

## THE NEVER-ENDING KINGDOM

Presented by

**Blake Brown**

As we read through the pages of the Old Testament, we are introduced to many different nations of people. For example, we learn of the Israelites, the Amorites, the Amalekites, the Hittites, the Assyrians, the Philistines, the Babylonians, the Canaanites, and many others. These nations usually were governed by powerful kings who made and enforced the laws of the land, and who sometimes went to war against other nations in order to protect their citizens or to enlarge their kingdoms. Some of those kingdoms—like the Assyrian Empire, the Babylonian Empire and the Medo-Persian Empire—were incredibly large and powerful.

Today, of course, all of the kings who once led those powerful nations are dead. But just as important is the fact that none of the kingdoms mentioned by name in the Old Testament exists any longer. Each of them has faded into history, and is little more than a dim memory of the ancient past.

However, during the reign of one powerful king—King Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonians—God promised through one of His prophets that one day He would send a kingdom that would never end. Here is what happened.

One night as King Nebuchadnezzar was sleeping, he had a strange dream about a giant image made in the likeness of a man. Daniel 2:31-35 tells us that the head of the image was made of gold. The chest and arms were made of silver. The stomach and thighs were made of bronze. The legs were made of iron. And the feet were made of a combination of iron and clay. Suddenly, a large stone appeared out of nowhere, struck the image in its feet, and broke them into pieces. This caused the iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold to all be crushed and turned into dust, which the wind carried away so that they were never seen again. But the stone that had struck the image became a huge mountain that ultimately grew to fill the whole Earth.

No one in the king's palace could tell him what his unusual dream meant. Eventually, however, an Israelite prophet by the name of Daniel was brought to the king, and he, through God's power, was able to tell the king the meaning of the dream. In Daniel 2:36-44 we find the interpretation of the dream. Daniel explained that the four sections of the image represented four earthly kingdoms. The head of gold represented the powerful Babylonian kingdom, of which Nebuchadnezzar was the king. The chest of silver represented a future Medo-Persian kingdom. The thighs of bronze represented a future Greek Empire. The legs and feet of iron and clay represented the fourth and final kingdom, the future Roman Empire.

But that was not all Daniel had to say. Daniel 2:44 explains that Daniel also told King Nebuchadnezzar that in the days of the Roman emperors, "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom **which shall never be destroyed**; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but shall break in pieces and consume all

these kingdoms, **and it shall stand forever.**” We know today, of course, that this prophecy referred to the fact that God’s kingdom—the church—would be established while the Roman Empire was still in power.

Toward the beginning of Christ’s ministry on Earth He said, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). In the middle of the Lord’s ministry He said to some of the people who were in His presence, “Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power” (Mark 9:1). Jesus later told His apostles, “Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). Acts 2:1-4 records how, on the Day of Pentecost following Christ’s resurrection from the dead, God sent the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. That same chapter also records the beginning of the Lord’s church—what we know as “the kingdom of God” (Acts 28:23).

Long ago Daniel prophesied on God’s behalf that a kingdom would come that would be greater than all other kingdoms of the Earth because it would not be one that would have to defend itself with walls and weapons. Instead, it would be a **spiritual** kingdom. Did Daniel’s prophecy about such a kingdom come true? **Indeed it did!** While great kingdoms of the past—like the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Greek Empire, and the Roman Empire—have all been destroyed, the spiritual empire known as “the kingdom of God” is still active and thriving, thousands of years after Daniel made his prediction. Why is that the case? It is because, as Daniel predicted, the church is a kingdom “that shall never be destroyed” and that “shall stand forever.”

In fact, the apostle Paul spoke about what will happen at the end of time when this Earth and everything on it is destroyed. In 1 Corinthians 15:24 he wrote, “Then comes the end, when Christ will deliver the kingdom to God the Father, and when He will put an end to all rule and all authority and power” (1 Corinthians 15:24). This is what Daniel meant when he spoke of a kingdom that “shall never be destroyed.” Earthly kingdoms come and go. But Christ’s kingdom, the church, has been in existence since the days of the Roman Empire, and will go on throughout all of eternity.

Tyler and I have been studying about this eternal kingdom in our Sunday morning Bible classes on the gospel accounts and how they tie into the events recorded in the book of Acts. It is amazing to see how the Bible fits together, and how God has accomplished everything He said He would. As Daniel told King Nebuchadnezzar, “the Most High rules in the kingdoms of men.” **He certainly does!** How thrilling it is to know that **God** is our **King**, and that if we obey His Word, the Bible, we can be a citizen of His kingdom, which “shall never be destroyed,” but “shall last forever.”