

Europe in Prophecy

by Denis Lyle

The sermon explores the prophecy in Daniel 2, which describes the succession of Gentile world powers and the eventual destruction of the image by Jesus Christ, with the European Common Market potentially foreshadowing the revived Roman Empire.

Scripture: Psalm 72:11, Psalm 118:22, Isaiah 28:16, Daniel 2:31, Luke 20:17, Luke 21:24, Romans 1:25, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, Hebrews 1:3, 1 Peter 2:6

Topics: "End Time Prophecy", "Kingdom Of God"

Description

Denis Lyle preaches on the prophecy in Daniel 2, highlighting the rise and fall of world empires as foretold by God. The vision of the image described in the dream to Nebuchadnezzar symbolizes the succession of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome as world powers, with a future revival of the Roman Empire. The image's decline in value and weight contrasts with the eternal glory of Christ, who will ultimately destroy all earthly kingdoms and establish His reign. Lyle emphasizes the importance of being prepared for Christ's return and the signs pointing to the fulfillment of biblical prophecies in current events.

Transcript

Reading: Daniel 2:31-45

4. EUROPE IN PROPHECY

Napoleon Bonaparte: Benito Mussolini: Winston Churchill... three names. One common denominator. They all shared a vision of a United States of Europe. Like pieces in a jigsaw it is all fitting together. A new Europe is emerging before our eyes. A European Parliament: a Court of Human Rights: binding laws on member states: freedom of movement across open borders: common policies on fishery, agriculture etc.;

pooled resources in the tackling of crime and terrorism and drug trafficking. Of course a common currency,

The EURO is now with us. How exciting that it is all happening in our day just as Daniel said it would. God communicated to a pagan king, not only the future events in his life, but also in the life of the world. Now this dream that was given by God to Nebuchadnezzar concerned the future. Underscore two phrases in

(2:28-29) "the latter days", "and what shall come to pass."

With Nebuchadnezzar began a period of time known as

" the time of the Gentiles", (Lk 21:24) Now please, do not confuse this phrase with another phrase, "the fullness of the Gentiles", for they are not the same.

(Rom 1:25) "The fullness of the Gentiles", has reference to the completion of the body of Christ in the salvation of lost souls. Today, God is taking out of the world a people for His name. God is saving people out of the Gentile world, of course Jews are being saved, but not in the same numbers. God's primary goal in this age is to take out of the Gentile world a people for His name and one of these days "the fullness of the Gentiles", will be completed and the last soul will be saved and the Lord Jesus will "descend".

(1 Thes 4:16) That's "fullness of the Gentiles", but Christ was talking about "the times of the Gentiles", and this is what we have got in (Dan Ch 2) Nebuchadnezzar saw a panoramic view of Gentile world power from the days of the Babylonian empire, until the final days of Gentile power and to the time when the Lord Jesus shall establish His kingdom on earth.

Now why did God choose a time like this, with His people in captivity, to reveal so great a prophecy If you had been a Jew during that time, you would be wondering, "Is God finished with us Are we to be put on the shelf forever" Through a dream and interpreter, God wants to say to the Jews, "This isn't the end. There's a future, when I am going to be involved with you again, but I want to tell you what is going to happen in the meantime". So lets have a look at this Image this... to discover what God was saying!

(1) THE IMAGE DESCRIBED

Look at (2:31) The wise men had not been able to reveal even that much. Can you imagine the king nodding with approval as Daniel began to remind him exactly what he had dreamed This is the Image Described! Look at: (a) THE SIZE OF IT: (2:31) I take the word "great", to refer to its size! This image was large. Something designed to make a lasting impression on the one who saw it! (b) THE SPLENDOR OF IT: For its metals were shining! "Gold, silver, brass, iron and clay". It had a dazzling lustre and as it towered before the king its form was terrible instilling fear and awe.

Look at: (c) THE STRUCTURE OF IT: (2:32-33) Will you notice that this image was broken into five explicit components. 1. The Head was pure gold! 2. The Chest was silver! 3. The Belly and Thighs were brass or copper! 4. The Legs were iron. 5. The Feet and Toes were a mixture of iron and clay! Now can you see or imagine this image Can you see the Head of gold The Chest and arms of silver The Belly and Thighs of brass The Legs of iron The Feet a mixture of iron and clay Look at: (d) THE SUBSTANCE OF IT: A lot of people tell me this old world is getting better and better but you can't help but be struck by the deterioration of this image!

Will you notice that there is a decline in VALUE: as the metals moved from gold at the top to silver: brass: iron and on down to clay at the bottom. Will you notice there was a decline in WEIGHT: this image was top heavy and was resting on a worthless foundation. Everything pictured here implies declining! Its declining in value and weight, just the opposite of the theory of evolution. Evolution says that things begin with mud and get better and better. The theory of evolution is that man is improving.

Civilisation is progressing. Man goes from mud to gold, but God says that man goes from gold to mud. Man says, "look at the advancements we've made in science, travel, medicine, communication and transportation and information. Yet in spite of all this there is the deterioration of civilisation generally. (2:39) Has there not been a deterioration in: 1. MAN'S WORSHIP: In (Ch 3) Nebuchadnezzar made a great image and commanded all to worship it. History shows us how Darius and Alexander the Great

demanded the worship of their subjects.

What about the Roman Emperors who were regarded as gods Then came the suppression of the Bible: the rise of the Roman priesthood: the Cult of Mary: the idolatry of worshipping the saints and the papal bondage of millions! 1. 2. MAN'S WORD: The truth will become more scarce as we approach the end of this age. Men will "believe a lie", and "resist the truth". (2 Thes 2:11-12 2 Tim 3:7) 3. MAN'S WORTH: Morally! Think of the breakdown of home and family life. Drink: drugs: aids: crime... is the world getting better as the postmillennialist would tell me As you look at are we to expect world betterment or world breakdown My, as we look at this image here we see the deterioration of world civilisation.

In striking contrast how precious it is to look at another image a Divine one thats found in (S.S. 5:10-16) Its the portrait of our Lord Jesus "who is the express image of God," (Heb 1:3) Aren't you glad that there is no deterioration in Christ His head is of "fine gold", and His feet is of " fine gold". From His Godhead Glory to His humble walk on earth all is pure gold. And He shall stand forever and He shall destroy all other images including this one and at His feet every knee shall bow!

Are you beginning to see this image (a) (b) (c) (d) Look at: (e) THE STRIKING OF IT: Look at (2:34-35) You see, its the stone or rock that is responsible for smashing this image. One day the Lord Jesus will come and smash Gentile world power, just as the image was smashed by the stone. (Rev 19:15) (1) (2) THE IMAGE DISCUSSED For now Daniel begins to interpret the kings dream. Now before we look at these different kingdoms here, I want you to see what God is doing here. Daniel is saying to the king that God has delivered into his hands and into the hands of the Gentiles all the rulership of this earth.

Now that means that God was transferring the rulership of this earth from the Jew to the Gentile. According to (Deut 32:8-9) Jerusalem was to be the centre of dominion and power on earth. God not only purposed that for Israel, but God purposed that His only Son was to come to this earth as the King of that nation. But how did this work out in history Well, Israel failed to live up to its destiny. Because of their unfaithfulness, they were carried into captivity. Later when Christ presented Himself to them as their King they rejected him.

When Israel rejected God's perfect plan, however God turned to Gentile nations and gave them the dominion and power He had intended for Israel. In the Bible we have got the whole history of the Jewish nation... from Abraham and on and on... until God carried them into captivity. Then began "the times of the Gentiles". But at Pentecost God sent the Holy Spirit and individual believers were "baptised into the body." The church was formed. So that this... you have "the Jews, the Gentiles and the church of God". (1 Cor 10:31) Now Daniel is looking at the king and saying "Thou art this head of gold". (2:38) In discussing this image with the king Daniel pointed out (a) SOMETHING WHICH IS NOW HISTORIC: Now all of this to Daniel was prophecy, but to us it is history.

Daniel was looking forward to these kingdoms but we are looking backward to these kingdoms and of course with these kingdoms began "the times of the Gentiles". (Lk 21:24) Now lets look at these kingdoms individually! 1. BABYLON: The Key Dates: 605 BC - 540 BC (2:38) Nebuchadnezzar married a Median Princess named Amythia and built for her the famous Hanging Gardens of Babylon considered by the Greeks the seventh wonder of the ancient world. Will you notice the emphasis on "gold".

When Herodotus the historian visited Babylon 100 years after Nebuchadnezzar, he wrote that in all of his life he had never seen more gold nor imagined there could be so much. It was pure glitter from the palace to the Ishtar gate! (Is 14:4) Now this mighty empire of gold lasted right down to the end of (Ch 5) when the

second kingdom came into view! 2. MEDO-PERSIA: The Key Dates: 539 B.C.-331 BC Look at (2:39) Now look at (5:30-31) Now this Median king represented "the Medes and Persians." (5:28 6:28 8:20) So what have we got here "the breast and arms of silver".

The two arms indicating the divided nature of the second empire. The Medes and the Persians. Now when the Medes and Persians came to power, they were known for their extensive system of taxation. All taxes were paid in silver, unlike the Babylonian Empire where all taxes were paid in gold. Now Biblically Medo-Persia empire stretches from the end of (Ch 5) to the close of the OT Indeed the OT closes with Medo-Persia in full sway but just a few years later Kingdom no 3 appears. 3.

GREECE: The key Dates: 332 - Look at (2:39) In (8:21) we are told specifically that this was Greece. Alexander the Great, the greatest general in ancient times, conquered and ruled the known world of his time. He died at Babylon, his vitality exhausted. It was he who wept because there was no more world to conquer. So the OT ends with Medo-Persia in power. But in between the testaments there is Greece, and before the NT opens Rome has come to power and this is the 4th kingdom. 4.

ROME: Key Dates: 58 BC - 476 AD Look at (2:40) What a picture of an empire relentless in its advance, one that would subdue everything in its path. My, when you read these verses you can almost hear the tramp, tramp of marching feet, the iron legions of Rome. So that when the N.T. opens Rome has come to power. (Lk 2:1) It was Roman rule that put Christ on the cross. It was the Romans who ruled ruthlessly throughout the world in the early days of the church. The Roman empire was a mixture of strength and weakness.

Rome was strong militarily (iron) but it was also marked by internal decay (clay) In time Rome fell from within, it collapsed upon itself. My, isn't this book amazingly accurate When Daniel spoke about these nations, Persia was a Babylonian vassal state, the Greeks were a group of warring tribes, Rome was a village on the River Tiber. My, what a Bible we have. The Inspired: Infallible: Indestructible Word of the Living God. Now lets gather together these threads. * THESE WERE FOUR KINGDOMS: (2:37) The word appears 9 times in these verses.

Whats a kingdom Its the dominion of a king. This is a vision of rule and government! * THESE WERE FOUR SUCCESSIVE KINGDOMS: They are following one after another. (2:39-40) So we have a succession of kingdoms! * THESE WERE FOUR SUCCESSIVE KINGDOMS AND NO MORE: For what we have here is the whole history of the world and God says there would be only four Gentile world powers and no more. There was a time when Napoleon thought he would rule this world, only God had already said "No".

When Hitler dreamed of world rule, when he marched into Paris in 1940/41 and caused our army to go back across the Channel at Dunkirk, the world thought that Hitler was going to rule the world, but Germany is not here. Four successive kingdoms and no more. Rome, the fourth kingdom was the last to fall in 476 AD But what about the statue's feet and toes According to the context they represented a form of the fourth kingdom, the Roman Empire a form that has not yet appeared on the scene of history.

And what about the stone that pulverises the image and then fills the earth How and when is that to be fulfilled It seems best to recognise that Daniel's prophecy passes over this present age and that this rather extended period of time belongs between (2:40-41) From our vantage point, the prophetic dream reveals that the fourth empire, Rome would appear and have a dramatic history only to go into an eclipse till the end times, when it will reappear. So while Daniel pointed out something which is now Historic, he then

pointed out: (b) SOMETHING WHICH IS YET PROPHETIC: Between (2:40-41) there is a gap or parenthesis as is often true of Bible prophecy!

Sometimes between one verse and the next a Bible prophecy will leap over hundreds of years. We find an illustration of this when the Lord Jesus was in the synagogue in Nazareth. (Lk 4:19-20) Now Christ is quoting from (Is 61) but He stops right in the middle of a verse. Then he said, "this day is this Scripture... ears". But He said nothing about the rest of the verse. Why Because right in the middle of the verse in (Is 61) was a gap of centuries between two statements. Now its just the same here.

Of course between Rome's appearance as iron legs and Rome's reappearance as ten iron/clay toes, there intervenes this entire church age! (Col 1:26) Now Now look at (2:41-44) "These kings", what kings The ten toes of the image for these ten toes are symbolic of ten kings. They represent the same kings as the ten horns in (7:24) Moreover in (Rev ch 17) the idolatrous church is riding the beast and the beast has seven heads and ten horns, and "the ten horns are ten kings". (Rev 17:12) There has been no other world empire since the Romans so where are we now in God's prophetic picture Mussolini said, "I believe in the resurrection of the Roman Empire".

But his abortive attempts to resurrect it met with colossal failure for he was ahead of his or rather God's time! It was Churchill who said, "I hope to live to see the United States of Europe". My, are there any developments on the current scene that point to the fulfilment of these prophecies about a revived Roman Empire Well, what we have in (Dan 2) may be foreshadowed in the European Common Market. Its interesting that the European Common Market came into existence by the treaty of Rome in 1957.

The number of members fluctuates but that is not the important thing. The important thing to know is at the end times there will be some coalition, some kind of military, political and economic union of European powers that will revive the Roman Empire and with it that final Gentile world power depicted here in (ch 2) Now I believe that this ten kingdom alliance headed eventually by the antichrist is still future for three reasons. 1. Never in the past has Rome survived under ten heads: It is true that the Roman Empire was divided into several kingdoms, but noone can agree as to their actual number, and they fought among themselves to destroy each other. 2.

Never in the past has Rome survived under ten heads at one given time: The divisions in the Roman Empire were spread over a period of several centuries whereas the ten kingdoms represented by the toes exist at one time and form one confederation. Nothing in the past answers to that. 3. Never in the past has Rome survived under ten heads at one given time and been smitten by the Lord Jesus: Look at (2:45) Now the stone is Christ. Tell me: when in the past did this smiting rock shatter those earthly kingdoms When On the contrary our Lord was put to death by the sentence of an officer of the fourth empire.

Never in the past did the Lord Jesus hit the nations, Rome hit Him. They nailed Him to a Roman cross. It was Roman soldiers who mocked Him, it was a Roman lash that scourged Him, it was Roman soldiers who crucified Him. This part of Daniel's prophecy has yet to be fulfilled for it was not fulfilled in the history of ancient Rome! (1) (2) (3) THE IMAGE DESTROYED Look at (2:34) What is the significance of the stone Who or what is this stone A stone that breaks the feet and crushes the image A stone that becomes a mountain that encompasses the earth!

Well, over fourteen times in the Scriptures Christ is referred to as the stone. (Ps 118:22 Lk 20:17 Is 28:16 1 Pet 2:6-7) My, He is going to come and destroy the image which represents the world governments of our day, and to establish His kingdom, something unlike anything we have ever known! Can you see here

the image and: (a) ITS RUINATION: " A stone brake them to pieces". (2:35) Our Lord Jesus is going to deal a pulverising blow this revived Roman Empire. (b) ITS REDUCTION: Look at (2:35) So thorough is this destruction that the metals are reduced to powder! (c) ITS REMOVAL: " And the wind carried them away...

"(2:35) The sweeping away will be so complete that the dust will find no visible resting place! (d) ITS REPLACEMENT: " And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth". (2:35) When Christ returns, He is going to rule over all the earth. The mountain that Daniel saw filling the universe is the sovereign rule of King Jesus. (Ps 72:11) says "Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him". "And Jesus shall reign where're the sun."

I am not a date setter! However the next event on the horizon is the Rapture, then the Tribulation period for seven years, followed by the Return of Christ at the end of the Tribulation. My, we may as close as seven years away from the Kingdom of Christ. Something dramatic is happening in Europe. Until recently there was Eastern Europe and Western Europe. But the Berlin Wall fell overnight. All of Eastern Europe is not applying to join the Common Market. The pieces of the prophetic puzzle appear to be falling into place.

Israel is back in the land and when Jesus Christ returns He will reign from Jerusalem. It pre-supposes a nation-state. The European Common Market may herald the near fulfilment of this Scripture. The only thing we are waiting for this... is the SHOUT and the TRUMPET! "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God". (1 Thes 4:16) My... Are you saved Is your family saved Have you a relative yet not saved Are you just letting them go to hell My...

"the coming of the Lord draweth nigh". The day of service will soon be over and we will be at home with the Lord. It's a great prophecy isn't it Its a great book we hold in our hands Its a great Saviour for which we wait. " Marantha", the Lord is coming. Even so come Lord Jesus "

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