

THE RISE & FALL OF EARTHLY KINGDOMS

Daniel Chapter Two, Part One

What was God's purpose in revealing through prophecy of the rise and fall of earthly kingdoms?

Within the books of Daniel and Revelation we find the core issues of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Satan's master plan is to set up his kingdom here on the earth as an everlasting kingdom, believing his to be superior to God's. We read of his desire to exalt himself above the throne of God, sitting in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God, and receiving all worship. In Daniel and Revelation, we see the prophetic, panoramic view of the epic battle between two kingdoms, Jerusalem and Babylon—the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. These books lay out for us the principles of both kingdoms. They reveal the temporary ascendancy Satan has gained through his succession of earthly kingdoms, which have adopted his principles of self-exalting, self-serving force. They also reveal the Victor, whose principles of self-lowering, self-sacrificing love will prevail, as demonstrated at the cross and again ultimately through His bride, the church.

Where do we read of Satan's desire to sit on the throne of God?

Isaiah 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13) For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4) Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Ezekiel 28:1 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, 2) Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:

Isaiah 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13) For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

What prompted this rebellion?

This was the first time in all the universe that the spirit of pride and selfishness manifested itself. Satan was found guilty of worshipping the creature more than the Creator who is blessed forever. See Romans 1:25.

Ezekiel 28:11 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 12) Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. 13) Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl,

the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. 14) Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. 15) Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. . . . 17) Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness:

Where did this rebellion first take place?

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8) And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9) And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Where are we currently in this prophetic scope of time?

We are at the last end of this controversy between Christ and Satan that began in heaven.

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

What is the promised result of this rebellion?

Isaiah 14:15) Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. 16) They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

Ezekiel 28:16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17) Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. 18) Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. 19) All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

Prophetic history, (history foretold), reveals the play-counter-play (battle plans) between Christ and Satan. The battle is now on earth and is between Christ's seed, the righteous, and Satan's seed, the wicked. The rebellion was reproduced at the creation of this world. But God provided a plan that we might not suffer the results of this rebellion.

Christ promises Adam and Eve that He would put enmity between the woman, representing the church, and the serpent, representing Satan.

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.

Who is the woman's seed?

It is through the witness of the love of God through His Son, Jesus Christ, that we come to hate sin and all its results.

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

Our first parents had found themselves in a helpless condition,

“because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Romans 8:7, 8.

But God sent His Son,

“that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:4.

We must recognize that the enmity that God promised to put between us and Satan, is not the same enmity that we have against God and His law. For,

Isaiah 55:8, For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9) For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

We find the principle that nothing can be done against the truth but for the truth as we watch the “play-counter-play” between God and Satan.

2 Corinthians 13:8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

The historical story in Daniel 2 shows us the wise and merciful way that God chooses to save the heathen as well as those who claim to be called by His name. God is no respecter of persons and He would that all would come unto Him and be saved.

A major theme in this chapter as well as in the whole book, is the personal involvement of God in the affairs of nations, of kings and individuals, and that He cares for and works for their salvation with all longsuffering and diligence.

As we study this chapter we will also discover that the principles and ways of Satan are revealed for what they are—a feeble attempt, scarcely managing his assumed kingdom, let alone the universe which he aspires to rule. The prophecy begins with the kingdom of Babylon ruling but ends with the kingdom of God ruling. This is a common theme throughout the book of Daniel.

Verse 1 King Nebuchadnezzar receives a dream

Nebuchadnezzar has a dream and is troubled. He had been contemplating the future of his kingdom (verse 29), and God revealed the future to him showing him the end of all earthly kingdoms and the setting up of the everlasting kingdom. God wanted to convict Nebuchadnezzar of his pride, ambition and self exaltation and give him opportunity to become acquainted with the true God—the only Saviour.

Nebuchadnezzar manifests the same sins as Lucifer in the very beginning of the great controversy. By his besieging Jerusalem, taking the Hebrews captive and stealing the holy vessels from the temple, he was in essence saying that he and his gods were more powerful than Israel and Israel's God. But God is about to reveal to him who really is in control, and whose kingdom principles are enduring. So what Satan meant for evil, God used for good—not only for Israel but for Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon as well.

Verse 2-9

Nebuchadnezzar forgets the dream and commands the Chaldeans to reveal the dream as well as the interpretation. God has given him the dream and caused him to forget it so that the Chaldeans can be exposed as frauds and God can be exalted. Nebuchadnezzar's forgetting the dream prevented the Chaldeans from inventing a false interpretation. The Lord is teaching the lesson that wisdom and understanding can only come from Him. See Dan 2:20-22.

Isaiah 47:13, 14 Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.

Verses 5, 6

The king threatens them with death if they do not do so, and on the other hand he offers them gifts, rewards and honor if they can show and interpret the dream.

Nebuchadnezzar is again revealing the principles of Satan's kingdom, that of force and coercion. Here is another move in the play-counter-play between Christ and Satan. Satan is attempting to kill God's servant Daniel by motivating the king to make a death decree. However, God again wins because Daniel is brought into a place of recognition and placed in a prominent position giving him an even greater opportunity to testify of God and His eternal principles.

Verses 10, 11

By stating that the gods do not dwell with flesh, the Chaldeans verify by their confession that they are not in contact with the gods and therefore they are unable to show or interpret the dream.

Verses 12-16

Nebuchadnezzar discerned their deceptions and was convinced that they did not have the learning and power that they claimed to possess and commanded that they be killed. Daniel hears of this and requests time and an opportunity to reveal the dream to the king with the interpretation.

Verses 17-23

Daniel exhibits that he has a relationship and a faith in God that He will reveal the dream and the interpretation. He seeks his companions to solicit the God of Heaven along with him. They do not neglect the praise due God for His tender mercies in revealing the dream.

Verse 21 "He changeth the times and the seasons"

Acts 1:7 And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power.

We will find this to be significant when we read of the antichrist's desire to change the times, (Daniel 7:25), another play in the controversy between Christ and antichrist.

Verse 21 "He removeth kings and setteth up kings"

As we discovered in the first study on Daniel chapter one, the mechanisms by which God gave Judah into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar reveal the reaping and sowing principle. We will find that the same principle applies to the judgment of Babylon for God is not a respecter of persons. The wages of sin is death and it applies to everyone.

Verse 22 "He revealeth the deep and secret things"

God not only purposed to strengthen the faith of His people through the gift of prophecy, but to expose the phony bologna claims of the magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers to whom the king sought to reveal the dream and the interpretation.

De 29:29 The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Ps 25:14 The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will shew them His covenant.

Prov 3:32 For the froward is abomination to the LORD: but His secret is with the righteous.

Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets.

Verse 24 Daniel pleads for the lives of all the wise men

Even though Daniel knew that the wise men were fakes, he represented the thoughts and feelings of the God in heaven when he pleaded for their lives. Later in Daniel 6 we find these same men who were jealous of Daniel laying a trap to destroy him.

Verse 25

We see that Arioch had not the same humble spirit that we find in Daniel and he takes credit for having found one who will interpret the dream.

Verses 26-30

Here we find the interactions between Daniel and the king. The king is hopeful that Daniel will be able to reveal the dream, give the interpretation and set his mind at rest. Daniel is quick to give credit where credit is due and does not take any glory to himself, a characteristic principle of the kingdom of God.

Verse 29, 30

Daniel explains to the king that the dream is God's answer to his contemplations of the future of his kingdom. God takes the opportunity to reveal to Nebuchadnezzar saving truths calculated to save him from his worst enemy--self, and to faithfully rise to the high and lofty responsibility for which God has raised him up. At the same time, God reveals the inevitable rise and fall of nations that refuse to implement the principles of His kingdom and assures His children of the everlasting kingdom of righteousness that will fill this earth. Praise God!