Christ, the Eternal King!

Daniel 2:31-45

 This morning, we are going to be spending our time together looking specifically at the dream that King Nebuchadnezzar had that he was demanding a description and an interpretation for. This dream, as we have already mentioned, was so disturbing that it caused him to lose sleep and respond in a hasty manner. As Daniel explains the dream to the king and then interprets what it means, he is not only telling the king about the future but is also providing for all who will read this account a description of the coming kingdom of Christ. This morning, we will read the passage together, next we will look carefully at the dream as well as its interpretation and then finally we will outline what this passage teaches us regarding the coming eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ. Please read with me Daniel 2:31-45:

**31 “You, O king, were watching and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary radiance, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. 32 The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its chest and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, and its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 You continued watching until a stone was broken off without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed to pieces all at the same time, and they were like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the entire earth.**

**The Interpretation—Babylon the First Kingdom**

**36 “This was the dream; and now we will tell its interpretation before the king. 37 You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the honor; 38 and wherever the sons of mankind live, or the animals of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has handed them over to you and has made you ruler over them all. You are the head of gold.**

**Medo-Persia and Greece**

**39 And after you another kingdom will arise inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth.**

**Rome**

**40 Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; just as iron smashes and crushes everything, so, like iron that crushes, it will smash and crush all these things. 41 And in that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have within it some of the toughness of iron, since you saw the iron mixed with common clay. 42 And just as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong, and part of it will be fragile. 43 In that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in their descendants; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not combine with pottery.**

**The Divine Kingdom**

**44 And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. 45 Just as you saw that a stone was broken off from the mountain without hands, and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is certain and its interpretation is trustworthy.”**

 If you look at the screen you will find that there is a picture of what the statue Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream may have looked like. We see this as a Babylonian king who has the physical attributes of what a king back in that time might have looked like. What we need to do first is take a few minutes to familiarize ourselves with the statue itself. Then we will look at what each part of the statue represents. After we have become familiar with the images, then we will discuss what this has to teach us regarding the future kingdom of God that will be ruled by Jesus Christ.

 We will begin with the head of gold. Daniel tells the king that he represents the head of gold, meaning that he is the most powerful king on the earth at that time. The reason that Nebuchadnezzar is so powerful is because God had granted him all that power and influence. The term used to describe the king is “king of kings.” No one else on the earth had the power or control that the king of Babylon had. All the other kings were under his authority, and they therefore had to answer to him. So, we have the head of gold, which is the most precious mineral found on the statue, representing the most powerful king.

 The next level of the statue made of silver was the chest and the arms. When looking at the kingdom in the book of Daniel that will eventually come in to defeat the Babylonians, we see that in chapter 5 verse 31 the Medo-Persian Empire will invade the country and take over after removing Nebuchadnezzar’s son. If we look at the statue very carefully, we see that the chest and arms represent this kingdom, and it is also interesting to note that the Medo-Persian Empire is represented by the two arms. Silver is a precious mineral that is less valuable than gold which is why it is below the head. Not only is silver less valuable, but it is also a less heavy metal than gold.

 The third level of the statue are the thighs of bronze, which represents the kingdom that took over Persia in the 4th century BC which is the Greek Empire. This kingdom was ruled by Alexander the Great. Daniel states in verse 34 that the kingdom after the Persians would rule over the entire earth. Alexander defeated all the kingdoms in the world at his time and up until his death, at the age of 32, he was in total control of the world. When he died his kingdom was split into four regions which were given to four of his generals to rule. Once again, we see that the kingdom of Greece is represented by Bronze, which is less valuable than silver meaning that this is a weaker kingdom than Babylon.

 The fourth kingdom that is represented in this dream is the Roman empire which will defeat the Greeks in 168 BC and will dominate the world until nearly the end of the 4th century A.D. They are represented by the legs of Iron. Iron is a strong metal and is stable, but it is not as valuable in the world when compared to gold, silver or bronze. In verse 40 Daniel says that this kingdom will crush everything that had come before it. The Roman Empire dominated the world for almost 5 centuries and occupied several regions of the world as a part of their rule. They had governors who ruled each region who were answerable to Caesar. Pontius Pilate, for example, was the governor of Judea at the time of Jesus and his main responsibility was to administer Roman justice in the region while at the same time collect taxes to keep the kingdom funded.

 After the fall of the Roman Empire there will be several smaller kingdoms that will be dominating different regions of the world. He says these are represented by the feet that are made of an iron and clay mixture. This shows that those kingdoms are not nearly as powerful or stable as the kingdom that was ruled by Nebuchadnezzar. The feet are the weakest part of the statue, which is not a good thing because the entire structure must be supported by the feet and the legs.

 Now that we have looked at each part of the statue, it is now important that we take a few minutes to make some observations regarding it. When looking at the statue what do you notice regarding the materials as we work down towards the feet? What we notice is that the metals get lighter and less valuable as we move from head to toe. This is telling King Nebuchadnezzar that the kingdoms that follow him will be inferior to his own and that as they continue each of them will be weaker than the one before it. When we reach the feet made of iron and clay, we find that the 10 kingdoms represented by the toes are the weakest overall. Therefore, if the statue is to be toppled or defeated the perfect place for it to be hit will be in lower part of the legs near the feet. This leads us to the next part of the dream, where the statue will be demolished and then will be replaced by an eternal kingdom.

In verse 34 Daniel begins to explain that the stone, that was not cut by human hands, hits the statue in the feet which brings the entire statue down. Not only is the statue destroyed, but it disappears completely being carried away by the wind just like the chaff when separated from the grain. This is showing us that the new kingdom of God, being represented by the stone, will totally destroy all of the kingdoms of the earth and that they will disappear from sight. This new kingdom is totally different from everything else that had appeared before it. This is an eternal kingdom that will never pass away. The kingdom of God will rule forever and it will establish justice as well as restore the brokenness that took place because of the fall of man. What we are going to do for the remainder of our time together this morning is look specifically at this stone that attacks the statue and learn what it has to teach us regarding the kingdom of God as well as our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

 Our next slide on the screen shows a picture of the stone hurling towards the statue. If we look closely at this picture, we can see that the stone is targeting the weak area of the statue, which we already said are the feet made of a mixture of iron and clay. As we review our passage of study today, we are told three specific characteristics of this stone that show us what the kingdom of God, ruled by Christ, will be like in the future.

 In verse 34 Daniel describes the stone as being “cut off without human hands.” This means that the stone was not manmade, but rather made by God. This attribute of the kingdom of God ruled by Christ tells us that this eternal kingdom will last because it is not built using the knowledge of man, rather it is assembled according to the wisdom of God. This kingdom has been in existence since the beginning of time and has always existed with God. This is what the gospel of John says regarding Jesus Christ as well. He has always existed with God and was with God when He spoke the world into existence. Please read with me chapter 1 verses 1-3 of the gospel of John **“1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being.”** We learn from the Apostle John that Jesus Christ is not a created being. That He has always existed with God and through Him the entire world was created. This is what Daniel was referring to when he said that this stone was not cut using human hands, it came from God and was cut using God’s power. Therefore, the stone that is attacking the statue is the kingdom of God that is ruled by the Lord Jesus Christ.

 The second attribute of this stone is that it had enough power in it to destroy the entire statue. Not only was the statue destroyed, but it totally disappeared from existence. All the kingdoms represented in the statue will blow away with the wind. What this shows us is that the kingdoms of this world are temporary, but the kingdom of God will be established forever. In the gospel of Luke, when Gabriel comes to tell Mary that she will be giving birth to Jesus, he describes Jesus in this way: **“32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end” (Luke 1:32-33).** This confirmation of Christ’s kingdom lasting forever is also recorded for us in **Revelation 11:15 “5 Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.’”** So, what we learn is that even though the kingdom’s of man are always being overthrown and changing, the eternal kingdom of God will last forever, and it will allow those who have been purchased through the sacrifice of Christ to be in His presence for all of eternity.

 The third, and final, characteristic of this stone is provided for us in verse 35 when Daniel tells the king that the stone filled up the entire earth. What we learn from this is that the Kingdom of God, when it comes, will fill the entire earth and at that time everyone will know who God is and they will witness His power. The reason that all people will come to know the Lord is because Jesus Christ has promised this will be so. In Matthew 24:14 as He is discussing the end times with the disciples, Jesus says **“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.”** As the gospel has been proclaimed all over the world, when the kingdom of God comes it will serve as proof of the good news that has been shared since Christ’s ascension. The coming of the kingdom will fill the entire earth with the knowledge of God. The prophet **Habakkuk** confirms this when he writes **“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord,**

**As the waters cover the sea” (2:14).** One of the greatest promises for when the kingdom of God comes is that God will be known to the entire earth and that His great wonders will be on display for all to see. The Apostle John in the book of Revelation has this to say regarding the coming of the kingdom of God **“20 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he took hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he threw him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. 4 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their foreheads and on their hands; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”** When Christ returns and assumes control over His earthly kingdom, He will rule for 1,000 years along with those who have remained faithful and have not taken the mark of the beast. At the end of the millennium, He will throw Satan into the pit of fire forever. This will signal the end of the deceiver and nothing will stand between us and our Holy God any longer. This promise of restoration and reward for the faithful shows us that in the future God’s faithfulness towards His people will never end and that everything those who love Him have done to share the gospel will result in them having joy for eternity.

 As we conclude today’s message may we be encouraged knowing that our God has everything under His control. In today’s passage we have learned that in all things God is in complete control. **“But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases” (Psalm 115:3).** The Psalmist also declares **“Whatever the Lord pleases, He does, In heaven and on earth, in the seas and in all the ocean depths” (135:6).** Secondly, even though we see things getting worse every day we do not have to lose hope. **“But evil people and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13).** This is happening around us today, but we have hope in Christ! Finally, after all things in this world fail, we will have the coming of the Kingdom of Christ. We have nothing to fear because our God is more powerful than evil, and He will bring restoration to this fallen world. Just as the Apostle John says at the conclusion of the book of Revelation, let us pray for the Lord Jesus to come quickly. May His kingdom come. Amen.