

In the Days of these Kings

by Brian Maxwell

The Old Testament is full of prophecy concerning the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom is written about in the Prophets, the Psalms, and Moses speaks of it as well. The Old Testament ends with Malachi around 400BC. The patriarchs and prophets all died without seeing this Kingdom come to fruition. Can we know with certainty when this Kingdom would come? I believe we can. There is one particular passage in the Old Testament that tells us the approximate time this Kingdom would come.

Daniel 2:44 And in the days of these kings 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.

In this short study, we will look at Daniel 2:44 and the surrounding context to see if we can be relatively sure when *this Kingdom--the Kingdom of the God of heaven--* would come. Daniel tells us this Kingdom that would stand forever would arise "in the days of these kings". If we are able to discover when the "days of these kings" were, then we will know beyond any doubt when the Kingdom of God was established.

The context of Daniel 2 is Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's interpretation. It is generally agreed that the metal man image is made up of four successive kingdoms. The last of these kingdoms is a bit more involved, as it contains the toes of the feet that were part iron and part clay. There is little mystery as to what the iron represents. The iron was the Roman Empire, which "subdueth all things." The nearest antecedent to "these kings" in verse 44 is the previously discussed fourth kingdom, or Rome, in verse 40. The next question would be, what is the clay in the toes? Is clay typically symbolic of anything in the bible? There is a popular Christian song which states: "You are the potter, I am the *clay*. Mold me and make me, this is what I pray." Did the nation of Israel understand that God was the potter, and that they were *clay*? This is a frequently used metaphor in Scripture:

Isaiah 45:9 Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

Isaiah 64:8 But now, O LORD, thou art our father; *we are the clay*, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.

Jeremiah 18:6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as *the clay is in the potter's hand*, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

From the prophets' writings, Israel (including Daniel) would have understood that they are clay, and God is the potter. Paul in Romans 9 confirms this metaphor:

Romans 9:21 Hath not *the potter power over the clay*, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

So what were these feet which were mixed with iron and clay? This is a picture of the kingdom of Rome, where the Jews had partial rule in their own land, but under the yoke of Rome. As a side note, it would be worth mentioning that the four kingdoms described in Daniel 2 never ruled over the entire globe. They ruled over *the covenant people of God*. Let us always remember that the Bible concerns God's covenant people, and that is its primary focus. With that in mind, we know that Rome ruled over the entire known world at that time. From the Jewish perspective, it would have been easy to say that Rome "ruled over all the earth." So what about the iron mixed with clay? During the time of Christ, the Jews had their Herods, which ruled in the land of Israel. These Herods were Jews, but were puppets subservient to the Roman Caesar. And as iron does not mix with clay, there was much upheaval at this time between Judah and Rome. One interesting verse from the New Testament shows how Rome and Jerusalem were at odds with each other (iron does not mix with clay), but yet united to put Christ to death:

Luke 23:11 And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. 12 And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

So this iron mixed with clay is the Roman/Jewish relationship. It is helpful to look back at verse 43:

Daniel 2:43 And whereas thou sawest 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 is not mixed with clay.

Although we will not spend time here elaborating, the phrase "seed of men" refers to God's covenant people. [1] We see Rome mixing with the Jews, who were God's covenant people. And even though the Jews mingled themselves with Rome, they did not completely cleave to Roman law, still having their own law, their own temple, and their own form of government and religion.

So what about the ten toes? I believe the ten toes represent the first ten kings of the Roman Empire. [2] This is what is referred to as the "days of these kings". During the first ten kings of the Roman Empire, the Jews still had a strong influence on the land, and they were in constant conflict with Rome. It is interesting to note that it was during the time of the tenth king (Emperor Vespasian) that Rome invaded and destroyed Jerusalem and her temple in AD70. Vespasian had been the military commander in Palestine from AD66-69. During this tumultuous time in Palestine, war broke out in AD67 between the Jews and Rome. During this war, Rome went through five Emperors. The war began with Emperor Nero. In AD68, after Nero committed suicide, Rome had four Emperors within less than two years (Galba AD68, Otho AD69, Vitellius AD69, and Vespasian AD69). In late AD69, with Vespasian having much success in the War against the Jews, his troops began to hail him "Emperor." His support ranged from Egypt to Syria. Vespasian and his armies then marched on Rome and killed Vitellius and he became Emperor.

Shortly after taking the throne in Rome, Vespasian sent his trusted son Titus to lead

the Roman armies in Palestine in the continuing war against the Jews. [3] Vespasian wanted the war to end, as the Jews had become an increasingly difficult problem to manage. He gave his son instructions to basically wipe them off the map. Titus' siege on Jerusalem took place in late September AD70 when the Jews were gathering in the city to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. This guaranteed a massive loss of life, as all Jewish males were required to pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the feast. Fortunately for the early Jewish Christians, Christ had warned them to flee the city when they saw it surrounded with armies (Luke 21:20-22). The Roman armies laid waste to the city, setting the temple on fire, and not leaving one stone unturned (Matthew 24:2). Josephus, the Jewish historian who lived through the war, estimates that 1.1 million lives were lost during the siege, approximately one third of the entire Jewish population in the world at that time. [4]

In the Book of Revelation, which prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem, there are several references to "one third" of something being killed in the trumpet judgments. Particularly interesting is Revelation 8:12, which states that one third of the *sun, moon and stars*, were smitten or darkened. The *sun, moon and stars* are often a reference to Old Covenant Israel (for example, see Genesis 37:9,10). These judgments described in Revelation 8-9 are referencing the Jewish loss of life during the Roman/Jewish war (AD67-AD70).

Some might be asking "why the history lesson?" It is important to recognize that something very significant happened during the tenth king's (Emperor's) reign. In chapter 2 Daniel describes this fourth kingdom (Rome) as having ten toes. Chapter 7 is a parallel passage which tells us explicitly that the ten horns of the fourth "beast" (or kingdom) are ten kings (Dan 7:24). We are told in both Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 that during the days of these ten kings the God of Heaven would set up a Kingdom that would not be destroyed! Is there any biblical doubt that this *Kingdom of God* is none other than the Kingdom of Jesus Christ? What other kingdom was established during the reign of these ten kings that would not be destroyed? There is only one. Some may argue that this Kingdom of Christ established 2000 years ago is simply the spiritual part of the kingdom, and that sometime in our future the physical part will be fulfilled; that is, when God turns back to physical Israel and establishes them in their physical land. But the Scripture simply does not support dividing the Kingdom into phases, some fulfilled now, and some fulfilled later. It does not wash with the word of God. Jesus gave no hint of a dual fulfillment of His kingdom. He spoke plainly about His kingdom: that it was not of this world (the old world, or Hebrew world) but that it was "within you" (within the believer, a spiritual Kingdom of *conscience*). That is why Daniel was able to prophesy concerning Christ (the stone) that His Kingdom was *made without hands*, and that it broke the other four kingdoms into pieces. Jesus Christ's kingdom was *made* through the gospel (without hands, through changed hearts).

Daniel 2:44 And in the days of these kings 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. 45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that *the 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.

When Jesus Christ came on the scene, He brought a change to the covenant world. No longer would God work through nations, or physical borders. Through the gospel, God, in the person and work of His son Jesus Christ, would establish the true kingdom of God. It is a kingdom of the heart and reflects the true nature of God. It is established through God's love toward His people in the forgiveness of their sins; and it is manifested in God's people by their love for one another.

In summary, this article is intended to show how Daniel 2:44 can only see its fulfillment in the Kingdom established by Jesus Christ in the first century. This Kingdom, which would last forever, and which would break in pieces the previous kingdoms, had to be "set up" during the first century. With the revelation of the New Testament, we know that Christ's Kingdom was "not of this world," meaning not of the Jewish world, or Old Covenant order (John 18:36); but that it was a Kingdom within the believer in Jesus Christ (Luke 17:21). This matches perfectly with Daniel's prophecy that the Kingdom would be "made without hands". Jesus would rule, not from a physical throne in Jerusalem, but He would rule in the hearts of His people. The Gospel Kingdom of Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of Daniel 2:44.

Notes:

[1] See Tim Martin's* Sermons in Daniel at www.truthinliving.org

***Our citation of Tim Martin's material on this topic is not meant to suggest agreement with his soteriological views.**

[2] The Roman Emperors. <http://www.roman-empire.net/emperors/emp-index.html>

[3] Suetonius: The Lives of the Twelve Caesars.
<http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Suetonius/12Caesars/home.html>

[4] Josephus: Wars of the Jews

Copyright 2005-2012 | New Creation Ministries International | All rights reserved |
PO Box 5014 | Grenehaven, AZ | 86040