

“The Rise and Fall of Nations, Part 2,” Daniel 2:44-49

1.28.24

Take a look at the screens and let me show you one of my favorite places on earth:



That’s the city of Jerusalem. It’s amazingly beautiful! The picture doesn’t do it justice. That’s a view from the Mount of Olives, the very place where Jesus will return one day and then walk through the Eastern Gate of the city, as Zechariah the prophet prophesied, and rule and reign for 1,000 years...His Millennial Reign, from Jerusalem. Let me show you another picture.



Jerusalem at night. It’s absolutely gorgeous when it’s lit up at night. I look forward, Lord willing, going back in the summer of 2025. I dearly love Jerusalem...it’s an amazing city. And I bring it up because it’s the focal point of God’s plan on this earth and has been since Abraham took Isaac up on Mount Moriah over 4,000 years ago. Do you know where Mount Moriah is? I’ll show you:



Mt. Moriah is the Temple Mount. Today, this sits on top of the Temple Mount:



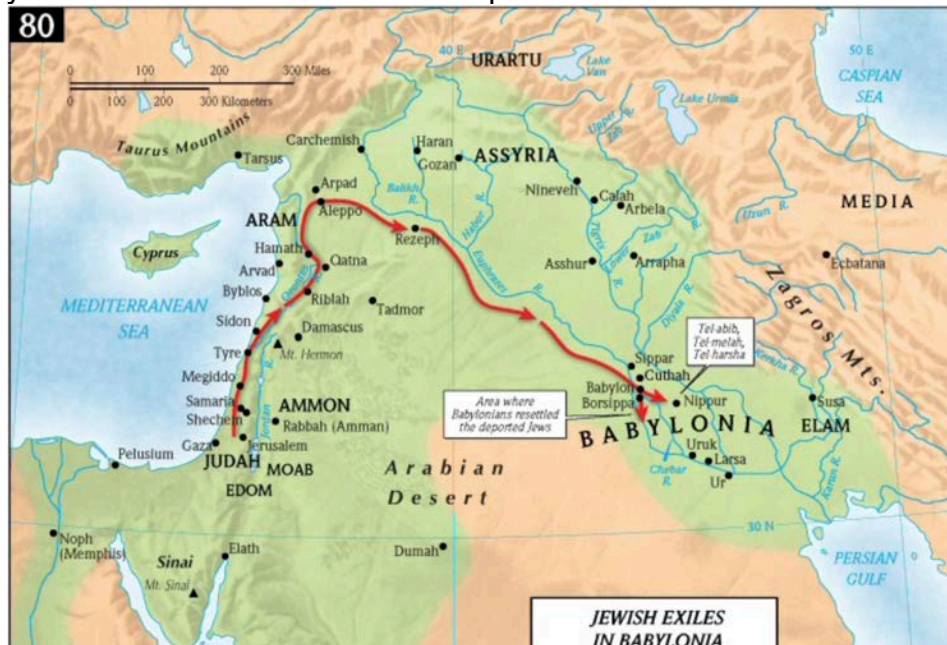
That's the Dome of the Rock, a Muslim-mosque that was built in 691 A.D. after Muslims took over Jerusalem about 60 years earlier. That mosque was built where the Temple resided when Jesus was on this earth. One day a new Temple will be erected and that new Temple will be where Jesus will set up His throne for His 1,000-year, Millennial Reign.

By the way, someone asked me last week: "Pastor Kevin, is the 1,000 years, literally 1,000 years?" Yes, it is. It's 1,000 literal years? How do we know? Well, it's because all of the other numbers used in the book of Revelation are literal. There are literally 7 churches, 12 tribes, 10 lamps, 10 horns, 7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 bowls, 200 miles, 3 days and on and on I could go. Those are literal numbers, and so, when we pray: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven?" That's literally going to be the case during the 1,000-year, millennial reign of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, I tell you all of this because this is prophecy. Prophecy that is yet to be fulfilled. But as sure as the young Hebrew slave Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar about the rise and fall of his kingdom, and not only his kingdom, but all Gentile nations and kingdoms to come...as sure as our history books tell us about the Babylonians, the Medes, Persians, Greeks and Romans...as sure as those kingdoms

were prophesied and came into existence, so will the kingdom of Jesus, just as it is prophesied in Scripture. If this book predicts it...it will come true 100% of the time...you can take that to the bank!

Turn in your Bibles to Jeremiah 52 for a moment. As you are turning, let me remind you of where we are in our study of Daniel. You will remember Daniel was a teenager, and his people...the southern kingdom of Judah had turned their back on God, and God allowed the Babylonians, led by King Nebuchadnezzar to take over the city of Jerusalem and haul off into captivity the best and the brightest to Babylon. See the red arrow on the map...



900 miles from Jerusalem to Babylon. Jerusalem was left in ruins. Let me show you this. Jeremiah 52, verse 12.

Jeremiah 52:12-14

¹² In the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month—that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard, who served the king of Babylon, entered Jerusalem. ¹³ And he burned the house of the Lord, and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down. ¹⁴ And all the army of the Chaldeans, who were with the captain of the guard, broke down all the walls around Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 52:28-30

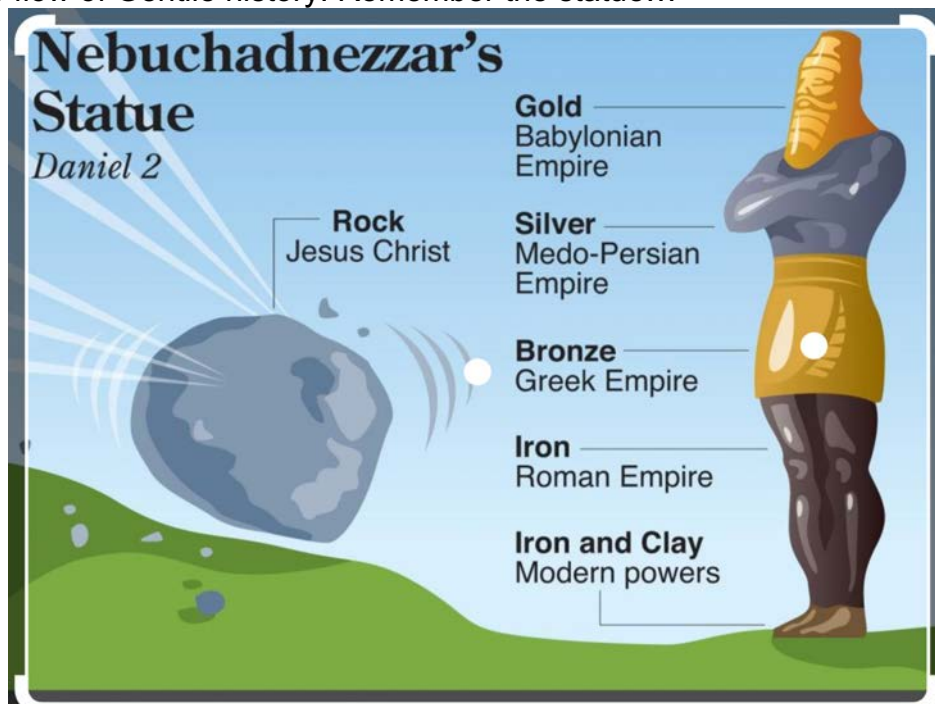
²⁸ This is the number of the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year, 3,023 Judeans; ²⁹ in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem 832 persons; ³⁰ in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Judeans 745 persons; all the persons were 4,600.

Nebuchadnezzar had two objectives in what he did to Jerusalem: #1 Destroy the house of God to disrupt the religious practices of the people and #2, destroy the political order of the nation. Sounds like America to me. Here, there is also an attack on the things of God in this country and the political order in this nation is suspect at best, now being controlled by, not Nebuzaradan, but political and judicial corruption in the highest places of our government. So, Jerusalem was destroyed and the best and brightest hauled off to Babylon and that's where, BY THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD, Daniel, a Hebrew slave would be brought before the most powerful man in the world. See the depiction we've been showing you...



That's an astounding picture...it would be like an 18-year old advising the Pres.

Church, God's plan to judge His people would include Daniel, a teenager, who was taken from his family, had his name changed, was emasculated, taught and trained in the ways of Babylon; and yet, he remained faithful to God and refused to be defiled by the King's food. This courage and conviction became known to all in the palace and when the King had a dream that scared him to death and no one could interpret it, ENTER DANIEL...and God revealed the dream to him...a dream that detailed the flow of Gentile history. Remember the statue...



You'll remember, the head was gold...that depicted Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire, the chest was made of silver, and that would be Medo-Persian Empire (which overtook Babylon),

and then, the waist was bronze, depicting the Greek Empire, led by Alexander the Great and then the Roman Empire, (the legs of iron), depicting a 500+ year reign, culminating in the feet and toes, mixed with iron and clay, which are the Modern World Powers. That is Gentile world history and it all came to fruition, just as Daniel prophesied that it would to Nebuchadnezzar.

But don't forget, there was also a stone...a stone not cut by human hands, (meaning it had no human source, but instead, originated from heaven). Remember the depiction of it...



That stone, Daniel said, “will destroy the statue,” as it comes from heaven and hits the feet and down it goes. That stone is the depiction of the Lord Jesus and His power that will come over all the earth. Let's see this in more detail now:

Daniel 2:44-49

⁴⁴ And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, ⁴⁵ just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.” ⁴⁶ Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him. ⁴⁷ The king answered and said to Daniel, “Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.”⁴⁸ Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. ⁴⁹ Daniel made a request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king's court.

Now church family, I want us to go back to a verse we saw last week and I mentioned a moment ago. Go back to verse 34...

Daniel 2:34

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 us to think about this stone, not cut by human hands... We know this is Jesus and literally this is a testament to His virgin birth. Without a human agency, without the normal course of the process of the creation of human life with male and female...God brought forth His Son by way of conception through a virgin, without human hands...but instead...by way of the Holy Spirit.

But church, here's the thing that's fascinating about this dream. As I studied this passage, I discovered some things about Nebuchadnezzar's chief god, as it relates to a mountain. Now, get this...based on archaeological digs in that region...the Babylonian's chief god was called:

Shadu Rabu - "The Great Mountain"

Nebuchadnezzar thought Shadu Rabu, the "mountain god" was the most powerful of all gods. Yet, Daniel tells him, based on his dream that stone, not made with human hands, is going to hit that massive image and destroy it and that stone will the whole earth and became, guess what? Vs 35...

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.

What does all of this mean? It means: Your god has been replaced Nebuchadnezzar. Your god is nothing...because a god that can be destroyed by another god is worthless! So, when Daniel described this event oh, Nebuchadnezzar knew exactly what Daniel was talking about!

You know that's how the Lord is...He brings things down to our level so we can understand how He's drawing us. I thought back to last week and all of those wonderful families who joined...



And then the 11 baptisms



and all of those amazing testimonies. I wish you could have heard them all. Each one was as unique as the person who shared it; and yet, they were all the same in that God, through His Holy Spirit, drew each person to Himself... God gave Nebuchadnezzar a dream that he could understand, that was unique and specifically for him!

And that's my prayer for you today...God speaks specifically to you and wakes you up so that you can be saved. Today is the day of salvation!

Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that stone would destroy all of the other world powers and world governments. That reminds me of Isaiah's prophecy: "And the government shall be upon His shoulder." Jesus will be in total control of this earth, and that's because He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords! And that's verses 44 and 45...

Daniel 2:44-45

⁴⁴And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever. ⁴⁵just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure."

You know, ask I thought about the stone, I thought about the fact that throughout Scripture Jesus is described as the "stone" or the "rock." For instance, back in Psalm 118.

Psalm 118:22

²² The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

The prophet Isaiah also this:

Isaiah 28:16

¹⁶ therefore thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’”

Turn in your Bibles to Matthew 7. At the end of Matthew 7, verse 24, we see the summary to Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount”...the greatest sermon ever preached...watch it...

Matthew 7:24-27

²⁴ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

How are you building your life? Are you building your life on the Rock of Jesus? If you aren’t, you are building on sand... See the screens...pretty, isn’t it...



But what’s going to eventually happen to this castle? When the tide comes in...



It's going down! This was true of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom and it's true of anyone who seeks to stand against God. The stone of Christ will crush all statues...even yours...even you. Daniel made sure Nebuchadnezzar knew what God was saying was guaranteed and sure! Go back to Daniel 2. See the end of verse 45 again.

Daniel 2:45b

A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.”

Church, why is it sure...why is it true...why is it certain? Because God said it. **Turn with me in your Bibles to Psalm 2.** I want to show you something that was prophesied 400 years before Daniel was even born... Watch this.

Psalm 2:1-12

¹ Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, ³ “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.” ⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. ⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, ⁶ “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.” ⁷ I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. ⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. ⁹ You shall break^[b] them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.” ¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. ¹¹ Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. ¹² Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Have you taken refuge in in the Son? This will be you!



Oh, Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you perish in the way. At this point, Nebuchadnezzar hits the floor on his face.

Daniel 2:46

⁴⁶ Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him.

This is astounding. He's gone from listening to this a teenager, this Hebrew slave, to being on his face paying homage to a Hebrew slave! Don't tell me God can't perform miracles! You say, "What's

he doing worshipping Daniel?" Well, I see it this way. He doesn't know Daniel's God, so he figures the only way to get to Daniel's God is through Daniel. So, he's just doing what he's always done...which is to worship physical objects...wood, stone...gold, silver, mountains, Shadu-Rabu. This was Nebuchadnezzar's introduction to God...the God of heaven...verse 47...

Daniel 2:47

⁴⁷ The king answered and said to Daniel, "Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery."

Nebuchadnezzar realized Daniel's God was better than his mountain god. So, is he converted. No, not yet. No, this doesn't last...Nebuchadnezzar is like a lot of people who act on emotion... He seems "all-in" at this point...on his face; but, he bails in short order...and we'll see that in the very next chapter...because the Fiery Furnace is coming! But at this moment, he's "all-in," and he's going to make this Hebrew slave his prime minister over the entire Babylonian Empire.

Daniel 2:48-49

⁴⁸ Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. ⁴⁹ Daniel made a request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king's court.

So good! Daniel didn't forget his friends...he placed them in positions of authority. And this is a reminder: "Don't forget your people, your friends...those who have helped you along the way." You see, Daniel was loyal and faithful to his fellow Hebrews...those young men who had stood with him, not eating the King's meat and locking in prayer with him, when Daniel was seeking the Lord for knowledge about the dream and its interpretation.

Church, let me make this comment. Daniel is in the administration of a pagan government, in a pagan country, in a pagan city. What's he supposed to do? He's supposed to promote the "welfare of the city." You say, where do you get that? I get it from what God told the prophet Jeremiah to tell the southern kingdom of Judah.

Remember Jeremiah had been tasked by God to preach to the people of the Southern Kingdom and implore them to repent, but they didn't. Therefore, they would have to endure chastisement and punishment and be hauled off. Yet, they were given instructions as to what to do if that happened.

Jeremiah 29:5-7

⁵ Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. ⁶ Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷ But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Church, that's what we're to do here and now as well. By and large, we're living in a pagan country (as far as the institutional powers who lead us, are concerned); yet, we don't give up. We keep praying and we keep seeking to be salt and light in the darkness.

I want to return to this picture as we close...



That's Jerusalem. And one day, Jesus will return and He will set up His throne and rule and reign for 1,000 (literal years) from that city. Now, you can believe that or not. But, as sure as He came the first time, and He did...just as was prophesied...He's coming again and just as is prophesied in Scripture, (because the Bible cannot lie), He will reign from Jerusalem. He is the rock, the cornerstone...the stone that will fill the earth.

The Apostle Peter said it this way:

1 Peter 2:6-8

⁶ For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." ⁷ So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," ⁸ and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

Those who reject Jesus are going to be destroyed, like Nebuchadnezzar's statue.



J. Vernon McGee said this about this passage:

“I hear people say, ‘I’ll take my chances.’ My unsaved friend, you do not have a chance. You are lost. We live in a world that’s already been judged. You are without God. You have no capacity for God. All you have in your heart is perhaps a little desire to be religious... But you my friend, you need to trust Christ as Savior, and this is not easy to do, is it? It is not easy to bow to Him and acknowledge Him. However, either you are going to come to that Stone, or that Stone is coming to you. God is going to end man’s little day down here and God’s kingdom will prevail. Come to the Stone, Christ.” J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary Series*
