**1.14 Daniel’s Prophecy of Things to Come…**

Remember that Daniel had a lot of credibility in the Israelite community. He was seen as a trustworthy and noble Jew. He had worked for the Babylonian king and had not compromised his ethics and faith. He had been tested and threatened with death and survived. He was also gifted by God with the skill of interpreting dreams. In this excerpt, he interprets the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar. Remember that this is the king who brutalized Daniel’s people – the Israelites. The king is now older, and has had a series of terrible dreams. Nobody seems to be able to explain these dreams to him – enter Daniel.

**Daniel 2: 24-49**

Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, “*Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him*.” Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, “*I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means*.” The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), “*Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it*?”

Daniel replied, “*No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these*:

“*As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen. As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.*

 “*Your Majesty looked, and there before you stood a large statue—an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance.* *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.**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.**Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces 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.*

“*This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king.**Your Majesty, you are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory;**in your hands he has placed all mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds in the sky. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.*

“*After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth.**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.**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. As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle.**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.*

“*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.**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.*

“*The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy*.”

Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. 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*.”

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. 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.

**Notes on Daniel’s prophecy:**

\*gold represents Babylon

\*silver chest and arms represents Persia

\*bronze belly and thighs represent Greece

\*iron legs and feet represent Rome

\*the final kingdom has been a source of debate for scholars. Most believe that it represents the Eternal Kingdom of God – built on the ruins of all earthly empires of mankind. Its authority will extend “over all of the earth” (v. 35) and ultimately, over a new heaven and a new earth (as promised in the final book of the bible, Revelation)

As Daniel’s prophecy states, many people strongly believe that the time was right for the long-awaited Messiah to come. Practically speaking, the Roman Empire had within in it, the perfect conditions for the spread of Christianity – a good system of roads, bridges, and a common language and laws.