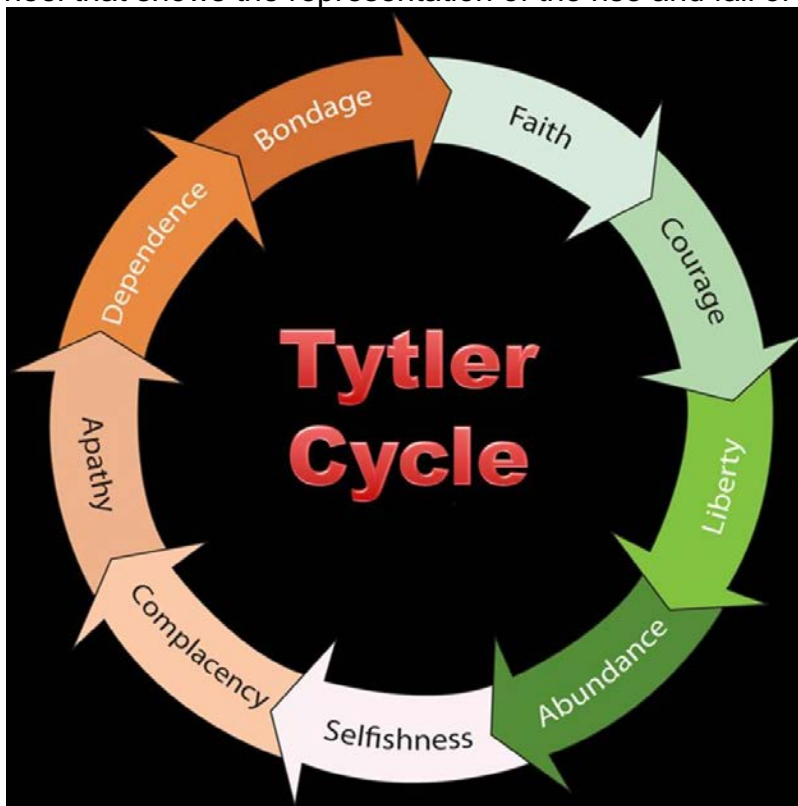


“The Rise and Fall of Nations, Part 1,” Daniel 2:31-43

The Apostle Paul warned Timothy in the last letter he would ever write that in the last days evil men will go worse and worse. Meaning that as the days grow shorter, hastening the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, there will be a continual process of deterioration on this earth. This deterioration began in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve chose to disobey God and fell into sin and continues right up to today.

Scottish Professor and historian Alexander Tytler noted something very profound in the year 1787. This was when we, as a nation, were only 13 colonies. Tytler came up with what we today call: “The Tytler Cycle.” It’s a wheel that shows the representation of the rise and fall of a nation. Take a look:



Start at the top (and we’ll go right). It all begins with people having **Faith** and the search for the freedom to live out that faith. The people then garner the **Courage** to fight for freedom. Think about us defeating the British. Then the nation is established and there is **Liberty**, where prosperity and freedom are achieved. Then the nation reaches a period of **Abundance** (5 o’clock) where the nation has become prosperous.

Unfortunately, this leads **Selfishness**. Then **Complacency** (7 o’clock) and this sets in motion entitlement and self-absorption. **Apathy** then takes hold, which leads to the government stepping in and freedoms being curtailed, and the populace becomes dependent, leading to a state of **Dependency** (10 o’clock) on the government. It’s at this point, the government gains total control and the people are then held captive by the government in total **Bondage**, with all loss of freedom. And the only way out of bondage is if the people oppose their conditions and are willing to have faith and courage to seek liberty again.

Now you may ask, “What’s your point in sharing all of this?” My point is this: we better take stock as a nation, where we are. I would argue that we’re at the point of apathy and dependence and we

better wake-up before we fly off the cliff into bondage. Church, I believe the United States is heading to bondage because we have turned our backs on God.

You see, God's own people turned their backs on God, and their nation ended up splitting into two kingdoms with the northern kingdom being overtaken by the Assyrians in 722 BC and the southern kingdom being taken over by the Babylonians in three waves a little over 135 years later.

Nations rise and nations fall...and this will continue, until the return of Jesus, when He will make all things right and rule and reign in magnificent power and authority over all the earth. But that's to come.

For this morning, we return to our study Daniel, and we're going to see how young Daniel...a teenager, or 20-something, at most, is placed by God, in the position to interpret a dream for the most powerful man on the face of the earth. The dream? Well, the dream is about the rise and fall of not only his nation, but all the nations of the world until the return of Christ. It's truly an amazing dream and we're going to begin to see it in detail. I say begin to see it...because this will be part 1 of a 2-part message that we'll conclude next week. The title of today's message is: "The Rise and Fall of Nations."

I want to draw your mind back to the depiction of a scene that we showed you last week.



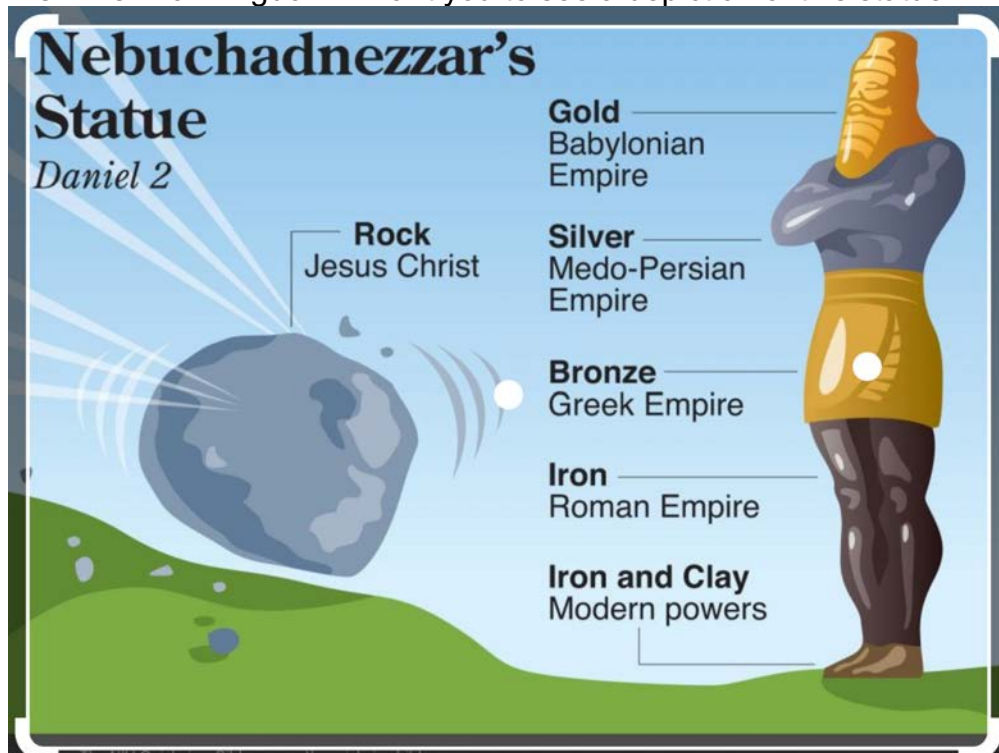
This is such an astounding thing...a teen before a King. Daniel is now ready to tell Nebuchadnezzar his dream and the interpretation of it.

Daniel 2:31-34

³¹ "You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening.³² The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, ³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.³⁴ As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

Now, I want you to think with me about something. Nebuchadnezzar is a pagan, Gentile king and God is giving this revelation about how things are going to unfold for the rest of human history, right up to the return of Jesus. Yes, this revelation was given to the King of Babylon, not a King of Israel. It's interesting, the prophet Ezekiel wrote about how God had said: "Ichabod" (meaning: "God has left") about the nation of Israel. And sure enough, God allowed the nation to be punished by being carried off into captivity. Yes, that's true...but in this revelation, we're going to also see that God doesn't abandon His people and will not give up on them, because after 70 years of captivity, under another pagan King, Cyrus, they would be allowed to return home.

Now, you'll, notice from verse 31, Daniel describes the image as: "this great image." That word "great" in Aramaic means: "immense or massive." And so, it's huge and that frightened Nebuchadnezzar. It's from this image we're going to see: the 5 world empires that will come and be in power, until Jesus returns and restores Israel, as He sits upon the throne, ruling the world from Jerusalem, in His Millennial Kingdom. I want you to see a depiction of this statue...



The head was gold...that was Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon, the chest was made of silver, the waist: bronze, the legs: iron and the feet: iron and clay. And think about this...that depicts a decrease in value as it goes down. Gold is the most valuable...but the value decreases until you get to the feet that's iron mixed with clay. And something else...this thing is massively top heavy...and easily toppled and oh, it will be...because a stone...representing Jesus will topple it. See the depiction.



A stone not cut by human hands, meaning it had no human source, will topple it. Let's keep reading...

Daniel 2:35

³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

So, the entire image comes crashing down and it's broken to smithereens and it just blows away like dust. What does this mean? It's all Gentile history being blown away setting up the return of Jesus, who will rule and reign from the throne of David, keeping His promise to the nation of Israel. Wow! What a dream!

Now, church, look at your Bibles with me...has Nebuchadnezzar said anything yet? Nope! Not a word! I believe he was speechless...sitting there with his mouth hanging open. Now Daniel is going to give more details...

Daniel 2:36-38

³⁶ "This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation. ³⁷ You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, ³⁸ and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—you are the head of gold.

Daniel reminds Nebuchadnezzar that it's the "God of heaven..." the only God...the One who bestows power and might...who is revealing this dream. And you know what I thought of? Paul talking to the elites at Mars Hill.

Acts 17:24-26

²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man,^[c] ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. ²⁶ And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place.

Church, never forget that it's God who has determined the allotted periods and times and the seasons and the boundaries of nations and people. So, we don't have to be afraid of the future, because God holds the future in His magnificent sovereignty. It was God who raised up

Nebuchadnezzar. And God would use him to chasten and punish His people. Take a look with me at another depiction of this statue...



Gold at the top. Babylon was known for gold. The Greek historian Herodotus, visited Babylon 90 years after the era of Nebuchadnezzar and wrote that he had never seen such an abundance of gold in all of his life, as he saw in Babylon. Well, we move down the statue...to the second kingdom:

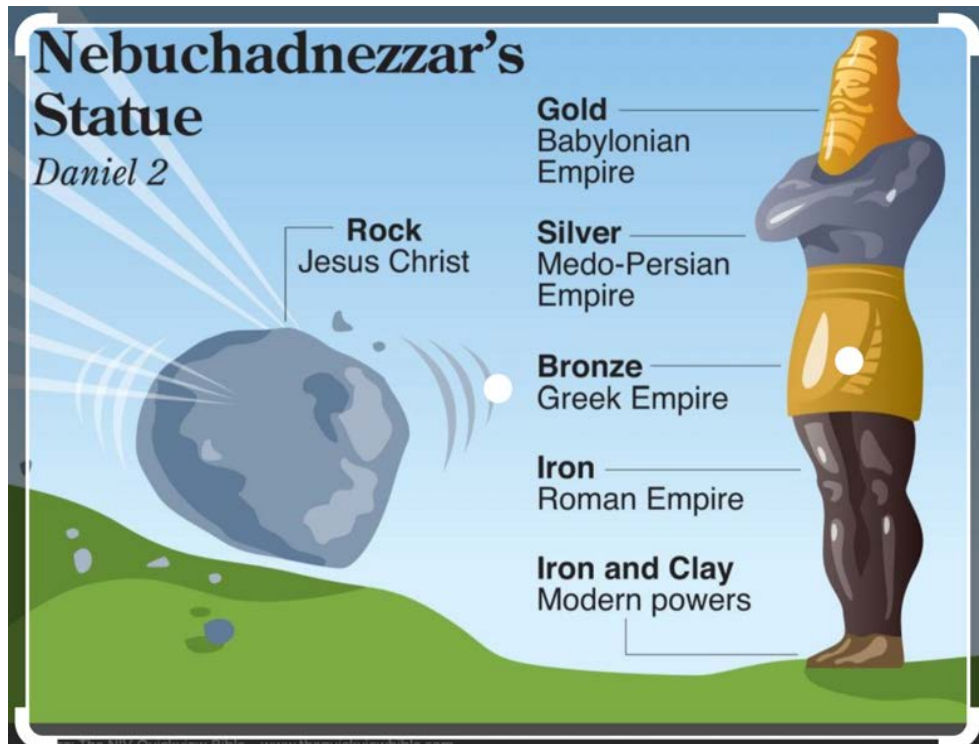
Daniel 2:39a

³⁹ Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you,

Remember from back in verse 32 that the breast and the arms are silver. See it again...



There is no longer solidarity in the head. It's split in the arms and chest...and scholars tell us that's the Medo-Persian Empire, which would reign in power from 530 BC to 331 BC . See the chart again...



See the silver under the head...that's the combination of two people groups, the Medes and Persians and it was characterized by silver. Now the third kingdom...

Daniel 2:39b

and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

Now, this third kingdom is represented by the belly and the thighs and they're made of bronze.



This symbolizes the reign of Greece 331 BC to 146 BC under Alexander the Great. Historians tell us that the Greeks fought with swords of bronze along with helmets, breastplates and shields of bronze. Alexander the Great demanded the title "king of all the earth," and he extended his empire from Western Europe all the way to India. Alexander died at the age of just 30 of malaria. He known as a

glutton and a drunkard. So sad, what power can do to people. Next up: the fourth kingdom...and that is represented by Rome...reigning from 146 BC to 395 AD.

Daniel 2:40

40 And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these.

If you know your history, you'll know that Rome emerged out of nowhere, and scoped in size and power even **further and greater** than Alexander's conquests. One historian said: "The Roman legions crushed all resistance with an iron heel." **And in the statue, that's the legs of iron.** It's interesting to note that the legs, being the longest part of the statue...depicting the duration of the Roman Empire...lasting over 500 years. And BTW...many prophetic scholars see the iron legs...the TWO legs as ultimately representing the division of the Roman Empire in 395 A.D., which resulted in the Eastern (Byzantine) Empire, with its capital in Constantinople, and the Western Empire, with its capital in Rome...split, like legs.

Now, I want to stop here for a moment and I want us to ponder what we've seen...Look at it...

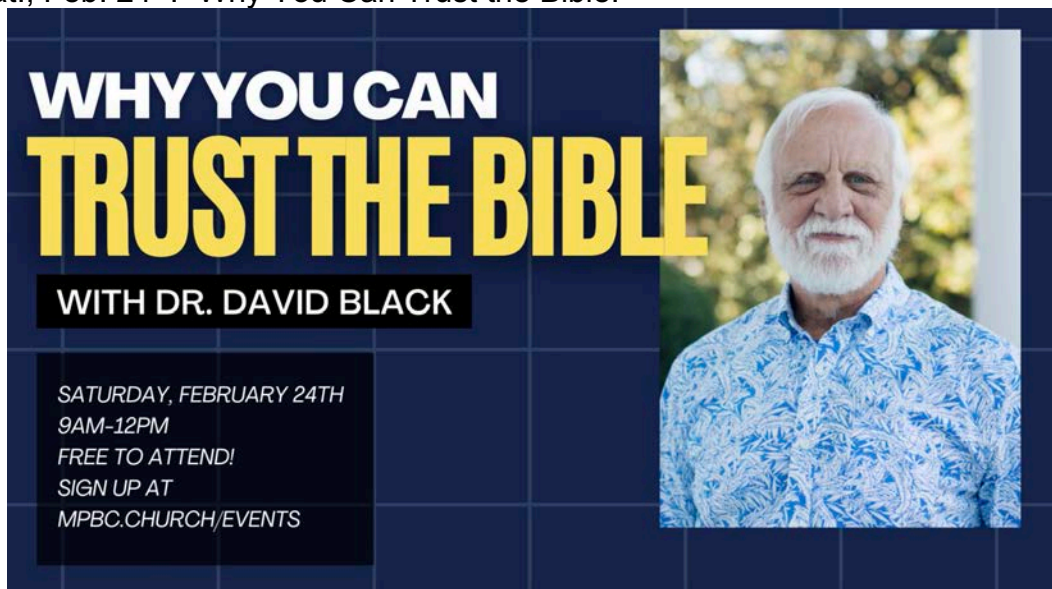


Did everything that Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar come true? Did everything this teenager...this 20-something tell Nebuchadnezzar come true? Yes! Church, all you have to do is read your history books and you'll see it all came true. From Babylon to the Medo-Persians, to the Greeks...to the Romans...just read your history books...it all came true!

"So, what are you trying to say, Pastor?" I'm trying to say that one of the greatest proofs regarding the reliability of the Bible and why you can trust as God's Holy Word is because of all of the prophecies contained in this book have come true. Predictions were made and they came true, not 50% of the time. 75% of the time 90% of the time. No, if there's a prophecy noted in the Bible, it always comes true, 100% of the time!

Listen carefully, fulfilled prophecy shows the world that the Bible can be trusted. It's proof that's external even from Scripture itself; and so, for the skeptic...they have to stare history in the face and try to deny what's right before their eyes. Yes, the Bible predicts it and it comes true...100%...verified

in human history. And this brings me to a plug for the conference we've got coming up with Dr. David Black on Sat., Feb. 24th. "Why You Can Trust the Bible."



The poster features a dark blue background with a grid pattern. On the right side, there is a portrait of Dr. David Black, an older man with a white beard and hair, wearing a blue patterned shirt. To the left of the portrait, the title "WHY YOU CAN TRUST THE BIBLE" is written in large, bold, white and yellow letters. Below the title, it says "WITH DR. DAVID BLACK" in white text on a black rectangular background. Further down, in a smaller white font, it lists the date and time: "SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24TH 9AM-12PM", and notes that it is "FREE TO ATTEND!" and provides the sign-up link "SIGN UP AT MPBC.CHURCH/EVENTS".

It's a one-day conference, from 9-till noon and we'll have a light breakfast at 8:30 and I want to encourage you to **sign-up and come**. Why? For two reasons. #1 It's worth your time, because Dr. Black is a treasure...he's one of the most renowned Bible Scholars in the world and what he will share with us will encourage and strengthen your faith, mightily! #2 to know how much breakfast to get. Please sign on the Events page.

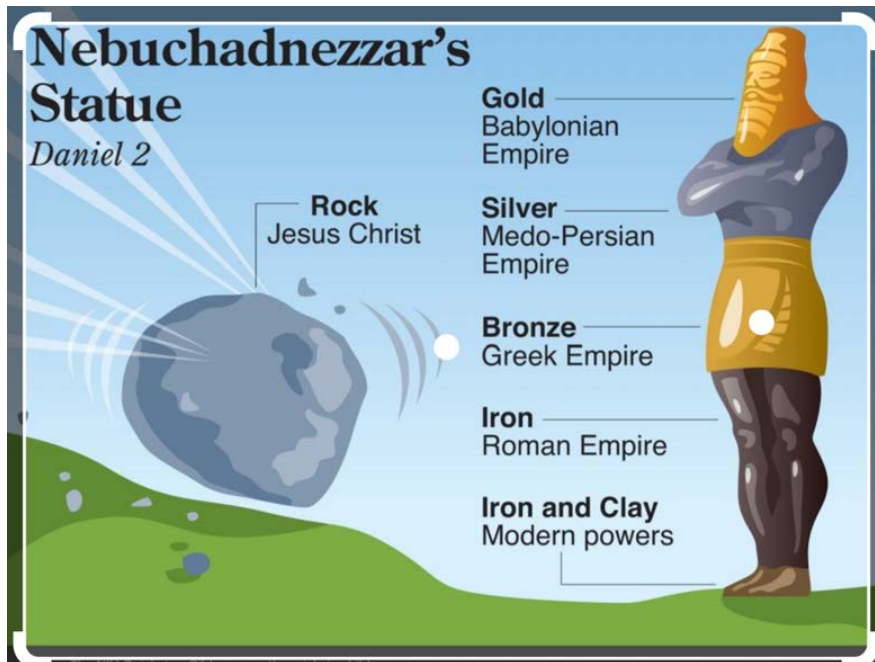
BTW, earlier this week, Dr. Black said this on his blog, talking about the upcoming conference here: **"I hope you can join us in Wilkesboro, NC for our Saturday seminar. Because there are many who would undermine the Bible today, even in our churches. They have a strategy, a plan of attack, that can easily dupe us if we're not vigilant. They will tell you what is reliable in the Bible and what is not. How is it that doubters living thousands of years after the fact feel qualified to pass judgment on the authority of God's word?"**

If the Bible is to be authoritative, it must be true. A partially inerrant Bible is an errant Bible. Inerrancy means that the Bible is completely trustworthy and reliable in its original form. And as we study it, we can anticipate answers to all the questions of life that are essential.

I eagerly anticipate sharing with you my answers to the two most common objections to the Bible's inerrancy and answering your questions." Dr. David A. Black, Greek Professor, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

Sign-up today, it's going to be a great conference and you'll be greatly encouraged in your faith.

Well, we're to the bottom of the statue...all the way down to the feet...see the depiction...



made of iron and clay. These are often described as the “modern powers.”

Daniel 2:41-43

41 And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. ***42*** And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. ***43*** As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage,^[c] but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay.

This last Kingdom is depicted as feet with toes. And how many toes do we have? 10. Now, it's interesting because we'll eventually get to Daniel chapter 7 and learn about ten kings...a ten-nation confederacy. And I don't think this is a coincidence. You can look at the book of Revelation and read in Revelation, chapter 17 that there will be ten kings who serve under the Antichrist, who we will see in Daniel's writings as the “little horn.”

You say, “So, what does this mean? Who are these “modern powers?” Well, some say it's going to be the rebirth of the Roman Empire. Some say that's already happening and they point to the establishment several years ago of the European Union? Some say all of this won't happen until the Tribulation period...the time of upheaval that comes to this earth after the church is removed and has been raptured off of this earth and taken to heaven...which will then usher in the man who says he can fix it all: the Antichrist. The point is: in my mind this is yet to happen. These powers are yet to be revealed in totality.

But I will tell you this...America is not mentioned in the apocalyptic writings of Daniel or in the book of the Revelation. People argue about this and say, “Well, America may not be known in its current form and may still be around.” I agree it may be around...but, not powerful enough to be named as world power. It's true, because we could be taken over by another world power, let's say China. You know China is pointed to in Revelation 9 and 16 as the “Kings of the East,” having a 200-million-man army and they will march to battle of Armageddon.

Church, I personally believe it's likely the United States will be weakened to the point that we no longer play an important role in the world. Unfortunately, I also believe we will eventually turn our backs totally on Israel. The Bible says that everyone will. But that hasn't happened yet, even though

I believe the Biden Administration would if they could, but they don't have the full public support to do so at this time...but you can see their position...

I'm sure you heard about pro-Palestinian mob that came to Washington last weekend. These people who are okay with the senseless killing of innocent Israelis by Hamas on Oct 7...oh, they came to DC to White house and sprayed graffiti all over the gates... White House staff members had to be relocated.



Those protestors almost break down the fence in front of the White House and not a single arrest was made. Sounds like Jan 6th to me...that doesn't fit their narrative. Genesis 12 says that God will "bless those who bless [Israel]" and curse those who curse Israel.

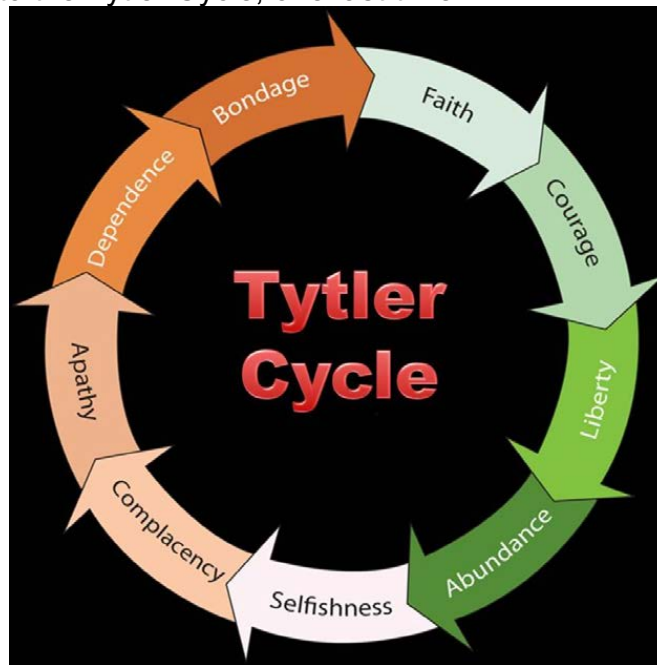
So, what does it mean that the feet/toes are mixed with iron and clay? It means they're brittle and can never stand...even though iron gives the impression of strength...the clay negates that. It's going to crumble. Here's the point...the feet and toes are going to fail...just like the rest of the statue... You see, there is no power that can overcome Jesus...the stone...when it comes...See it again...



This tells us: in the end...Jesus wins...the stone that will fill the entire earth...and church, that ought to fill us all with tremendous encouragement and hope!

As we close, I'll say this: evolutionists think the world is getting better and better as we get more evolved. But that isn't true. They're wrong! Everything is deteriorating...just like the statue from top

to bottom. Yes, Paul told Timothy...as time goes along, in the last days...men will wax worse and worse...bringing us back to the Tytler Cycle, one last time...



Are we headed to Bondage 11 o'clock or can we return to 1 o'clock, Faith, Courage and Liberty. Church, God can do anything.



Even putting a teenager in front of a pagan King...just so the events would begin that that young man Daniel, would eventually tell another pagan to allow the return of God's people to their homeland. Remember the picture...



Nothing is too hard for God. So, don't be afraid. God is in control of yesterday, today and forever. And one day He's going to look to His right, at His Jesus and tell Him: "Go get 'em...bring my people home." And that'll be a great day for the saved...but, for the lost, they'll go through tumultuous times on this earth...with the rise of the Antichrist with all of his deception...so, don't delay...trust Jesus...the stone, the rock, and be saved today!!
