

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TIME OF SETTING UP THE KINGDOM.

THE first words of the revelation of God concerning man are these, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion." Gen. 1:26. Thus the purpose was announced to make man that he might have dominion over the earth. It has been noticed that when Daniel spoke before Nebuchadnezzar of the extent of his dominion which the God of Heaven had given him, he used the same terms that were used in the first declaration of the purpose of God, and in the original gift to Adam, of dominion over all the earth.

When man was created, dominion was given to him in the following words:—

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Gen. 1:28.

We do not find these ideas expressed, or these terms again used, until Daniel reminds the triumphant king of Babylon of the source of his power. Thus he said:—

"Thou, O king, art a king of kings; for the God of Heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all." Dan. 2:37, 38.

The same witness was given by Daniel in speaking to Belshazzar, in the closing hours of this great empire:—

"The most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour; and for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him." Dan. 5:18, 19.

We have seen that the parts of the image in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar represented four great kingdoms which should bear rule over all the earth. The interpretation of the dream shows that it was given as a prophecy of the kingdom which the God of Heaven should set up. In other words, it was a prophecy of the restoration of the kingdom and throne of David, in the hands of him "whose right it is." The king in this kingdom, the seed of David, is also the Son of God; he is the seed of Abraham, in whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed; the seed of the woman who should bruise the head of the serpent, and restore what was lost by the sin of our first parents. This kingdom is the same as "the first dominion," spoken of by the prophet Micah,—dominion lost by Adam. Now it seems altogether fitting that, in the prophecy of the restoration of the kingdom of the whole earth, the way should be prepared for a full understanding of the subject, by setting forth the kingdoms upon the same territory, by which the order of succession could be made plain. In Dan. 2:44, the characteristics of the kingdom which the God of Heaven should set up are pointed out; but these are prefaced with a declaration concerning *the time* when the kingdom shall be set up. The exact time is not revealed, either here or elsewhere; only an approximation to the time is given.

The statement on this subject is very explicit: "In the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom. In the days of what kings? Some authors have assumed that it meant the Roman kings; that is, that the kingdom of Heaven should be set up in the time of the Roman empire. But there are insuperable objections to this view, and not a single good reason can be adduced in its favour. In the preceding verses the immediate antecedent of the expression, "these kings," are the ten kings that shall arise out of the fourth kingdom. If "these kings" did not mean the ten kings, then there is nothing to indicate that it refers to the kings of Rome more than to the kings of Greece, of Persia, or of Babylon. It is an evident truth that each part of the image represents one kingdom or king. In no case is either of them referred to in the plural

number. The plural is not used until we come to the ten kings. Therefore if the ten kings are not referred to, it yet remains to be proved that it refers to the Roman kings rather than to those of the others of the four. Then it would mean that the God of Heaven would set up a kingdom somewhere in the days of the four kingdoms—say somewhere between the days of Nebuchadnezzar and Constantine. But such a construction is very far from the truth; it is based on an unreasonable supposition. It is not in harmony with the declaration of the prophecy. The immediate antecedent, and the only grammatical antecedent of the expression, "these kings," are the ten kings which are represented by the feet and toes of the image.

And this view is verified by the prophecy in its description of the kingdom of Heaven. It must be evident to every reader that, as Babylon was represented by the head of gold, and Medo-Persia by the breast and arms of silver, and Grecia by the body of brass, and Rome by the legs of iron, and the ten kings by the feet and toes of the image, so the kingdom to be set up by the God of Heaven is represented by the stone. Every point in the image or in the dream, has a corresponding fact in the fulfilment. The stone was cut out without hands; and the kingdom was to be set up by the God of Heaven—not by human agency. The stone broke in pieces and destroyed the image in all its parts; so the kingdom was to break in pieces and consume all the kingdoms of the earth. The stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth; so the kingdom was to succeed all kingdoms under the whole heaven. Dan. 7:13, 14, 27. The history of the image is a history of the successive powers of the whole earth. Persia succeeded Babylon; Grecia succeeded Persia; Rome succeeded Grecia; the ten kings succeeded the Roman empire; and the kingdom of the God of Heaven succeeds the ten kings. It utterly destroys all the kingdoms of the earth. To show more clearly the proof that lies in this order of succession, we will examine the several parts of the image as they are presented in the successive kingdoms, in the order of their time.

First we have the head of gold, Babylon, which we date from the time that Nebuchadnezzar took captive Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and carried him to Babylon, with part of the vessels of the house of God, and some of the children of Judah, including Daniel and his brethren. 2 Chron. 36:5-8; Dan. 1:1-7. This was before Christ 606. The dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and its interpretation, were given in the year B. C. 603, while this king was in the height of his power and glory. Therefore, at the time of this dream, only this much of the image—the head of gold—was fulfilled.

In the interpretation of the dream Daniel said to the king, "Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee." It was another kingdom that was to arise after him,—not merely another *king*. As the kingdom which was to succeed Babylon did not appear for half a century after this time, of course only the head of gold had an existence in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. But when Belshazzar was slain—when Darius the Median took the kingdom (Dan. 5:30, 31),—the second part of the image appeared in view, namely, the breast and arms of silver. Then two of the great divisions of the image were fulfilled, and the fulfilled parts stood as shown on page 90: the head of gold and the breast and arms of silver.

Belshazzar was slain in the year B. C. 538; therefore from the time of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar to the rise of the second kingdom, was sixty-five years. And in this manner the first two parts of the image stood for more than two centuries.

The first two kingdoms are identified in the clearest manner in the scriptures already noticed. The kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar was expressly declared to be the head of gold (Daniel 2); and the Babylonian kingdom ceased at the death of



Belshazzar, and was succeeded by the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. Dan. 5:30, 31. These were represented by the gold and silver of the image. "And another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth," continued the prophet. And this third kingdom is as clearly revealed in the Scriptures as are the first and second. The first, Babylon, is named in Daniel 2; the second, Medo-Persia, is named in Daniel 8; and the third, Grecia, is also named in Daniel 8, as we have seen. The ram was said by the angel to be the



kings of Media and Persia. The kings of the Medes and Persians are counted one kingdom; that which came into power on the death of Belshazzar. The rough goat overpowered the ram, and became very great, and of him the angel said: "The

rough goat is the king [or kingdom, see verse 22] of Grecia."

It was in the year B. C. 331 that Alexander the Grecian overthrew the Persians, and thus brought into existence another part of the image. From that time three parts stood in view, as shown on the next page. Thus it stood until the fourth, or strong kingdom, arose, more than a century and a half afterwards.

We have before remarked that the Romans did not rise to supreme power by one great victory, as was the case with the Persians and the Grecians. The rise of the Roman empire was very peculiar in this respect. It conquered the world by de-

grees, never yielding what it had gained, and sometimes gaining by the fears of other people, who peacefully resigned themselves into the hands of those who were everywhere triumphant, rather than to risk the chance of a destructive warfare, which, they were assured, would terminate in their own overthrow. Nothing stood before the people who were so well represented by the legs of iron of the image of Nebuchadnezzar, and by the fourth beast of Daniel 7, which was dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly.

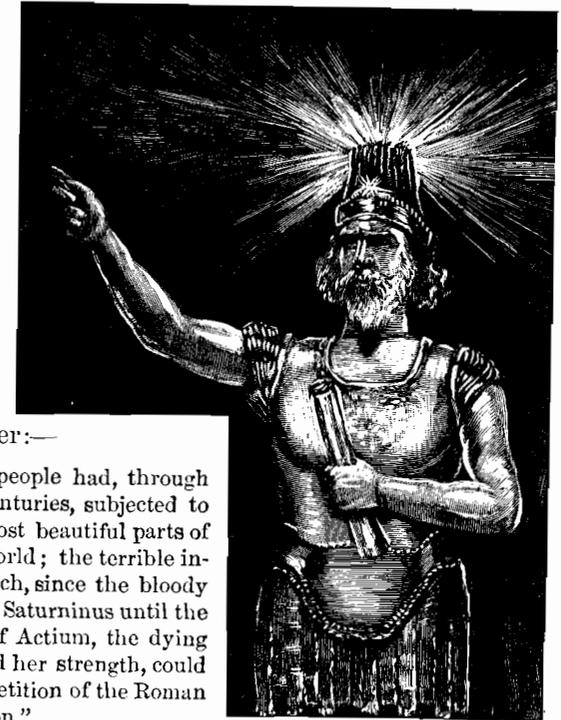
Becker's History of the World, Vol. IV., p. 1, speaks thus of the gradual rise of the Roman power:—

"The Roman people had, through the wars of four centuries, subjected to its authority the most beautiful parts of the then known world; the terrible internal wars, in which, since the bloody days of Glaucia and Saturninus until the time of the battle of Actium, the dying republic had wasted her strength, could not check the competition of the Roman world-wide dominion."

Gibbon presents a feature of the policy of the Romans in extending their dominion, as follows:—

"It was customary to tempt the protectors of besieged cities by the promise of more distinguished honors than they possessed in their native country. By such means they not only conquered their enemies, but turned them into honoured citizens, cemented and strengthened the empire wherever they went."

The Grecian empire was already divided into four kingdoms, which, however, were counted as so many parts of that



kingdom. See Dan. 7:6. But these divisions made it necessary for the Romans to carry on their conquests in many directions in order to bring all the world into subjection.

As we count the beginning of the empire of Nebuchadnezzar, not from its foundation, but from the time when the kingdom of Israel was entirely subverted and subjected to it, so we date the beginning of the Roman empire from the time when the Jews, restored by the united action of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes (Ezra 6:14), made a league with the Romans. Nations are brought prominently into prophecy when they are brought into close relations with the people of God. We therefore take the date of this league, B. C. 161, for the beginning of this empire as related to the prophecy. Here the tribes of Israel were merged into the Roman kingdom, and their land became a Roman province by their own consent. And from this time onward for several centuries after Christ, the image stood thus nearly complete, having the head, breast and arms, body, and legs of iron, in full view. And what is the next event in the order of the prophecy? A correct answer to this question is of the greatest importance, for upon it depends a true understanding of all the rest of the prophecy. As the introduction of one wrong figure into an extended calculation makes every part of the process wrong from that point, and renders a correct result impossible, so a mistake in one point in the interpretation of the whole prophecy, leads the inquirer in a wrong direction, and turns the interpretation of the whole prophecy into a wrong channel.

Many affirm, and with much apparent confidence, that the next event is the setting up of the everlasting kingdom by the God of Heaven. But this is not the order of the prophecy. That kingdom is represented by the stone; but when did the stone make its first appearance? Not when the legs of iron were developed, but when it smote the image upon the feet. But where were the feet at the time of the advent of the Son of God to this earth? Where were they on the day of Pentecost, when it is affirmed that the kingdom was set up? They were not in existence. Look at the representation of the image

as far as it was fulfilled up to nearly five hundred years this side of the beginning of the Christian era. The feet and toes did not make their appearance at all for nearly five centuries after the legs of iron were upon the stage of action. The stone did not smite the image upon the legs. Its first appearance was when it smote the image upon the feet; and this, in the interpretation, is explained as meaning that in the days of the kings thus smitten shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom.

And this is confirmed by the further declaration that when the kingdom of God is set up, it shall break in pieces and consume all the preceding kingdoms; and as the clay, the iron, the brass, the silver, and the gold, were all broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and they were driven away so that no place was found for them, even thus were all the kingdoms of the earth to be consumed by the kingdom of the God of Heaven.



And the image was not fully

developed, as is shown, with the feet and toes standing upon the earth, until the Roman kingdom was divided into ten parts, as foretold in Daniel 2 and 7, which was not until near the close of the fifth century.

The difficulty with current interpretations of this prophecy is this: The setting up of the kingdom is confounded with the confirmation of the new covenant, or the preaching of the gospel by Christ and his apostles. But that view is very far from being the correct one. The preaching of the gospel is preparatory to the setting up of the kingdom. The gospel is intended to call out of the world and prepare a people who shall be fitted by grace to inherit the kingdom when it is set up. There is nothing in the description of the setting up of the kingdom which can reasonably be applied to the preaching of the gospel. Dr. Barnes clearly saw this difficulty, and stated it as follows:—

“Two inquiries at once meet us here, of somewhat difficult solution. The first is, how, if this is designed to apply to the kingdom of the Messiah, can the description be true? The language here would seem to imply some violent action, some positive crushing force; something like that which occurs in conquests when nations are subdued. Would it not appear from this that the kingdom here represented was to make its way by conquests in the same manner as the other kingdoms, rather than by a silent and peaceful influence? Is this language, in fact, applicable to the method in which the kingdom of Christ is to supplant all others?”

These questions are well calculated to cause the advocates of that theory solemnly to reflect upon the violence that they are doing to the plain language of the Scriptures. We confidently answer the questions put forth by the learned doctor in the affirmative; this language is, in fact, applicable to the manner in which the kingdom of Christ is to be introduced. But it is not at all applicable, as the doctor plainly says, to the theory that makes the kingdom set up by the mildness of the introduction of the gospel. There is not a text in all the Bible which speaks of the kingdom of God supplanting all other kingdoms by mild means; everywhere it is said to break and destroy them. This description can be true,—it is true,—and there is no necessity to force the language to make it mean



THE IMAGE OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM.

something entirely contrary to what it says. And this is by no means the only scripture that must be perverted to make that theory appear consistent. Turn to Ps. 2:7-9:—

“Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

Strangely enough, this second psalm has been construed into a prophecy of the conversion of the world! What is the position of the Son during the preaching of the gospel? He is a priest, sitting at the right hand of his Father in Heaven. Heb. 8:1, 2. Now read Ps. 110:1, and there we learn the condition of the world when he leaves that position as a priest, as he prepares to return the second time to this world. “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” And thus the author of the book of Hebrews says he is seated at the right hand of the Father, from henceforth expecting till his enemies shall be put under his feet. When his priesthood is finished, then he will leave his position at the right hand of the Father; then his enemies will be put under his feet; then he will come to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel. 2 Thess. 1:6-10. Then will the kings of the earth, the great men, the mighty men, try in vain to hide from the wrath of the Lamb, crying, “The great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?” Rev. 6:15-17. Then he will break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces as a potter’s vessel; and then will Dan. 2:34 and 44 be literally fulfilled. Rev. 11:16-18 says that when it is announced that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, then it is also said that the nations were angry, and the wrath of God is come, and the time to judge the dead, and to give reward to all his people, and to visit with destruction all those who corrupt the earth. And thus the question which appeared so perplexing to Dr. Barnes is easily solved, and the language of the prophecy is seen to apply naturally to the facts in the case. There is nothing in Daniel

2, when most literally construed, at all inconsistent with the other scriptures; and more might be quoted of like import.

We come down three centuries this side of our Saviour's advent. In Northern Europe there were great numbers of people, restless for new countries in which to settle, or to conquer for spoil. The empire of the Romans was losing its former strength and power. Describing these people of the North who were seeking new countries to inhabit, Machiavelli said:—

“These colonists have destroyed the Roman Empire, by the error of the emperors, who, having abandoned Rome, the true seat of the empire, to dwell at Constantinople, have, by this conduct, rendered the western part more feeble, not being able so well to defend it.” *History of Florence*, Book 1., p. 2.

A certain writer said that when Constantine removed his capital to Constantinople, he virtually left the seat of the Cæsars to the bishops of Rome. One thing is certain: the power of the emperors over Rome decreased in exactly the proportion that the power of the bishops increased. A history of the “Papal Supremacy,” published in Dublin in 1810, says: “It is most certain that if the emperors had continued to reside at Rome, the bishops never would have usurped a supremacy.” This is reasonable; it is conclusive. Early in the fourth century, the Northern Barbarians, as they have been called, made inroads upon some of the fairest portions of the empire, in Central Europe and along the Rhine. And before the close of the fifth century the empire was broken up into ten kingdoms, as before noticed. The Ostrogoths took possession of Italy, and ruled in Rome, until they were driven out by the army of Justinian, under Belisarius, in 538.

Now we take our stand near the beginning of the sixth century, and we behold these fragments of the Roman empire, exactly as pointed out by Daniel in the interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. And there the image stands complete, as represented in the engraving. Not before this time could the stone smite the image, for it was to smite it upon the feet, and nowhere else. The stone is not introduced into the prophecy before that time.

What then? Was the kingdom set up at that time? It

was not. In this and other prophecies, where the history of the world is briefly outlined, the ultimate—the setting up of the kingdom of God—is introduced, without in each instance, filling up all the particulars. As prophecy follows prophecy, we find more and more of these particulars inserted, but the ultimate is always the same,—the establishment of the kingdom of God; the restoration of what was lost in the fall, closes up this world's history, and introduces the eternal state.

In Dan. 2:47, speaking of the ten kingdoms, it is said: “They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with miry clay.” These words plainly indicate that after these kingdoms arise, some time will elapse before they are smitten and destroyed; some time is allotted to their mingling and undergoing changes. How long this time would be, the second chapter of Daniel gives no intimation; it might be very short for all that we can learn in this chapter. But Daniel 7 gives additional facts in the history of the kingdoms of the world, and describes the coming up of another power after the rise of the ten kings, before whom three of the ten were plucked up. And it is shown that this other power wears out the saints, and prevails against them a long time before the kingdom is given to the saints of the Most High. The order of these events is marked out very plainly in Dan. 7:21, 22.

“I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.”

We have seen that the ten kingdoms were not fully developed until the latter part of the fifth century after Christ. The horn that rose after them, which became stronger than they, and that persecuted the saints, was not fully established until the sixth century. For many centuries he wore out the saints; he is still opposing himself to the free worship of God; still declaring that it is his fixed principle not to tolerate freedom of conscience toward God where he has the power to put down every religion that opposes itself unto him. And still the

saints are waiting; judgment has not yet been given to them; and the time has not yet come for them to possess the kingdom.

The stone has not yet smitten the image. The kingdoms of this world still occupy their places; they are not yet broken and driven away as the chaff; but they are fast filling up the cups of their iniquity. Pride and the love of worldly power fill their hearts. Their greatest ambition seems to be the making of abundant provision for shedding human blood. A slight pretext is sufficient for them to engage in the most unjust and destructive enterprises, if an extension of territory or an increase of power is to be the result; yes, the most mischievous schemes are often carried out to serve the interest of a party. Where is the exception to these declarations? Alas for the world! Peace has flown away; equity and the love of their fellow-men are not found among the great of the earth. And among the professed people of God, with very small exceptions, formality has usurped the place of the power of godliness, and the fear of God is taught by the precept of men. Surely, God will yet visit for these things.



CHAPTER IX.

HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM.

"And the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." Dan. 2: 44.

HERE is presented a strong contrast between this kingdom and its predecessors. The Babylonian empire was mighty and magnificent. Its capital has never been equalled by any city on the earth. But it became exceedingly wicked, and the same Being who gave this dominion to Nebuchadnezzar, declared that it should be utterly destroyed. Belshazzar and his thousand lords, and his hosts of mighty ones, laughed to scorn the efforts of their invaders; they mocked and insulted the true and living God. But the sure word of prophecy was spoken against Babylon, and that word has never failed—it cannot fail. To show how wonderfully the prophecies of God are fulfilled, we will give quotations from two prophets in regard to the destruction of Babylon.

Isaiah spoke of this in the year 712 B. C. This was just about one hundred years before Nebuchadnezzar overthrew Jerusalem, when Babylon was the rising power of the earth. It was one hundred and seventy years before its conquest by Cyrus. Thus said the prophet:—

"And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the island shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged." Isa. 13: 19-22.