

Daniel Chapter 2B -- John Karmelich

(There are 2 lessons on this chapter. This is #2.)

1. Today, begins the first in many lessons on Biblical prophecy. Because this is the first of many lessons on prophecy, I want to deviate a little and talk about the topic of Bible prophecy.
 - i) Before I begin. If the general-topic of prophecy is very familiar to you, you can skim ahead to the 3rd page, where I actually start on Daniel.
 - ii) The first few pages focuses on prophecy-in-general and why it is in the Bible.
 - a) Much of Daniel is prophetic. Since this is the 1st of many chapters in Daniel dealing with prophecy, consider this section is very relevant to tonight's lesson.
 - b) Prophecy has a number of biblical definitions, but the one I am going to focus on today, is that of predicting the future.
 - i) Roughly 30% of Bible is predictive prophecy. That's a large chunk. It's large enough that it should not be ignored, nor is it large enough that one should become obsessed with it.
 - ii) To me, the two biggest mistakes I have seen from Christian pulpits is to take one or the other extreme on the topic of Bible prophecy. There are many Protestant Christian churches that never or rarely discuss Bible prophesy during the Sunday Sermon. There are other churches, albeit small in number that overly obsess upon it. If 30% of the Bible is prophecy, then in one way, or another, it should cover 30% of our Bible reading time and meditation time.
 - a) I have met devout Christians who sarcastically roll their eyes when somebody mentions Bible prophecy. I know others who "foam at the mouth" over this topic and live to talk about it. The danger is to avoid both extremes, acknowledge its importance, and study it proportionately to the rest of the Bible.
2. I should also comment specifically on the ministries that focus specifically on the interpretation of the Bible prophecy.
 - a) First of all, there is nothing wrong with that type of ministry. Prophecy can be confusing, and a ministry to help explain prophecy is both Biblical and practical.
 - b) The most important thing to remember when you go to a Bible prophesy conference or here a sermon by a prophecy "expert" is:
 - i) Is it Biblical? Is what the person saying in the Bible?
 - a) Is he preaching in/out of context of the text itself?
 - b) You would be surprised how many bad prophecy messages and sermons are out there simply because the person spoke things that simply are not in the Bible, or the person is teaching the verses out of context of what the Bible-as-a whole teaches.
 - c) One of the great mistakes in studying the Bible is to take 1-2 passages and run-with-them. The Bible is meant to be studied as a whole. There are principals in the Bible that are "balanced" with other principals. The danger is to teach one extreme without considering the other extreme.
 - c) The second thing to consider carefully all studies on future predictions. I define that as Bible prophecies that have not yet been fulfilled.
 - i) Don't get me wrong. I believe the Bible is filled with prophecies that *will* happen. I am sure that they will. The great question is always "when".
 - ii) A Bible principal to remember and remember well is:

- a) No one but God the father knows the day and hour of Jesus return. No one! No matter how well you study your Bible, you won't find that in the Bible, nor does any teacher or preacher know.
 - (1) "But no one knows the date and hour when the end will be--not even the angels. No, nor even God's Son. Only the Father knows. (Matthew 24:36 The Living Bible)
- b) There was a book that came out in the mid 1980's called "88 reasons why Jesus will come back in 1988". All the arguments in the book were impressive to read. The problem was that the author forgot the principal of Matthew 24:36. The book didn't sell well in 1989. ☺
- c) The corollary to this argument is that God expects to watch for the signs of the end-times. The gospels give us specific things to look for as signs of things to happen prior to Jesus 2nd coming.
 - (1) "Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. (Mark 13:33 NKJV)
 - (2) So, if we don't know when it is, why are we to watch? Good question! ☺
 - (a) God designed it this way to "keep us on our toes". If we constantly "keep watch" it keeps our focus on God and not on ourselves.
 - (b) God designed the era of Christian-history so that we think that our generation is the "last" generation before his return. This is why the last 2,000 years are refereed to as "the last days" as a Bible idiom.
 - (c) "but in these last days he (God the Father) has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, (Hebrews 1:2a, NIV)

3. Here is another question to ponder. Why is 30% of the Bible prophetic?

- a) The most important answer is validation. It validates the Bible as the Word of God. There are many books that claim to be the Word of God. There are lots of "Holy Books" out there.
 - i) How much "space" is written in the Koran, or in the Book of Mormon, or in the sayings of Confucius that are written to predict specific events of the future? The answer is little to none.
 - ii) God makes it perfectly clear that he and he alone knows all things...
 - a) I (God) make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. (Isaiah 46:10 NIV)
 - iii) He also makes it clear that he reveals to men his plans for our lives.
 - a) Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. (Amos 3:7 NKJV, emphasis added.)

4. Another question is why spend so much space on Bible prophecy?

- a) I mean, can't God just put in a handful of verses to predict the future, thus validating it as the Word of God? Why 30% (give or take)?
 - i) The application to you & I is doubts. All Christians go through periods of "doubts". To paraphrase "Gee, maybe I'm getting carried away with this Christian stuff. How do I know all of this is real?"
 - a) I find those moments come the hardest when things aren't going well, or not going as planned. We go through periods where we don't sense

God's presence in our lives. We go through very difficult periods and ask, "Where is God anyway?"

- b) It is during those periods where God is saying, "Trust me. I'm here. I'm working things out, even though you don't see me."
- c) Bible prophecy is validation that "this is real."
 - (1) We, as 21st Century Christians, have the advantage of looking back at seeing 2,000 to 4,000 years of Bible predictions come true. In a sense, we have less of an excuse for turning our backs on God than the people who lived during Biblical times, because we have the *evidence of time* to justify the Bible as the Word of God.

5. OK, I believe the Bible is the Word of God, and I'm not going through any great doubt-period in my life right now? So why should I study this stuff?

- a) The answer is application. Bible prophecy is not just written for verification of who God is and that his word-is-true. As we will learn in tonight's study of Daniel (I promise, we'll get to that very soon! ☺) there are other applications to our lives based on what is taught in the prophetic Scriptures of the Bible. Paul teaches that all Scripture is inspired by God and beneficial for our learning (paraphrase of 2nd Timothy 3:16). That even includes "the weird parts" in Bible prophecy.
- b) With that said, what do you say we actually get back to Daniel?

6. I purposely separated Daniel Chapter 2 into 2 lessons. Here is a recap of the first half of Chapter two and a summary of the rest of the chapter:

- a) The second half of Daniel focuses on Daniel-himself, interpreting the dream of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar.
 - i) The dream is of a statue made in 4 parts. Each part is a different material. Daniel states that each part represents a different kingdom.
 - a) Daniel further describes a great rock, not made by human hands that destroys the statue without a trace of it left. The rock then "grows" and covers the whole earth.
 - (1) Daniel talks a little about the meaning of the different metals but talks very little about this "great rock".
 - b) The interpretation of this dream, which took place roughly 3,000 years ago, can now be stated as literally coming true and is supported by secular history.
 - ii) The dream itself was a nightmare to King Nebuchadnezzar. It was reoccurring to him, and it affected his sleep. He didn't understand the dream, but he knew it was about him, and how his kingdom and/or his life, would come to an end.
 - a) King Nebuchadnezzar called in all his dream-specialists and "wise-men", figuring somebody who was either smart or had special powers should be able to interpret the dream for him.
 - b) Just to make sure these wise guys weren't making up the interpretation as they were going along, he also asked them to read-his-mind and tell the king exactly what he dreamed and how to interpret it.
 - c) When these men said we can't do that, the king explained his "executive incentive plan" more clearly ☺, by saying you will be killed if you fail, and rewarded greatly if you do.
 - d) Daniel, who is among this group, prays to God for an answer. God reveals that answer to Daniel, and in the second half of the chapter, explains the dream and its meaning to King Nebuchadnezzar.

- b) The last few verses of this chapter are an epilogue that I like to call “King Nebuchadnezzar gets religious”. He honors Daniel and his god for revealing the dream. When we read this, and the next chapter, we don’t see any change in the king’s behavior, so I don’t see this section of the chapter as the king being “saved”, at least not in the Old Testament-Biblical sense of the term.
7. There is an old biblical expression that I want to remember today:
- a) “The main things are the plain things, and
“the plain things are the main things.
 - b) When you read and study the prophecy of Daniel Chapter 2, there are a lot of things *said* and other things that are *implied*.
 - i) I am amazed at some of the lectures/sermons I have heard on Daniel Chapter 2 where the speaker is absolutely positive about some thing is implied.
 - a) The principal of “plain things/main things” really applies to Chapter 2.
 - b) The secret of studying this chapter is to focus on what is plainly said, and to keep the implications in focus for what they are: “implications”.
 - c) It is always fun to think about “this could mean this, or this could mean that”, but when the plain text doesn’t say, and history isn’t sure, we are doing just that, speculating.
 - d) There are some predictions in Daniel we can be very sure about because history records them as true. Others we can be less certain about because it can be interpreted a number of ways.
 - e) My point is that you can become *too* obsessed with trying to solve future mysteries, and miss the important lessons that God wants us to apply to our lives today. That is what is meant by “plain thing/main thing”!
8. Let’s get back to the Bible verses. We last left Daniel about to interpret the dream to King Nebuchadnezzar. Verse 26: The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?"
- a) This is “the big moment” in our story. Daniel was sentenced to death along with all the other leaders of Babylon (a.k.a. “wise-men”) for not being able to interpret the dream. Daniel holds a prayer meeting with his 3 buddies, and God gives Daniel a vision of the dream and the proper interpretation. Note that this is a first in the Bible. No other place is it recorded where one man knows what another man dreamed and properly interpreted it, and supported it through historical facts.
9. Verse 27: Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,²⁸ but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries.
- a) Daniel gives a Sunday-school lesson to King Nebuchadnezzar. If you read verses 27-30 straight through, you can almost picture Daniel boldly standing up to the most powerful man on earth.
 - i) The subtle message of the boldness of Daniel’s presentation is “you may be the most powerful man on earth, but there is something more powerful than you!
 - b) First of all, Daniel explains that God, and God-alone can read minds. God can give us the ability to discern what people are thinking, but that supernatural ability comes from God himself.
 - c) I am fascinated by the half-sentence of verse 28. Daniel says, “there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries”.
 - i) There is a Bible Proverb that comes on this issue: “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings.” (Prov. 25:2 NIV)
 - ii) What does Daniel mean by “reveal mystery’s?” Mystery means “to reveal something unknown up to this point”. Why does God reveal mysteries?

- a) For the same reason he loves us and cares for us! The secret to a happy and fulfilled Christian life is not only to turn your life over to God, but to seek him daily to grow in his love.
 - b) Which leads us back to “mysteries”. There are things in life we wonder about... “Where do we come from? Where do we go from here? Is this all there is to life? To a “king”, it is “I have all this power and money. Why am I still not happy and what happens next?”
 - c) These are mysteries God reveals to us. Today we use the Word of God. God expects us to share that revealed knowledge with others. Christianity was never meant to be an exclusive club. The joy we have from our walk with God should naturally exude from us and be a witness to other people.
- 10. Verse 28, continued: He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these:
 - a) Now comes the actual explanation of the dream itself.
- 11. Verse 29: "As you were lying there, O king, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen.
 - a) What is impressive about Verse 29 is not only did Daniel interpret the dream, he stated what was on the King's mind when the dream occurred.
 - b) Daniel stated that the King was thinking about “Things to come”. I suspect this meant to the king “what happens next?” I have absolute power. Now what do I do?
 - c) Whenever someone reaches the pinnacle of power, or accomplishes some great goal, you will usually hear about a “sense of disappointment” once they have achieved that goal. They will usually say “getting there” derived more satisfaction than the goal itself. That feeling is “Biblical”. There is no satisfaction with life itself. God “designed” us with a desire to worship something greater than himself.
- 12. Verse 30: (Daniel continues) As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than other living men, but so that you, O king, may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.
 - a) To paraphrase: “Oh king, I'm not just revealing you this dream to save my life, but to teach you about the true and living God and so that God's purpose for your life may be revealed through me.
 - b) Here comes the dream itself:
- 13. Verse 31: "You looked, O king, and there before you stood a large statue--an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance.³² The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay.
 - a) Before I comment on the interpretation, notice what Verse 36 says, “we will interpret it to the king.”
 - i) From verses 36 to 45, Daniel himself gives the interpretation.
 - ii) Therefore, my job as commentator has just been made a lot easier! ☺
 - a) I say that because you would be amazed at some of the interpretations that commentators have on this. My response to them: Read the text!
 - iii) I won't say anything more on this verse until we get to Daniel's interpretation.

14. Verse 34: While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them.³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.
 - a) Daniel continues to describe this vision. Remember that this vision was a nightmare to King Nebuchadnezzar. It would be to me too!
 - b) Remember that the king was thinking about “things to come”. That could refer to the end of his reign, or maybe the end of the reign of the Babylonian kingdom. So here, the king sees this big statue made of all sorts of materials. Eventually, a big rock, which is not man made, not only crushes the statue, but the wind drives away any last trace of the statue’s existence.
 - i) I suspect Nebuchadnezzar was thinking, “I don’t know what this means, but I know it has something to do with me”. “Maybe I’m the statue, maybe I’m the rock, but I don’t get it. I need somebody to interpret this dream. Just to make sure they’re interpretation is something they’re making up as they go along, let them tell me *what* I dreamed, and *then* I’ll believe their interpretation.
 - a) Thus, we have our story to the moment.
 - b) Again, it’s a waste of time to comment on the interpretation of each thing when Daniel himself is going to do this.
 - c) With that, Daniel begins in the next verse.
15. Verse 36: "This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king.
 - a) Before I start into the interpretation, I’m fascinated by the word “we” in this verse. When Daniel said “we” will interpret it, I assume he means that he is a spokesman for God himself. That is a pretty bold thing to do, and you have to admire Daniel’s confidence that he got the thing right.
 - i) When any person is teaching the Word of God, he himself is applying the same “we!”. Our job is to let the Holy Spirit work *through us* to help us understand what the Bible means and how we should apply it to our lives.
 - a) Jesus said, “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14:26 NIV, emphasis added)
16. Verse 37, here we go: You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory;³⁸ in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.
 - a) Remember that the statue is divided into 4 parts: The head was of pure gold. The arms and chest were silver, the belly and legs were bronze and the feet and toes were a mixture of bronze and clay. Daniel starts by saying that the head of the statue was pure gold, and that Nebuchadnezzar himself was the head of gold.
 - i) I want to pound-the-point home of proper scripture interpretation. I’m doing this because I see so much bad interpretation out there.
 - ii) The basic rules for scripture interpretation are:
 - a) Interpret the Bible *with* the Bible. Ask if the text consistent with other references in the Bible? In this case, Daniel himself gives the interpretation. In cases where it is not that blunt, look elsewhere in the scripture for support.
 - (1) A good question to ask is, “is my interpretation consistent with all the great doctrines of scripture”?

- (2) Most of the great teachings of the Bible (e.g., Jesus as God, the Messiah, the Trinity, one way to salvation, etc. can not be found in any one chapter. For example, there is no one chapter on the Bible *specifically* teaching Jesus as God, or one chapter *specifically* teaching on baptism. We get our views from “a few verses here” and “a few verses there”. On these major doctrinal issues the Bible is consistent from Genesis to Revelation.
- b) Read the text in *context*. Most Bible errors come from reading text out of context of the surrounding text.
- c) “If the plain text makes sense, seek no other sense”.
 - (1) If the plain text of the Bible can be taken literally, it is usually best to do so. Sometimes there are obvious cases where it is not so, and this is one of them. It is not literal in that the king’s head was not literally made of gold!
 - (2) The dream of Nebuchadnezzar is a vision. Daniel says it is a vision and Nebuchadnezzar says it is a vision. Therefore, I believe it is a vision! ☺ Again, the point is that King Nebuchadnezzar’s head was not *literally* made of gold. The vision of a gold-head is because gold is considered the most precious of all metals by man. Therefore, it is a legitimate word-picture interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar being the greatest of all kings.
- b) Daniel starts by saying you king, are “king of kings”. This means that God has raised up Nebuchadnezzar to be the greatest king of all time. Subject to no one. Subject to no set of laws. Subject to no court system. Subject to no set of advisors. His word is “it”.
 - i) This much power was given to a pagan king! Stop and reflect upon that for a moment. Why would God give that much power to a pagan king?
 - a) Stop & think how many men were killed in battles in order for this king to be raised to power. Stop & think how many of God’s chosen people (Israelites) were killed as Babylon conquered the Promised Land and destroyed it completely. Again, why would God give this much power to a pagan king?
 - b) A good answer comes from Moses. Remember, that many centuries earlier during the time of the Exodus, Egypt was at the height of power. I’m speculating by Daniel calling Nebuchadnezzar “king of kings” that Nebuchadnezzar’s power was *even greater* than that of the Pharaoh during the time of the Exodus. Notice what Moses says to Pharaoh:
 - (1) God, speaking through Moses to Pharaoh: “ For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”
 - (2) That’s it in a nutshell. That is why God raised up the pagan Pharaoh, at the cost of many lives. That is why God raised up Nebuchadnezzar at the cost of many lives. God raised up Nebuchadnezzar to show off his power. He raised up a mighty king to show that God himself is more powerful than this guy, or anyone else in history! God himself is still around, roughly 3,000 years later. Where is the Babylonian empire today?

- (3) When we see people raised up in power, God is behind it. Don't get me wrong; we are supposed to pray for our leaders. We are supposed to prayerfully vote and support for Godly men in government, if it all possible. The point to remember is that God is sovereign, and God is in control!
 - (a) "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. "(Romans 13:1 NIV)
 - c) OK, I've drifted off the topic a bit. ☺ What I want to establish more than anything else is that the Pharaoh's and the Nebuchadnezzar's and yes, the American Presidents and captains of industry of the world come and go. The God of the Bible lives on.
- 17. Meanwhile, back to Daniel's interpretation, Verse 39: After you, another kingdom will rise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth.
 - a) You & I have the advantage of history to help interpret this dream. Because the text does not blatantly say the *name* of the kingdom, we have to look elsewhere for an answer.
 - i) In interpreting future prophecy, the best help comes 1) the Bible itself, and 2) history). When trying to interpret future-prophecy, look elsewhere in the Bible first, and since we have the advantage of history-hindsight, we can look that way as well.
 - ii) In both cases, we have the answer.
 - a) The Babylonian kingdom was conquered by the "Partnership" between two nationalities; The Medes and the Persians". The Meden/Persian Empire was later conquered by the Greeks and Alexander the Great.
 - b) History teaches this. Archelologist found an object (I would best describe it a big cylinder) that recorded the conquering of Babylon by King Darius of the Meden/Persian Empire. That cylinder today is in the British Museum of London.
 - c) Also, we have Daniel Chapter 8. In that chapter, there is a vision of four "beasts". Each beast comes after (i.e. conquers) the previous beast. The first beast represents King Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian Empire. That beast was replaced by a "goat" that represents the Median Persian Empire. (Daniel 8:20 NIV). In Verse 21 of Daniel 8, God reveals to Daniel that the 3rd animal/beast represents the Grecian empire. Remember that God revealed all of this to Daniel way before these historical events actually happened.
 - b) Everybody stop and take a deep breath. ☺ Some people are fascinated by ancient history, others are not. If all these details are interesting to you, study more. The more you know about ancient history, the more it will validate the Bible as the word of God.
 - i) On the other hand, if you simply believe the Bible is the Word of God, and don't need additional proof of all this prophecy to believe Daniel was a spokesman of God, let me give you some *modern* application to all of this:
 - a) Remember this expression: The "main things are the plain things and the main things are the plain things". In this case, it means to think about the big-picture and not worry about the historical ramifications.

- b) Think about the fact that Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that an inferior kingdom will conquer his kingdom. Read Verse 39 again, that is what is says. How can an “inferior” kingdom defeat a “superior kingdom”? Luck? ☺ Better strategy? If the inferior kingdom had better strategy, they wouldn’t be inferior, would they?

- (1) This is about the God of the Universe telling the King “I’m in charge here. I can make an inferior king defeat a superior king. The illogic of the war is not based on luck, or superior tactics of an inferior king, it is based on the fact that God rules in the affairs of mankind for his glory!

- 18. To summarize the text so far, Daniel continue to interpret the statue as being made up of 4 kingdoms. The first (gold) is King Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian kingdom. The 2nd (silver) is the Medo-Persians, and 3rd (bronze) is the Greeks. We interpolate this by historical facts and other information in the Book of Daniel. Now we come to the 4th kingdom that is the bottom part of this statue.
- 19. Verse 40: Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron--for iron breaks and smashes everything--and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others.
 - a) Historically, this must refer to the Roman Empire. It is not stated anywhere directly in Daniel, nor is it hinted who this 4th kingdom was. Remember this was written during the time of the first kingdom.
 - i) Some other commentators will argue that the 4th kingdom refers to one of the Greek generals who came after Alexander the Great. You *can* make this argument, but I think it is a stretch. The text says this kingdom will be greater than all the others and cover the whole world. The Roman Empire was the largest of these 4 empires.
 - ii) Again, the “main things are the plain things”. Some will argue this is not the Roman Empire as Daniel does not specifically say anywhere in Daniel that the 4th kingdom is the Roman Empire. The important thing is that Nebuchadnezzar is being told that 3 kingdoms, all inferior to his, will dominate that part of the world. God is revealing the future to Nebuchadnezzar for *his* sake!
- 20. Daniel continues, Verse 41: Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. ⁴² As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. ⁴³ And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.
 - a) The 4th Empire is described as “weaker” than the others. It uses the metaphor of “iron and clay” mixed together. Clay is a weak substance and does not mix with iron.
 - i) So how is the Roman Empire “weak like clay?” Good question.
 - a) Answer the question “Who conquered the Romans? The answer is nobody. The Empire collapsed unto itself as it became weaker through the centuries. Thus the analogy of “iron mixed with clay”.
 - b) The historical interpretation fits best here. This 4th kingdom is a “divided kingdom”. History taught us that the Roman Empire was eventually split into the western and eastern halves of the empire.
 - i) There are some other interpretations of this verse.
 - a) A minority view is that this is about the Greek Empire as it was divided after the death of Alexander the Great. The Greek empire was divided into 4 kingdoms by four of his generals.

- (1) I disagree with this view because Daniel describes this 4th kingdom as one that “breaks and crushes all others.
- c) There is another view that I’ll discuss after the next verse.
21. Daniel continues, Verse 44: “In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.”⁴⁵ This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands--a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.
- a) Daniel says here in the times of “those kings”, God will set up another kingdom that will 1) never be destroyed, 2) never be given to others and 3) will bring the other kingdoms to an end, but the “rock” itself will endure forever.
- b) This is a vision of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.
- i) In the Old Testament, the “rock” is a name associated with God and/or the Messiah, depending upon your Jewish or Christian viewpoint. It is interesting to do a word-study of “rock” in the Old Testament and see the tie to Jesus.
- a) Paul himself comments on this: “For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.” (1 Cor. 10:4b NKJV)
- c) Now here comes the great debate issue: Is this vision referring to just Jesus’ first coming, or is it also referring to Jesus 2nd coming?
- i) Jesus came during the peak-years of the Roman Empire. Actually, the Roman Empire was at its height during the time of the early apostles. I believe God designed it that way to spread the Gospel faster and easier.
- ii) This is why I also believe the 4th beast “is” the Roman Empire.
- iii) The interesting thing to notice was that The Roman Empire was **not** divided during the time of Jesus’ first coming.
- a) Some argue that the Roman Empire was “weaker” during the time of Jesus as the Emperor was “subject” to existing Roman law and the rulings of the Roman Senate.
- (1) Personally, I don’t see it that way, but some do.
- d) Now we come to the issue of Jesus second coming. Some see this verse as partially being fulfilled during Jesus second coming on earth.
- i) Most conservative Christians take the view of a literal 1,000-year reign of Jesus from earth. This is described in Revelation, Chapter 20. Even Orthodox Jews believe the Messiah will set up a 1,000 year reign on earth from Jerusalem.
- ii) When I think of a kingdom, I *literally* think of a guy, sitting on a throne, ruling over people. Therefore, when Daniel says in Verse 44 “(God) will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed”, this refers to Jesus 2nd coming and the millennial reign.
- a) The interesting thing is that in order for this verse to become literally fulfilled, we need the Roman Empire “to come back in a weaker form, and thus “iron mixed with clay”. Thus, those who believe Jesus will set up his millennial reign based on Daniel’s view here, see a “Revised Roman Empire” as it is commonly called among prophecy buffs.
- b) Could that mean the “European Union” as it is currently being formed, “be” the Revised Roman Empire? It “fits the model” as it is a collection of the European States, but much weaker than the Roman Empire.
- (1) The true answer is we don’t know until Jesus returns. It sure “fits the model”, but that’s it.
- iii) Now let me give you the “other view”. Other commentators see this as only being fulfilled by Jesus first coming.

- a) Jesus himself many times referred to the collection of Christians as “the kingdom of God”. Jesus himself claimed to be the Messiah, which means “King”.
 - b) So has Jesus kingdom “destroyed all the others” without a trace and has gone forever?
 - (1) Well, is the Greek Empire still around today? How about the Roman Empire? Yet, 2,000 years after Jesus walked on this earth, his kingdom still exists.
 - iv) Remember that prophecy (i.e. Bible predictions) often have double-fulfillment.
 - a) My personal view is that this prophecy was purposely designed to fulfill both Jesus first and second comings, as described over the past few pages. Other good-Bible-believing Christians have different views, but hey, they-have a right to be wrong! ☺
 - b) Back to the big picture: What is important to see is that “kingdoms come and go, but Jesus the Christ will reign forever!
- 22. Daniel gives the closing of his interpretation in Verse 45: "The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy."
 - a) To use a modern cliché here, “Oh King Nebuchadnezzar, you can bank on it!”
 - i) God accomplishes his plan. He may not accomplish it the way *we think* he is going to, but he does. Bible prophecy has a 100% track record of accuracy to date. There are still many prophecies yet-to-be fulfilled. Those future prophecies are sometimes vague, but as time progresses, we can have the joy of seeing those fulfilled as well.
- 23. Verse 46: Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. ⁴⁷ The king said to Daniel, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."
 - a) “In Verse 46, King Nebuchadnezzar gets religious”. Allister Begg.
 - b) We’ll see in the next chapter that the King does not change his lifestyle based on Daniel’s ability to interpret the dream. Therefore, I don’t believe Nebuchadnezzar was “saved” at this point in his life.
 - c) I take the view that salvation is a free gift of God, but the *evidence* of your salvation is based on what you *do* with that information. Demons believe in Jesus. What is the difference between a Christian and demons? Christians are *obedient* to what God calls us to do!
- 24. Verse 48: Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men. ⁴⁹ Moreover, at Daniel's request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court.
 - a) I have to admit I wonder why Daniel accepted these gifts. Reading all of Daniel, you don’t see that as being part of his character. The Bible doesn’t comment any further on this, so anything I say would just be speculation.
 - b) I do see Daniel as taking the role of being in charge of the wise men. Daniel was called to be a witness to the current king-of-the-earth. This is a calling of many God fearing people through out history to pray for God and be a good example to those God places in charge.
 - c) I also want you to notice Daniel doesn’t forget his 3 prayer partners. At Daniel’s request, the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to other high positions. This is a good example of not forgetting your friends. Remember that all three of them prayed for the vision.

25. OK, running long, and we've covered two lessons on this chapter. I do admit I spent a lot of time talking about prophecy-in-general, as this is the first of many lessons in Daniel that covers the topic. Therefore, this lesson is designed to be a "primer" in good Biblical interpretation of prophecy.
26. Let's pray: Father, how often we forget that you are in charge of all things. You raise up people and nations and you bring them down. It is Christ and Christ alone that will last forever. Help us, moment by moment, to put our trust only in you and not our own efforts. Like Daniel, help us to be a great example to a dying world around us, and have the boldness to stand up for the God-of-the Universe. For we ask this in Jesus name, Amen.