

COUNTERFEIT CONTROLLERS

In Daniel two, the prophet lays out a vision that is not only amazing in its historical prophetic accuracy as seen from our present day but enlightening in regards to contemporary events. Many Bible scholars who study prophecy (which, by the way is about 1/3 of the Bible) point to it as the foundation lesson.

Now, Daniel was taken from Judah as a boy to Babylon which overthrew the Assyrian capital of Ninevah in 612 BC, thus becoming the newly dominant 'world' power. It then moved on and conquered Egypt's armies in 605 BC. That was the same year it took Jerusalem which had not left the Jews' control since being taken by David about 400 years earlier. (Note: That will be on the test! ☺)

Daniel, as an advisor to the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, interpreted a dream that provides us a stunningly accurate picture of the sequence of rising and falling empires which all had/have one thing in common – the control of Jerusalem and the Jewish people. You see, the Lord declared numerous times in the scriptures that He chose Jerusalem and the Jews as His portion in the world. But when His people rejected His rule over

them, He committed them unto the governments of man as a school of 'hard knocks' so to speak. This will end when He takes back rulership over them and His chosen city, Jerusalem. Let's look at this dream.

Without delving into the circumstances surrounding the dream and its interpretation, we'll focus on the prophetic message it contains.

Nebuchadnezzar was concerned about what the future held and was troubled by a recurring dream. In Daniel 2:31-45, the prophet miraculously provides the king both the dream and its meaning.

Here's what he saw – a giant image like a man. The image had a head of gold, shoulders and arms of silver, an abdomen of bronze, legs of iron and then feet and toes made of a mixture of iron and clay. As he beheld the image, a rock "cut out without hands" struck the image on its feet and broke them into pieces, then like World Trade Center towers, the image was crushed together and became like chaff blown away in the wind. Meanwhile, the stone which struck it became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Daniel explained that each material of the image represented another kingdom and as we examine the symbology, it is truly remarkable – so much so that skeptics have for centuries, tried

to claim that Daniel was written post-facto. Christ, however, authenticated Daniel Himself in Matt 24:15 and Mark 13:14 and there are many other proofs of authenticity as well (if you need more than Christ's!).

The head of gold represented Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire. After this came the Medo-Persian, the Grecian and then the Roman empires.

Babylon is called the "Golden City" in Isaiah 14:4. The Greek historian, Herodotus, visited Babylon ninety years after Nebuchadnezzar. He said that he was shocked at the amount of gold in Babylon. He added that all the walls and buildings in the city were overlaid with gold. Interestingly, the only nation Babylon actually removed from their homeland was the Jews.

Babylon was conquered in 539 BC by the Medo-Persian Empire. There is a sense in which the image shows the deterioration of value in the kingdoms – gold, silver, bronze, iron, ceramic clay. Also, the materials are getting harder as the interpretation progresses.

The next empire of the image is represented by the two arms but united by the chest. Just as the next historical empire to rule over Jerusalem and the Jews had two parts the Medes and the Persians but which were united as one. (The Kurds, by the way

are the modern day descendants to the Medes and Iran is modern day Persia.)

Now this empire had a ruler that was less powerful than the kings of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar was an absolute monarch – total authority. The Medo-Persian rulers though were somewhat restricted by their own laws. This is evident in both historical texts and in Daniel chapter six (the famous lions' den story).

The next empire represented by the bronze belly and thighs was the Greeks who most people remember from their history classes was led to prominence by Alexander the Great. Now the Greeks used a lot of bronze. In their weapons of war, they turned the world upside down with their use of bronze. Also, the belly for the Greeks was the seat of the soul and the Greeks were known for their philosophies and attempts to explain the spiritual.

The two thighs are also significant. Alexander left his empire to four generals, but only two of them became powerful. The empire of Syria, run by the Seleucid dynasty, and the empire of Egypt, run by the Ptolemies. The Greeks were run by an oligarchy which was less powerful than the Persian constitutional monarchy.

The next empire represented by the iron legs was Rome. The two legs are clearly indicative of

Rome and the iron pictures the crushing and shattering that Rome brought to every nation they conquered. There was no empire in world history that so crushed all of its enemies as Rome did. The two legs represent, according to history, the East and West divisions of Rome – the East came to be known as the Byzantine Empire and was based out of the city we now call Istanbul, Turkey. The West remained centered in the city of Rome. It was Rome which destroyed the city of Jerusalem and along with crucifying many tens of thousands of Jews, scattered these people out of their homeland, not to return for about 1900 years. Also, the Roman government was inclusive of a Senate and thus was weaker at the top than the previous three empires.

Finally, however, we come to the feet and toes. Now, since the holy city was destroyed in 70 AD by Titus and his Roman legions, the prophetic 'clock' stopped for the Jews together with Jerusalem were not ruled by any one power. The people were scattered over the whole world and the city passed from power to power to power including Arabs, Crusaders, Turks and the British.

But then, in May of 1948, a UN resolution formalized the creation of a reborn Israel and in 1967, during the famous Six Day War, the Jews regained control over

their ancient capital, Jerusalem. This is significant because the scriptures themselves identify the Jewish people as "the clay". For example:

Isaiah 64:8 says, "But now, O Lord, You are our Father; we are the clay and You our potter; and all we are the work of Your hand."

Jeremiah 18:4-6 says, "And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the Lord. "Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!"

But we must remember that in the feet and toes of the image, the clay is mixed with the iron. And although the clay is mingled with the iron, verse 43 of Daniel 2 points out that it will not cling or adhere together. From, this scholars point to the re-emergence of the old Roman empire in some form as a cooperative but not absolute sovereign together with the reborn Jewish state over Jerusalem.

Historically, many commentators have speculated that the ten toes point to the European Union and certainly, the EU could be the iron in the feet and toes but that does not account for the clay. Some have

said, based on verses 41 and 42, that this mingling of the iron and clay simply indicates a mix of strong and weak governments in coalition. Personally, I think this is only part of the story. Every other part of the image's materials is clearly linked to a governing body, yet for some reason, many ignore the clay when the scripture has been quite explicit in interpreting itself. The Jews are the clay.

Considering the present day and looking ahead, based upon these and other passages, I think we're soon going to witness (either from here or from heaven!) an EU or perhaps a Papal authority being exerted cooperatively with the Jews over Jerusalem. Interestingly enough, there have already been many semi-secret discussions along this line at high levels of the respective governments.

Another reason not to omit the imagery of the clay in the prophecy is found in verse 45 where it is mentioned specifically between the bronze and silver rather than with the iron. Now, what happened historically between the dominance of the silver (the Medo-Persians) and the dominance of the bronze (the Greeks)?

Well, it's mentioned in both the Bible and in just about any good encyclopedia – in the final days of Daniel, during the rule of the Medo-Persians (in type, similar

to the last days of the church age – i.e. nowadays) the Jews were given authority by the 'world government' of Cyrus, the Medo-Persian king (in type, similar to the action of the UN) to return to Israel and specifically to rebuild Jerusalem. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah also deal with this. Thus, the positioning of the clay, there between the bronze and silver in verse 45, should clue us in to its significance.

Regardless, with the rebirth of the Jewish nation and the re-emergence of the Roman Empire in the form of the EU, we are clearly living in the days of the image's feet. This is the time in which the Rock is going to come from heaven and strike, bringing the governments of man to an end. This Rock, of course, is Jesus Christ. He is returning soon. And His kingdom will never end.

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