

The Coming Kingdom



THE coming kingdom of Christ is the subject of many of the ancient prophecies of the Bible. From a study of these prophecies we may obtain much valuable information concerning the nature of this kingdom, and the time when it will be established upon this earth.

In the days of Babylon, the first universal empire, God gave to its king, the mighty Nebuchadnezzar, a dream which covered the entire course of this world's history from that time to the very end of the world. In one night God unfolded the history of more than twenty-five hundred years. This prophecy is recorded in the second chapter of Daniel.

The meaning of this dream was made known to the king by Daniel, a young Hebrew captive, who was one of the king's wise men. He said, "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the

latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass." Verses 28, 29.

This dream was given in response to a question in the mind of Nebuchadnezzar concerning the future, "what should come to pass hereafter." Who would be his successor? Would he be able to keep his great kingdom intact? Would Babylon ever fall? Was it not more likely that it would stand forever, and always be the mistress of the world?

The Secrets of the Future Unlocked

And as he slept, God gave him a dream which unlocked the secrets of the future. The questions of his heart were answered in this dream. But when he awoke, although he remembered that he had had a dream which he felt was of vital importance, he could not recall it. After the failure of the wise men to enlighten him, Daniel, given special instruction by the Lord, made known not only what the dream was, but also its interpretation.

It is important to notice that this dream contains information regarding "what shall be in the latter days." It is, then, a prophecy for the present time.

In describing the king's dream Daniel said, "Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent,

stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay." Verses 31-33.

And as the king considered this remarkable image in his dream, he beheld "till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." Verses 34, 35.

The Interpretation

This was the dream as the king saw it. And then Daniel, God's mouthpiece to Nebuchadnezzar, gave him the interpretation of it as follows: "Thou art this head of gold." Verse 38.

But Babylon was not, as Nebuchadnezzar had hoped, to remain forever. It was to be overthrown. "After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee." Verse 39.

This prediction was fulfilled. Years later the Medes and the Persians overthrew Babylon on the night of the great feast of Belshazzar. (Daniel 5:30, 31.) The breast and arms of silver, then, of this great

image, represent the empire which succeeded Babylon, the Medo-Persian Empire.

Greece and Rome

But the course of history was not to stop with Medo-Persia, for there was to arise "another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth." Daniel 2:39.

This third kingdom, represented by the waist and thighs of brass of the image, represented the kingdom which overthrew Medo-Persia. This was Greece, under Alexander the Great.

"And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise." Verse 40.

This kingdom was the "great iron monarchy of Rome," which overthrew the Grecian Empire. As iron that "subdueth all things," so Rome crushed the world and trampled it under her feet.

The Division of Rome

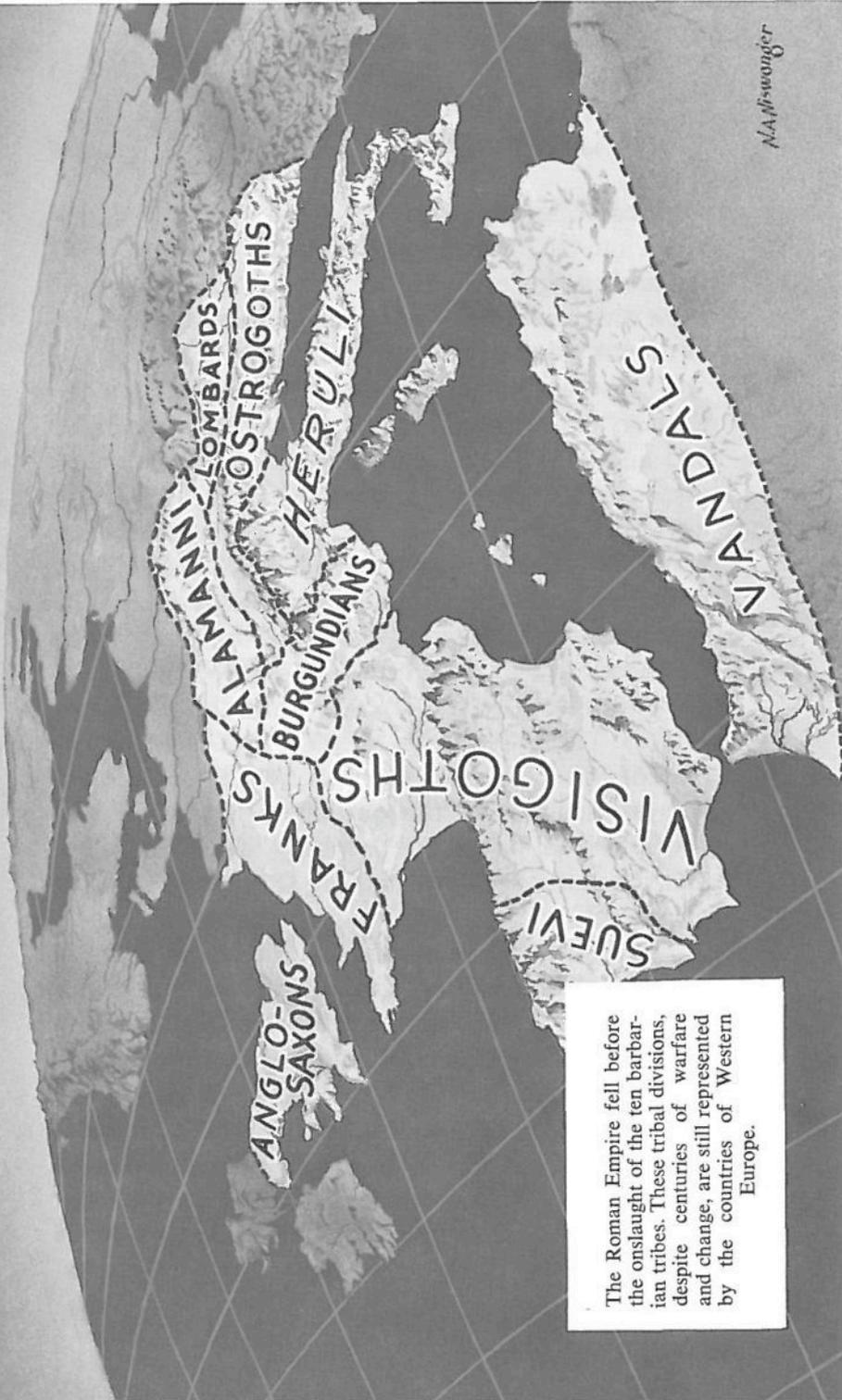
But Rome, too, was to fall. "And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom [Rome] shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken [or weak]." Verses 41, 42.

According to this prophecy Rome was to be divided into ten divisions, represented by the ten toes of the human figure, the ten toes of the image. Some of these divisions were to be strong kingdoms, and some of them were to be weak.

These ten kingdoms came into existence in the territory of the Roman Empire between the years A.D. 351 and 476. They were the result of the barbarian invasions of those times. The kingdoms were as follows: the Alemanni (Germany), the Suevi (Portugal), the Franks (France), the Vandals (who have been destroyed), the Burgundians (Switzerland), the Anglo-Saxons (England), the Visigoths (Spain), the Ostrogoths (who have been destroyed), the Heruli (who also have been destroyed), and the Lombards (Italy). These are the ten kingdoms which are represented in the prophecy of the seventh chapter of Daniel by the ten horns of the fourth beast of that chapter. And it is true, just as the prophecy said it would be, that some of these kingdoms are strong and some of them weak.

And now follows a most remarkable part of this prophecy. "And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." Verse 43.

The thought here is that attempts would be made, after the division of the Roman Empire into the ten kingdoms, to weld these kingdoms again into one great empire. These have not succeeded and never



The Roman Empire fell before the onslaught of the ten barbarian tribes. These tribal divisions, despite centuries of warfare and change, are still represented by the countries of Western Europe.

will. "They shall not cleave one to another." Examine these seven words closely, for they have proved stronger than all the legions of earth's mightiest armies.

Attempts to Unite the Nations of Europe

Charlemagne made an attempt to do what God had said could not be done. But, just as God foretold, he failed. A similar attempt was made by Charles V, but he failed. During the latter part of the seventeenth and the first part of the eighteenth centuries Louis XIV tried to bring nearly all Europe under his dominion. But the greatest, and what appeared for a time to be the most successful, attempt to bring all the divided parts of the ancient Roman Empire under one rule was made by Napoleon Bonaparte. Likewise, in our own day Kaiser Wilhelm, Hitler, and Mussolini were unable to unite Europe, for God had spoken, and "the Scripture cannot be broken." Others still try, but God's word continues to prevent their succeeding.

But the prophecy goes further and indicates that when the use of force should fail to bring together these kingdoms into one great empire, other methods would be tried. It definitely predicts that one of these methods would be intermarriage. The prophecy says, "They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another." Verse 43.

This plan, too, has failed. Before World War I all the crowned heads of Europe were closely related by marriage. But this intermarrying did not fulfill its

purpose of bringing these nations into a closer and more friendly relationship to each other. It did not serve to cement them together. The enmity between Germany and England was not lessened because their kings were first cousins. And they were all just as ready to go to war with one another as they would have been if their rulers had not been all blood relatives. God's word still stands, "They shall not cleave one to another."

The Everlasting Kingdom of Peace

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: 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 for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure." Verses 44, 45.

This is the most important part of this entire line of prophecy. "In the days of these kings," or kingdoms. What kings? The kingdoms arising on the ruins of Rome, the modern nations of Europe. In the days of the modern nations of Europe the God of heaven is to establish His everlasting kingdom, the kingdom of Christ.

Just as surely as Medo-Persia followed Babylon, as Greece followed Medo-Persia, as Rome followed Greece, and as the modern nations of Europe followed the empire of Rome, just so surely will this present world order be followed in the very near future by the kingdom of God, the great kingdom of peace which shall extend from one end of the earth to the other.

It should be noticed that this kingdom is not to be established in this world by the world's conversion. Such a doctrine is unknown in the Bible. The stone which smote the great image and ground it to powder represents the kingdom of God. After pleading with all flesh, after sending His gospel of the coming kingdom into all the world as a witness to every nation, God will punish the inhabitants of the earth for the rejection of the gospel, bringing the existing order of the world to destruction. Before this destruction, the people of God will be gathered out of the world by the preaching of the gospel. Everyone who makes a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice, who accepts Jesus Christ as his Saviour, will become a subject of the everlasting kingdom about to be set up on earth. Let the reader be admonished by these rapidly fulfilling prophecies and make his peace with the Lord, that he may have an abundant entrance into that kingdom which is soon to come.