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Vol. 64, No. 1

**“Thy
kingdom
come”**

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Have you ever thought of distributing The Reformation Herald among those you meet or already know? More and more, this magazine is being designed to answer the real spiritual hunger of people in today’s society, tapping into the exact train of thought being triggered by current events. As Bible prophecy unfolds before our eyes, why not keep some of these magazines on hand in a large ziplock bag, ready to share with honest, thinking people who fear God and are eager to know what in the world is going on?

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“The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold.”—Education, p. 57.

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"THY KINGDOM COME"

Besides the famous phrase in the Lord's prayer, there is an interesting prophecy in the book of Ezekiel: "Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him" (Ezekiel 21:26, 27).

We often hear about the political spectrum of things on this planet. So many are frantically jostling for position, power and financial gain—craving the things of this world. Yet while living as our Example as the Son of man on earth, Jesus Christ did not concern Himself with such matters. In His response to Pontius Pilate, the governor so eager to know whether he ought to be concerned or even paranoid about Christ's influence, the Lord explained, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight" (John 18:36).

A kingdom not of this world. . . . How different is that? Quite different! It is a kingdom not gained by force or armaments, because "the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Psalm 37:11).

That is the ultimate plan of the Creator of the whole world. He loves the meek. He is neither impressed nor intimidated by bullies.

IN THE LAST DAYS

As world history escalates to its rapidly approaching climax with the second coming of Jesus

Christ in the clouds of Heaven, anticipation is keen. Reviewing the history of the nations, we are reminded of God's plan expressed in the opening verse above as found in Ezekiel. Yes, God has been overturning things throughout history and will continue to do so until the return of Christ to claim His rightful role as King not merely of a nation, nor even an empire—but of the entire planet and the vast universe.

AND ULTIMATELY . . .

John the Revelator describes: "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:11–16).

This is not speaking of any one of us mere mortals. It will be through the power of God Himself. Let us invite Jesus into our hearts and enjoy the blessing of meekness on the right side of world history. Amen.



by Barbara Montrose

A UNIQUE MESSAGE FOR YOUR UNIQUE DNA

The Majesty of the universe has a plan for every one of us. He will not accidentally send something to someone else that is meant for you. He makes no mistakes. Your DNA with your personal genetic blueprint is uniquely for you—and you, alone. You are a unique creation.

Now picture the scene: A king with a problem—but not just any king. Nebuchadnezzar was the ruler over “wheresoever the children of men dwell” (Daniel 2:38). The walls of his kingdom of Babylon were 350 high and 87 feet thick. The government was an absolute monarchy

demanding supreme homage and to which every knee was to bow.

“And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherein his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O

king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation” (Daniel 2:1–4).

Why was the king so troubled by a simple dream? Somehow, he perceived that it must have been a highly significant dream with a specific message for him personally, individually for him and his DNA. But he forgot what the dream was and therefore certainly could not guess what it may have meant! As a highly educated man, it was he who had presided over the final examination of the captives to whom the highest level of Babylo-

nian education had been provided (Daniel 1:19, 20). The problem now was that this dream was of heavenly origin—and Nebuchadnezzar was a worldly-minded man. So, at this point he felt compelled to seek help from those he considered to be the most highly qualified advisers to tell and then interpret the dream and to explain the message he was evidently meant to receive.

A CREDIBILITY CRISIS

The magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and Chaldeans were quickly summoned for their presumed level of expertise. These were professional people with high qualifications within their sphere. Yet the frustration the king faced at their inability to tell him the dream soon turned into fury.

“The king . . . said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dung-hill. . . . If ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof” (Daniel 2:5–9).

THE EXCUSES

“The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king’s matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain” (Daniel 2:10–13).

DANIEL

Who was Daniel? Although he had graduated from the school of Babylon and had been among the top four students found to be ten times better than the other classmates (Daniel 1:19, 20), as a Hebrew captive he was likely younger and less experienced than the other wise men, so he had not been among those summoned to fix the problem. But when the decree was issued to slay all the wise men, he was now to be included as one to be slain.

A young man of courage, at the peril of his life, Daniel respectfully went to the king to request some time to consider this matter. What a contrast between his courteous and gentle humility compared to the haughty spirit of oppression characteristic of the Babylonian realm! (See Daniel 2:14–16.) Daniel had tested the promises of the God of heaven and knew Him to be One to rely upon in such emergencies.

“Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king’s matter” (Daniel 2:17–23).

Daniel did not neglect to praise, thank, and publicly acknowledge the One who had granted the solution that night.

“The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; as for thee, **O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass.** But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart” (Daniel 2:26–30). [Emphasis added.] To God be all glory!

THE DREAM

The king’s dream of a statue made of metals whose value descends in decreasing order is revealed in Daniel 2:31–35. (This will be explained in further detail in the next article following on page 10: “A Dream of a Thousand Years—and Beyond.”)

THE INTERPRETATION

The interpretation as provided by God unveils with uncanny accuracy the future of the major world empires all the way to the close of human history (Daniel 2:36–44). What finally happens in the end?

THE CLIMAX

“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. 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" (Daniel 2:44, 45). [Emphasis added.]

THE KING AGREES

In great amazement, Nebuchadnezzar could only acknowledge that yes, what Daniel described was in fact the dream—and the interpretation he had provided made perfect sense. (See Daniel 2:46–49.) Divine revelation had not been given by means of worldly glory, honor, and benefits—but through Daniel's trust in the merciful God who reveals secrets.

DANIEL 3

Unfortunately, in Daniel chapter 3, we see how quickly king Nebuchadnezzar soon forgot about



the awesome, Divine power of the God of heaven. When Daniel first revealed the dream and its interpretation, the king rejoiced in the worship of the true and living God. But alas, the paganism still rooted in the depths of his heart still prevailed. He took the information he had received from Daniel and then came up with something more flattering to his own ego. Instead of being limited only to the head of gold that was to be followed by another kingdom, Nebuchadnezzar decided to erect an entire statue of gold with a view to try to change the future course of history. After all, the statue in the dream was symbolic of empires to the close of time—so, if the entire statue were made completely of gold (which had indicated the reign of Babylon), then, in his mind, he and his nation of Babylon could conceivably live and reign forever! Interesting logic, but defiant to that which Divine wisdom from Heaven had plainly revealed.

It's noteworthy to see how human nature manages to concoct all sorts of flawed alternative methods by which to supposedly live forever—methods which are but vain attempts to try to bypass the only way, truth and life provided by the Lifegiver Himself.

Nebuchadnezzar instituted upon the people a forced worship of the golden statue to try to glorify himself. All were compelled to bow down to this image under penalty of death. But no matter how hard a leader may try, true allegiance—genuine worship—cannot be mandated. It must come from the heart. This is a God-given inalienable right of every member of the human race. In contrast, it is the plan of Satan—the enemy of our souls—that seeks to enforce a counterfeit plan against the worship of God.

MODERN BABYLON

Do the twisted and flawed philosophies found in the pride of Babylon still exist today? Absolutely! Just as the king in ancient Babylon obsessed over distorted views of immortality, so likewise does modern

Babylon. History has repeated itself in every generation, and the contemporary world in our generation is no exception.

What constitutes modern Babylon today? Babylon basically means confusion—especially religious confusion. John the Revelator was shown the following scene:

"And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: **With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.** So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:1–5). [Emphasis added.]

The kings of the earth are carrying on an illicit intimate relationship with the spiritual darkness of Babylon. The inhabitants of the earth are confused by the fermented spiritual drink she is serving to the multitudes:

"Babylon has been fostering poisonous doctrines, the wine of error. This wine of error is made up of false doctrines, such as the natural immortality of the soul, the eternal torment of the wicked, the denial of the pre-existence of Christ prior to His birth in Bethlehem, and advocating and exalting the first day of the week above God's holy, sanctified day. These and kindred errors are presented to the world by the various churches."¹

Philosophies that claim to be Christian yet actually conflict with Scripture can indeed cause a lot of confusion, for sure.

FALSE PROPHETS

False prophets have existed since ancient times. How can you recognize them? Please notice the clear instruction from God:

1. Rebellious charmers

“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deuteronomy 13:1–3).

So, if the prophet tries to lure us away from following God to go in a different direction, we must not put our trust in that prophet, even if some things he/she says happen to come to pass.

2. Missing 100%

“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But **the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.** And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, **if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him**” (Deuteronomy 18:19–22). [Emphasis added.]

So, if the prophet doesn't obey God or prophesies some things shown to be inaccurate, we must not put our trust in that prophet, either.

Indeed, a big problem today is that of false prophets. They simply

prosper because people are blindly accepting whatever tickles their ears and sounds sensational. Yet John the Revelator explains that this will cause a world crisis:

“And I saw **three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world,** to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Revelation 16:13, 14). [Emphasis added.] Look at how frightfully far-reaching this is!

FAKE “IMMORTALITY”

Like Nebuchadnezzar in ancient Babylon, the perpetrators of modern Babylon are also obsessed with vainly trying to force false, alternative paths to supposed immortality. What are just a few of these fake paths that lead to nowhere but perdition?

SPIRITUALISM

Spiritualism (and its many forms, including “the occult,” “spiritism,” “kabbalah,” “kabala,” “channeling,” “theosophy,” “ouija,” or other various kinds of mysticism) is the belief that the dead can communicate with the living. It embraces a philosophy of doctrines based on the serpent's big lie first told in the garden of Eden: “Ye shall not surely die. . . ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:4, 5). Yet God clearly explains, “the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6). “The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence” (Psalm 115:17).

“Spiritualism asserts that men are unfallen demigods; that ‘each mind will judge itself;’ that ‘true

“The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6).

knowledge places men above all law;’ that ‘all sins committed are innocent;’ for ‘whatever is, is right,’ and ‘God doth not condemn.’ The basest of human beings it represents as in heaven, and highly exalted there. Thus it declares to all men, ‘It matters not what you do; live as you please, heaven is your home.’ Multitudes are thus led to believe that desire is the highest law, that license is liberty, and that man is accountable only to himself.

“With such teaching given at the very outset of life, when impulse is strongest, and the demand for self-restraint and purity is most urgent, where are the safeguards of virtue? what is to prevent the world from becoming a second Sodom?

“At the same time anarchy is seeking to sweep away all law, not only divine, but human.”²

“There is but one power that can break the hold of evil from the hearts of men, and that is the

The new claim from the scientism cult is that state-of-the-art technology can supposedly make “you” live forever, rather than offering salvation through Christ, the actual way, truth, and life (John 14:6).

power of God in Jesus Christ. Only through the blood of the Crucified One is there cleansing from sin. His grace alone can enable us to resist and subdue the tendencies of our fallen nature. This power the spiritualistic theories concerning God make of no effect. If God is an essence pervading all nature, then He dwells in all men; and in order to attain holiness, man has only to develop the power that is within him.

“These theories, followed to their logical conclusion, sweep away the whole Christian economy. They do away with the necessity for the atonement and make man his own savior. These theories regarding God make His word of no effect, and those who accept them are in great danger of being led finally to look upon the whole Bible as a fiction. They may regard virtue as better than vice; but God being removed from His position of sovereignty, they place their dependence upon human power, which, without God, is worthless. The unaided human will has no real power to resist and overcome evil. The defenses of the soul are broken down. Man has no barrier against sin. When once the restraints of God’s word and His Spirit are rejected, we know not to what depths one may sink.

“Those who continue to hold these spiritualistic theories will

surely spoil their Christian experience, sever their connection with God, and lose eternal life.”³

ANOTHER TRAP: TRANSHUMANISM

A world-renowned brain surgeon explains, “Transhumanism in simple terms means ‘beyond human.’ It is the transformation of the human condition through technology that promises to enhance human intellect and physiology. Transhumanists would use emerging and exponential technologies like AI [artificial intelligence], nanotechnology, biotechnology, stem cells, and gene therapy to overcome fundamental human limitations. Often called ‘Humanity+’ or simply ‘H+,’ it is also telling that some prefer the term ‘posthuman.’”⁴

This is supposedly the next step in human evolution, with one claim being made that hybrid avatars will supposedly perpetuate a continuum of people’s lives.

Is such a feat on the verge of technological feasibility? Let’s read about “chimeras”:

“A chimera is an individual composed of cells with different embryonic origins. The successful isolation of five human embryonic stem cell (hESC) lines in 1998 increased scientists’ ability to create human/nonhuman chimeras.”⁵

“Dr. Ian Pearson claims people born after 1970 should be able to live forever. Genetic engineering could be used to reduce or reverse the ageing of cells. AI could lead to android bodies for humans to live in after their body’s fail.”⁶

Another headline reads: “Unblocking virtual immortality: How AI clones can let ‘you’ live forever.”⁷

“Gene editing, the ability to make highly specific changes in the DNA sequence of a living organism, essentially customizing its genetic makeup. . . . Key among gene-editing technologies is a molecular tool known as CRISPR-Cas9, a powerful technology discovered in 2012. . . . CRISPR-Cas9 functioned with precision, allowing researchers to remove and insert DNA in the desired locations.”⁸

Another physician explains, “Historically, the striving for immortality has been a faith-based venture, based in the idea that the soul is immortal while the body perishes, which is a concept I am in complete alignment with. Transhumanists more or less reverse this idea. They discard the notion of soul altogether and aim for the preservation of the perceived personality, first through radical life extension of the physical body, and later through the transfer of brain data into a replacement form.

“According to Dmitry Itskov, the Russian founder of the Immortality 2045 project, only 2% of people are ready to accept death—a statistic that he uses to justify the search for immortality through things like artificial organs, artificial body constructs, the simulation of mental processes and, ultimately, the transferring of one’s mind into an artificial carrier.

“The goals of this project include not only the creation of the cybernetic technologies needed to achieve an immortal body, but also the creation of ‘a new philosophical paradigm for humanity.’ [Klaus] Schwab has talked about the same thing, using the term ‘social contract’ rather than ‘philosophical paradigm.’ . . .

“I just don’t foresee being able to elevate spiritually when any number of outside parties can access your brain and dictate what you think, feel and believe.”⁹

Yes, just as in the case of proud Nebuchadnezzar’s plan, this is all a strange delusion. It’s the same old morally degrading lie by which humanity was first tricked: “Ye shall not surely die.” So, the new claim from the scientism cult is that state-of-the-art technology can supposedly make “you” live forever, rather than offering salvation through Christ, the actual way, truth, and life (John 14:6). But would that soulless entity even be “you” anyway? No, your genetic fingerprint would be corrupted. It would not be “you”—the original “you” made in the image of God with your unique DNA. Would such a plan be of heavenly origin? Of course not! It’s just one of



the latest inventions of the enemy of our soul to try to bypass Christ our only Saviour.

WHAT MUST WE REALIZE?

“The world is a theater; the actors, its inhabitants, are preparing to act their part in the last great drama. With the great masses of mankind, there is no unity, except as men confederate to accomplish their selfish purposes. God is looking on. His purposes in regard to His rebellious subjects will be fulfilled. The world has not been given into the hands of men, though God is permitting the elements of confusion and disorder to bear sway for a season. A power from beneath is working to bring about the last

great scenes in the drama—Satan coming as Christ, and working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are binding themselves together in secret societies. Those who are yielding to the passion for confederation are working out the plans of the enemy. The cause will be followed by the effect.”¹⁰

THE SECRET OF ETERNAL LIFE

The reality is clear, so we are reminded that “the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”; “neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men,

whereby we must be saved” (Romans 6:23; Acts 4:12).

Thus resounds the message and appeal to each of us in our unique life with our unique DNA:

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:9–11).

“Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them” (2 Timothy 3:13, 14).

“We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, **Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life**” (Titus 3:3–7). [Emphasis added.] *R*

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A DREAM OF A THOUSAND YEARS — AND BEYOND

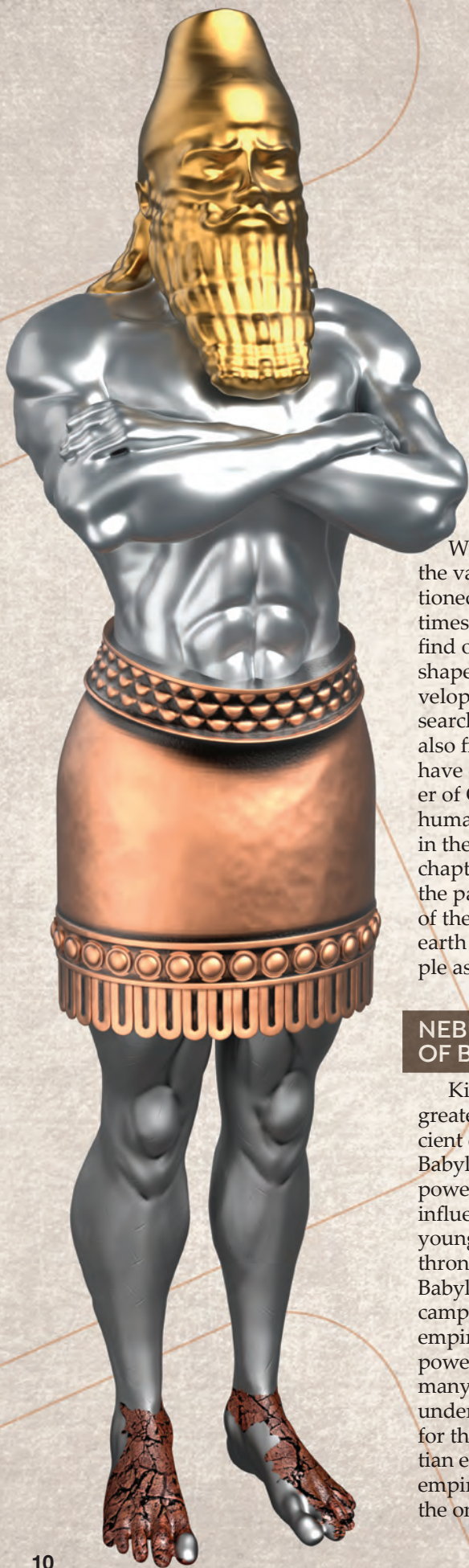
by Enrique Nataren

When we see around the world the various places and names mentioned that tell us of significant times and events in history, we can find out how the world has been shaped and influenced in its development. Reading the Bible and searching through its content we also find events and prophecies that have declared how the divine power of God intervenes in all stages of human history. There is one episode in the Bible—in the book of Daniel chapter 2—in which we are shown the past, the present and the future of the empires that have ruled the earth in connection with God's people as a nation and as a church.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR, KING OF BABYLON

King Nebuchadnezzar is the greatest king in the history of the ancient city of Babylon. For centuries, Babylon had been a minor regional power and had exerted its limited influence in Mesopotamia. As a young man and heir to his father's throne, Nebuchadnezzar had led the Babylonian army in lightning-fast campaigns in which the Assyrian empire was humiliated; its once powerful armies that brought so many other neighboring kingdoms under submission were no match for the Babylonian forces. The Egyptian empire: the most ancient of empires that had for so long been the only challenge to Assyrian rule

in the Middle East was crushed and humbled by this young and fearless prince. It is easy to see that once he was crowned king, Nebuchadnezzar should have felt invincible, being assured that his dynasty would rule forever. The great Nebuchadnezzar had no challenger and even his contemporaries could look back in the history of Babylon and find no other equal to him. Why should he not be sure of his kingdom lasting forever? Even the Assyrians and Egyptians had proven unable to bring all neighboring kingdoms under one rule in such speed and efficiency. The kingdom of Judah that had for so long resisted its bigger, more powerful neighbors as if aided by a divine force, finally fell to his control and the Hebrews began their 70 years of prophesied captivity on Babylonian soil for their disobedience to Jehovah. Nebuchadnezzar's destiny could not be denied. All fell before him, and his subjects were happy under his rule of stability and peace. And yet no one was more uncertain about the future than the king himself; he went to bed thinking of his rule and wishing that unlike all the other powerful empires that had come before him, Babylon would last forever and his dynasty would never collapse. Little did the pagan ruler know that the true King of the universe had put his kingdom as the starting point to one of the most beautiful prophecies to ever be given to humanity.



THE DREAM

The Scriptures tell us that the king went to sleep, but he was deeply troubled about the future, and Daniel chapter 2 records his dream vividly. God gave Nebuchadnezzar a supernatural dream—a vision of the near and far future of the world and who would be ruling it.

The king awoke more troubled than when he had laid to rest. He could not remember the dream. Nebuchadnezzar knew that the dream had a divine origin; it had come from the gods, and he would do anything to not only remember it but know what it meant.

In Daniel 2:31–35 we read: “Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff 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.”

As mentioned in the previous article, since the king had forgotten the dream, and his servants could not reveal it to him, they were sentenced to death for their incompetence. But God had His faithful prophet among His captive people and gave through Daniel the revelation and interpretation of the dream to the King. Now the king had to accept the revelation and the interpretation the prophet of God had given him as divine.

This dream gives us a picture of history from the time Nebuchadnezzar had the dream until the end of the world. One of the most important lessons we can take from this story shows that God is the One who reveals secrets and makes them known to anyone whom He chooses. In this story the person chosen was a

pagan king of Babylon. As we study this chapter we can figure out where we are in the scheme of time, while the fulfillment of the prophecy assures us that God is in control. The prophet was ready to tell the dream to the king and to make an impression in his mind. Daniel reminded the king about the great image—a statue—that he saw in the dream but he also mentioned a **stone**. These are the main objects of the dream. The stone represented the kingdom of God and the statue or image represented the kingdoms of man.

THE STATUE

When we see the stone, we may think of the altars that the Israelites built in the wilderness where only God was worshiped or even the Ten Commandments written on two tables of stone representing the government of God. In the revelation and interpretation of the dream, the Jews did not see anything but that rock representing the kingdom of God Almighty, while the great image represents idolatry, human arrogance, human ambitions, and temporary strength. Now the king remembered the dream, and he was sure that this man was a true prophet. Nebuchadnezzar remembered his dream and was now ready to understand its meaning.

In the explanation of the dream, it was revealed to the king that his Babylon was the head of gold—much to his satisfaction, no doubt. The next kingdom was represented by silver, the third represented by brass and the fourth represented by iron. This last kingdom would be divided into ten kingdoms that are composed of a mixture of clay and iron. We can observe that the quality and value of the metal is indeed decreasing as the image is described and this is explained. As the elements decreased in value, on the other hand, they were increasing in hardness. This is significant. Every kingdom was decreasing in majesty and getting farther and farther away from God. Also, the people of God were impacted negatively as they interacted and ended up making unwise concessions with these idolatrous nations.

MEDO-PERSIA, GREECE, AND ROME

By the time the Medes and the Persians conquered Babylon, many of the Jews were comfortably established and had no desire to return to Judea. Many had built homes in their new lands assigned to them. But even through their perceived comfort they waited for the promise from God to end their captivity and rebuild Jerusalem.

As time passed, the Greeks also exerted much influence on the Jewish people in the system of government. Many were half Jewish and half Greek that were not faithful to the requirements of God. Notice the change from the time of Nebuchadnezzar to the time of Alexander the Great—already there was a deterioration in moral, religious and social principles. And as we get to the times of the Roman occupation and control, the rulers of Judah were not loyal to the principles of God and their government was more secular in its enforcement. It remained merely coated in a thin layer of ritual and practice. Therefore, the decreasing of the metals in value aptly represents the deterioration of the kingdoms in reference to principles and virtues that are approved by God.

“That alliance with Rome proved in the end to be the Jews’ undoing. This is the case when the people of God line up with the world. Had the Jewish leaders heeded the counsel of Isaiah and Jeremiah, history would have been written differently.”¹

The following paragraphs sum-





marize the impact that the worldly government had in the development of humanity:

“Babylon was an example of Satan’s power to establish a *religion* which counterfeited the heavenly worship. The result was the basest form of idolatry, a fornication which makes her the personification, among Bible writers, of all vileness. Medo-Persia was a type of **Oriental despotism**. ‘The law of the Medes and Persians changeth not;’ this was a proverb among the nations. But it was with the kings of this nation that Gabriel and Michael wrought; it was the heads of this despotism who were kept in check by the power of the King of kings.

“Greece was altogether different from the preceding two, and instead of gaining recognition because of the form of religion or government, she gained control of the world by **the power of her intellect**. With her education and philosophy she gained a foothold which no other nation ever held. When Babylon was overthrown and Medo-Persia was no more, **Greece lived on in the minds of men**.

“But the fourth kingdom was ‘diverse from all the others.’ As represented to John, Rome, the beast of Rev. 13:2, combined the characteristics of the leopard, the bear, and the lion. There was united the **false system of the religion of ancient Babylon, the governmental tyranny of Medo-Persia, and the mixture of good and evil in the intellectual culture of Greece**. When the religion and educational system, or intellectual statutes, and the governmental history of a nation is given,

there remains little else worth relating. So in the one nation, **Rome, is embodied the strength of all previous nations.**”²

It was during the iron-handed rule of Rome that Jesus was born and iron nails pierced His hands and feet. Rome was this iron empire and just as the Persians lasted longer than the Babylonians and the Greeks lasted longer than the Persians, the Romans lasted longer than the Greeks. The Roman empire was exceedingly powerful as iron was stronger than the other metals, but it had less value.

“During the reign of Tiberius our Lord was crucified. Pilate owed his governorship of Judea only to the favor of Tiberius, the uncle of his wife. So, when someone in the crowd called out, ‘If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend’ (John 19:12), he gave in to the demands of the Jewish leaders. This settled the verdict. Pilate, the vacillating princeling who knew that Jesus was innocent, gave the order for Him to be scourged and crucified.”³

“Rome was the universal kingdom during the life of Christ. To Babylon God sent His people, the Jews, to scatter the truths of His kingdom and lead men to repentance. The Medes and the Persians received the gospel from this same people, and representatives from Greece came to Jerusalem, into the very temple, in touch with the priests, in order that there might be no excuse for their refusing Christ. **But to the Roman kingdom, heaven itself was poured out in the person of the Saviour, and it was Rome that nailed him to the cross.** It was

a Roman seal on His tomb, and a Roman guard at His grave.”⁴

AFTER ROME

What happened after the fall of the Roman Empire? In Daniel 2:41, 42 we read as follows: “And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters’ clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.”

The Roman empire expanded and tried to cover more territory that gradually was more challenging to keep under control. As a result, immorality, corruption and depravity began to set in, the kingdom began to collapse, and self-destruction came as a consequence. The empire was divided into ten kingdoms and the combination of clay and iron shows that there was weakness in these realms, they would try to unite but they would not.

In *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by Edward Gibbon, it is explained that some of the components that contributed to the fall of the Roman empire—and when we read and compare these with today’s society there is a lot of similarity regarding the way everything is decaying around us:

1. The undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, which is the basis of human society.
2. Higher and higher taxes and the spending of public money on free



bread and circuses for the populace.

3. The mad craze for pleasure; sports are becoming more and more exciting and brutal every year.
4. The building of gigantic armaments when the real enemy was within, the decadence of the people.
5. The decay of religion—faith fading into mere formality, losing touch with life, and becoming impotent to warn and guide the people.⁵

Why did Rome fall? “It is written that Babylon, the mother of harlots, fell because of imputing her power unto the gods of the heathen. Pagan Rome fell because she presumed to hold authority over the person of Christ and His followers.”⁶

When we trace the history of Rome, we find that its original territory (western Europe) was conquered in A.D. 476 by exactly ten kings. Rome started to gradually disintegrate and what was once a united, mighty, and vast empire, broke into ten kingdoms (as foretold in Daniel 7:19, 20, 23, 24). The following are the ancient names of the kingdoms with the modern territory:

1. Anglo-Saxons = England
2. Franks = France
3. Lombards = Italy
4. Alemannis = Germany
5. Suevis = Portugal
6. Burgundians = Switzerland/
France
7. Visigoths = Spain
8. Ostrogoths were destroyed
9. Herulis were destroyed

10. Vandals were destroyed

The Roman empire was broken, and it has remained broken in numerous fragments ever since.

THE FINAL KINGDOM

This takes us to the end of the image. There have been attempts to unite the empire again through human unions, and intermarriages, but as divine inspiration had said, they would not succeed.

It was revealed by the prophet that in the dream there is a setting of the final and eternal kingdom, the stone that was cut not by hands and that came down to destroy the image in such a way that all the metals turned to dust. That stone represents the second coming of Jesus and the establishment of the eternal kingdom that He has promised to His faithful followers throughout the ages. This is the kingdom that the patriarchs, prophets, and disciples envisioned in their hopes and faith.

“Exalted to the pinnacle of worldly honor and acknowledged even by Inspiration as ‘a king of kings’ (Ezekiel 26:7). Nebuchadnezzar nevertheless at times had ascribed to the favor of Jehovah the glory of his kingdom and the splendor of his reign. Such had been the case after his dream of the great image. His mind had been profoundly influenced by this vision and by the thought that the Babylonian Empire, universal though it was, was finally to fall, and other kingdoms were to bear sway, until at last all earthly powers were **to be superseded** by a kingdom set up by **the God of heaven, which kingdom was never to be destroyed.**”⁷

As the image represents a false system of worship and government, the kingdom of God comes to destroy once and for all the system that has been destroying souls and taking them to perdition. This part of the prophecy has not been fulfilled because it is referring to the second coming of Jesus.

When Nebuchadnezzar heard the revelation and interpretation of the dream, he bowed and worshiped the true and only God. The king was convinced that all the words spoken by the prophet Daniel were true, since this prophet had been able to do what his servants were not capable of doing. Daniel 2:47.

God has given us a map of events—that is why the book of Daniel is so popular. Here we can look back in history and see that Daniel wrote these things way before they took place. To comprehend these events is a wonderful experience. But having the experience of Nebuchadnezzar, accepting the One who gave the dream and its interpretation is the most fulfilling experience that we can have when we study these amazing events of history! *R*

References:

- ¹ Roy Allan Anderson: *Unfolding Daniel's Prophecies*, p. 135.
- ² Stephen Haskell: *The Story of Daniel the Prophet*, pp. 201, 202. [Emphasis added.]
- ³ Roy Allan Anderson: *Unfolding Daniel's Prophecies*, p. 142.
- ⁴ Stephen Haskell: *The Story of Daniel the Prophet*, p. 94. [Emphasis added.]
- ⁵ Edward Gibbon: *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 1787.
- ⁶ Stephen Haskell: *The Story of Daniel the Prophet*, p. 95.
- ⁷ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 514. [Emphasis added.]



by Peter D. Lausevic

THE DILEMMA

The God that we serve is One that knows the end from the beginning. We also develop some of this same characteristic to a very limited degree through experience when we know that something will happen as a result of certain events that we have faced in the past. This is called consequences to our actions. It is like a chemical reaction. Combine certain ingredients and you will know exactly the result.

But to God the future is the same as if looking at the past. This is one of the key evidences for identifying Him as having the right to our wor-

ship. "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done" (Isaiah 46:10). Furthermore, there are things we need to know about the future in order to be prepared for the events that are to take place. For that reason God gives to His prophets messages that are essential for us to know so we can get ready. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

These messages to godly prophets are often given in symbols so that a person must really have

a desire to know in order to understand what is being said. These symbols can be in the form of a prophecy or at times be delivered through parables. God utilizes symbols that would be familiar to a person as much as possible. Since the majority of the people in Israel were living in an agrarian society, many symbols in the Bible are related to agriculture, whether of plants or livestock.

In the Babylonian society everything centered around their pagan religion. Their views and understanding of deity and the

divine will was through the various forms of idolatry which they worshipped through their elaborate temples, thus missing the character of the true God. When they associated something with an idol, they would immediately think that they were dealing with deity. This is why an image was used in the second chapter of Daniel to arrest the king's attention and then explain to him the future empires that would hold world dominion.

Although the seventh chapter of Daniel still held interest to the Babylonian people and hence was written in their language, we find that beasts are used to describe these kingdoms rather than the non-expressive elements of gold, silver, brass, iron and finally a mixture of iron and clay. In an explanation of what this chapter means, Daniel was clearly told what these ferocious animals represented. "... The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth. . ." Daniel 7:23. Beasts show character traits that cannot be revealed by inanimate objects.

TURMOIL BETWEEN NATIONS

"A tornado is a violently rotating column of air that extends from a thunderstorm to the ground. It's often portended by a dark, greenish sky. Black storm clouds gather. Baseball-size hail may fall. A funnel suddenly appears, as though descending from a cloud. The funnel hits the ground and roars forward with a sound like that of a freight train approaching. . . . The tornado tears up everything in its path. . . ."

"Tornadoes form when warm, humid air collides with cold, dry air. The denser cold air is pushed over the warm air, usually producing thunderstorms. The warm air rises through the colder air, causing an updraft. The updraft will begin to rotate if winds vary sharply in speed or direction.

"As the rotating updraft, called a mesocycle, draws in more warm air from the moving thunderstorm, its rotation speed increases. Cool air fed by the jet stream, a strong band

of wind in the atmosphere, provides even more energy.

"Water droplets from the mesocyclone's moist air form a funnel cloud. The funnel continues to grow and eventually it descends from the cloud. When it touches the ground, it becomes a tornado."¹

This is the exact picture I get whenever I begin reading this vision: "Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea" (Daniel 7:2). Another prophet describes the destruction that happens when these winds collide: "Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us! for we are spoiled" (Jeremiah 4:13). When we read this in the context of nations, we can clearly see terrible war and bloodshed. This horrible picture of war is clearly between the nations because a sea is a symbol of "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (Revelation 17:15). And the result of all this turmoil are "four great beasts" that "came up from the sea, diverse one from another" (Daniel 7:3). As we have seen already, these beasts are a symbol first of their king and then these nations.





THE LION AND THE BEAR

The very first beast national power to come up is the king of the animal world. "The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof 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" (Daniel 7:4). In order to properly describe its character, wings were added to it so that its swiftness to destroy in conquest can be seen. "For, lo, I raised up the Chaldeans [Babylonians], that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful: their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves. Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat. . . . And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every strong hold; for they shall heap dust, and take it" (Habakkuk 1:6-10).

Daniel was familiar with the

writings of Jeremiah (Daniel 9:2) where a lion was used to represent the kingdom of Babylon. "Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away; first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones" (Jeremiah 50:17). By the time Daniel is writing this vision, the Assyrian kingdom was subdued by Babylon and thus formed a part of it. Therefore, a lion here could only represent the kingdom of Babylon.

Once we have established that Babylon is this first beast, then all we need to do is look at which beast nation conquered Babylon and became a world power. "And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh" (Daniel 7:5). In this case, it would be a bear. Babylon was given to the Medes (combined with the Persians and thus called the Medo-Persian kingdom). We see this clearly when we read the 5th chapter that describes the last night of Babylon and how it was given to the Medes and Persians. This kingdom is represented by this vicious bear. In nature, a bear would not normally go around with three ribs in its mouth; but prophecy shows its true character to be more vicious even than a normal grizzly bear.

THE LEOPARD

The prophet then describes the next beast nation: "After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it" (Daniel 7:6). Which kingdom was to succeed Medo-Persia?

In a parallel prophecy found in Daniel 8, we see two beasts: "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts



might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great. And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes." Although different beasts are used showing additional characteristics, "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persian. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king" (Daniel 8:3-5, 20, 21).

Therefore, the kingdom of Greece was to follow Medo-Persia. As Babylon's lion had two wings representing speed of conquest, so this leopard has four wings indicating even greater rapidity. So fast was it to conquer that in Daniel 8 it "touched not the ground." This is very true when we consider the history of the conquests of Alexander the Great [the horn between the eyes of the he goat].

But that horn [Alexander the Great] was to be broken. "Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation." Daniel 8:22. These four horns in Daniel 8 must be the same as the four heads on the leopard. When Alexander died from an overdose of alcohol, four of his generals eventually took control of the entire Grecian empire exactly as prophecy depicted.

THE DREADFUL BEAST

The next beast mentioned in this prophecy is something that cannot

be found in nature. "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns" (Daniel 7:7).

The first three beasts were clearly named in prophecy, thus they set a precedent as to what we are to ex-



pect—how each followed the other. In our study of history, the next empire that controlled the world after Greece was the mighty Roman empire. "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces." Verse 23. How it controlled kingdoms, how it persecuted its dissenters is clearly revealed in the above verses.

"And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise." Verse 24. In the beginning of this kingdom, it did not have any horns; but later, ten were to arise out of it which were a symbol of ten kings or kingdoms who are still a part of the dragon. When we trace the history of Rome, we find that its original territory (western Europe) was conquered in A.D. 476 by exactly ten kings [the Anglo-Saxons (England), Franks (France), Alemanni (Germany), Suevi (Portugal), Visigoths (Spain), Burgundians (now part of Switzerland and France), Lombards (now part of northern Italy), Ostrogoths, Heruli, and Vandals (three tribes that were uprooted).

THE DRAGON

This last beast has its description in folklore and the customs of nations. The Bible also uses the same term and calls it a dragon. The origin of this dragon actually began in heaven when there was a war for supremacy. "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven." This dragon is none other than the devil himself. "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Revelation 12:7–9).

Although this is the same dragon as in Daniel with some slight differences in order to emphasize different characteristics just like between Daniel 7 and 8, this dragon was present to destroy the Christ child when He was born in a manger. "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne" (Revelation 12:3–5).

It is for this reason that we know that the devil actually uses nations who have the dragon spirit in them. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, it was the Roman power that was used to destroy Him at His birth. "Thus while the dragon, primarily, represents Satan, it is, in a secondary sense, a symbol of pagan Rome."² In reality, each of these kingdoms manifesting different characteristics had the spirit of a dragon. When you look at the actions of Egypt in persecuting the people of God and holding them in slavery, those actions were truly dragon-like. "Speak, and say, Thus



saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself" (Ezekiel 29:3).

Some nations may have a more noble beginning and are described as lamb-like. However, whenever a nation has a taste for power and control, they are not so eager to give it up. This beast nation identified in the Revelation that at first has the horns like a lamb soon speaks like a dragon and then exercises the same power of a dragon. "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." Their eagerness for control is in ever facet of life. "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Revelation 13:11, 12, 15–17).

We are speaking here about affecting the economy, personal freedoms and even life itself all for the sake of control. Controlling people to obey its dictates regardless of

what one may think or believe. When you read the spirit of the dragon in Daniel 7 you can see that we are talking about utter decimation of a person or nation that dares to challenge this dragon. "Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" (Daniel 7:23–25).

Those who cherish the freedom to think and act according to their own conscience are inspired by these words of the first apostles: "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

THE LAMB

The dilemma that we find in all of this is that there is also a lamb as it had been slain. Although Jesus is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5) when describing certain characteristics especially in relationship to the closing scenes of this earth's history and in the defense of His chosen people, He is primarily called the Lamb of God. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). This term is used for Jesus once in the Old Testament and 30 times in the New, of which 28 are in the book of Revelation alone.

It is true that a lamb is also a beast of sorts, but what a different animal this is! Instead of seeking to devour and destroy in order to control, the lamb on the other hand reacts completely different when attacked. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth" (Isaiah 53:7). And

we as Christians are to follow in the footsteps of Jesus our Redeemer. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21). What does this mean personally to us? "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (1 Peter 3:9). This is a completely different attitude than is common in this world.

What a different way to look at life through the eyes of Jesus the Lamb rather than the characteristic beast of the nations of this world. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:19–21). Leaving the Lord to fight our battles is the only way to be like Jesus. The way in which God works is completely different to the ways of the world. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9).

And yes, the lamb is still some kind of a beast although, as we have mentioned, a beast with a completely different character. As beasts do represent kingdoms, the Lamb also has a kingdom—an eternal kingdom that has no end. "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Daniel 7:27). Can you imagine an eternal kingdom that has the characteristics of a Lamb?

A CHANGE OF NATURE

Our God wants to engage the conscience and obtain our approval rather than coming like a tornado and destroying anything in its path. For that reason He is inviting us to a dialogue. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord:

though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). He uses the act of invitation instead of coercion. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

Why is it possible for these beast nations to control the world? Because we all have a beast nature in ourselves and this beast nature must change if we desire to be a part of that Lamb Kingdom. How is it possible for a beast nature like you and me to obtain this radical change of nature to be like the Lamb of God? The Old Testament describes this process as a change of heart. This is not some remodel job but rather a complete heart transplant. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." And what is the natural consequence of this change of heart? "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:26, 27). "There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness. The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit."³

Jesus in the New Testament describes this same transformation to Nicodemus. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). "The new birth consists in having new motives, new tastes, new tendencies."⁴ In other words, the transformation of a beast to a lamb. Are you that lamb? *R*

References:

- ¹ <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/tornadoes>
- ² *The Great Controversy*, p. 438.
- ³ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.
- ⁴ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1101.



Compiled from the writings of Ellen G. White

THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S KINGDOM

“Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God?” said Christ, “or with what comparison shall we compare it?” Christ found the kingdoms of the world corrupt. After Satan was expelled from heaven, he erected his standard of rebellion on this earth, and sought by every means to win men to his standard. In order the more successfully to gain the allegiance of the world, he put on the garb of religion. By familiar intercourse, through his agents, with the inhabitants of the world, he worked to extend his power, that the contagion of evil might be wide

spread. His purpose was to establish a kingdom which would be governed by his own laws, and carried on with his own resources, independent of God; and so well did he succeed, that when Christ came to the world to establish a kingdom, he looked upon the governments of men, and said, “Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God?” Nothing in civil society afforded him a comparison. The world had cast aside that class of people most needing care and attention; even the most earnest religionists among the Jews, filled with pride and preju-

dice, neglected the poor and needy, and some among them frowned upon their existence.

In striking contrast to the wrong and oppression so universally practised were the mission and work of Christ. Earthly kingdoms are established and upheld by physical force, but this was not to be the foundation of the Messiah's kingdom. In the establishment of His government no carnal weapons were to be used, no coercion practised; no attempt would be made to force the consciences of men. These are the principles used by the prince of

darkness for the government of his kingdom. His agents are actively at work, seeking in their human independence to enact laws which are in direct contrast to Christ's mercy and loving-kindness.

Prophecy has plainly stated the nature of Christ's kingdom. He planned a government which would use no force; His subjects would know no oppression. The symbols of earthly governments are wild beasts, but in the kingdom of Christ, men are called upon to behold, not a ferocious beast, but the Lamb of God. Not as a fierce tyrant did He come, but as the Son of man; not to conquer the nations by His iron power, but "to preach good tidings unto the meek;" "to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;" "to comfort all that mourn." He came as the divine Restorer, bringing to oppressed and downtrodden humanity the rich and abundant grace of Heaven, that by the power of His righteousness, man, fallen and degraded though he was, might be a partaker of divinity.

In the eyes of the world, Christ was peculiar in some things. Ever a friend of those who most needed His protection, He comforted the needy, and befriended those shunned by the proud and exclusive Jews. The forsaken ones felt His protection, and the convicted, repentant soul was clothed with His salvation. And He required of His subjects that they give aid and protection to the oppressed. No soul that bears the image of God is to be placed at the footstool of human power. The greatest possible kindness and freedom are to be granted to the purchase of the blood of Christ. Over and over again in His teaching, Christ presented the value of true humility, showing how necessary it is that we exercise helpfulness, compassion, and love toward one another.

Professed Christians of today have the example of Christ before them, but do they follow it? Often, by the hardness of their hearts, they make it manifest that they do not belong to the kingdom of Christ.

Too many educate themselves to censure and condemn, repulsing with harsh, stinging words, those who may seek their help. But cold-hearted worldliness excludes the love of Jesus from the heart. We can cooperate with Christ in the up-building of His kingdom only by being sanctified by His Spirit. We must use no force, take up no weapons to compel obedience; for to do this would be to exhibit the same spirit revealed by the enemies of Christ.

Christ can do nothing for the recovery of man until, convinced of his own weakness and stripped of all self-sufficiency and pride, he puts himself under the control of God. Then and then only can he be a true subject of God. No confidence can be placed in human greatness, human intellect, or human plans. We must place ourselves under the guidance of an infinite mind, acknowledging that without Jesus we can do nothing. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." "Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."

Christ taught that His church is a spiritual kingdom. He Himself, "the Prince of peace," is the head of His church. In His person humanity, inhabited by divinity, was represented to the world. The great end of His mission was to be a sin-offering for the world, that by the shedding of blood an atonement might be made for the whole race of men. With a heart ever touched with the feelings of our infirmities, an ear ever open to the cry of suffering humanity, a hand ever ready to save the discouraged and despairing, Jesus, our Saviour, "went about doing good." His words inspired hope; His precepts awakened men to faith, and caused them to put their trust in Him.

Before man can belong to the kingdom of Christ, his character must be purified from sin and sanctified by the grace of Christ. He must become a member of Christ's body, receiving nourishment from Him as the branches of

the vine derive their strength from the parent stalk. And all who are members of the kingdom of Christ will represent Him in character and disposition. Who are thus working out their lives in the service of Christ? All such will sit with Him on His throne. But all who exalt themselves, all who oppress their fellow men in any wise, do this to Jesus Christ; for every soul has been purchased at an infinite price, and through faith in Christ is capable of receiving immortality, to live through the eternal ages.

How long God will bear with the heartless indifference shown in the treatment of men toward their fellow men, we cannot determine. But "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." If men sow deeds of love and compassion, words of comfort, hope, and encouragement, they will reap that which they have sown.

Christ longs to manifest His grace, and stamp His character and image upon the whole world. He was offered the kingdoms of this world by the one who revolted in heaven, to buy His homage to the principles of evil; but He came to establish a kingdom of righteousness, and He would not be bought; He would not abandon His purpose. This earth is His purchased inheritance, and He would have men free and pure and holy. The world's Redeemer hungered and thirsted for sympathy and cooperation; and His earthly pilgrimage of toil and self sacrifice was cheered by the prospect that His longings would be satisfied, that His work would not be for naught. And though Satan works through human instrumentalities to hinder the purpose of Christ, there are triumphs yet to be accomplished through the blood shed for the world, that will bring glory to God and to the Lamb. His kingdom will extend, and embrace the whole world."¹

But today in the religious world there are multitudes who, as they believe, are working for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as an earthly and temporal dominion. They desire to make our Lord the ruler of the kingdoms of this world,

The kingdom of heaven can be felt, but not seen. The inward working of the Spirit of God is compared to leaven. Said Christ, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.”



the ruler in its courts and camps, its legislative halls, its palaces and market places. They expect Him to rule through legal enactments, enforced by human authority. Since Christ is not now here in person, they themselves will undertake to act in His stead, to execute the laws of His kingdom. The establishment of such a kingdom is what the Jews desired in the days of Christ. They would have received Jesus, had He been willing to establish a temporal dominion, to enforce what they regarded as the laws of God, and to make them the expositors of His will and the agents of His authority. But He said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” John 18:36. He would not accept the earthly throne.²

LIKENED TO LEAVEN

The kingdom of heaven can be felt, but not seen. The inward working of the Spirit of God is compared to leaven. Said Christ, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened” (Matthew 13:33). And again, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3).

The leaven of truth, hidden in the heart, will not produce the spirit of rivalry, the love of ambition, the

desire to be first. Thousands upon thousands of those to whom God has entrusted talents to be improved and increased that they may bring all their consecrated ability into the kingdom of God, become slaves to gold and silver and earthly possessions. They abuse their entrusted capabilities, and scheme and plan to obtain those things which have no value with God. They buy and sell and get gain, but they neglect to secure those precious things which are placed within their reach—the bread of life, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

“Whatever ye ask the Father in My name believing,” Christ says, “ye shall receive.” Money is of value only as it is used as the Lord’s entrusted means [only] if, as the Lord’s stewards we hold it in trust as a precious gift of heaven with which we can bless humanity. But if it is used to indulge and glorify self, it is a curse and an encumbrance and a constant temptation. It becomes a stumbling block over which thousands of souls fall into temptation and all manner of iniquity.

The sixth chapter of First Timothy speaks of a class of people who

dishonor God. In the place of seeking for purity of heart, for love and unity, thus revealing that the leaven of truth has been hidden in their souls, they give evidence that they know not what it means to have the leaven of truth in the heart, molding the affections and sanctifying the soul. They are proud, “knowing nothing, but dotting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings. Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness” (verses 4, 5). “From such” the apostle warns Timothy, “withdraw thyself.” “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (Verses 6–10).

A true, practical Christian will show himself a believer in sanctification, and his works will testify of him that he is born of God. The apostle continues, "Follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (verses 11, 12).

The lesson given is for every human being. Christ by this parable illustrates the human heart. The leaven of truth, working inwardly, will be revealed in the life. The heart must be cleansed from all impurity. Man must be fitted with traits of character that will enable him to do service for God in any line. The process is invisible by which the leaven changes the mass of meal into which it has been introduced, but it works until the meal is converted into bread. So must the Spirit of God work a radical change. New faculties are not supplied, but a thorough change is made in the employment of those faculties. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. But while every faculty is regenerated, man does not lose his identity.

The apostle Paul says: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in [his] kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not

of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:1-8).

Here is brought to view the change that must take place in the heart. And "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The Scriptures are the great agency in this transformation. Christ prayed, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). In this great work we are laborers together with God. With the divine agency there is to be the co-operation of the human instrument. To each of His followers Christ says, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18-20).

AN UNSOLVED MYSTERY

The meal in which the leaven has been hid represents the heart that believes and receives Jesus. Christ works *out* the principles which He alone can work *in*. The world looks upon this class as a mystery which they cannot solve. The selfish, money loving man lives to eat and drink and enjoy his worldly goods. But he does not keep eternity in view. He loses the eternal world from his reckoning. But those who receive and believe the truth have that faith which works by love and purifies the soul from everything sensual.

The world cannot know them, for they are keeping in view eternal realities. A motive power is working within to transform the character. A constraining influence received from heaven is working like the leaven hid in the meal. The love of Jesus has come into the heart with its redeeming power to conquer the entire being, soul, body, and spirit. When counter influences work to conflict the grace of Christ which bringeth salvation, the love of Christ masters every other motive, and raises the human agent above the corrupting influences of the world.

Because he clings to Jesus in faith

and prayer, because he looks unto Him who died that he might have all the power that Christ has to bestow, the believing soul enters into fellowship with Christ. His life is hid with Christ in God. This class is widely separated from the motives which move and control the world, and therefore the world knows them not.

With the follower of Christ the love of money is not all absorbing. For Christ's sake he will labor for it, deny self for it, cut off every superfluous want, bind about every needless expenditure, that the means which come into his possession may be used in the great work of saving souls who are without Christ and without hope in the world. Thus he cooperates with the world's Redeemer, who for our sakes became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich.

He, our great Deliverer, left the royal courts of heaven. The Commander of all the angelic hosts laid aside His royal robes, His crown of honor. He clothed His divinity with humanity, that humanity might touch humanity, and that divinity might lay hold of the divine power of God in behalf of the fallen race.

The love of ease and pleasure and self-exaltation did not characterize His life. He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. And all who make an unreserved surrender to God will from the heart say, "I will follow Thee, my Saviour." They will have fellowship with Christ in His sufferings.

Has the truth we profess to believe sanctified the soul? If it has, the result will be manifest. As the penetrating power of the leaven produces an entire change in the meal, so the power of the Word of God through His grace will work a transformation in the soul. The truth which is contained in the Scriptures must not be received merely as a theory. It is to work a change upon human hearts. . . .

There are grand principles set before us in the Word of God, but

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these are not to be considered too pure and holy to be brought into the business life. Through the reception of Christ as our personal Saviour, the precious gems which that Word contains become to us threads of gold that bind us to Christ and to each other. In loving one another as Christ has loved humanity, we receive sanctification of the soul and obtain that faith which works by love and purifies the soul. When the leaven of truth is implanted in the heart, it absorbs to itself all the capabilities of mind and soul and strength. It implants in the human being a new nature, and the grace of Christ is more and more developed.

The twelfth and thirteenth chapters of 1 Corinthians should be committed to memory, written in the mind and heart. Through His servant Paul, the Lord has placed before us these subjects for our consideration, and those who have the privilege of being brought together in church capacity will be united, understandingly and intelligently. The figure of the members which compose the body represents the church of God and the relation its members should sustain to one another. . . .

A KINGDOM OF LITTLE THINGS

When the leaven of truth is hidden in the heart it becomes a vital working power to bring into conformity to itself all the capabilities of the being. The mind, the affections, the motives—all the powers—become converted through the truth. And all are worked by the same Spirit. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. The truths of the Word of God meet in one grand practical necessity—the conversion of the soul through faith.

When the believer is united with Christ, that faith is manifested in holiness of character, in consistent obedience to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The truths which we receive from the Word of God are truths which reach to heaven and compass eternity, and yet the vital influence of those truths may be woven into the human life. The influence of the Word of God is to have a sanctifying effect on our speech, our actions, our association with every member of the family, and with strangers. The leaven of truth must bring under control the temper and the voice. In the home and in the church there are matters which are termed “little things,” but all these little things have great results. It is the “little things” that discipline the soul and prepare men to act with lowly-mindedness in large responsibilities. . . .

The truth must exercise an influence over the practical life. The large and the small things are always linked together. The fact that the little things are not seen and linked with the great and higher interests is the cause of the failure of many church members. There are great defects in the professedly Christian life. Their words are not leavened by the truth. There are many whose characters are now being weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, and they are pronounced “wanting” because they do not bring the truth into practice.

The leaven of truth is a living principle, and it is to be exercised in the little things and exert an influence over the daily life. But many act as if the truths of God’s Word did not exist. The same love of self, the same selfish indulgence, the same temper and hasty speech is seen in their lives as in the worldling. The same sensitive pride, the

same yielding to natural inclination, the same perversities of character are seen as if the truth were totally unknown by them. They have closed the windows and drawn the blinds of the soul, and shut out the sunshine of the righteousness of Christ, and then complain that they have no sweet joy, no assurance and happiness in believing the truth. But the sin lies at their own door. They have not hidden the leaven of truth in the heart.

When the waters of life flow in pure, sweet currents to the parched soil of the heart, there will be a development of fruit to the glory of God. Then the truth will not be brought into disrepute by the perverse disposition, the defective hereditary and cultivated tendencies now revealed in word and action.

Oh, that all of our people would understand the harm they do by little acts of inconsistency. There are some who have a burden for the souls of their friends. They try to bring the truth before them, to soften their hearts, but there are inconsistencies in their own words and spirit, and their influence pulls down that which they really desire to build up. It may be that bitterness is revealed in the voice, that severity is manifested in the judgment. Remember that the manner is the unspoken language of the feelings, and all this works away from Christ and daily witnesses against you, hardening the hearts you wish to save.

Should not the consideration of these matters arouse every Christian to the solemn resolution to be more faithful? Should not the words of the apostle have weight with us: “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ”? This Scripture is given to us to heed and to practice. The apostle

continues, "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:13-16).

As men and women who profess godliness, are we obeying the Word of God? Is the leaven of truth hidden in the heart, working in the character, and conforming the entire being to the will and ways of God? Our churches need the converting power of God. The leaven of evil which works in disobedience and denial of the truth must be eradicated, and the leaven of the word of God [must be] implanted in the heart. This will work with its vital properties, restoring the lost image of God in man.

And the transformation having taken place through the leaven of truth, a work is entrusted to us. Christ commissions us, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."³

ARISE AND SHINE

My brethren and sisters, arise; shine! The time has come when we should make every possible effort in giving this last message to the world. I call upon all who possibly can to connect with the work, and to do it now. Do not be indifferent to the messages God sends for the spiritual uplifting of His people, nor negligent of the responsibility that has been placed upon you in a knowledge of present truth. God's first and great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." The second is like unto it: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The Lord is sending us repeated instruction pointing us to the impor-



tance of becoming earnest, diligent workers. We have an important work to do, a work that will not wait, a work that can be accomplished only in the power of, and through, the Spirit, and under the direction and guidance of Christ. Let every believer at this time show himself a worker together with God. Let all differences be put away, all light meaningless talk. Let us speak and act righteously. The Lord will work through every soul who will yield heart and life to His control. To all who will be led by the Spirit, God will impart His righteousness. He commits to His true followers the power of persuasion, the power of His grace and truth, a deep and constant love for His work in home and foreign fields. He gives them hearts that are in earnest in gathering with Christ. With helpers possessing such gifts as these, the missionary work can not be without fruit.

The kingdom of grace is now being established, as day by day hearts that have been full of sin and rebellion yield to the sovereignty of His love. But the full establishment of the kingdom of His glory will not take place till the second coming of Christ to this world. "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven" is to "be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." They shall inherit the kingdom prepared

for them from the foundation of the world. And Christ will take to Himself His great power, and reign.

The heavenly gates are again to be lifted up, and with ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of holy ones, our Saviour will come forth as "King of kings, and Lord of lords." Jehovah Immanuel "shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." "The tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them . . . and be their God."

But before that coming, Jesus said, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations." His kingdom will not come until the good tidings of His grace shall have been carried to all the earth. Hence, as we give ourselves to God, and win other souls to Him, we hasten the coming of His kingdom. Only those who devote themselves to His service, saying, "Here am I; send me" to open blind eyes, to turn men "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God,"—they alone pray in sincerity, "Thy kingdom come."⁴ *R*

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¹ *The Review and Herald*, August 18, 1896. [Emphasis added.]

² *The Desire of Ages*, p. 509.

³ *Manuscript 82*, 1898. *Sermons and Talks*, vol. 2, pp. 116-122. [Emphasis added.]

⁴ *The Review and Herald*, November 14, 1912. [Emphasis added.]



by Walter V. Lukic

THE TWO REPUBLICS

Part One: Setting the Stage and Roman Historiography

ROME – THE CITY AND STATE LIKE NO OTHER

There has never been a city in the world like the city of Rome. No political entity has ever been studied, admired, and emulated more than The Roman Republic. As one of the most fascinating civilizations in history, ancient Rome has never ceased to attract the interest of historians—professional and amateur alike.

Throughout the ages, Roman civilization has profoundly shaped the development of Western political institutions and powerfully

influenced the world's social and moral values. Our language still betrays the timelessness of Rome, with phrases such as: "All roads lead to Rome," "When in Rome do as the Romans do," "Rome wasn't built in a day," "Rome, the eternal city." Although Latin long ceased to be a living language, the language of ancient Romans is still the language of medicine, law, botany, astronomy, and of much of the sciences. Virtually all months in our calendar are named after Roman deities and Roman emperors, or represent Latin

words for numbers seven, eight, nine, and ten. We even use the Roman numerals. By its reception in the civil law codes, Roman law has laid the foundations of many European legal systems, and it is still an integral part of legal education in most countries based on civil law tradition.

The names of many American institutions—the Senate, Congress, President—all have Latin origin, and this is not by chance. The founding fathers of the United States of America spent most of

their childhood and much of their adulthood reading the Latin classics. To America's founders, the past, especially the Roman past, was not something that was dead but rather alive, with much personal and social meaning. Their understanding of the origins of The Roman Republic gave both meaning and shape to their undertakings in the American Revolution. They knew they were doing something unprecedented in that revolution, yet they felt that they were not the first.

WHY WRITE ABOUT ANCIENT ROME?

A question may be asked about the reasons for surveying the history of The Roman Republic in a religious magazine. Instead of keeping the reader in suspense and guessing about those reasons, we are prepared to lay them out in the opening lines. Ancient Rome, and The Roman Republic specifically, are the subject matter of our investigation for the following reasons: For one, any individual and any organized group can learn valuable lessons from the rise and fall of The Roman Republic. Closely related to this reason is our interest in making a comparison between The Roman Republic and another great experiment in the republican form of government—the United States of America (USA). The third one, which is of primary interest to us, is the discovery and display of the intimate relationship that exists between history and Bible prophecy. The apocalyptic prophecies in the book of Daniel, and more explicitly in the book of Revelation, identify Rome (both pagan and Christian Rome) and the United States of America as major end-time religious and political forces. The fateful alliance between these global powers will lead to the greatest crisis in world's history—to the end of human history as known to us, to the glorious return of Jesus Christ, and to the commencement of the eternal reign of Jesus Christ and His faithful followers.

The students of the apocalyptic prophecies have always recognized the unique place accorded to Rome in two biblical books—Daniel and Revelation—first to pagan, then to Christian, Rome. Almost without exception, Rome is viewed as an oppressive and persecuting power. Rome's representative was behind the plot to kill the child Jesus. It was the Roman praefect of Judea who found Jesus not guilty of a capital offence, yet under pressure, consented to Jesus' death on the cross. A few decades later, the Roman Empire executed the divine judgment upon the rebellious Jewish nation, the city of Jerusalem and its temple. As the Christian church emerged and spread rapidly, the Roman emperors persecuted the disciples of Jesus.

Then, sometime in the fourth century AD, a Roman emperor adopted Christianity and became an ally of the Christian church. Yet that fateful alliance between the church and state led to the emergence of the papacy—"the mingling of churchcraft and statecraft"¹ embodied in the bishop of Rome as its visible head. Christian Rome then received from the pagan Rome "his power, and his seat, and great authority" (Revelation 13:2). Papal Rome, employing the powerful arm of the state, enforced its religious dogmas on all peoples living within its jurisdiction. Through many centuries and in many parts of medieval Europe, millions of religious dissenters were imprisoned and put to death. After long last, papal supremacy was ended in 1798 when revolutionary France took Pope Pius VI captive. By incapacitating the pope's temporal power, France inflicted to the head of church-state craft a mortal wound.

At about the same time, on the new continent west of Rome, was arising a new republic. Its founders were to studiously examine the history of The Roman Republic and consciously adopt many of its democratic features. They would deliberately reject the kingly power and the papal supremacy by form-

ing their own government under a written constitution that guarantees to all its citizens God-given, unalienable rights. However, notwithstanding the noble desires of its founders and all the safeguards placed in the constitutional framework of the new republic, the Bible prophecy foretells that this "Land of the Free" shall be transformed so that "he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed" (Revelation 13:12). The Bible affirms that the deadly wound would be healed, the apostate Christian religion will again control the state, and as in the past, the church-state craft will result in the persecution of religious dissenters. The examination of the rise and fall of The Roman Republic presents us with an excellent case study in history. By observing the causes and processes that led to the decline and downfall of The Roman Republic, we can much better understand the degeneration of the American Republic, its democratic institutions, and constitutional safeguards.

This is a worthy cause to be explored, unravelled, and taken account of as we seek to understand the current events and the imminent future. As we have already indicated, it is impossible to properly understand apocalyptic prophecy without understanding history. Let us therefore briefly survey the history of ancient Rome by examining first the value which the ancient Romans attached to the study of history and then the Roman historiography.

HISTORY IS LIFE'S TEACHER

The ancient Romans were keenly aware of the valuable lessons that can be derived from the study of history. They diligently studied the histories of other great nations and kingdoms. Historical accounts written by ancient Greek historians served as their favorite literary sources and their main inspiration.

The early Romans made a conscious effort to avoid the errors of the kingdoms that had either retreated or passed from the world stage. At the same time, they strived to repeat and even to exceed their accomplishments. In his monumental work, *The History of Rome*, the great Roman historian, Livy (Titus Livius), had this to say about the study of the past:

“There is this exceptionally beneficial and fruitful advantage to be derived from the study of the past, that you see, set in the clear light of historical truth, examples of every possible type. From these you may select for yourself and your country what to imitate, and also what, as being mischievous in its inception and disastrous in its issues, you are to avoid.”²

ROMAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

At this juncture, it may be appropriate to offer a brief survey of some notable historians whose written records illumine our path to the Roman past. In Roman historiography there are no contemporary witnesses to the early history of Rome. The earliest surviving documents are *Annales Maximi*, annual historical records kept by Pontifex Maximus during The Roman Republic. As the chief priest of the College of Pontiffs, Pontifex Maximus recorded in a concise form the key public events and the names of the magistrates. The earliest known Roman historian is **Quintus Fabius Pictor** (born c. 270 BC) who wrote in the annalist tradition and in the Greek language (*Graeci Annales*). Fabius' Annals survey the Roman history from Rome's legendary founding in 753 BC to the author's own time (the Second Punic War, 218–201 BC). **Lucius Cincius Alimentus**, Fabius' contemporary, was another noted Roman annalist who wrote his *Annals* in the Greek language, probably not later than 202 BC.

It is noteworthy that talented Greek historians also made significant contributions to Roman historiography. The best known

among them is **Polybius of Megalopolis** (c. 200–c. 118 BC). Polybius' main work, *The Histories*, covers the period from 264 BC to 146 BC (from the First Punic War to the Achaean War). This is the period during which The Roman Republic grew immensely, becoming a global power in the ancient Mediterranean world. In the *Histories*, Polybius showed interest in the division of government responsibilities (“mixed constitution”), which made his work highly influential among political thinkers, from Machiavelli to the framers of the United States Constitution. Another remarkable Greek contributed to Roman historiography—**Posidonius of Apameia or of Rhodes** (c. 135–c. 51 BC). Posidonius was considered the most learned man of his time and of the Stoic school. He was a friend of leading Romans and a true polymath of the Graeco-Roman world—an astronomer, geographer, botanist, historian, philosopher, mathematician, politician, and teacher. As a historian, Posidonius is known for his work *Histories* that can be viewed as a continuation of Polybius' *Histories* (the rise and expansion of Roman dominance). Posidonius' *Histories* differ from those of Polybius, in the period surveyed (a later period, 146–88 BC) and in the approach to history writing (his writings being less detached and factual). Human psychology, human passions and follies, are seen by Posidonius as the cause of events and as such are submitted to reader's approbation or condemnation. **Dionysius of Halicarnassus** (c. 60 BC–after 7 BC) is another prominent Greek narrating the history of Rome in his major work, *Roman Antiquities*. As a historian and teacher of rhetoric, Dionysius prospered during the reign of Emperor Augustus.

The first Roman known to us who wrote on the history of Rome in the Latin language is **Marcus Porcius Cato** (also known as Cato the Censor or Cato the Elder, 234–149 BC). His *Origines* (c. 168 BC) was written to teach Romans the virtues

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of their honorable ancestors and to oppose Hellenizing influence. Cato was succeeded by several other principal authors who wrote in the annalistic tradition.

The Roman histories that are best known to us come from the historians that wrote monographs or histories dedicated to a single topic, often taking the form of biographies. The goal of ancient Roman historians was not so much an objective presentation of facts but rather an interpretation of those facts for the benefit of future statesmen and policy makers. Therefore, we say that ancient Roman historians wrote **pragmatic histories**. Romans consciously extolled the virtues of their ancestors and deliberately omitted the past events unfavorable to the image of Rome they intended to convey to their contemporaries or leave to future generations. This approach to history writing was abundantly employed in the times of political unrest and social



Historians in the ancient world, including ancient Rome, were often individuals who could no longer participate in the political process. Being temporarily or permanently removed from power, they often recognized in historical compositions and in the permanence of the written record a suitable vehicle for voicing their perspectives.

turmoil. Histories produced in such times are little less than propaganda or rewriting of history for the purpose of convincing the audience to adopt desirable views on social and political issues.

On the other hand, Roman historiography can at times display **subversive writing styles**. Some historians did not have favorable views of either the contemporary or of the past rulers, or of both. To avoid censure or persecution, several Roman histories communicate the information by implication and insinuation. Tacitus' historical writings about Augustus and his critical attitude of the emperors in general, is a good example of such subversive writing style. Another tendency is noticeable in the writings of Roman historians. In their lifetime, a good number of Roman historians held high government offices and later in life either stepped down or were dismissed from their office. In other words, historians in the ancient world, including ancient Rome, were often individuals who could no longer participate in the political process.

Being temporarily or permanently removed from power, they often recognized in historical compositions and in the permanence of the written record a suitable vehicle for voicing their perspectives to those closer to the center of political deliberation.

THE HISTORIANS OF THE LATE REPUBLIC AND OF THE EMPIRE

The best-known Roman historians lived in the time of the late Republic and during the Empire. We shall list just a few notable names and some of their major works. Most of these works, regrettably, survived only in fragments. The writings of some historians are completely lost. We know about them indirectly—through later historians who either quoted or otherwise relied on their historical accounts.

Julius Caesar (100–44 BC) distinguished himself not only as a superb military commander and an exceptional statesman, but also as a prolific and competent

writer. Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* is his account of Gallic Wars, and his *Commentarii de Bello Civillii* describe the course of the Civil War (49–48 BC). In these historical writings Caesar displayed outstanding literary skills which he cleverly used to aid his political agenda.

One of the most popular Roman historians is **Titus Livius** (59 BC–17 AD), commonly known as **Livy**. Livy wrote a monumental history of Rome titled *Ab Urbe Condita* ("From the Founding of the City"). This work consisting of 142 books covers the history of ancient Rome from the founding of the city until the year 9 BC (reign of the emperor Augustus). Only one quarter of the original work is still extant (from the founding of Rome until 293 BC, and from 219 to 166 BC). Livy's history was written with the aim to preserve the memory of the Roman past and to teach the contemporaries how the moral virtues elevate their nation and moral decline leads to nation's failure. Since Livy often relied uncritically on his sources, his writings are not always historically reliable.

A generation older contemporary of Livy was **Gaius Sallustius Crispus** (86 BC–c. 35 BC), commonly known as **Sallust**. Sallust served the Republic as questor, tribune, and praetor. He produced two significant monographs, *Bellum Catilinae* ("Conspiracy of Catiline") and *Bellum Jugurthinum* ("Jugurthine War"). In these works, Sallust not only traced the progress of these military conflicts and conspiracies, but also provided a valuable backdrop for his exploration of the party struggles in Rome in the 1st century BC. In them Sallust reveals how decadent and corrupt aristocratic behavior led to the political and moral decline of Rome, especially after the fall of Carthage (146 BC).

An outstanding historian of the Imperial Rome in the 1st century AD is **Publius Cornelius Tacitus** (c. AC 56–c. 120). Modern scholarship widely regards Tacitus as one of the greatest Roman historians of all times. Tacitus was an orator, lawyer, and politician who held the highest offices in the Empire (from questor, to praetor, to suffect consul, and provincial governor). He was a close friend of Pliny the Younger. Tacitus' most notable works are *Annals* (*Ab excessu divi Augusti*) and *Histories* (*Historiae*). These two great histories form a continuous narrative from the death of Augustus (14 AD) to the death of Domitian (96 AD). His other works include: *The Life of Agricola*, *Germania*, and *Dialogue on Oratory*. As stated earlier, Tacitus employed a subversive writing style and displayed superb mastery of the Latin language. He is known for asserting that he wrote *sine ira et studio* ("without anger and partiality" – *Annales* I. 1).

There was another famous Roman historian and highly positioned magistrate. He is noted for writing biographies of twelve successive Julio-Claudian and Flavian emperors (from Julius Caesar to Domitian). *De Vita Caesarum* ("The Life of Caesars" or "The Twelve Caesars") was the literary creation of **Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus**, commonly referred to as **Suetonius** (c. AD 69–after AD

122). In this work Suetonius does not record the events chronologically but presents them thematically. Suetonius chose this approach consciously for the purpose of comparing various emperors and for evaluating their achievements.

For the students of Roman history worthy of mention are a few other historians. One of them is **Pliny the Elder** (Gaius Plinius Secundus – AD 23/24–79), who was uncle of Pliny the Younger (governor of Bithynia and Pontus, known for his letter to Emperor Trajan in AD 112, inquiring how to proceed legally against Christians). Pliny the Elder was an officer in Roman army who died in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in AD 79. He is known for his encyclopedic work *Naturalis Historia* (on natural history) and *Bella Germanica* (on the history of the German wars; the book is not extant but was heavily relied on by other 1st and 2nd century AD Roman historians). Pliny the Elder also wrote history of Julio-Claudian Rome. A notable historian of Jewish origin who became an ally of Romans was **Titus Flavius Josephus** (c. 37–c. 100). Josephus is best known for his work, *The Jewish War*, providing a historic account of the First Jewish-Roman War (66–70 AD), *Antiquities of the Jews*, and *Against Apion*. **Plutarch** (46–after 119 AD) was yet another great historian and biographer of Greek ethnicity. His works strongly influenced development of literary genres like biography, essay, and historical writings. Plutarch's best-known work is *Parallel Lives*, a series of biographies of illustrious Greeks and Romans, arguably written to encourage mutual respect between Greeks and Romans. *Lives* display impressive learning and research.

Lucius Cassius Dio (c. 155–c. 235) or **Cassius Dio** was a Roman historian and senator, native of Nicaea, Bithynia. Cassius Dio published in the Greek language *Roman History* in 80 books covering the period of about 1,000 years of history (beginning with the tales from Roman mythology and the founding

of Rome until 229 AD). There is a famous Roman who did not produce a comprehensive historical writing, yet who deserves honorable mention. His name is **Marcus Tullius Cicero** (106–43 BC). As a prominent Roman statesman, lawyer, scholar, philosopher, and arguably the greatest Roman orator, Cicero made an outstanding contribution to our understanding of the Roman society, its politics, philosophy, culture, Latin language, influential men and women of his age. Cicero's writings are regarded as one of the most renowned collections in all classical antiquity. His best-known works are *De Re Publica* ("On the Commonwealth") and *De Legibus* ("On the Laws"). Cicero's opus is enormous: he wrote on rhetoric, politics, philosophy, and delivered numerous speeches (88, of which 52 survived). Cicero's letters, however, are the most valuable source of information about the people and events associated with the fall of the Roman Republic. Of the total of 72 books of letters, only 37 have survived into modern times. *R*

[In Part Two of this series we propose to offer a brief historical survey of the Roman Republic by examining the salient features of its political and social organization. We will consider the institutions and policies that contributed to Rome's rise but also the degenerative processes that transformed The Roman Republic into dictatorship and finally into an empire. That survey shall serve as a point of departure for the comparison of The Roman Republic with the American Republic.]

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by Liviu Tudoroiu

“IN THE DAYS OF THESE KINGS”

“In the days of these kings” is one of the most significant concepts featured in the Word of God in the biblical prophecy. It is found in Daniel 2:44.

If we are capable of “cracking the mystery” of this prophetic time, then we can know if our generation is indeed the generation to behold the great event. If we can frame the time and the events connected to this prophecy, then we can recognize the springtime of the resurrection. We may see that this generation is indeed the generation that

will see Jesus come in the clouds of glory to establish His eternal kingdom. What a privilege and what a huge responsibility we may have in **“the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed”** (Daniel 2:44, first part). [Emphasis added.]

Dear friend, what we as Bible students can observe in the global socio-political context is that the materialistic mentality that characterizes the behavior of the world’s leaders has blinded their eyes con-

cerning religion. Religion—God—is nothing to them. Almost every decision-making human element involved in the world’s future does not have any regard for the religion of the Bible.

The time will soon come when the world will exhaust all alternatives, all probabilities, all scientific formulas to save the planet, and then in **“the days of these kings”** the world, the leaders—along with both the poor and the rich—will turn back to religion. The more they try to save the planet

the more they will find out that the reins of the planet are utterly seized from human hands into the hands of an Almighty One in the days of these kings.

“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” (Daniel 2:44).

There was never a time when this verse had more significance. The Lord Jesus Christ is coming soon. Times are changing rapidly. The power stipulated in Revelation 13 that has two horns like a lamb, is taking on the tone of the voice of the dragon.

In the countless numbers of immigrants that have entered the USA in recent years, you can find many courageous voices that have the guts to stand before the public and express their legitimate concerns about the change of tune/the change of voice of the nation in relation to the rest of the world. Here is an example:

“No one knows better about the danger of communism than the survivors of the Chinese Communist party. We are the survivors of the Cultural Revolution [and] the survivors of the tons of massacres; we are the survivors of the labor’s concentration camp and the genocide, and we know that the only thing worse than CCP in China is a CCP in America. No one knows better about the danger of communism.” Transcribed from the words of a Chinese student on **Arizona Turning Point Action** (audio and video provided).

Sure, we do not necessarily agree or disagree with such a political statement, but we can observe that the symbol of the **red dragon** of Roman Empire is “footprinted” or “copy-pasted” by the **red dragon** of the Chinese empire. The Book of Revelation warns us that when the beast with the lamblike horns will flip the voice and **speak like a dragon**, that will occur, in “the days of these

kings” according to Daniel chapter 4:22, this will conclude the history of our tired and miserable world.

“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” (Daniel 2:44).

The long-preeminent nation of the world it is in fact giving up the Christian foundation that was, symbolically speaking, “**the hair of Samson.**” The very secret of the nation’s power—the very secret of its beauty—was the best constitution ever created by humans: The United States Constitution. Just get yourself a copy of the entire text and you will be very impressed with the thoughtful foresight the Creator bestowed upon those founding fathers. A famous 20th-century leader, Ronald Reagan, explained it well in a speech given on January 11, 1989:

“ ‘We the people.’ ‘We the people’ tell the government what to do, it doesn’t tell us. ‘We the people’ are the driver, the government is the car. And we decide where it should go, and by what route, and how fast. Almost all the world’s constitutions are documents in which governments tell the people what their privileges are. Our Constitution is a document in which ‘We the people’ tell the government what it is allowed to do. ‘We the people’ are free.”

WAS WHAT WE NOW FACE KNOWN IN ADVANCE?

An old respectful lady many years ago (back in 1885 to be exact) anticipated a change—that the bastion of freedom would soon repudiate the most brilliant enactment ever created by a society with the Bible in hand. The United States of America will repudiate by education, by ignoring, by removing every principle of its Constitution. That time has just about arrived. That is “in the days of these kings.”

Indeed, the Lord Jesus Christ is right at the door to come, and “in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.”

Ellen G. White foresaw:

“When Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution as a **Protestant and Republican** government and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near.”¹ [Emphasis added.]

Indeed, the Lord Jesus Christ is right at the door to come, 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.” Amen! *R*

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¹ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 451.

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MOVING? Please let us know.



A NEW KINGDOM

We read in the Bible about kings and kingdoms from long ago. We hear in today's world about nations and the presidents and kings that lead them. We hear about people having problems and about people fighting against each other. These are true stories about real people. Maybe we wish that there would not be so many bad things going on, but sadly, they are.

But let's stop for a minute and picture another world. It is a true story about a real world that is coming soon—and we can be part of it!

Can you imagine a place with no pain, no crying, no sickness, no sadness? Where people don't kill or hurt each other or say mean, ugly things? Where nobody ever dies?

This is a real place; it really is! It's called the earth made new. Jesus is inviting you to be there!

Let's read about it. The apostle John saw it in a vision given by Christ: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold,

the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful" (Revelation 21:1–5).

This place is very, very beautiful!

"And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. . . . And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need

of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Revelation 21:18, 19, 21–23).

The brightness of God, His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit will make this a cheerful, happy place forever and ever. Do you want to be there? Then get ready—for "it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9). Everything will be more beautiful than anything you have ever seen and the music prettier than anything you have ever heard. The place is called the kingdom of God! Don't miss the chance to be there! —BHM.

