

THE KINGDOM

of

THE HEAVENS

and the

KINGDOM OF GOD

PRIDE, described in God's dealings with Nebuchadnezzar and in **Daniel 7** the terrible underlying **VIOLENCE** depicted in the lion, the bear, the leopard and the beasts. Nebuchadnezzar could say, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of **my** power, and for the honour of **my** majesty?" v. **30**. As the Psalmist states "God is not in all his thoughts." **Ps. 10: 4**. Man instead of ascribing glory to God, accredits all to himself and the very power put into his hands by God was used to persecute the saints and put to death the Son of God. This is pictured in the three in the furnace and Daniel in the den later. So it has ever been that power put into the hands of any fallen son of Adam will be used to exalt himself and he will dare to use it against the saints of God and even God Himself. Hence God's chastisement was upon Nebuchadnezzar. It is a fitting picture of the turmoil amongst the nations today. What is God seeking to teach us?

"That the most high rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will."

When will we learn this lesson? When, like this king, we lift up their eyes to heaven, v. **34**. Our understanding will then return and instead of praising ourselves we will bless, and praise, and honour the Lord (Most High). The very experience through which Nebuchadnezzar passed was to teach him that, "the heavens do rule" v. **26**. This goes beyond earth for God is in sovereign control of the universe, both heaven and earth. "And He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?" If then in v. **17** we read He "**setteth up**", we read also in v. **37**, "He is **able to abase**". God sets up and God puts down — He alone is sovereign in the universe.

E. Ferguson – 2006

OVERVIEW	
God's desire was to have a kingdom of priests but it was contingent on their obedience.	Ex. 19:6
Israel failed and brought on God's judgment	Dt. 9:16, 17; 28:25 Mt. 21:42-44
God's future plan promised in David's greater Son	2 Sam. 7:12-16
God's plan unfolded in the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's vision by Daniel	Dan. 2:31-35
The kingdom of the heavens was preached by John, then Jesus when he was here	Mt. 3:2; 4:17; 12:28
The Sermon on the Mount gives the moral characteristics suitable to the Kingdom	Mt. 5; 6 & 7
The Sower sows the seed (gospel) and six similitudes of the Kingdom give a dispensational outline during the present time	Mt. 13
Peter is given the keys to the Kingdom which he later uses in Acts 2 & Acts 10	Mt. 16:13-19
The principles and order of the Kingdom	Mt. 18:1-14
Man's responsibility in the kingdom	Mt. 25:14-30; Lk. 19:10-27
The kingdom of God viewed morally	Jn. 1:13; 3:3-16 Rom. 14:17 Eph. 5:5; Col. 1:13; 2 Pet. 1:11

Third the brass represents the **GRECIAN**, v. 32, 39

Last the iron represents the past empire of **ROME**, and the iron and clay of the toes, **ROME FUTURE** v. 32, 40-43

Also Daniel tells, in the subsequent visions given to him, that one head controlled the Babylonian empire; **Dan. 2: 37**, two horns controlled the Media-Persian; **Dan. 8: 3**, four heads ultimately controlled the Grecian empire; **Dan. 7: 6**, and seven heads controlled the Roman empire in its original form; **Rev. 17:7, 9**, while ten horns or toes will control it in its future revival, **Rev. 13: 1, Dan. 2: 7 42**.

Almost all known types of government are seen:

First, absolute **AUTOCRACY** is seen in Nebuchadnezzar **then MONARCHY** is seen in the Media-Persian but not the absolute autocracy of Babylon. **Then** in the Grecian empire, dividing into four heads, we have **OLIGARCHY**. **Then** in Rome past we have **IMPERIALISM** while in the ten toes or horns in Rome future we have **DEMOCRACY**. All of these signs show the decrease in power and glory. So God foretold of this degeneration by clearly stamping it on this image. Man may boast of progress in his character of rule but the Scriptures give the divine estimation. The last phase of the image will be in the future when the ten kings receive power one hour with the beast. It will be in this state that Christ appears, and as the **STONE** smites the image on the feet, destroying this power bringing to an end forever Gentile dominion. He will set up His kingdom which will stand forever, v. 44. He will not take possession of the earth through any Gentile power but will take it through Israel when they come into their rightful place in the kingdom of the Son of Man.

If in **Daniel 2** we have an outline of the **HISTORY** of the times of the Gentiles, in **Daniel 4** we have an outline of the **moral** state

THE KINGDOM IS DESCRIBED BY TEN DISTINCTIVE TITLES

#	TITLE	VERSE	COMMENT
1	Kingdom	Mt.6:10; 13:38	General description of heaven's rule.
2	Kingdom of Heaven	Mt. only	Kingdom after Christ went to heaven and emphasizes the rule of the heavens.
3	Kingdom of God	Mt; Mark; Luke; John	The Kingdom morally in Christ dwelling in the midst of man.
4	Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ	Rev. 1:9; Mt. 13:11	The Kingdom currently in "mystery" while the King is in heaven.
5	Kingdom of Christ and God	Eph. 5:5	Emphasizes the moral character of the Kingdom.
6	Kingdom of His dear Son	Col. 1:13	Emphasizes the preciousness and privilege to be brought into the Kingdom.
7	His Kingdom	1 Thess. 2:12	Emphasizes the responsibility to walk worthy.
8	Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ	2 Pet. 1:11	Emphasizes faithfulness to achieve an abundant entrance.
9	Kingdom of the Father	Mt. 13:43; 26:29	Heavenly portion of the Kingdom
10	Kingdom of the Son of Man	Mt. 16:28	Earthy portion of the Kingdom

In **Daniel 2: 44** it is predicted that "In the days of these kings [the ten divisions of the fourth kingdom, the revived Roman Empire] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever:" cf. also **Dan. 7:18, 22, 27**. The 'kingdom of the heavens' was announced by John the Baptist and by the Lord as 'at hand' (**Matt. 3: 2; Matt. 4: 17**), but the Lord declared that the 'kingdom of God' had come. **Matt. 12: 28**. In many respects the two expressions are identical in the synoptic gospels, but the 'kingdom of the heavens' occurs in the gospel by Matthew only and refers to the *mile* of that which God has set in heaven, and commenced when Christ went to heaven. The term 'kingdom of God' is more connected with the *moral* state established in man and was seen in all its fullness when Christ was here.

The parables in the gospels describe the *form and objects* of the kingdom while the Lord is away. In **Matt. 13** the Lord spoke four parables to the multitude; then He dismissed the people and explained the parable of the Wheat and the Tares to His disciples and added three parables bearing on the secret character of the kingdom. It is shown that evil would be found in the kingdom, but that Christ will eventually send His angels to gather out of His kingdom all things that offend; then it will be established in power by the Lord Jesus sitting on His own throne, and reigning supreme as Son of Man over the earth, ending by His ultimately giving up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. **1 Cor. 15: 24, 28**. The moral characteristics suitable to the kingdom are given in the Sermon on the Mount **Matt. 5-7**, and its principles and order in **Matt. 18**.

The Jews having refused their king, the kingdom was not set up in manifestation at that time and it is still held in abeyance. In the meanwhile it is 'the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ.' **Rev. 1: 9**.

Christ is represented as having gone to receive a kingdom, and to return. **Luke 19: 12**. In the meantime the kingdom has been produced, and goes on in its *mysterious* form: cf. **Matt. 13: 11**. There are multitudes who profess obedience to God and to the Lord Jesus, and who look to heaven as the throne from whence come all their blessings, while they are passing through a world of which Satan is the god and prince; and to the saints the kingdom of God is very real. They by faith anticipate the kingdom in power. Righteousness, peace, and joy characteristics of the kingdom are already theirs in the Holy Ghost, **Rom. 14: 17**. In this sense the kingdom of God is often referred to in the Epistles. A person must be born anew to enter into it, **John 3: 3, 5**, but this idea, is distinct from the *form* which the kingdom has taken, and the *dimensions* it has attained in the hands of man.

DANIEL (THE KINGDOMS OF MEN)

In the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, we have the whole course of Gentile dominion from the kingdom of Babylon till the revival of the Roman Empire which will be the last kingdom in the times of the Gentiles (the kingdoms of men).

The **STONE** cut out without hands brings this image to an end introducing the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He is the stone cut out without hands — meaning without human aid — Who, at His appearing and kingdom will bring to an end all of these kingdoms. His kingdom will fill the whole earth. Nebuchadnezzar's image shows deterioration in value in the metals used to describe the various kingdoms giving us the divine estimation of the decreasing glory in the kingdoms of men.

First we have the gold as representing **BABYLON**; the kingdom in its best estate as given to Nebuchadnezzar by God, v. **32, 37**.

Second the silver represents the **MEDIA-PERSIAN**, v. **32, 39**