

Smiting of the Image



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(Daniel 2:31)

THE SMITING OF THE IMAGE

The smiting of the image is recorded in the second chapter of the Book of Daniel.

“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.” (Dan. 2:31)

King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream by night, and in the dream, he beheld a great and impressive image (Dan. 2:1). As will be seen, his dream was a vision of earth’s governments from man’s standpoint. The brightness of the image was “excellent,” and its form was “terrible” (awesome). In other words, the image was presented in a favorable sense, and its size, brilliance, and form created a cumulative effect of *awesomeness*. In the dream, the king began to notice the details of the image, starting with the head.

“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.” (Dan. 2:32,33)

In recalling the dream to the king’s mind, Daniel revealed the meaning of the terms. He said the four parts of the image represented four universal governments that would arise, the

first, the head of gold, being the Babylonian Empire under King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:37,38). After this would arise another kingdom, inferior to the gold kingdom, pictured by the arms and breast of silver (Dan. 2:39). History proves this prophecy was factual, for the succeeding empire was Media-Persia. The two arms of silver appropriately prefigured the two divisions: Media and Persia. Next came the belly and thighs of brass, representing the Grecian Empire. The image eventuated in two legs of iron and two feet of part iron and part clay. The two iron legs were related to the development of the Roman Empire, which, in time, was divided into an eastern and a western portion when the capital was moved from Rome to Constantinople. In addition, the iron aptly represented Rome because as iron is inflexible, so the Roman Empire was noted for its law and order and its rigid rule.

The two legs terminated in a pair of feet that were a mixture of iron and clay, picturing the so-called Holy Roman Empire. Iron portrayed the civil aspect and clay prefigured the ecclesiastical element of the government of the Middle Ages. Made of mud and water hardened into a substance that resembles stone, clay is really *imitation* stone. Hence the clay pictured the kingdom that nominally represents Christ and his government and Kingdom; that is, the mixture of iron and clay in the feet represented the development of Christendom or the Holy Roman Empire.

“Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were [composed] 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.” (Dan. 2:34,35)

It is not unreasonable to assume that the image, as well as the stone that smote the image, had a common origin in the “mountain,” which prefigured the earth (Dan. 2:45). The chief distinction in this vision between the component parts of the image and the stone consists in the fact that the gold, the silver, the brass, the iron, and the clay were elements extracted from the earth by *human* hands, figuratively speaking. Various human agencies did the smelting, the refining, the molding, and the shaping of the metals into the body of this earthly image. Then man exhibited the result as an awesome and glorious spectacle to behold. In contrast, the stone, which also had its origin in the mountain, or earth, was set forth as it is found in nature and worked upon by the elements and the *God* of nature. Created not by human ingenuity, the stone was without a proud and boastful display.

Not only will the small, insignificant, disesteemed stone class smite and replace the giant image of the earthly empires in the near future, but also the stone will grow into such a gigantic proportion that it will completely overwhelm and dwarf the excellency of the former image. The memory of the prior image of greatness will pale into insignificance when it is contrasted with the scope, the authority, and the immensity of the Kingdom of Messiah, which is to bring into complete subjection every living creature so that every knee will bow and every tongue “confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10,11). To this general picture is added the realization that all who are in their graves must come forth to hear the voice of the Son of the living God and make a similar confession if they are to secure life and everlasting happiness (John 5:28,29). Such a glorious empire, such an extensive rule prefigured by the stone, could not even be envisioned by man, blinded as he has been by Satan, the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4). The majesty of the true Kingdom, promised as a certainty by the holy Scriptures, lies far beyond the realm of human conjecture.

The fact that the stone was “cut out without hands” indicates it is *God’s* workmanship. When the stone smote the great image on its iron and clay feet, the entire image was “broken to pieces together.” The significance of the stone’s smiting the image on the *feet*, the *extremity* of the body, is that the event will occur *at*

the end of the Christian or Gospel Age. What is the smiting of the image? It is the *Armageddon crash* (Rev. 16:16).

It would be very discouraging to view history and see the kingdoms deteriorating if the Scriptures did not show that God's Kingdom will soon be established on earth. Indeed the present governments are to be replaced not by other kingdoms and ideologies of *man* but by *God's Kingdom*. Jesus set forth this hope in his prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). God's Kingdom will displace previous empires and fill the whole earth. We look forward *with hope* in regard to the interpretation of this vision—and its fulfillment.

"This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

"Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.

"And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. [Daniel's summation is] Thou [O King Nebuchadnezzar] art this head of gold [of the image].

"And after thee shall arise another kingdom [Media-Persia] inferior to thee, and another third kingdom [Greece] of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

**“And the fourth kingdom [Rome] shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.”
(Dan. 2:36-40)**

The iron breaking in pieces and subduing all things represents the military prowess and strength of the Roman Empire, which subjugated (“devoured”) the entire civilized earth of its day (Dan. 7:7).

“And whereas thou sawest the feet and [the ten] 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.” (Dan. 2:41,42)

As already mentioned, the iron represented the civil aspect of the Holy Roman Empire, and the clay represented the ecclesiastical aspect. The ten toes of the two feet pictured the ten kingdoms of Europe. This vision of the image was presented as though history had already been fulfilled; that is, God foresaw the development of the earthly empires as one whole unit or image with the ten toes representing the end of the Gospel Age. From a prophetic standpoint, the development of the European Union indicates that we are close to the end of the age. Prophecy shows

that for one “hour” in the near future, there will be a revival of the persecuting power Papacy exercised in the Dark Ages, and the ten toes or kingdoms will actually be numerically the same (Rev. 17:12).

“And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.” (Dan. 2:43)

This verse explains the significance of the clay, which, as *imitation* stone, represents the *imitation* Kingdom of God. As seen in the vision, iron was mixed with clay, so they “mingle[d] themselves with the seed of men”; that is, professed Christians began to dabble in politics and associate with earthly politicians, who were not particularly religiously minded. Thus during the Middle Ages, the ecclesiastical element infiltrated into the civil aspect, and the result ultimately became known as the *Holy Roman Empire*. The statement “they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay” shows the arrangement will not be successful.

“And in the days of these kings [that is, in the days of the ten toes at the end of the age] 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.” (Dan. 2:44)

The trouble in the earth today and the deterioration of the various nations morally, spiritually, politically, and in every possible way spell gloom and doom, but when we see that present kingdoms must be displaced before the Kingdom of Messiah is established, we can take heart based on faith in God and in His promises. Otherwise, the picture before us would be very distressing indeed.

“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.” (Dan. 2:45)

The stone being “cut out of the mountain without hands” represents the development of the true “stone” class. Jesus, the Rock to whom we fly, is pictured in the Bible as a stone. For example, as the chief cornerstone, he was a stumbling stone to the religious element at the First Advent (1 Pet. 2:7,8). And Jesus’ followers are likened to living stones built up into a holy temple (1 Pet. 2:5). The stone cut out of the mountain represents the embryo government of God, the class whom God calls out of the world to ultimately be kings and priests if they are faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). The stone class are extracted without human hands (*spiritually* developed) from the mountain down here in

earth's quarry. Just as the God of nature developed literal stones, so His Holy Spirit perfects this class. When complete, when entirely cut out, the stone will break in pieces the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold—the entire image.

Daniel then assured King Nebuchadnezzar that God had made known what would happen subsequently and that the dream was certain and the interpretation sure. When the stone class, who are still being cut out and developed, are changed to Kingdom glory, they will be instrumental in replacing the shattered kingdoms of earth. The king appreciated Daniel's miraculous recall and interpretation and realized the vision was a prophecy from the invisible God.

“Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him.

“The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.” (Dan. 2:46,47)

Let us now consider the expression “in the days of these kings” (Dan. 2:44). It is a mistake to assume that these words, of sheer necessity, refer solely to the royal hereditary ruling monarchs of Europe. This phrase depicts the division of Europe

into ten parts (styled “ten toes” and “ten horns”), which existed at times during the Gospel Age and will again exist at its close (Rev. 17:3,12). The expression is not limited to the pre-1914 era but pertains to the divided remnants or parts of the Roman Empire as they persist to the present hour. Furthermore, the close affiliation between Church and State, prefigured by the miry clay and iron toes, still exists as a reality in the various nations of Europe—and in all Christendom—*whether or not it is constitutionally formalized*. The Church-State affiliation belies the assertion made by some that the image has already been smitten.

We also observe here that God does not countenance the Church-State relationship in the present age. The Christian is to keep separate from the world, separate from the ecumenical spirit of cooperation and association with civil governments, and is to look to Christ for leadership (James 4:4). The Christian should be controlled by Jesus and leave politics to others.

The term “king” is frequently used in Scripture to denote not a literal monarch but a kingdom, a power, a government. For example, the four universal empires that are shown here in Daniel chapter 2 are called four “kings” in Daniel 7:17. The expressions “king of the north” and “king of the south” are used repeatedly in Daniel chapter 11 to refer to the powers of Rome and Egypt, covering great periods of time. Therefore, the expression “in the

days of these kings” represents the days at the end of the Gospel Age, in which Europe will again be divided into ten component parts or powers.

The Book of Isaiah speaks of the breaking of a potter’s vessel, an illustration that is comparable to the smiting of the image. How is a potter’s vessel broken? Hear the words of the Prophet Isaiah:

“And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters’ vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit.” (Isa. 30:14)

Notice that the vessel was smashed beyond repair. It was broken in pieces so small “that there shall not be found ... a sherd [a piece] to take fire from the hearth.” Another reference to this same smiting work is found in the Second Psalm: “Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel” (Psa. 2:9). Still another text reads, “And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers” (Rev. 2:27). Thus other Scriptures parallel the smiting of the image in the second chapter of Daniel. Various threads of prophecy that converge or focalize at this end of the Gospel Age use comparable language, all leading toward the same climax.

The illustration of the potter's vessel depicts two aspects of the trouble at the end of the age. The destruction of the earthly governments, to be replaced by Messiah's government, will not be a gradual matter. If a dried potter's vessel were smitten, it would shatter *suddenly* and *instantly*, and this is the Scriptural explanation. The Prophet Isaiah wrote: "Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh *suddenly at an instant* ... as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces" (Isa. 30:13,14). Thus both the *suddenness of the final trouble* at the end of the age and the *completeness of the destruction* are shown. This future trouble will be very intense. Although speaking of the conditions back in his day, the Prophet Jeremiah said:

"Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee,

"And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury."

(Jer. 19:10,11)

The illustration is clear. The breaking of the image as a dried potter's vessel emphasizes the suddenness and the completeness of the destruction and not gradual stages. God will replace the governments of earth with a pure government and His own

elected officers with the Lord Jesus Christ as the head. That is the Kingdom for which Christians have prayed for almost two thousand years.

Christians might ask, "Since these events are imminent, what should be our message to others?" The answer follows:

"Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger." (Zeph. 2:3)

Although this promise is not a guarantee that every righteously disposed individual will live through Armageddon, the possibility of survival will be greatly enhanced by pursuing such a course of conduct. "It *may be* ye shall be hid." The logic is irrefutable. Why should those who do not wish to fully surrender their lives to God expect Him to watch over them as individuals in the present life? The Master is looking for a willing Bride in his Church; he is not drafting and forcing people to be Christians. "Come unto me [of your own volition]" is his invitation.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden [in mind], and I will give you rest ... [even] unto your souls." (Matt. 11:28,29)

The Scriptures provide much information about the trouble that is to come at the end of the age.

**“And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come [following the shaking].”
(Hag. 2:7)**

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, ... and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

“And [after the trouble] many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake [in the general resurrection].” (Dan. 12:1,2)

After the trouble, the resurrection of the dead here on earth will take place. Way back in the Book of Genesis, God made a promise to Abraham that through Jesus and the glorified Church will come the restitution and resurrection of all the families of the earth (Gal. 3:29). The promise was as follows:

“And in thy [Abraham’s] seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” (Gen. 22:18)

Regardless of affiliation, Christians living today need to be aware of the message that is now due pertaining to the end of the age. It is essential to know about God’s plan and purposes and about the times and the seasons of the Bible. God has a special message for the true followers of Christ during this harvest season of the Christian Church, and He also has a message for the

world about the soon-to-come great Time of Trouble. Bible truth is uninhibited by medieval traditions and is without regard for denominational views. As the Apostle James said, “The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable” (James 3:17).

Blessed Bible, precious Word!
Boon most sacred from the Lord;
Glory to His name be given
For this choicest gift from heaven.

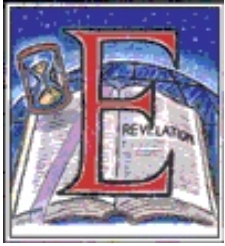
‘Tis a ray of purest light,
Beaming through the depths of night;
Brighter than ten thousand gems
Of the costliest diadems.

‘Tis a fountain, pouring forth
Streams of life to gladden earth;
Whence eternal blessings flow,
Antidote for human woe.

‘Tis a mine, aye, deeper too,
Than can mortal ever go;
Search we may for many years,
Still some new, rich gem appears.

Frank Shallieu

The Keys of Revelation



**ND TIME
PROPHECIES
REVEALED**

The curious symbols and visions of the Book of Revelation mystify scholar and layman alike. *The Keys of Revelation* unlocks the secret code

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