

The following Scripture passages are offered to aid beginning fellowships. The readings and commentary for this week are more in line with what has become usual; for the following will most likely be familiar observations. The concept behind this Sabbath's selection is the kingdom Jesus receives.

Weekly Readings **For the Sabbath of May 17, 2008**

The person conducting the Sabbath service should open services with two or three hymns, or psalms, followed by an opening prayer acknowledging that two or three (or more) are gathered together in Christ Jesus' name, and inviting the Lord to be with them.

The person conducting services should read or assign to be read Daniel chapter 2, followed by chapter 8 and chapters 10 through 12.

Commentary: When Daniel appeared before Nebuchadnezzar to reveal and interpret the king's dream, he said, "[T]here is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days" (2:28). What God had made known to the king was not for the immediate future or for the period between when the king received the vision and the latter days: the vision was given to reveal what would be in the latter days, the same period as addressed in Daniel's vision of chapter 8 (8:19, 26) and the same period addressed in the long prophecy recorded in chapters 10 through 12 (10:14; 12:4, 9).

If Daniel's visions, coming to him from when he was young to when he was old, were for *the latter days*, a time period far in the future from when Daniel lived, then why have so many prophecy pundits found in Daniel's visions the course of history from when Daniel lived until the end of the era? And why do so many biblical scholars now discount Daniel's visions, assigning to the Book of Daniel a date during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes IV?

Daniel concludes his session before King Nebuchadnezzar by saying, "The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure" (2:45). So if a disciple is to believe Daniel (and few do), every understanding of what will happen in the latter days—the period also known as the time of the end—begins with understanding Daniel's interpretation of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision. ... Daniel's interpretation of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw is familiar to Bible students: the king saw a standing figure of man that had a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and feet of mingled iron and clay. Five discernable elements are present in the image, and remain present when the image's feet are crushed by a stone cut without hands (v. 34-35). This stone becomes a great mountain that fills the entire earth; this stone is the kingdom of God.

Altogether, in the image Nebuchadnezzar saw, there are four metals that have economic value, clay that is the stuff of which men are made, and stone that forms the base upon which all kingdoms of the earth are constructed. The four metals and the clay are simultaneously present and simultaneously blown away by the breath [wind] of God (2:44-45).

The four metals and the soft clay are of the latter days; yet Daniel identified Nebuchadnezzar as the head of gold, then said, "Another kingdom inferior to

you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 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” (2:39–40). And traditionally, Daniel’s divine interpretation has been interpreted by men to mean that four world ruling human kingdoms shall successively supersede one another, and shall continue from ancient Babylon until Christ returns to begin His millennial reign. Traditionally, those nations have been identified as Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. But this tradition is woefully disrespectful to China, which has been and is a great nation, a perennial world power that never came under domination by Babylon, Persia, Greece, or Rome. So by ignoring China (and Chile) traditional understandings of Daniel’s interpretation are wrong, or Daniel’s interpretation is wrong, which isn’t the problem. The problem lies in not understanding what the humanoid image represents.

Daniel also told Nebuchadnezzar, ““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, and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of men, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all” (Dan 2:37–38) ... hold it! No man rules over the migrations of the birds of the heavens, nor has any man ruled over the wild beasts of the field. The one who rules over migratory birds and over lions and jackals is the one who has given them their “natures” or basic instincts.

Either Daniel delivered hyperbole to the king, setting before the king a plateful of exaggeration to appease the king, or Daniel makes Nebuchadnezzar a type of the king of Babylon whom Israel, according to the prophet Isaiah, will taunt when the Lord gives Israel rest from pain and turmoil and hard service which the Lord made Israel serve (Isa 14:1-4). This latter king of Babylon has fallen from heaven after saying in his heart that he would ascend to heaven and set his throne on high (*vv.* 12-14); he is the Adversary, the present prince of this world. He is Lucifer, the fallen Day Star. And Nebuchadnezzar formed the shadow and type of Satan in a manner analogous to how physically circumcised Israel forms the shadow and type of the now holy nation circumcised of heart by spirit.

The prophet Isaiah records that when the righteous Branch judges the poor and decides with equity for the meek, the natures of the great predators will change (11:6–9); for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord [YHWH], who shall “extend his hand a second time to recover the remnant that remains of his people” (*v.* 11). Then, when the predatory natures of lions, wolves and bears are changed, a man shall not be king of kings, but the glorified Messiah shall be King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16). Jesus told Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world; that if it were His servants would fight that He not be delivered over to the Jews—His kingdom is not of this world or from this world (John 18:36). His kingdom will rule over the natures of men and beasts and the birds of the air. He will rule as no man has or can, for His realm shall be the mental topography of living creatures.

When Jesus receives His kingdom, He shall replace the present prince of this world, “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience” (Eph 2:2). It is this spirit being, the prince of the power of the air, that presently rules over the predatory natures of lions and jackals. He is identified by the prophet Isaiah as the king of Babylon (again, 14:4–20). And the

human king of Babylon formed the shadow and type of this spiritual king of Babylon who sought to make himself like the Most High.

The Apostle Paul identifies the Church as the Body of Christ, with the glorified Jesus as the Head of this Body. But Jesus is also identified as the Son of Man; thus, the Church as the Body of Christ is also the Body of the Son of Man. So when one like a Son of Man appears in Daniel's visions (7:13) to receive the kingdom of this world at the time of the end, Christ and the Church are this one who is like a Son of Man. Christ and the Church are the equivalent and successor to the humanoid image Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision.

To repeat, Jesus told Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world or from this world. His kingdom is not a kingdom like Nebuchadnezzar's, or Darius', or Alexander's. Human beings rule kingdoms of this world. The glorified Christ is no longer a human being.

Human kings receive power in this world to rule for good or for evil as agents of the prince of this world, to whom God has delivered the house of Adam for the destruction of the flesh as Paul commanded the saints at Corinth to deliver the man with his father's wife to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1 Cor 5:5). God consigned all of humankind to disobedience because of the sin of Adam; He consigned or concluded all of humanity to sin so that He could have mercy on all (Rom 11:32). Literally, God delivered human beings into the hand of the Adversary so that their being in subjection to disobedience and to Satan would give human beings the covering of natural grace (Rom 5:13) for their lawlessness in this world. Sin is not counted as sin where the person is not free to obey God regardless of how pious the person desires to be. The person will still die because of his or her lawlessness, but when judgments are revealed, the person who did by nature what the law required showed that the work of the law was written on his or her heart, and the person's conscience will bear witness for or against him or her, accusing and possibly excusing the person so that the spirit might be saved.

The prince of this world presently reigns over the realm of the subconscious mind—the territory of thoughts and desires and all of those things that seem “natural” such as gender identity. He doesn't reign over humankind through the United Nations, or before, the League of Nations. He doesn't rule through any human nation, such as the Roman Empire. His kingdom is far larger than Europe, Asia Minor, and Saharan Africa. He reigns over every son of the first Adam regardless of where this son dwells, and this is what the many prophecy pundits of today do not understand.

Satan reigns as the king of spiritual Babylon until he is cast from heaven (Rev 12:7-10) halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation ... that old dragon, Satan the devil, is cast from heaven in what will truly be the latter days, the period generically known as the time of the end.

*

The reader shall now read Daniel chapter 7; followed by Revelation chapter 11, verses 15 through 19.

Commentary: Jesus as the anointed Messiah and as the Son of Man will only receive the kingdom of this world once! He will not receive the kingdom many times, what the stone cut without hands indicates; for the kingdom the anointed one receives “shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people” (Dan 2:44). And because the kingdom will not be left to another, and because the God of heaven shall set up this kingdom, the kingdom will be ruled by the one who was *Yah*, the God of heaven that Moses and the seventy elders

saw at Sinai, the *Theos* of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt 22:32), the *Theos* who entered His creation (John 1:3) as His only begotten Son (John 3:16), the man Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:14).

The kingdom the glorified Jesus will receive—this world is not yet His kingdom, for the predatory natures of the great predators have not been changed and no peace exists between men—is not of this world or from this world. It is the kingdom presently ruled by the prince of this world, “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience” (Eph 2:2), and within the prince of this world’s reigning hierarchy are the prince [*sar*] and kings of Persia (Dan 10:13) and the prince or king of Greece (*v.* 20). These *sars* or ruling princes/kings of Persia and Greece are not human beings, but powerful demonic spirit beings that the archangel Michael, one of the chief princes, must battle before the angel coming to bring Daniel knowledge of what will happen in the latter days can get to Daniel.

With pedagogical redundancy, every scholar, every prophecy pundit, every theologian of any flavor who looks for endtime prophecies to be fulfilled by construction of a physical temple or by an alignment of physical nations or by the physically circumcised nation of Israel’s return to the land of Judea is *physically minded* and has no spiritual understanding—doesn’t understand that the kings of Persia and Greece in Daniel’s second vision (chap 8) are not human kings, but demonic spirits of great power. The little horn that speaks great words directly to the court of the Ancient of Days (Dan 7:11) is not a human beings that has entered into the presence of God, but a spirit being. The beasts or kings of chapter 7 are not human kings reigning in this world, but spirit beings appearing in the latter days before the court of the Ancient of Days to have their dominion over humankind (over living creatures of all sorts) taken from them and given to the Son of Man.

So, since Jesus’ kingdom is the successor to the humanoid appearing kingdom of gold, silver, bronze, iron and clay, the humanoid image Nebuchadnezzar saw cannot be of this world. The kingdom about which Jesus said He would receive, the kingdom that was not of this world or from this world, will exist in the same realm or dimension as the humanoid image Nebuchadnezzar saw, an awkward way of saying that the humanoid image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision was the reigning hierarchy of spiritual Babylon, with Nebuchadnezzar’s vision being sealed and kept secret until the time of the end by its shadow reigning in this world from Nebuchadnezzar to Antiochus Epiphanes IV. Therefore, because the kingdom which Jesus and the Church (these two being one as a man and his body are one) receive as the Son of Man is not received until the end of the age and is not of this world or from this world, the humanoid image Nebuchadnezzar saw is one kingdom that reigns over living entities in and from the heavenly realm from Nebuchadnezzar’s era until the time of the end, and is not a series of succeeding human kingdoms in this world—its shadow is a series of human kingdoms. And since God has consigned all of humankind to disobedience so that He can have mercy upon all (Rom 11:32), the kingdom that reigns over the sons of disobedience is a kingdom of disobedience, its prince the prince of this world, the prince of the power of the air. Nebuchadnezzar, now, becomes the lively representation of the spiritual king of Babylon, and this spiritual king of Babylon is the Adversary. The humanoid image Nebuchadnezzar saw is the disobedient antetype to the obedient Son of Man, who receives the single kingdom of this world halfway through seven endtime years of tribulation.

As light comes from darkness (Gen 1:4), the sons of light come from sons of disobedience, and the Son of Man comes out from spiritual Babylon through life coming from the death of one man, Christ Jesus.

Traditional interpretations of Daniel's prophecies require the insertion of a secular history textbook into Holy Writ. So before going farther, return that history book to its shelf. If God needed additional revelation to be given so that Daniel's sealed and secret prophecies could be unsealed in the latter days, He would have given that revelation through another prophet. But no additional revelation is needed for the visions were sealed with their visible, physical shadows, with Nebuchadnezzar being the type and shadow of Satan. And the succession of kingdoms from Babylon, Media Persia, Greece, and through the reigns of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms forms the shadow and copy of the single kingdom of spiritual Babylon that Nebuchadnezzar saw represented as a humanoid image.

Again, Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that his vision is of what will be in the latter days, again a phrase that needs remembered considering that the four metals and the clay are simultaneously present when the stone cut without hands crushes the image. But Nebuchadnezzar as the head of gold won't be present. He died at a relatively young age. However, Isaiah identifies Satan as the spiritual king of Babylon, and Satan will be present when a spiritual kingdom of Babylon falls, the promise of Revelation and the reality of what happens when Satan is cast from heaven (Rev 12:7-13).

Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon was a theocracy, as evidenced by the gold statue the king tried to require Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to worship. Persia was a theocracy, and Alexander's mother claimed he was the son of God. So each kingdom named in the visions of Daniel physically reigned over both the civil and religious affairs of the empire, but the princes of Persia and of Greece mentioned in Daniel chapter 10 are not human princes but demonic spirits able to withstand the angel sent to Daniel for 21 days. Human kingdoms serve as the lively representation of these demonic princes and kings. And the lack of this realization is what kept the visions of Daniel sealed and secret until the time of the end.

One more time: Jesus told Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world; that if it were of this world His servants would fight. So the kingdom of God over which Christ Jesus will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords is not a kingdom of this world as Alexander's Greece was, as even as Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon was. Christ Jesus will not reign from the spiritual realm over vassal kings and lords that in turn will reign over humanity in the manner that Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander did. Rather, He will reign by replacing Satan, who, today, reigns over all sons of disobedience as the prince of the power of the air. The Son of Man will reign over the single kingdom of this world by ruling humanity's mental topography through Jesus giving to all humankind His mind and His nature when the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28).

There is a war presently being fought in the heavenly realm between the king of Greece and the king of Persia, the war described in Daniel chapter 8. The territory they fight to control is the mental topography of living creatures, and those values that are traditionally perceived as Greek will become the values of this world when the spiritual king of Greece tramples the king of Persia. But as Alexander died when he had no more empires to conquer, the great horn of the spiritual king of Greece will be broken (because he is first) suddenly at the second Passover liberation of Israel shortly after he has defeated Persia.

The course of this heavenly war can be seen in the responses to the cyclone in Myanmar and the earthquake in China ... a very few decades ago, China would have been as secretive as Myanmar and as reluctant to allow foreign aid workers to enter the nation's interior, but the apparent openness now of China is evidence of a changed mindset, the movement towards Chinese implementation of the values of Greece. And the generals' reluctance to extend rights towards individuals in Myanmar is evidence that the spiritual king of Greece has not yet fully trampled the ram that is the king of Persia.

It is the second Passover liberation of Israel that has been hidden from humankind by Daniel's visions being sealed and kept secret until the time of the end.

*

The person conducting the Sabbath service should close services with two hymns, or psalms, followed by a prayer asking God's dismissal.

* * * * *

"Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

[[Home](#)] [[Sabbath Readings](#)]