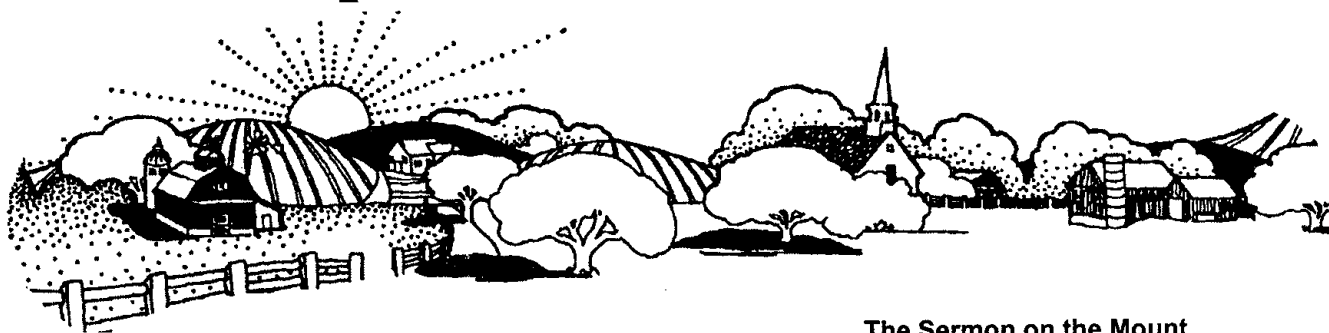


The Sword AND Staff

"Preach the Word" (II Timothy 4:2) • "Feed the Flock" (I Peter 5:2)

An Explanation of Matthew 5:48



"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

● By JAMES E. GIBBONS—1535 Fairfield Drive
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IN THE LAST ISSUE of this paper we ran a featured article on, "Let Us Go On Unto Perfection." In it we saw that the basic meaning of the word translated "perfect" (KJV), *teleios*, in the New Testament was complete (with slightly variant and almost parallel secondary meanings). We found that in certain places the word was used in the sense of full grown and mature. Our lesson was that we are admonished to go on unto maturity in Christ.

In view of the things we considered, a question comes to mind as to exactly what the Lord had in mind in the Sermon on the Mount when he said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." It is fitting that we look at this statement before advancing on to more extended studies about going "on unto perfection." What is the explanation? What did the Lord mean?

It would be helpful in understanding Matthew 5:48 to get an overview of the Sermon on the Mount and then examine the immediate context of the Lord's statement here. The meaning of words can be easily distorted, even unintentionally, when taken out of context and pressed beyond their original usage and application.

The Sermon on the Mount

Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7 make up the Sermon on the Mount. Key words like "righteousness" (5:6, 10,20; 6:33) and "kingdom" (5:3,10,19,20; 6:10,13,33; 7:21) stand out. The theme of the sermon seems to be attaining the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven. The thrust of this theme gets under way in the beatitudes. In the process of hungering and thirsting after righteousness, one is poor in spirit as he recognizes his spiritual bankruptcy. He bemoans his undone condition and is meek. And as he becomes a recipient of the mercy of God, it makes him merciful. There is that oneness and purity of heart, no admixture of inferior motives. At peace with God, he becomes a peacemaker. But when this righteousness is finally reached in its fullness, he will be persecuted for it by the unrighteous. But at the same time, upon this attainment, he will be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. After saying all of these great truths in a preliminary way, Matthew 5:20 now seems to be the definitive key verse that really nails down the main outline and headings that are to follow. As the Word of God incarnate, the Lord Jesus Christ declares, "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

An Outline of the Sermon

The necessity of exceeding the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees seems to be nailed down

(Continued on Page 5)

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—THANK YOU—

Proverbially ***SPEAKING...***

***THE LAW** of use and disuse: If you don't use it, you lose it.*

If you profess to be religious, and God is not first in your life, your whole religious life is out of kilter.

The more that you love, the greater your capacity to love becomes.

On the things we do not know or understand, the less we say the less likely we are to err.

The most humble person is usually the least aware of his humility.

God is love, and the person who truly loves knows God (I John 4:8), and God knows that person (I Cor. 8:3).

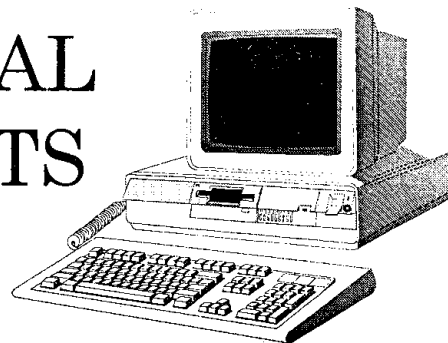
Your energy is uselessly spent unless it is spent on that which is useful.

Love (I Cor. 13) is greater (I Cor. 12:31) than spiritual gifts (I Cor. 12) because the giver is greater than the gifts ("God is love," I John 4:8,16).

Where will you be when you get where you are going?

Religiously speaking, only one road leads to heaven (John 14:6; Acts 4:12)—all others are sidetracks, veering in many and diverse directions. ☐

EDITORIAL COMMENTS



ROMANS CHAPTER FOURTEEN NOT A "CATCHALL" WITHOUT BOUNDS TO JUSTIFY DEVIATE INNOVATIONS AND PRACTICES

PERHAPS a closer look at the 14th chapter of Romans is in order. We need to get hold of this Scripture. It seems that some would carelessly try to use this as a "catchall" beyond what the apostle Paul had in mind or was dealing with. Perhaps this Scripture is not as inclusive as some people would like to think. Let us take a look at this in the context of all of the New Testament.

The early days of the church saw Christians in transition from the Mosaic system to Christianity. Yes, the New Testament came into force with the death of Christ upon the cross (Hebrews 9:16,17). But Jesus had promised that when the Holy Spirit came he would "guide" the apostles into all truth (John 16:13; 14:26). Although the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, this didn't happen all at once. Even the apostle Paul stated, "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect [complete] is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (I Corinthians 13:9,10). A person only has to read the book of Acts to see how true this statement was. For a while, they continued to worship in the temple. They observed Jewish customs and days. It took them several years, with the prodding of God, to get around to preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. Then with Gentiles coming into the church, a wider view was thrust upon them. And with Gentile and Jewish Christians having different backgrounds and hang-ups, problems surfaced and had to be dealt with. But to the outsider, it would appear that Christianity was just a sect of the Jewish religion.

Romans 14:1 through 15:7 is to be understood with all of this in mind. Introducing us to the trend of the thought here, Romans 14:1-6 reads,

"Him that is weak [not strong] in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak [not strong], eateth herbs [vegetables]. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks."

Here we see the situation involved eating: (1) Some believed that a Christian could eat "all things," including meat; (2) Others,

evidently Jewish Christians, believed in being strictly vegetarians. ***It involved observing days religiously:*** (1) Some observed one day “above another”; (2) Others did not observe these days. Evidently there is a Jewish backdrop to all of this. They were instructed to exercise tolerance, longsuffering and patience in dealing with one another.

But were these matters a matter of opinion? Could either of these positions involving eating and days be nailed down as the Christian position? If this can be ascertained, why were these directives given here with teachings elsewhere that seem to be otherwise? Or, are they otherwise?

For example, ***in reference to eating***, consider the following in I Timothy 4:1-5. Paul foretells of what would be taught by those who departed from the faith and along beside it he tells what the right teaching is.

“Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.”

Then, ***in reference to special days***, consider Galatians 4:10 and 11. This is very interesting since it is generally thought that the book of Romans and Galatians were written about the same time.

“Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”

And in connection with ***eating*** and ***days***, Colossians 2:16 deals with both.

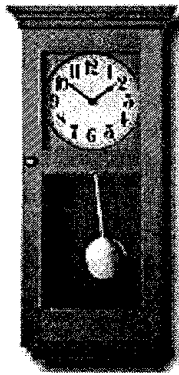
“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days.”

How are we to understand this? The distinctive Christian view seems to be that we are free to eat any kind of food, including meats, and that we do not observe special days. The answer seems to lie in that Paul addresses his words in Romans 14 to the individual, “***one*** believeth,” “***one*** esteemeth.” These beliefs and hang-ups were not being imposed on the church as such. Jew and Gentile with their varied backgrounds were to patiently deal with one another as they came unto the larger view of things. But Paul does not seem to have this tolerance and patience in the book of Galatians. What is the difference? In the book of Galatians, and in Galatia, whole churches were going back under the Law of Moses and, no doubt, publicly embracing the Jewish distinctions about foods and the observance of days as the express doctrine of the church. It was not a matter of individual Christians holding views and hang-ups that they were growing out of, but a matter of them imposing them upon the whole church. This could

not be allowed. Read the book of Galatians. Paul had said to the Romans, “Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification” (Romans 15:2). To confirm someone in error is not “for his good to edification.” But to be patient with him on an individual basis as he grows in the grace and knowledge of the Lord is decidedly another thing.

What are we to learn from all of this? (1) Let us not try to use Romans chapter 14 as a catchall to excuse, justify, or introduce unscriptural innovations, practices and false teachings into the church. (2) Let us exercise longsuffering and patience with one another on an individual basis as we grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and especially with new converts as they grow in understanding. □

WHAT REACTIONARIES TEACH US



REACTIONARIES are people who overreact in a given situation. What they stand for, or what they oppose, may largely be right (or at least some truth in it). They have a just grievance. But in their obsession with their view and their opposition to the wrong, they have become like the pendulum in the old grandfather clock. They have

gone to the extreme in the other direction. In trying to correct one evil, they have unintentionally become responsible for the introduction of another.

This can be seen throughout history. It can be seen in modern times. This is in evidence in religion as well as politics. It is to be found in the form of great movements, as well as on an individual basis.

The rise of monastic orders in ancient times was of a reactionary nature. Whether one investigates the Jewish Essenes of some 2,000 or more years ago, or the monasteries that came into being after the church had been here a few centuries, the truth is the same. The world, and even the supposed church, became so corrupt that sensitive and pious souls wanted no part of it. So they withdrew from society. A false asceticism came into being. But Christianity is to be lived in the world. Jesus prayed, “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from evil” (John 17:15). They were to be Christ’s witnesses in the world, but they were not to be of the world. (In reference to the rise of this false asceticism, read Paul’s prophecy in I Timothy 4:1-4).

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS...

WHAT REACTIONARIES TEACH US

(Continued from Previous Page)

The Protestant Reformation turned out to be a reactionary movement in many ways. If anyone ever had a legitimate and just grievance, those who spoke out against Roman Catholic apostasy did. In Catholicism they found God dethroned with the pope and priests in His place, the pope claiming to be the head of the church (and even called "Lord God the Pope") and the whole synthetic cleric system claiming the power to absolve sins. Men were supposedly justified by prescribed works of man as laid down by the Catholic Church. By all means, the sovereignty of God needed to be restored among men, the great doctrine of justification by faith needed to be heralded forth again, along with many other things. But the proverbial pendulum made its decided swing. Reactionary reformers began to preach the sovereignty of Almighty God to the point of irrevocable predestination (the Calvinistic version). Everything was so ordered that man's responsive works did not enter in. The characteristic and hallmark doctrine of Protestantism became "faith only." And of course, although having an element of great truth, all of these doctrines are out of harmony with the Scriptures (II Peter 3:9; II Peter 1:10; James 2:14-26; Romans 1:5; etc.). Man most certainly is justified by faith, but not by an inactive "faith only."

The world has been in an upheaval because of the reactionary political philosophy introduced by Karl Marx and others. No doubt, abuses that this man pointed out were to a large extent true at the time. No doubt, much of the religion, masquerading as Christianity that Marx came in contact with, needed criticizing. (It is a shame that this man was not exposed to real New Testament Christianity). From his feelings of desperation and hate have come what we know as Communism. It proposes, in essence, to enslave man and his spirit (at least that has been its record) and to remake the world after its own atheistic image. But, as it has been said, two wrongs don't make a right. What a shame! Mankind selling its soul and birthright for a measly mess of pottage, and in the end having neither!

Most modern religious movements are reactionary movements. This can be said of the so-called "charismatic movement." The pendulum continues to swing as time moves on. Division occurs, and consequently splinter group after splinter group comes into being (even among people professing to be the New Testament church).

To counter this, another reactionary movement comes into being. Some being tired of division and problems that seem insolvable, seemingly have thrown themselves open to unrestricted fellowship with almost anything and anyone religiously. Correct doctrinal teaching is downplayed, it seems, in trying to realize this longed for fellowship. Certainly improper attitudes and sectarian concepts may be barriers to fellowship, but we do not want to throw out respect for the truth to accomplish our goals. We have deep feelings that go out to anyone and all who are genuinely concerned about restoring the New Testament church among men. (But the problem is that many give this lip service but fail to back up their claim). If we have really been "born again" according to the Scriptures, we have entered the kingdom of God wherever we are (John 3:5; Acts 2:38-47). However, we must go from there to be the Lord's church in reality and not just another denominational faction. There are teachings that some are presenting and others are not. There are truths that are being neglected. We practice the unity of the faith, not by compromise of the truth, but by sincerely examining the Scriptures and putting them into practice. Let us practice them in love and humility, not with arrogance and a sectarian attitude. The truth is for all to enjoy (to enjoy as truth and not as a tool for sectarianism).

Then "reactionaryism" can be a matter of individual experience. Men have gone forth preaching the truth of God, but perhaps with the wrong motive and attitude. Their being "strong" for the truth has been a youthful phase they have been going through. Really, some who have been thought to be "strong preachers" have been men with personality problems—they evidently enjoyed the attention they got by making abrasive, dogmatic statements in their flamboyancy. Then one day they grew up. They looked back over their lives. They didn't like what they saw. So, they changed their preaching (their message). Really, there basically had been nothing wrong with their message (just the man). It was their attitude, their arrogance, and the way they presented what they had to say. But the pendulum has made its swing, and we have a reactionary, fuzzy-minded liberal who has lost his mooring and sense of direction.

And, so we could go on pointing out different kinds of reactionaries. But what lesson, or lessons, do we learn from reactionaries? What do reactionaries teach us?

First, reactionaries teach us that a basic truth has probably been neglected. When we hear someone preach that we think is a little extreme in his

views, it would be wise for us to listen instead of completely discounting and discrediting him. Almost all reactionaries have a legitimate point (up to a point) which needs to be considered. Look for it, and learn from it.

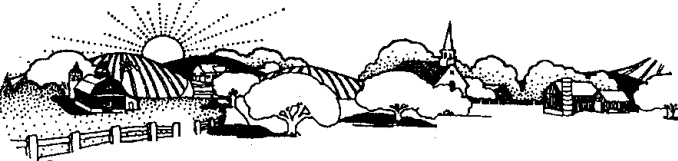
Second, it behooves us to be levelheaded students of God's Word. Take a strong and decided (but mature) stand for the truth of God, but don't be unchristian in the way it is presented or the way you treat other people. (Sometimes the rebuke is in order, but not always). Otherwise someday you may be unhappy with yourself and meet yourself coming back. You may find that you have become a reactionary turning from the truth to become a compromiser. God forbid!

We can learn from reactionaries, but, at the same time, let us not be taken in by their simplistic overstatement. And let us not be reactionary in our reaction to reactionaries. □

(Adapted from Volume 26, Number 1, 1988)

An Explanation of Matthew 5:48

(Continued from Page 1)



under several obvious headings, starting with (1) Being more than just a traditional, legalistic righteousness ("Ye have heard that it was said by them of old...But I say unto you"), 5:21-5:48. Then, (2) Being more than just a showy, pretentious righteousness, 6:1-18. And, (3) Being more than a righteousness dominated by materialism, 6:19-34. Then in chapter 7 we see sundry warnings and applications with the scribes and Pharisees further in the Lord's eye. Finally, 7:21-29 fittingly concludes this great discourse with 7:21 especially getting our attention, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

The Immediate Context

Now let us notice Matthew 5:48, the focus of our question, and its immediate context. It falls under our suggested heading of "being more than just a traditional, legalistic righteousness" in exceeding the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Following is the full quotation of the immediate context (Matthew 5:43-48).

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you: That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he

maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*"

The Meaning of Matthew 5:48

All right, we have the contextual picture spread before us. So, what is the explanation of, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"? The Lord nails down what he is talking about in 5:43, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies..." And the "therefore" indicates that what he is talking about involves the Father in this connection. He is talking about love. And his treatment of love involves two parts or categories, with the Jews only carrying out the first, loving their neighbors (but they hated their enemies). Then Jesus shows how that God loves both, and all, categories of people as he variously expands and illustrates this point.

Now with the basic definition of the Greek word (*teleios*) for perfect in mind, which is complete, let's just replace the word "perfect" in our translation with the word "complete." "Be ye therefore **complete**, even as your Father which is in heaven is **complete**." Be complete? How? Obviously in the two part matter being dealt with in 5:43, neighbors and enemies were both to be loved (not one loved and the other hated). By putting the two parts together in loving, they would be perfect, or complete, like their heavenly Father in his love as illustrated here. Here the Lord is not necessarily talking about the quality of our love, but the impartiality of it.

A Parallel Illustration

Another Scripture that would illustrate this use of perfect is I Corinthians 13:9 and 10. It reads, "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect [*teleios*, complete] is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." The "in part" and the complete are thrown over against one another, emphasizing the meaning of each. The revelation of the truths of the New Testament was received in parts, not all at once, as the Spirit led them into all truth. When that which was perfect, or complete, was come, the in part situation was done away. All the parts put together make that which is complete, the whole. Likewise we see this with the multi-facets of love dealt with in Matthew 5:43-48.

Other Great Scriptures

Matthew 5:48 is a great Scripture, but it is not as inclusive in its reference to God as some would seem to think. But we are not at a loss. There are

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An Explanation of Matthew 5:48

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plenty of other Scriptures pointing to God with his wondrous attributes for us to emulate. For example I Peter 1:15 and 16 reads, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [conduct, the way that you live]; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." Furthermore, the apostle Paul admonishes in Ephesians 5:1, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love..." In Luke 6:36 the Lord also said, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." We serve the great and glorious God of eternity, the one who is absolute in perfection in every way. Let us in humility and godly fear be found in Him, walking in love, in truth and in righteousness. Amen! □

A Lesson They Wouldn't Forget

A YOUNG LADY named Sally relates an experience she had in class, involving her teacher, whom we will call Mr. Smith. She says that Mr. Smith was known for his elaborate and innovative object lessons. One particular day Sally walked into class and she knew they were in for another "fun" day. On the wall was a big target and on a nearby table was a stack of darts. Mr. Smith told the students to draw a picture of someone that they disliked or someone who had made them angry and he would allow them to throw darts at the person's picture.

Sally's girlfriend on her right, drew a picture of a girl who had stolen her boyfriend. Another friend on her left, drew a picture of his little brother. Sally drew a picture of Mr. Smith, putting a great deal of detail into her drawing. Sally was pleased with the overall effect she had achieved.

The class lined up and began throwing darts, with much laughter and hilarity. Some of the students threw their darts with such force that their targets were ripping apart. Sally looked forward to her turn, but was filled with disappointment when Mr. Smith, because of time limits, asked the students to return to their seats.

As Sally sat thinking about how angry she was because she didn't have a chance to throw any darts at her target, Mr. Smith began removing the target from the wall. Underneath the target was a picture representing Jesus.

A complete hush fell over the room as each student viewed the mangled picture of Jesus. Holes and jagged marks covered his face and his eyes were pierced out.

Mr. Smith said only these words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

No other words were necessary. The tear-filled eyes of each student focused on the picture of Christ. The students remained in their seats after the bell rang,

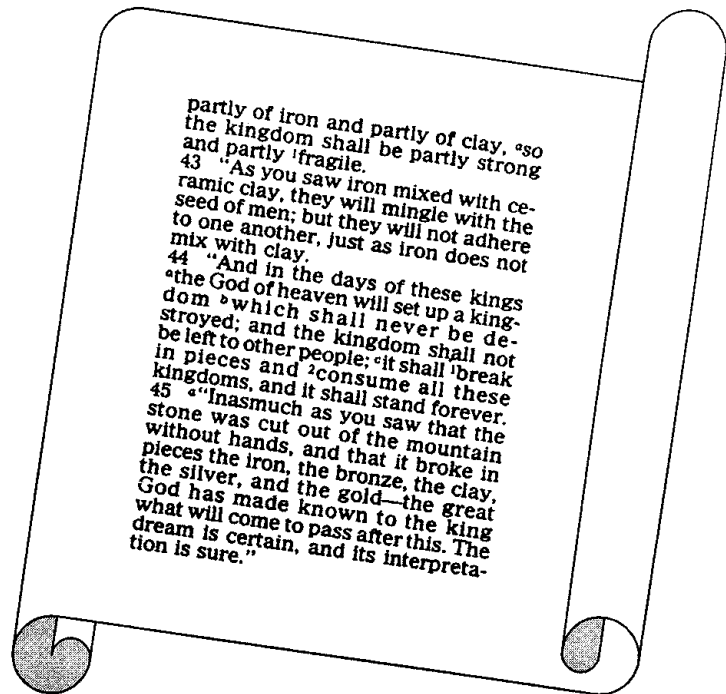
then slowly left the classroom, tears streaming down their faces.

May this story serve as a reminder that our attitude toward Jesus Christ is demonstrated by the way that we treat people around us. □

—From Australia

A Series Involving the Bible and Prophecy...

Daniel Foretells Indestructible Kingdom



● By DAVID VAUGHN ELLIOTT
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THE KINGDOMS (and democracies) of this world are filled with broken promises, hypocrisy, corruption and violence. Slavery and genocide are as old as the pyramids of Egypt. Pharaoh cared nothing for "human rights." The pages of history are filled with like-minded despots, some better, some worse.

Three thousand years ago, the Creator of the Universe began to prepare mankind for a better type of government, for a kingdom under His control. In a most unusual move, God used the likes of Saddam Hussein to bring this revelation.

Saddam Hussein considers himself a successor of Nebuchadnezzar. Modern Iraq sits on some of the same territory as the ancient Babylonian Empire. Saddam would very much like to do to Israel today what Nebuchadnezzar did back then. However, Nebuchadnezzar, unlike Hussein, was a special vessel utilized by God to punish Israel. Nebuchadnezzar was also a special vessel used of God to receive one of the greatest dreams of all times. Not that he understood a word of it. In fact, he could not even remember it.

Nebuchadnezzar, like many modern politicians, called in his astrologers for consultation. He asked them to tell him what he had dreamed. The astrologers, of course, asked the king to tell them the dream so that they could give the interpretation. However, Nebuchadnezzar had much more common sense than many church members today. He told them, "Tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation" (Daniel 2:9).

All the "wise men" of Babylonia would have been put to death had not Daniel come to the rescue. Daniel agreed that the astrologers were incapable of making the dream known. As they themselves had said, "There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter...there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh" (verses 10,11). The astrologers were wrong in that last point. The God of heaven did dwell with the prophets of Israel. Thus, Daniel, inspired by God, explained the dream.

Five Kingdoms

An awesome image...head of gold...chest of silver...belly of bronze...legs of iron. Then there was an extraordinary stone. After crushing the awesome image, this stone became such a great mountain that it filled the entire earth.

Daniel made it plain to Nebuchadnezzar: "You *are* this head of gold" (verse 38). Daniel continued, "after you shall arise another kingdom...then another, a third kingdom...And the fourth kingdom...[and last of all] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom" (verses 39, 40, 44). Five kingdoms in all. By saying a third and fourth kingdom, it is clear that the golden head is more than just king Nebuchadnezzar. The head includes the entire kingdom of Babylon. Five kingdoms in all: four of this world and one of heaven.

The identity of the first four kingdoms is the simplest part of the prophecy. Practically all Bible believers, from ancient to modern times, agree that they are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. The book of Daniel itself furnishes information on the first three. As we have seen, Daniel identifies the first kingdom with Nebuchadnezzar.

Who has not heard the picturesque expression: "He saw the handwriting on the wall"? However, for Belshazzar, king of Babylon, it was more than picturesque. He was so terrified when he saw part of a hand writing on the wall that his knees were knocking together. Included in Daniel's explanation of the writing were these words: "Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians" (Daniel 5:28). Thus, the second kingdom is that of the Medes and Persians, a fact also confirmed in historical records outside the Bible.

Outside the Bible, the third kingdom is easily confirmed to be Greece. The book of Daniel agrees. In chapter 8 is found the vision of how a goat totally overpowered and trampled a ram. Verses 20 and 21

point out: "The ram...the kings of Media and Persia. And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece." Positive identification.

The book of Daniel does not identify the fourth kingdom; but any student of history knows that the Roman Empire was next on the scene. It was Rome that was in power when Jesus of Nazareth walked this earth. Thus, the great image of Daniel 2 outlines the movement of world empires from the time of Daniel to the time of Christ: Babylon, Medo-Persia (often just called Persia), Greece and Rome.

God's Eternal Kingdom

As interesting as these ancient kingdoms may be, what Christians are concerned about is the fifth kingdom. The first four kingdoms are just temporary results of worldly politics. The fifth kingdom is both divine and eternal.

Several things can be learned about the fifth kingdom from the prophecy itself. The actual fulfillment of the prophecy of the fifth kingdom is not the subject of this article. (*Watch for future articles.*) The purpose now is to learn everything we can from the prophecy itself, so that we are better prepared to examine claims of fulfillment.

The Nature of the Kingdom: Whatever influence God may have exercised in and through them, it is nevertheless obvious that Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome were worldly kingdoms. They were set up by human power with human aims. They conquered and maintained control by force of arms. They were ruled over by pagans who had little or no knowledge of the God of the universe. They were concerned with the affairs of this world. They are all four together represented by the awesome image.

The fifth kingdom, however, was not a fifth part of the great image. No! It was not to be the next stage in the progression of the kingdoms of this world. The prophecy makes a great distinction when it introduces the fifth kingdom with these words: "a stone was cut out without hands" (2:34).

Reminds us of 2 Corinthians 5:1: "For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house **not made with hands**, eternal in the heavens." Reminds us of Colossians 2:11,12: "In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision **made without hands**, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism." Reminds us of Hebrews 9:11: "But Christ came *as* High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle **not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.**" (Bold emphasis supplied.)

"Not made with hands" in these three texts refers to that which is not of this world, that which is spiritual, that which is heavenly. Daniel further brought this out in his explanation of the fifth kingdom: "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom" (verse 44).

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Daniel Foretells Indestructible Kingdom

(Continued from Previous Page)

The Power of the Kingdom: This prophecy does not detail the activities of the fifth kingdom. Nevertheless, it does deal with the relationship of the fifth kingdom to the first four. One of the major points of the prophecy is that the fifth kingdom would destroy the other four.

The stone "struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found...it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (verses 34,35,44).

Notice that the prophecy does not say that the stone will destroy all the kingdoms of the world; it speaks of "all these kingdoms," that is Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. It is somewhat of a puzzle to understand how the stone would destroy all four kingdoms. In history, did not each successive kingdom destroy the one preceding it? In one sense, certainly yes. However, in another sense, it might be considered that each kingdom absorbed the previous kingdom so that some of the elements of the former kingdoms continued on.

On the other hand, the scenario might just be a necessary part of the imagery. Seldom, if ever, can any single illustration portray all the possible details of reality. Nebuchadnezzar saw one complete image, even though it represented four periods of history. He did not first see just a head, which afterward was destroyed by a breast, etc. It was one complete image. Thus, when the legs and feet were destroyed, a consistent imagery would show the entire image being destroyed. It seems to this writer that nothing more can be forced into the imagery.

The prophecy says that the stone "struck the image on its feet of iron and clay." That clearly means that the destruction took place during the latter part of the latter kingdom, Rome. The Roman Empire would be overcome and dissolved. Even though the fifth kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, "cut out without hands," yet it would have a definite destructive effect upon the fourth worldly kingdom.

The Extent of the Kingdom: At first, the fifth kingdom is represented as no larger than a stone. However, this stone "became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (verse 35). Daniel gives no further details about this growth. Was it rapid or was it very gradual? The text does not say.

What is made plain is that in time this kingdom—God's kingdom—would fill the entire earth. It would be a worldwide kingdom. Its territory would not be anything at all like the kingdom of Israel, which was limited to a small piece of land in the Middle East. This

writer has attempted to make some calculations as to the extent of Solomon's kingdom at its height, including territories subject to him. It would seem it could not have been more than 60,000 sq. mi. That is tiny. Nearly half of the states in the United States are larger than that!

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BIBLE QUESTIONS

(Random Questions Over the Bible)

1. Which two books of the Bible don't have the word "God" in them?
2. How many books of the Old Testament have only one chapter in them?
3. Where is the first time the word "prophet" appears in the Bible?
4. Where were Abraham and Sarah living in Canaan when Isaac, the son of promise, was born?
5. What man in the Bible had a name which meant rascal ("supplanter") but was given a new name that meant prince of God?
6. Why in particular were the children of Israel condemned to wander forty years in the wilderness before they could enter the Promised Land?
7. What place became the seat of the tabernacle when Israel conquered the Promised Land and remained that throughout the period of the judges?
8. What are the words that go in the blanks of these expressions found in the Bible (KJV)? (1) "Oaks of _____"; (2) "Cedars of _____"; (3) "Balm of _____"; (4) "Rose of _____"; (5) "Gold of _____".
9. What two different women especially are pictured in the book of Proverbs wanting to influence and impact the lives of young men?
10. What prophet said that he wouldn't speak anymore in God's name, but God's Word was in his heart as a "burning fire shut up" in his bones, and he couldn't be silent?
11. Who in the Bible said, "Cursed be the day wherein I was born"?
12. How many books of the New Testament have only one chapter in them?
13. What two books in the New Testament were written by a man named Luke (and to whom were they written)?
14. How many times did Christ perform a great miracle and feed a great multitude with just a few loaves and fish (and how many were fed each time)?
15. Who were the only two apostles that we have a record of raising anyone from the dead (and who were those raised)?
16. When the church in Jerusalem heard about the Gentile church being started in Antioch, who did they send to strengthen and encourage the new Christians?
17. How many times and where is the name "Christian" found in the New Testament?
18. What two epistles written about the same time by the apostle Paul are very similar in much of their content?
19. The apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians 16:14, "Let all your things be done with _____."
20. The apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 2:14, "Do all things without _____."

(NOTE: Answers found elsewhere in this issue of the paper)

READERS'

...Response

APOLOGY: Please accept our humble apology for slowness in getting correspondence answered. "We" have no staff of secretaries, etc. to handle such, and this is done by the "editor" as time allows. Be it known that you are sincerely appreciated. ☐

FLORIDA:

- "Thanks again for your wonderful paper."
- "Please take us off your mailing list. Thanks."
- "We have enjoyed and appreciated *THE SWORD AND STAFF* for years. We haven't even begun to stay even with our support. We read and study it often. Thanks and may God bless you and yours...We pray for the work and all the effort that is put out."

ALABAMA:

- "Please put me on your mailing list of *THE SWORD AND STAFF*...You really do have a good and insightful publication."

MISSISSIPPI:

- "Enclosed is my change of address, order of one each 1995-96 bound volumes and 1997-98 bound volumes. Balance of check is for your excellent publication. Keep up the good work. Please add my dear friends to your mailing list..."
- "Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and His Son Jesus Christ! Thanks so much for *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. I'm 'digesting' the volumes I ordered. The humble, loving and faithful exposition of God's Word is so very refreshing in this time of generic and anemic pulpity. I have an almost endless list of people I know to whom I'd like to send your publication. Enclosed are a few. I'll try to send a few along with some financial help as I can. Hopefully, some of them will help you also.

"May God bless you and continue to use you to enlighten, edify and motivate many for His glory and their service and salvation in His kingdom."

TENNESSEE:

- "Please remove the following from your mailing list...Thank you."

NORTH CAROLINA:

- "I have been receiving *THE SWORD AND STAFF* since 1985. I enjoy it thoroughly and hope God gives you the strength to keep it coming many more years."

VIRGINIA:

- "We have enjoyed *THE SWORD AND STAFF* for over twenty years and usually read it from cover to cover. We appreciate the strong stand that you have maintained for so many years..."

WEST VIRGINIA:

- "Thanks for all the good work you are doing. I always look forward to *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. One of the finest papers to be found. My prayers are for you in this great work."

OHIO:

- "I would like to receive your publication. Here is a contribution to help defray the costs. Thank you!"
- "Thank you for another year of sharing your love and labor for Jesus through *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. You are the Bereans of this day and age (Acts 17:11)..."
- "I am thankful for *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. But most of all I thank God for you who write *THE SWORD AND STAFF*...I'm sending a little gift to help in God's kingdom. I'm sure you will find a good place to use it. May God bless you and don't let down on the good Word."

MICHIGAN:

- "Please delete!!"

INDIANA:

- "You will, no doubt, receive a lot of negative mail from your article 'The Rapture' which was published in *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. After all, the basis of the article flies in the face of the recent best selling *LEFT BEHIND* series. And, because it is a best seller, that makes it right and you wrong.

"After hearing the *LEFT BEHIND* series criticized, and I have not read them, the thought occurred to me, 'What about Matthew 13:24-30 where the weeds are taken first and burned (the wicked being judged and thrown into hell, and then the wheat being harvested and put into the barns (the saved being taken to heaven)?' With that in mind, I dug into your article and was delighted when I saw that the account of Noah is the O.T. counterpart.

"The point of this letter is not to critique what you wrote, to give my view, to expand upon or argue. It is to say 'Thank You!' In my humble opinion, I think you hit the proverbial 'Nail on the Head.'

"When you get those negative notes, get this one out and read it again. **Good Job!**"

ILLINOIS:

- "I came out of a denomination a long time ago. It was a good denomination, as denominations go, big and honorable and acceptable. I had a struggle, and I had to study the Bible a long time before I was willing

(Continued on Next Page)

READERS'...Response

(Continued from Previous Page)

to give up denominationalism; but I finally gave it up. I gave up my denominational name; I gave up my denominational ordination ordinances; I gave up my denominational church government; I gave up my denominational creed, and became just a 'Christian.' Now I do not intend to go back into that out of which I came. Those who wish to do so, of course, are free people, and I will love them; but I cannot go with them."

WISCONSIN:

■ "Please take off your mailing list."

MINNESOTA:

■ "We enjoy THE SWORD AND STAFF as it is so inspirational to read..." (E-mail)

MISSOURI:

■ "My thanks for a well-written, sensible and concise approach to 'The Rapture' in THE SWORD AND STAFF. Your faithfulness is a gift to many, and your perspectives from willingness to dig in the Word about 'hot topics' are a wonderful example..."

NEBRASKA:

■ "Just received Vol. 38 [No. 3]. Was thrilled with 'The Rapture' article. Hear so much about the rapture and chaos it will create. God isn't a God of chaos. Thanks for such a good little paper."

KANSAS:

■ "Please take this name off your mailing list now."
■ "We didn't realize it had been so long since we had sent a contribution. Please accept our apology for being so remiss. We wish more people read your paper."

TEXAS:

■ "I continue to love THE SWORD AND STAFF and hope this check will help. Thanks for your love for Christ and his church."
■ "Enclosed find our contribution. Keep up the good work. My husband and I enjoy reading THE SWORD AND STAFF. I usually pass it on to others or put it in the waiting room at the hospital where I work..."

NEVADA:

■ "David Vaughn Elliott should do his series of articles on prophecy in book form!"

OREGON:

■ "Please take our address off your mailing list..." (E-mail)
■ "Thanks so much for your many wonderful articles and the paper you have been publishing for so many years."

UNITED STATES:

■ "Still growing from your journal! Thanks. Do you have a comprehensive article on baptism that I could view online or be sent in the mail?" (E-mail)
■ "Brother, I surely do enjoy your articles. I have found them to be well thought out and doctrinally sound and

I commend you for your efforts in the Lord." (E-mail, web page response)

■ "I am a 20 year old aspiring preacher and just to know that God has provided men like yourself, is just a blessing to me. Continue in your journey of knowing the Holy One, Jesus Christ, the one whom we acknowledge as the Lord of our lives." (E-mail)

■ "We enjoy THE SWORD AND STAFF very much. 'The Man of Sin' series was great. And I distributed copies of your word study on *diakonos*."

"We are graduates of...Christian College and [my husband]... was 'ordained into the ministry'... 20 years ago. Our problem is that we could never justify the modern office of minister in Scripture. Not only is it not there, the entire idea is counter-productive to the concept of the priesthood of all believers."

"Those who recognize that the office is non-existent try to fix it by essentially hiring elders, which is of course also unbiblical. Elders were recognized from within the local congregation as qualified and functioning as elders, and then were given the title, as we understand Scripture, in order to exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict."

"My husband has left the 'full-time' ministry and works as a tent-maker...which also gives him greater opportunity to witness. He still preaches by filling in and we teach Bible studies and teach classes on how to study the Bible inductively wherever we can."

"It is unlikely that a middle-aged couple...will overturn a system of hierarchy borrowed from the Roman church instead of having been patterned after the New Testament, but we are accountable before God to live truth."

"...[My husband] turned down two churches this summer that asked him to come as their official minister. We had opportunity in that to teach, but the tradition is too deeply entrenched and too greatly enjoyed to have been abandoned yet."

"Our belief, and I pray it is not too cynical, is that the church will not be restored to the primitive simplicity of the New Testament without the fire of persecution. What a price to pay. But what price can be placed on becoming the pure, spotless Bride of Christ?"

Answers to:

BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Esther and Song of Solomon; 2. One, Obadiah; 3. Genesis 20:7; 4. Genesis 20:1,15; 21:1-3,22-34; 5. Genesis 32:24-28; 6. Numbers 14:33,34; 7. Joshua 18:1; Jeremiah 7:12; 8. (1) Isaiah 2:13; Ezekiel 27:6; Zechariah 11:2; (2) Judges 9:15; Psalms 29:5; 104:16; Isaiah 2:13; 14:8; (3) Jeremiah 8:22; 46:11 (Genesis 37:25); (4) Song of Solomon 2:1; (5) I Chronicles 29:4; Psalms 45:9; Job 22:24; 28:16; 9. (1) Wisdom (Proverbs 1:20-33; 8:1-11; (2) The strange woman (Proverbs 2:16-19; 5:3-23; 6:24-33; 7:5-27); 10. Jeremiah 20:7-9; 11. Jeremiah 20:14 (Job 3:3); 12. Four: (1) Philemon; (2) II John; (3) III John; (4) Jude; 13. Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-3; 14. Two times (Matthew 14:13-21; 15:32-38); 15. Acts 9:36-42 and Acts 20:9-12; 16. Acts 11:19-24; 17. Three (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Peter 4:16); 18. Ephesians and Colossians; 19. Charity (love); 20. Murmurings and disputings

"Enclosed is a small donation to help with the expenses of publication. God bless you for the work you are doing through Him."

READ ALL OF LUKE CHAPTER 15.



"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10)

CANADA:

■ *"Please remove from mailing list."*

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC:

■ *"It is a pleasure to write to you to greet you and say that THE SWORD AND STAFF has been a blessing to me, I'm going to share the articles with the brothers in the congregation where I minister by the grace of God..."*

CHILE:

■ *"I am writing with the purpose of congratulating you for the excellent topics that appear in the paper: THE SWORD AND STAFF. Each time I like the paper more than the last..."*

GHANA:

■ *"I am very happy to receive another edition of THE SWORD AND STAFF entitled, 'Examination and Overview of Ephesians 4:11'... I thank you so much for your regular mailing of this wonderful journal. My prayer is that the Lord grant you sound health to continue your unselfish labor for the Lord."*

"I am so encouraged and uplifted in soul that through much study and research from THE SWORD AND STAFF members here have obtained more growth to carry the soul saving message of Jesus to the many lives with which we come in contact..."

PHILIPPINES:

■ *"This is to inform you of the change of my address...I know that money is needed to continue publishing such a good magazine, and how I wish that I could help even a little, but I could not. However, it is our prayer that the good Lord will supply such needed money from other sources, Christians who are able to."*

"THE SWORD AND STAFF magazine is unique in that it contains articles that edify and encourage the members of the church the Bible way...to the right direction...the only magazine that we are receiving, and we don't want to miss an issue."

■ *"I have read with interest the series involving 'the Bible and Prophecy' by David Vaughn Elliott, and it is really Scriptural. I have only one question for you and the author: Were there only two temples built by the Jews before Christ's first coming (after the first temple built by Solomon was destroyed by Babylon), or were there three temples?..."*

Answer: Your question about two or three temples is a very good question. Actually, both answers can be considered right. It just depends upon how a person wants to look at it. Solomon, of course, built the First Temple, and it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. There is no problem there.

The Second Temple was built under the direction of Zerubbabel when the Jews started returning from the Babylonian captivity around 538 B.C. Later, in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, in the Second Century B.C., the temple was badly desecrated but not destroyed. Judas Maccabeus did not have to rebuild the temple; he had to cleanse it. Up to this point in history, everyone is in agreement about the First Temple and the Second Temple.

The "problem" arises when Herod the Great, under the Romans, in the First Century before Christ, wanted to rebuild the temple. The Jews were afraid that by trickery or for any other reason, their temple would be torn down and not rebuilt. They were not satisfied with Herod's plans until Herod gathered together all the materials needed for the new temple. Only then was the old one taken down and the new one built in its place.

Since the temple at this time was not destroyed by an enemy, but was peaceably rebuilt, many call this the "rebuilt Second Temple." Others call it the "Third Temple." Whether Second or Third, it is often called "Herod's Temple."

Second or Third? I believe that the Jewish people most usually refer to only the First and Second Temple, not a Third. I mostly agree with that view. It is true that in John 2:20, the Jews say "Forty-six years was this temple in building," clearly referring to "Herod's Temple." However, my attention is called to the great prophecy in Haggai 2:4-9: "Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, says the LORD... For thus says the LORD of hosts... I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts...The glory of his latter house shall be greater than of the former, says the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, says the LORD of hosts." I understand this to be a prophecy that the Messiah's presence would make the Second Temple more glorious than the First Temple.

But some would argue the other way. In the end, it is a matter of explaining what you mean. Some view Herod's Temple as the Third Temple; others prefer to refer to it as the rebuilt Second Temple.—D.V.E. □

***When you are in Christ and Christ is in you,
salvation and victory are assured.***

Daniel Foretells Indestructible Kingdom

(Continued from Page 8)

In great contrast to this Old Testament kingdom of Israel, the fifth kingdom of Daniel's prophecy would be worldwide in its scope.

The Duration of the Kingdom: "A kingdom which shall never be destroyed...It shall stand forever," declared Daniel (verse 44). Not for a century; not for five centuries; not even for a mere millennium (one thousand years).

This fifth kingdom is an eternal, never-ending kingdom, standing forever and ever. This is in direct contrast to the four kingdoms of this world. The second kingdom overcomes the first; the third overcomes the second, and so forth. So is the march of history. The Roman Empire lasted for a full half millennium; but Rome, too, fell. In recent years, before our very eyes, we have seen the dramatic collapse of the Soviet Union, an empire that lasted for only 70 years.

The kingdom of God was prophesied to last, not for 70 years, nor for half a millennium, nor for a full millennium, nor even for as long as the world stands. It was prophesied to be a kingdom to last forever. One day the earth itself will be destroyed; but God's kingdom is "a kingdom which shall never be destroyed...It shall stand forever."

The Arrival of the Kingdom: Of utmost interest and importance in this prophecy is that it foretells the time of the arrival of God's kingdom. Not the precise date, but a specific time frame nevertheless. What other prophecy in the Old Testament so clearly connects God's promised kingdom to a specific period of time in history? "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom" (2:44). In the days of which kings? It would be profitable to review the context of Daniel's explanation:

"Now we will tell the interpretation...the God of heaven has given you a kingdom...after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron...Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided...the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile...And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom" (verses 36-44).

Before God's kingdom, there would be only four worldly kingdoms. There is much explanation of the fourth kingdom. Clay is mixed in, but the iron is still there. The kingdom is partly strong and partly fragile, but it is still the fourth kingdom. The expression "the kingdom" is used twice when speaking of the feet and toes. But it does not say "another kingdom" or "a fifth kingdom." Rather, it says "the kingdom" because the fourth kingdom is still in view. In short, the image portrays only four kingdoms.

The four kingdoms are Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. No one claims that the eternal kingdom of God was set up in the days of the Babylonian Empire, nor of the Persian or Grecian empires. That leaves us with only one possibility: the Roman Empire, during which time Jesus of Nazareth was born, crucified and resurrected.

The Roman Empire lasted for about 500 years. Finally, in 476 A.D. it came to an end. The last Roman Emperor, a lad, was brushed aside when the German leader Odovacar made himself king of Italy. True, the Empire continued in the East, with Constantinople as the capital. Some call this the Eastern Roman Empire. Others more correctly call it the Byzantine Empire. It was not Roman. Rome was "West" and Latin; Constantinople was "East" and Greek. Indeed, part of the time, Constantinople actually ruled Rome. The "Roman" Empire was gone. If by "Roman Empire" one means the Empire that was ruled by Romans from Rome, it was dead in 476 A.D.

The year 476 A.D. is thus the total and final ending date for Nebuchadnezzar's image. Since the prophecy foretold that God's Kingdom (the stone) would smite and destroy the image, God's Kingdom must have come into existence sometime before 476 A.D. Only thus could it fulfill the words: "in the days of these kings."

Chapter 7—The Five Kingdoms Revisited

Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2 does not stand alone. In chapter 7, Daniel records related visions of his own which God granted half a century later. Daniel was told that four beasts represent four kings (7:17) or kingdoms (7:23). However, chapter 7 does not openly identify any of the kingdoms; so, where does the prophecy begin? One must return to Daniel 2.

Both chapters predict four earthly kingdoms. In addition, since both prophecies were made during the time of the Babylonian Empire, they both have the same historical setting. There is thus every reason to believe that the four kingdoms in the two prophecies are the same four kingdoms. Indeed, there is no reason to believe otherwise.

Since Daniel 2 positively identifies the first kingdom as the Babylonian power, this becomes the only meaningful place to begin in chapter 7. Using this clue of similarity as the starting point, the other details of the beasts in Daniel 7 fall into place. Thus, the lion is Babylon, the bear is Persia, the leopard is Greece and the terrible beast is Rome.

On the other hand, there are important differences between chapters 2 and 7. To attempt to totally intertwine their details results only in confusion. Chapter 7 is more extensive; it focuses on matters not contemplated in chapter 2. Its fulfillment extends into later periods of history.

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Gold, Silver and Precious Stone Christians

MANY ARE out to build mega-churches with thousands of members, and mega-church buildings and mega-church staffs through sports evangelism or social evangelism, i.e., feeding them on the bread of this world, rather than the bread of Christ. What it takes to fill the building, is what it is going to take to keep it full. A change of diet to solid Bible preaching and teaching, book, chapter and verse, will likely empty the building, but that is what it takes to have gold, silver and precious stone Christians. All others, "wood, hay, stubble" will be destroyed in the fiery test [I Corinthians 3:9-13].—*Earl Chambers* □

BARBS... with a Point

IF THE LORD is not Lord of all in your life, then He is not Lord at all in your life.

You can tell much about a man by what he does when he has nothing else to do.

If you want your wife to treat you like a king, stop acting like a tyrant and start treating her like a queen.

The person who does as he pleases many times does not please the Lord.

A strong person can talk about his shortcomings and weaknesses, but a weak person is intimidated and crushed to talk about them.

If you don't respect your husband, don't expect your children to respect him either.

Someone has said that if we talk Christianity by the yard and live it by the inch, we should be dealt with by the foot.

The cobwebs of human tradition become ropes that bind us in the ways of man.

Homosexuals do not produce their kind by procreation (for God only made male and female); they produce their kind by molestation.

It is hard to have the mind of Christ when you have been brainwashed by the world.

If a person is not holy in his or her heart, we might as well forget about the outward expression of it in modest adornment.

To feed your insecurities with food may not be good for you physically or spiritually.

A U. S. president who practices sodomy in the White House and a former U. S. president who publicly undercuts the authority of the Spirit-inspired apostles on the role of women in the church and in the home are not good for our country.

If you would give the world to go to heaven that is just exactly what it takes.

Is this true? Political liberals are people who want to be liberal with someone else's money; political conservatives are those who want to be conservative with their own money.

Better not rub shoulders with people who wear their feelings on their sleeves.

It is really a sad commentary upon "Christianity" when so-called "Christian" nations have no scruples about going to war and killing those of other so-called "Christian" nations, whereas Moslems have a strong aversion to bearing arms against fellow Moslems of another country.

If we cannot accomplish the work of the church through the church, it is not the work of the church we are doing.

In some religious circles some people are so reactionary against religious error that they cannot understand and simply enjoy the truth in a positive way for what it is and thus become proponents of new error themselves.

Insecure people are the most likely ones to be "taken in" by the self-seeking person who uses flattery and thus would use them.

A negative mental attitude draws negative things to it, as well as spilling over in a negative way toward others, bringing negative consequences to many lives; keep a positive mental attitude.

Some preachers can really "beat around the bush," but they seem to never "tree" anything.

In adversity we find our true selves, just who and what we really are, as the deceptive veneer and delusion of the superficial is stripped away. □

BLESSED IS THE MAN

BLESSED IS THE MAN who can criticize himself before criticizing others.

BLESSED IS THE MAN who always puts God first.

BLESSED IS THE MAN who is as pleasant at home as he is when the world is watching.

BLESSED IS THE MAN who realizes that God meant him to live eternally and act accordingly.

BLESSED IS THE MAN who is quick to apologize for wrongdoing.

BLESSED IS THE MAN who knows right from wrong and indomitably sticks to the right.

BLESSED IS THE MAN who is easy to live with.

BLESSED IS THE MAN who can say "NO" to temptation and stick with it.

BLESSED IS THE MAN who loves God supremely.

BLESSED IS THE MAN who fears God for he need fear nothing else.—*Selected* □

The Desire of A Christian's Heart

AS A CHRISTIAN, we want all of our heart, soul, mind and strength to be entirely focused upon God our Father through Jesus Christ our Lord. Every area of our life is to be fully centered on Him. Are we determined to live a life of passionate, uncompromising, fervent devotion to God? Are we committed to actually living in God, living with God, and living for God every day, moment by moment? Do we know Him inwardly, personally, intimately, and deeply? If so, the following statements will express our heartfelt aspirations.

With these thoughts in mind, let us make the following words our very own. Let us use them to communicate our passion for the living God. (We may adapt the wording to actually pray these phrases directly to our heavenly Father.)

- We want to seek God persistently,
- Trust in Him freely,
- Rejoice in Him gratefully,
- Walk with Him closely,
- Learn of Him progressively,
- Follow Him single-mindedly,
- Listen to Him intently,
- Pursue Him unrelentingly,
- Serve Him resolutely,
- Exult in Him joyfully,
- Submit to Him unreservedly,
- Fear Him reverently,
- Wait for Him expectantly,
- Give to Him sacrificially,
- Gaze upon Him wonderingly,
- Magnify Him devoutly,
- Rest in Him contentedly,
- Labor for Him diligently,
- Bring joy to Him lovingly,
- Pray to Him unceasingly,
- Honor Him humbly,
- Be conformed to Him absolutely,
- Confide in Him thoroughly,
- Worship Him sincerely,
- Work for Him urgently,
- Receive Him abundantly,
- Speak of Him boldly,
- Praise Him perpetually,

- Cling to Him constantly,
 - Thirst for Him intensely,
 - Hunger for Him wholeheartedly,
 - Yearn for Him earnestly,
 - Surrender to Him conclusively,
 - Be satisfied in Him perfectly,
 - Be surrounded by Him totally,
 - Heed Him carefully,
 - Rely on Him implicitly,
 - Be loyal to Him uncompromisingly,
 - Glorify Him rapturously,
 - Think of Him devoutly,
 - Read of Him regularly,
 - Delight in Him solely,
 - Hide in Him securely,
 - Hold to Him unshakably,
 - Sing to Him purely,
 - Bow before Him willfully,
 - Be ruled by Him meticulously,
 - Dream of Him nightly,
 - Love Him passionately,
 - Obey Him explicitly,
 - Kneel before Him submissively,
 - Be filled with Him fully,
 - Yield to Him completely,
 - Confess Him openly,
 - Be broken before Him entirely,
 - Know Him intimately,
 - Grow in Him increasingly,
 - Bless Him continually,
 - Strive for Him ardently,
 - Hope in Him eagerly,
 - Please Him Purposefully,
 - Adore Him supremely,
 - Mediate on Him perpetually,
 - Abide in Him permanently,
 - Look for Him confidently,
 - Be united to Him unendingly,
 - And enjoy Him eternally!
- Adapted from
Richard Hollerman

Spilled Over Into the Church

BECAUSE CHRISTIANS are too much a part of the world today, the world has spilled over into the church. The hippie generation that saw a relaxation in how people dress, sometimes being very crude and unseemly, can be seen in the

unkempt and casual dress (even the wearing of immodest shorts) in the supposed assembly of the saints. A generation brought up on television geared to entertainment with the applause and clapping of hands finds this appropriate in a religious setting. Man-centered activities and entertainment in the guise of worship are a regular feature. And the tempo and bluster in some circles are but a religious substitute for rock 'n' roll. Yes, the carnal and the physical unconsciously spill over into the church, and at other times they are deliberately used to attract people, as the purely spiritual would drive them away.—J.E.G. □



A Note On A Tree

SEVERAL YEARS ago Meyer Leven wrote in *Collier's* magazine about a girl in an orphanage asylum. She was quite unattractive and had mannerisms that were not very attractive either, and so she was disliked and shunned by the other children and was not liked by her teachers.

The head of the institution looked for a reason to send her off to some other school. One afternoon the opportunity came. She was suspected of writing unapproved, clandestine notes to people outside the institution. One of the little girls had just reported, "I saw her write a note and hide it on a tree near the stone wall." The superintendent hurried to the tree and found the note. He then passed it silently to his assistant. The note read, "To whoever finds this, I love you."

In essence, someone else also wrote a note and put it on a tree outside a city wall at another place a long time ago. Of him, too, it was written, "He had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected of men." They sought to get rid of Jesus. They took him out to Calvary's hill where they crucified him. They nailed him to a tree. But when men got there, they find a note on that tree that reads, "To whoever find this, I love you."—Adapted □

Daniel Foretells Indestructible Kingdom

(Continued from Page 12)

A comparison may be made with Jesus' three parables in Luke 15. The parable of the lost sheep and lost coin teach the loving care of the one who seeks the lost. The parable of the lost boy, on the other hand, tells how the boy had to come to his senses and make a decision. The lost sheep did nothing to be saved, much less the lost coin. However, man's free will and choice are not the subject of these two parables.

The third parable contemplates important truths which are not contemplated in the first two. The three parables are surely similar, but it would be a distortion of truth to even ask what the first two parables teach about freedom of will in salvation. That question is entirely outside the scope of the parables of the lost sheep and lost coin. So it is with the four-kingdom image of Daniel 2 and the four beasts of Daniel 7. There are truths in chapter 7 which are not at all contemplated in chapter 2.

The fourth kingdom is a divided kingdom: As a case in point, the "ten horns" of chapter 7 take us into territory not contemplated in chapter 2. Chapter 2, indeed, speaks of a "divided" kingdom. A careful Bible student, however, will notice that this division has nothing to do with the ten toes. The image has ten toes simply because it is the image of a man. Its ten toes have no more prophetic meaning than do its ten fingers.

The prophecy in chapter 2 clearly identifies what division is contemplated: "Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided...And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile" (Daniel 2:41-42). The division—the partly and partly—is not the ten toes, but rather the iron and the clay, the strong and the fragile.

Many students of the Word understand that the ten horns and especially the "little horn" of the terrible beast in chapter 7 take us prophetically into history *after* the fall of the Roman Empire. That is to say, Rome continues, but in a different form. Many of us see clearly that this "little horn" represents the ecclesiastical power that arose in Rome upon the ashes of the Roman Empire.

However, nothing of this is contemplated in the image of chapter 2, in the same manner that the parable of the lost coin in no way relates to the question of man's free will. There is nothing in chapter 2 which deals in any way with what would happen in Rome after the fall of the Roman Empire. All that is contemplated is the Roman Empire itself and its fall. Whatever the prophet had in mind by the iron and the clay, it was to be a mixture of strength and weakness within that fourth—Roman—Empire.

More details on God's kingdom: Also, concerning the kingdom of God, there are various elements in chapter 7 which are not dealt with in chapter 2. Only one such element will be discussed here: information about the circumstances surrounding the King receiving the kingdom.

"I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, *One* like the Son of Man,
Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near before Him.
Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom *the one*
Which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13,14).

The "Son of Man" is pictured as "coming with the clouds of heaven." But where is He "coming" to? Note that He is not coming to earth. Rather, He is coming *"to"* the "Ancient of Days," the Father. The "Son" comes with the clouds, is brought to the Father and is then and there given dominion, glory and an everlasting kingdom. These details are of the utmost importance when studying "the kingdom" in the New Testament.

The prophecies of Daniel are one of the major reasons the Jews of Jesus' day were anticipating the arrival of the Kingdom of God on earth. No study of the "kingdom" in the New Testament is complete without a careful consideration of the background furnished in the Old Testament prophecies. Hopefully, all those who are reading these words are far more interested in the Kingdom of Heaven than they are in the kingdoms of this world, whether headquartered in Babylon, Rome, Washington or anywhere else.

Note by author: *This is only the first article regarding prophecies of the Messianic Kingdom and their fulfillment. Look for more in future issues.*

(Scripture in the preceding article is taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.)

"The Sun Might Shine"

IT HAD BEEN a dreary, dismal day. In fact, it had been raining all week and the sun had failed to shine. As the little girl lay in her sickroom, the nurse drew the shades to shut out the sight of the dreary drizzle outside. After all, she thought, the artificial lights of the room would be better sight than the cheerless outdoors. But the little brown-eyed girl had different ideas. "Don't pull the shade down! The sun might shine, and if does, I don't want to miss it!" What a good attitude! What optimism!—*Selected* □



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The Middle of the Bible

Did you know that:

- Psalm 118 is the middle of the entire Bible?
- Psalm 117, before Psalm 118, is the shortest chapter in the Bible?
- Psalm 119, right after Psalm 118, is the longest chapter in the Bible?
- The Bible has 594 chapters before Psalm 118 and 594 chapters after Psalm 118?
- If you add up all the chapters except Psalm 118, you get a total of 1188 chapters?
- 1188 or Psalm 118 verse 8 is the middle verse of the entire Bible?
- Should the central verse not have an important message?

"It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man" (Psalm 118:8).—*Selected* ☐

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"Let It Go Through You"

ONE FELLOW said that he received no inspiration from reading the Bible even though he had "gone through it several times." "Let it go through you just once," the evangelist replied, "then you will tell a different story!"

Isn't that the trouble most of us have? We spend a lot of time just listening to sermons or hearing teachers in classes expound on Bible passages, but go our way and forget what we have heard (James 1:16-27).—*Selected* ☐

This Love Imbibe, Imbue

Pity the person who pities himself
For pitiful indeed he has become;
Thereby reducing self to less than pelf;
Pitifully depressed, benumbed and glum.

Dear one, look up and know that God is love;
Then there beyond your blinded, clouded view
Brothers await, so give yourself a hefty shove;
Cheer up, reach out, their love imbibe, imbue.

This love imbibed is shared with one and all;
Becoming now a blessing, you are blessed;
Enslaving thoughts of self do not enthrall,
As needs and cares of others are addressed.

—By James E. Gibbons

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