankly. And he went on to say the reason these are very important times and the reason the arms races is so vital is because it has the potential to end the whole of world history. The wrong man punches the right button, we're all gone. And of course from his perspective, the West is woefully behind in the arms race and we stand on the brink of a potential nuclear disaster.

Secondly, he said the second major problem facing the United States and the Western world and the whole world as a result is the strain in Western alliance. He says America has not done well in maintaining its European allies. And little by little he sees Russia wooing away the American allies in Europe so that Europe is becoming more prone to listen to Russia than to the United States. We have a rather low level of commitment between us and the allies that we once had such a tight relationship with in Europe. And he feels that that just brings the whole of the Soviet power closer and closer to engulfing the world.

Thirdly, he said, we face the problem of what he calls perpetual retreat. He says America has continually retreated from equality with its sworn enemies until America stands in the face of the world in a position of weakness. We don't have the clout, and that was on Newsweek this week, wasn't it? Has America lost its clout?

Fourthly, he said, another major problem in America is our stress on money and machines. He said that we worship the idols made by our own hands as they did in their Old Testament times, only the idols made by our own hands are products. We worship the great god mechanization. We worship the god of progress. We worship the god of technology. We worship the god of modernization. We worship the product. And he says throughout the history of America in recent years, we have tried to buy friendship around the world, and to buy affinity with money and machines because that's our god without committing to anybody the community of spirit that he talked about. And he means by that a loving concern for people.

He said the only time on the foreign soil that you find America sharing community of spirit with a foreign nation is in the heart of some obscure missionary. For the most part, we've tried to buy them all off with money and machines.

Fifthly, he says another, and perhaps in his mind, the number one problem facing the world today is the Western university system. He says the Western university system is a devastating problem in the world because - and he made this statement - all the world's policymakers have been educated in Western universities. And he said Western universities are educating all the people who are making the decisions around the world. And he says the university system is - and this is his list - humanistic,

Freudian, naturalistic, secularistic, atheistic, cynical and a few others.

And we have educated people in this naturalistic, relativistic, humanistic, secularistic, Freudian kind of education that knows nothing about absolutes. It knows nothing about the affirmation of God or of a divine standard or of truth. And knows no commitment to that truth. And he said that's why when a man rises on the political scene like the Ayatollah Khomeini, nobody understands him in the Western world because nobody understands what it is to be committed to absolutes. He said the man is not a madman, he is not a maniac, he is not insane, he is not crazy. He is extremely intelligent and he is absolutely committed to what his authority says and his authority is the Koran.

He is an absolutist trying to negotiate with a bunch of relativists. And all we can conclude is that anybody who would hold to that kind of stuff is crazy. Because we have been educated in a relativistic world.

Now sixthly, and in a summary kind of fashion, he said, "Tragically from my perspective in the midst of all of this, I have to say also that one of the greatest problems facing the world is the retreat of Christianity," the retreat of Christianity. He said there have been three major revivals occurring in the world recently. One is the revival of atheism. He said atheism is sweeping through the East, through Europe, through other parts of the world. He said there is secondly a revival of Judaism. There is a Zionist movement and there has been for some years. Although it is small because there are not very Jewish people. It is nonetheless a true revival.

And then he said there is another revival that is going to sweep the world if it continues and that's the revival of Islam. And - mark it - Islam is not just a religion, Islam is politics because they do not separate those two things. He said in the midst of an atheistic revival, a Judaistic revival and an Islamic revival, Christianity is retreating. We are retreating before communism, he said, we are retreating before atheism, retreating before rationalism. Even our seminaries and our universities and our churches are pumping out Freudian rationalistic humanism. We are retreating before various sundrismsof our day.

In other words, if I can sum up what he was saying, he said Christian truth no longer has a significant impact on the world. We see this America, don't we? Does America make its decisions and its policies based on the authoritative word of God? Well, that's ridiculous. Of course not. It's morality by majority, isn't it? I remember hearing a politician on the radio and they were asking him whether he believed in capital punishment. He said, "I'm for capital punishment. I'm absolutely for capital punishment. I think capital punishment is a deterrent to crime and so forth and so forth and so forth. And we have to preserve the dignity of human life and the Bible says an eye for an eye," and he was going on misquoting Scriptures and all. He was for it. The man said, "Then why are you for it?" He said, "Well, I took a straw vote of my constituents and they're for it." Is that the way you judge whether you ought to take a man's life, whether or not people in your block voted for it? Morality by

majority? The motto of our society: if it works, do it. There are no absolutes.

And so Malik was saying that Christian heritage as we know it in the Western world plays no part in the politics of the Western world. For example, Christianity in Europe is well [inaudible] non-existent. Little tiny pockets of it here and there. Christianity is fading. It's fading into liberalism as well as it's fading into secularism. Now after all of that analysis of the death of Western civilization, this is what he said and this really shocked me, really shocked me because he said was a Christian and he affirmed that he believe in Jesus Christ as his Savior, and then he said this:

"The only hope for the Western world lies in an alliance between the Roman Catholic Church, which is the most commonly influence control of unifying elements in Europe, and first of all, the Eastern Orthodox Church." He says, "Rome must unite with eastern orthodoxy because the Eastern Orthodox Church controls western Middle East. It controls the east end of the Mediterranean. And if they don't solidify that control, Islam will march across Europe." He's looking at it politically.

So he says the first thing that has to happen is Rome must unite with the Eastern Orthodox Church. Then he said, "P.S. tomorrow the Pope has a meeting with the patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox Church." And he did. Did you see it on the news? That's the first step and they embraced and they kissed and it's very political. And then he said this: further, we only hope that the Western world lies then in a united Europe under the control of the Pope and then all Protestant Christians around the globe must come into submission to the Pope so that we have one unified Christian world.

Folks, when I heard that, knowing what I know about the book of Daniel, I started hopping on my seat. I knew that was coming. I just didn't think I'd hear it from somebody who claimed to be a Christian. The whole world of Christianity, all of Europe unified under the Pope. You know what he's thinking. You see he sees the globe in an imbalance. Here is Islam and the eastern system and the West is weaning because the loss of absolutes leads to dissolution. And he knows that the only common factor in Europe, in America North and America South is the Roman Catholic Church. The only common denominator for unification to give to the Western world its strength. A unified Europe led by the Pope. Embracing everything from Great Britain east to the east coast of the Mediterranean.

Do you know who all of that area belonged to at one time in history? It belonged to Rome. And do you know that Daniel says in Daniel 2 that some day the Roman Empire will revive itself? When I heard that, I was really shocked. As I said, I knew it was coming, I just didn't think it'd hear it in those terms. And he wants to draw America in as well.

Now why am I telling you this? Well, because I believe it's another thrust and I could've given you other ones. That was just fresh in my mind this week. But it's another thrust that shows us how fast we are moving to the fulfillment of Daniel 2. Here is a man who lived 600 years before Christ and yet

outlined in explicit detail what is happening in your lifetime. We shouldn't be shocked. In Psalm 22, David who lives hundreds of years before Jesus was born, drew out in explicit detail every single element of the crucifixion and described it. There are at least 330 plus prophecies explicitly made in the Old Testament regarding Jesus Christ, many of which have already come to pass in His first coming and the rest in His second. Did you know the Old Testament prophesized the dissolution of Babylon in a cane. It prophesied the destruction of Egypt and it came. It prophesized the destruction of Tyre and Sidon, two great cities, and it came. It prophesied that a man named Cyrus would be born and he would let Israel go out of captivity. He was born and he did let them go.

In my own mind, the greatest proof of the Bible is fulfilled prophecy because it is proof that is external to Scripture. The Bible says it and it is verified in human history. And preachers don't have any control over history to make the Bible come true. It's God.

Now every power and every nation assumes that it will exist forever. Or at least wishes that. I suppose as we study the Old Testament and we study human history it's just a common thing that nations think they're going to rise to power and they're going to ride that power out.

As we come to the book of Daniel, there was a great nation in power. That nation was Babylon, what is known as the neo-Babylonian Empire. The first great monarch of the neo-Babylonian Empire was a man named Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar. Nabopolassar was something of a vacile king under the Assyrian Empire, but he built together a great army, defeated the Assyrians and then at the Battle of Curcumas, he wiped out Egyptian society to the point where Egypt has never risen from its own ashes to be a semblance of what it once was. We go there now, we see the Sphinx and the pyramids and all of the massive things that are left from that great civilization that is no more and will be no more.

This man came along, Nebuchadnezzar, and he took over what his father had conquered. He took over what was Egypt and what was Assyria and the whole of the Middle East and stretched it west and stretched it east. And the Bible always sees the world and at its focus and its center is Jerusalem. The world sort of begins and spreads from there. And so that part of the world being dominated by this man signifies the whole of the Biblical perspective, the Biblical world.

The Bible indicates that had he had the time and had he had the resources, he would've had the power expressed to conquer the whole world. This man Nebuchadnezzar rules the world of Daniel's day. Now as he begins his rule in the kingdom of Babylon, he destroys the nation of Judah. And in destroying the nation of Judah, God's people, he takes them captive into his land. This is very common in history, to bring in captives. They use them for slave labor. They use them anyway they could.

In the first deportation in 605 or so, Nebuchadnezzar went into the court of Judah, because they had their own court and their own kings and things. He went into the court of Judah and he said I want all of the finest young men, all of the men who are the sons of the nobles, I want all of those who are in the royal line. I want the cream of the crop. And history seems to indicate that there probably were about 75 of these young men who were in their youth probably from 14 on up. Their teenage years, and they were the royal blood and the noble blood. They were the ones who had at the benefit of the finest education possible for them in their own country.

And his design was to educate them in Babylonian society and then use them in Jewish affairs. Because he had taken a whole nation captive and now he had to rule those people and he had to understand those people. And so if he could sort of Babylonianize some of their best leaders, some of their choice young men - he wasn't going to work with old men because they're set in their ways - but some of their choice young men then he could rule in Jewish affairs.

One of the young men he took was a man named Daniel. He had three friends with him - Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael. The four of them took an uncompromising stand and said, well, there are some things we'll do, O King Nebuchadnezzar, but there's some things we won't do. Because our God has told us not to. And so they drew an uncompromising line and said, "We will honor our God and His word." They were absolutists. We will do what God says and we won't do what you tell us to do.

Later on, as we shall see, it meant that the three of them were thrown in a fiery furnace. Ultimately it meant that Daniel was throw to some hungry lions but they would not compromise. And out of the whole group we only know four names who really stood true, who really maintained their position and those are the four names that are lasting. And out of those four, one rose to a very unique place, and that was Daniel. Why? Because God gave him the role of a prophet.

Look at chapter 1, verse 17. "As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom." They had knowledge and skill and all learning and wisdom - watch this - "but Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." He had a prophetic gift. He could receive visions and interpret dreams. Now why? There was no written word in that time completed. God was still revealing His word. And God was using prophets as the vehicle for his revelation. And it was very essential that God had this choice man through whom he could speak to the world. And Daniel was his man. So he gave him the ability to receive visions and dreams.

And with that in our mind, we come to chapter 2. And in chapter 2, God gives a dream to Nebuchadnezzar. Now this man is a real king, can be verified historically. The first great king of Babylon, ruled for 43 years, I think it is. And the empire only lasted 80 so he really dominated it. And He gives him a dream, God does. He had many dreams. Now how did it happen?

You remember what I told you last week? If you read the first part of the chapter, chapter 2, you find out that Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel, verses 28 and 29, was lying on his bed one night. And he was concerned about the future. We said that verses 1-30 was the dream received. And Nebuchadnezzar was lying in his bed and he was very concerned about the future. And he was worried about how it might be with his empire. Where was it all going? How long would it last? Who would knock him off the way his father had knocked off somebody else.

And as he was lying in bed with the thoughts about where his whole empire was going, he fell asleep. And in his sleep he dreamed some dreams. But there was one of those dreams that wasn't his own. It was God's revelation to him. And you know what happened? I believe the text is telling us he woke up in the morning scared to death but unable to recall the details of his dream. Have you ever had that experience? You had a bad dream and you're scared and you try to think about putting it together and you can't get the details. I believe God gave him the dream and then I believe God helped him forget it.

You say, "Now, wait a minute. Why does God give him a dream and then make him forget it?" Because God was setting up Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar immediately rushed to all the wise men who were educated in astrology and everything else and the Chaldean magic and all that. And he got them all together and said, "Tell me the dream. You guys are the soothsayers, you guys are the wise men. You're the one who are the seers and the prophets and the visionaries. Tell me my dream. Put together its pieces again and interpret for me." And they all stood there and they couldn't do it. It was just, duh, nothing.

They couldn't tell him his dream. They were charlatans, they were frauds. The best they could've been was demonically possessed and Satan can't read the mind and so they were stuck. They couldn't tell him his dream. And so he said, "If you don't tell me my dream, I'm going to kill every one of you." And so the men moved out, the chief executioner came to Daniel because Daniel was one of the trainees among the wise men at this point. He said, "Come on. You're all going to die because you can't tell the dream." Daniel hadn't even heard about it. And he said, "Wait a minute. You give me some time and I'll tell the dream." How did he know that? He knew God had given him that ability.

He got down on his knees with his three friends and they began to pray. And then we come to verses 31-35. Daniel gets the answer to his prayer. We have not only the dream received but the dream recalled. In verses 31-35, Daniel walks in and gives the king his dream. Let's read it again. "Thou O King sawest and behold a great image or a great statue. This great statue whose brightness with excellence stood before thee and the form of it was terrible." In other words, it was awesome, massive thing, immense and brilliantly shining the Hebrew or the Aramaic terms mean.

This statue's head was of fine gold, its breasts and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron and its feet part of iron and part of clay. Now he says what you saw in your dream - and he began to remember, I'm sure, as he heard it - was this massive statue with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, loins, bowels and thighs of bronze. Legs of iron. Feet and toes of iron mixed with clay.

Then it says in verse 34, "You saw until a stone was cut out with hands, which smote the image upon its feet that were of iron and clay and broke them to pieces." Like a missile, here comes the stone and it's cut out without hands. That is it doesn't seem to be any workman, it just seems to come from nowhere and it smashes its image its feet. Then with the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold broken to pieces together, became like the chafe of the summer threshing floors and the wind carried them away that no place was found for them. And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole Earth.

Now frankly if you and I had a dream like that, somebody'd think we'd been eating pickles and strawberries. That is a weird dream, very strange. And so we seem the dream recalled. Did you notice some things about it? Did you notice that the statue descends and the value of the precious metal from gold to silver to bronze to iron to iron and clay. Did you note that it becomes more diverse as it descends? It starts out as a head - that has solidarity. Then it becomes two breasts and two arms and then it becomes all of the bowels and the thighs. And finally it ends up in ten toes. There's a descending diversity that's in this image as well.

And did you notice that it has a descending specific gravity. Gold weighs more than twice as much as iron and clay mixed. So it's top heavy and easy to topple. And when the stone hits it, it crashes and the wind blows it away. So the dream received, the dream recalled and now the dream revealed. Daniel's going to tell us what it means in verse 36.

This is the dream and we will tell its interpretation before the king. Now here it comes: "Thou O King are the king of kings, for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom power, strength and glory. And wherever the children of men dwell, the beast of the field and the fowls of the heavens hath thee given into thine hand and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. You're the gold head. You, Nebuchadnezzar, who rule the world. You are the head of gold.

"And after thee shall arise another kingdom." The word inferior is better lower. The next one down is another kingdom. You notice he never tells him what it is? He never names it, doesn't say who it is because he didn't want Nebuchadnezzar to be known where it was gonna come from. And then he says another third kingdom of bronze, which shall bear rule over all the Earth and the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron for as much as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things. And as iron that breaketh all thee shall it break in pieces and bruise."

Now stay with me. I want you to get this. He says, "Nebuchadnezzar, you have seen four great world kingdoms. These four kingdoms stretch from you, Nebuchadnezzar, to a stone that comes and smashes them all and fills the whole Earth." This is the story of human history form Nebuchadnezzar to the smiting stone. Jesus referred to the same period in Luke 21:24. He called it the times of the Gentiles or the times of the nations. It is the time when the nations dominate the land of Israel. Israel is set aside. The prophet Ezekiel in chapter 9, chapter 10, chapter 11, chapter 21, says Ichabod is written over the nation Israel. They will be carried into Babylon and that will begin the times when the Gentiles rule in the land of Israel.

And believe it, folks, they're still under the impression of the nations even now. Israel still is tentatively holding to a small portion of the original land given them by God, which stretches from the north all the way down to the river of Egypt. And from the sea all the way to the Tigris and Euphrates. Way into where is Iran and past Iraq and Persia and all of that. They don't even have a smittence of what is theirs by God's gift originally.

And so there is still that oppression of the nations over that land until the stone comes to crush the empires of the world. And I wanna compare with this thing something in Daniel 7 for a minute. Stay with me now, it's all gonna come together for you. Daniel 7:1: "In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon," who came along after Nebuchadnezzar some time, "Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed. And he wrote the dream and told the sum of the matter. Daniel spoke and said, 'I saw in my vision by night and behold the four winds of the heavens strove upon the Great Sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea diverse one form another.'

"Here are four beasts" - now watch this - "these are just four other ways to see these same world empires. The first was like a lion and had eagle's wings. I beheld till its wings were plucked and it was lifted up from the Earth and made stand upon the feet as a man and a man's heart was given to it.

"And behold" - verse 5 - "another beast. The second like a bear and it raised up itself on one side and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between its teeth and they said thus unto it, arise and devour much flesh. After this and lo another like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a fowl" - that's a fast animal, a leopard, and when it's got wings, it's really fast.

And then in verse 7, "There was a fourth beast, dreadful, terrible, strong exceedingly, had great iron teeth. It devoured and broke in pieces and stamped the residue with its feet and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before and it had, what, ten horns." The last beast, ten horns. The last part of the image, ten what? Toes. In both cases, the final form of world rule will take a tenfold identity.

Now what are these four empires? Go back to chapter 2, and I'm just going to quickly - these reviews take so long and the time goes by so fast. But I have to tell you this: we remember that the head of gold is the Babylonian Empire. Lasted about 80 years and faded away when the Medo-Persians moved in in one night and devastated them. We'll find out the whole story in Daniel 5. It gives the whole description of how they took the city of Babylon and took over from the Babylonian Empire. The first is Babylon.

The fall of the Babylonian Empire just came suddenly. I'm sure there were some seeds of dissolution. Nebuchadnezzar had died in 562. He was succeeded by a man named - his own son - Emil Marduke. You remember Marduke was one of their gods. They always named themselves after their gods. He was succeeded by Emil Marduke who was promptly assassinated. In 560, just a couple of years later, Nera Glassertook the throne. After four years he died. He was succeeded by his son who was promptly assassinated. Then came a man named Nabanitus. And Nabanitus assumed great power and shared the power with his coregent whose name was Belshazzar.

So what you have in the Babylonian Empire is tremendous solidarity for 43 years and then just all falling apart. People being assassinated and so forth. Finally Belshazzar in a drunken stupor was carrying on a wild party - recorded in Daniel 5 - and in the midst of his foolishness and folly the Medes and the Persians marched right through the city and devastated his entire empire. The fall of Babylon.

Now listen, the fall of Babylon was the end of the Babylonian Empire but it was not the end of Babylonian influence. Because it was in Babylon that the systems of evil religion began. What is the first system of false religion ever recorded in the Bible? The tower of what? Babble. And from then on Babylon became synonymous with false religion. And the culture and the religions of Babylon have found their way into polluting the human stream so that some day when the last stages of human false religion rears its ugly head on the Earth - in Revelation 17 - the Lord says, "The name of it shall be called Mystery Babylon."

Why? Because Babylon was the fountain of false religious systems. And so while the empire crumbled, the pollution of its human religions found their way into the stream of history. Babylon was succeeded by Medo-Persia. Medo-Persia is in verse 39: "Lower down the image, the kingdom of silver, the arms and the breasts." Two parts, the Medes and the Persians, the silver. Medo-Persian Empire lasted only around 200 years, about 120 years longer than Babylon. It was during the time of the Medes and the Persians that Cyrus let Israel go back and reconstruct their land, which was just a semblance of what it once was.

The third empire in verse 39 we went into detail. If you didn't get this, get the tape from last week and you'll see how these things are so explicit. We know the Medo-Persian Empire was followed by Greece. History tells us that. There's no question about it. And it would bear rule over all the Earth.

I told you Alexander the Great, demanded the title king of all the Earth. He extended his empire from Western Europe to India. Massive conquering by a man who died just after he was 30 years old. Incredible. No wonder he is seen in Daniel 7 as a leopard with wings, springing a tremendously fast rate across the globe. He came across the Hellespont, conquered Greece and Rome, first met the Persian opposition at Granicus, subdued all of Asia Minor. He literally defeated a half a million Persians who were under Derias. He slaughtered them and broke the back of the empire and then he began to take city after city after city after city. And even swept down and took Egypt.

And he got to Egypt, he founded the city that's still there - the city of Alexandria was founded by Alexander the Great and named for him. Later on he had another great defeat of Derias and that totally wiped out the Medes and the Persians and Hebrew of the world. He returned to Babylon. Believe it or not, he made Babylon, ancient Babylon his capital city, he died historians tell us of gluttony and drunkenness and malaria in this youth. And who followed him? He tried to split the empire into four parts but his generals lost their power to the Romans.

And we find them in verse 40 strong as iron. "As iron that breaks in pieces and subdues all things. As iron that breaks all these and it shall break in pieces and bruise." The Roman Empire. By the second century B.C., the Mediterranean had become a Roman lake and the Romans ruled that part of the world, all the way from the Great Britain to the Euphrates, from northern Europe to Africa.

I was privileged to be in the eastern part of the Arab world not too many years ago and to be the eastern outpost of the Roman Empire, which is known as Baalbeck or Baalbeck. It's spelled with two As as a commemoration to Baal. The Roman allegiance extended themselves everywhere, tramping with their iron feet the world into submission.

But it doesn't end there. Now that was the introduction, here comes the sermon. Verse 41 - you can relax, you're going to get out on time. By the way, what time is on time? Verse 41: "And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes part of potter's clay and part of iron. The kingdom shall be divided." Was the Roman Empire divided? Into what segments? East and west. "But there shall be in it of the strength of the iron for as much as thou sawest the iron mixed with mire clay. It'll be a strong empire." And by the way, the Roman Empire lasted 500 years. Alexander, under 200. Medes and the Persians, over 200. Babylon, 80. But the Roman Empire in the west, 500 years. In the east it lasted till 1453 when Constantinople was taken by the Turks. It was strong.

But it was mixed with clay - verse 42. "And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. The clay here is the word that has to do with baked clay used for tile. It would be very brittle.

Now what is this? Verse 43 adds something else. "And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with mire clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men. But they shall not adhere one to another

even as iron is not mixed with clay." Iron and clay don't adhere. "And the weakness and the vulnerability of the Roman Empire is that it would be a mixture of strength and weakness and the weakness is called here the seed of men." The kingdom is a composite of the firm and the brittle. Now what about verse 31, it says that it was strong as iron. It was strong. The Roman government was strongly organized, solidly organized. Its armies were well trained, well drilled and well disciplined. Its policies were well defined.

In fact they were so well defined and so well carried out that they could pull off what is known in history as the pox romana. They had a great measure of peace in all of their empire. But there was a weakness. The weakness is not in the legs, the weakness is in the feet. You say, "What's the importance of that?" Because the weakness appears only in the final form. They were strong once. But in the final form, there's going to be weakness, great weakness. And what is the weakness? Verse 43 says, "The clay is the seed of men." What does that mean? What does that mean?

Well, all kinds of scholars have played around with it and I don't want to say that I know the absolute answer but I'm going to give you what I think is best. You know what I think it means? I think it refers simply to human beings. I think the problem in the final form of the Roman Empire is going to be that there are too many people involved in the issues. Solidarity will be lost in the final Roman Empire. It will be mixed. There will be a decay, a lack of solidarity. In fact, Robert Culver, who has done some marvelous in this area of Scripture, says, "The clay represents the ultimate in debasement of the character of sovereignty." At the top of the image is the gold head. That's not an empire, that's the only one of the four that he says is a man, that's you, Nebuchadnezzar. In other words, the Babylonian Empire was solidarity personified because one man called all the shots.

As you go down, it gets more diverse and more diverse and more diverse. And the more diverse government gets - watch this - the more you have problems with it. That's why I read you last week the statement of Alexander Tyler that the democracy can't last because as soon as it gets diverse enough to give the people the control and the people find out they can vote themselves inordinate amounts of money from the public treasury, they will begin by selfishness to destroy the democracy.

And so the diversity of this final form is going to be its destruction. It won't even have the solidarity of iron, which is less than a monarchy, but it won't even have what the Roman Empire once had. It'll have a confederacy that is too involved with too many people and so there is an inherent weakness.

Now the final form of the Roman Empire has ten toes. I believe the Bible is telling us by the ten toes and the ten kings in Daniel 7 that the final form of the Roman Empire would have a ten-nation confederacy. God doesn't just throw things around. If there is ten toes and ten kings - and if you're shocked about that, go to Revelation and read in Revelation and you'll find in chapter 17 that there are ten kings again in this final form. God is absolutely consistent. There's never nine and there's never 11. There's always ten. But God has something in mind. The final form of the Roman Empire

will be ten nations in confederacy.

Now by the way, beloved, that has never been true of the Roman Empire in the past. Never. You say, "Well, now wait a minute, McArthur, the Roman Empire is gone. There is no Roman Empire." But listen, the prophecy says the Roman Empire will be around when the stone comes and smashes this and fills the Earth. So the consummation of history is the coming of the smiting stone. I'll give you a little hint: who is the stone? Jesus Christ. You gave yourself the hint. I love when Paul says, "That rock was Christ." He is the stone the builders rejected.

Listen, Christ comes and smashes a final form of the Roman Empire. You said, "Well, that's that, folks. He must've been here and we didn't see him, cause there's no Roman Empire left." But listen to me. You know, there's never been another world empire? Napoleon tried it. Hitler tried it and couldn't do it. Russia tried it and is trying it and is unsuccessful. Listen, if there's ever a great fifth world empire, you can pack up your Bible because it's wrong.

You say, "Well, now wait a minute. Are you saying the Roman Empire just faded away to come back again?" That's exactly what I'm saying. In fact in Revelation, the Bible tells us that a beast - in chapter 13 - came and he was wounded and went into death but he rose again of that death. I believe that's a picture of Rome dying as it were only to rise again. And in its final form it will be ten nations. You're shocked by that, you haven't been reading about the common market.

Am I right in saying that most recently there are now ten nations in the common market? I think the last one that entered was the tenth. Now maybe they'll be 12, maybe they'll be 18, maybe they'll be 20, maybe they'll be 9, but when Jesus comes, they'll be 10. And isn't it interesting there are ten now.

I did a little checking on that, kind of interested me. Willie Brent who is famous as the fourth chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, said this: "We belong" - I love this - "to the community of ten." Interesting. Willie Brent said, "The common market must embrace the world." How interesting. Isn't that exactly what Dr. Malik said? We got to have an alliance that stretches across the sea to include the rest of the world.

You know, the Bible tells that there's going to be a ten-nation confederacy in the end and out of those ten nations is going to rise one ruler. He's called in Daniel, the little horn, he's called the son of perdition, he's called the man of sin. We know him as the antichrist. He'll be a great world ruler will come on the scene in Europe to pull together that coalition, which will perpetuate a great battle the Bible calls the battle of Armageddon.

Let me tell you something , people, watch Europe. Europe will rise again. And I'm not pulling this tuff out of space. I'm no prophet. I never got a vision in my life. I married one and that was the end of it. Nobody speaks to me out of the clouds. I'm just the average guy, open my Bible. I'm telling you

things that Bible scholars and teachers have known for years and years and years. I don't know how else to explain it. That's exactly what the Bible says. And once that ten-nation confederacy takes its form, and antichrist establishes his rule, his rule doesn't last very long. Until that stone comes and smashes the whole thing and fills the whole Earth. And that's none other than Jesus Christ.

Is that exciting to think about? What have we learned? By the way, I'm going to give you a whole thing next week on the stone. Not going to do that tonight. What have we learned? We've learned that there will be a continuous succession of world dominions from Nebuchadnezzar to the coming of Christ. That why it says your dream is regarding the latter days.

And it's so fascinating to me that the Old Testament - now what this - the Old Testament never saw anything between the two elements of Rome, did it? It just had the legs going down and the feet. But the Old Testament did note that the legs were iron but the feet were iron and clay mixed. There was a weakness there. And I mean that final form is really going to be weak because from the time antichrist ascends to rule that final ten-nation confederacy, it'll only be three and one-half years until it's wiped out. That's what the Bible says. It'll last for 42 months the prophet said for times two time one and half a time. Times time and half a time. Three-and-a-half.

It'll be weak ten-nation confederacy. And it'll be all under the banner of the old Roman Empire. When I hear somebody say we all need to line up under the Pope, man, sounds to me like we're getting close. When I hear people say the Pope is the spiritual leader of the world, that's scary. He is not. He is not. That which comes together under that is going to be ruled by the antichrist to fight against Christ establishing His own kingdom. But the battle won't last too long. He'll crush the dominions of Satan and the world.

It's coming, people, and it's exciting to be alive in a day when we can see these things on the horizon. Well, next week we're going to find out a few more facts about the ten-nation confederacy and just exactly how it's going to end. Let's pray together.

Father, I'm reminded of the great anticipation of Charles Wesley who wrote the hymn, lo He comes with clouds descending, once for our salvation slain, thousand, thousand saints attending, swell the triumph of his train, hallelujah, hallelujah, God appears on Earth to reign. Every eye should now behold him, robed in dreadful majesty. Those who set it not unsold him, pierced and nailed him to the tree, deeply wailing, deeply wailing shall the true messiah see. Now the savior long expected see in solemn pomp appear. All his saints by man rejected now shall meet him in the air, hallelujah, hallelujah, see the day of God appear.

And then Wesley wrote the essay, "Men, Let Us all Adore Thee." High on thine eternal throne, savior take the power and glory. Claim the kingdom for thine own. O come quickly, o come quickly, hallelujah, come Lord, come.

Father, as we see the gathering clouds of the final days of human history, at least it seems so from our perspective. As we know that there stands nothing between us and your return, as we await the day that we're raptured before all of the final form of the world struggle takes place, we can't help but be filled with anticipation. We thank you, Lord, that as we look forward to those days, we know that you'll take us out of this earth to be with yourself. And Lord we pray that we might have the same heart that Peter had, and that is that heart, which says, "Seen you know all these things shall come to pass. What manner of persons ought you to be?" And then he went onto to say we ought to be holy and godly. And, Lord, if we really know you're coming, oh how it ought to change our lives that we might be right when we see you face-to-face.

And Lord, how it ought to fill our hearts with compassion, with love and with a desire to reach out to those around us who do not know you. Lord, we are like John who when he realized these things were true said that it was sweet in his mouth but it was bitter in his stomach. Sweet because you have the right to rule, sweet because we long to see your face, but oh so bitter because we know it to be a sad day for those who've turned their back on you. We wish that for no one. We know that's your heart as well for you are not willing that any should perish. You are the God who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

And so Lord as we live in these days and we look forward to your coming, whether it's in a moment or beyond, we don't know. But Lord help us to live as if it were tomorrow. And to love and to preach and to share and to draw people to yourself that in that great hour they may see you face-to-face with all those who love you and dwell in your eternal kingdom. For such anticipation, we praise you in Christ's name. Amen.

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