Jesus in the Prophets – Daniel Ch.2 – the stone

1. Introduction

a. As most of us are aware Daniel contains several significant prophetic revelations much of which refers to the events at the End of the Age. Within out ETSG we have looked at these prophecies in detail and it is not my intention this morning to go into all that detail.

b. Our focus both this week and next is to look at two revelations of Jesus in Daniel; in Daniel chapter 2 and the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's vision in chapter 7. This week we will consider the stone that destroys the statue. Next week we will consider the description of Jesus as the Son of Man. Both these sessions overlap with our study day next week on heaven and earth and that day, I believe, will help us gain an even greater understanding of the nature of what we will consider over these next 2 Sundays.

2. Nebuchadnezzar's dream

a. In Daniel 2 Nebuchadnezzar has a dream that shook him to the core. None of his wise men can tell him what this dream is but Daniel, when summoned, explains who will be able to do so.

Dan.2:26-28 *The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?" **27** Daniel answered the king and said, "No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, **28** but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these:*

b. Daniel then goes on to describe the dream in which Nebuchadnezzar saw a large statue made of different metals which Daniel identifies as belonging to the latter days. The key part of this dream is "the stone" which shatters the statue.

Dan.2:31-35 *"You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. **32** The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, **33** its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. **34** As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. **35** Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.*

c. Daniel then goes on to provide the interpretation of the dream.

Dan.2:36-45 *"This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation. 37 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, 38 and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—you are the head of gold. 39 Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 40 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. 41 And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be*

partly strong and partly brittle. [43] As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. [44] And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand for ever, [45] just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold.
A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure."

d. It is not my intention this morning to discuss the various kingdoms described here. We took much time in our ETSG to look at these. Our focus this morning is to look at the way in which all earthly empires are destroyed by the Kingdom that God sets up and the nature of that kingdom which will "fill the whole earth."

3. The coming of the Kingdom of God.

a. The stone cut without hands is the kingdom of God, which would suddenly and completely obliterate all of the kingdoms of the statue and rule in their place over the entire earth, forever. Clearly this is the Kingdom established by the King, Jesus, at the end of the age ("in the latter days").

b. The rock that struck the image speaks of Jesus and His eternal kingdom (2:35, 44-45). The stone being cut without hands means that it has a divine origin. The stone will consume all the other kingdoms and shall stand forever (2:44). This is the Messianic Kingdom inaugurated at Jesus' second coming. This coming Kingdom will be triumphant over all others; it will crush and shatter all earthly kingdoms.

c. The thing to notice about this Kingdom is that it comes suddenly and completely destroys all the other kingdoms. This is not some gradual take over – this is a violent and decisive victory which leaves no trace of the previous kingdoms behind.

d. The kingdom set up by God "filled the whole earth," "will never be destroyed" or replaced, and will "endure forever." The picture is clear: God's kingdom will rule the entire earth forever in place of the prior kingdoms of the statue.

e. Down through history many rulers have dominated the earth and established kingdom rule. However, there is coming a time when all men's kingdoms will be destroyed and the true King will take His place. His Kingdom will know no end and shall be established over all the earth.

f. In Daniel 7 Daniel has a vision which recounts the same events as Chapter 2 but from God's viewpoint, not Nebuchadnezzar's. In that vision the 4 kingdoms are portrayed as beasts displaying the demonic nature of earthly kingdoms. (We will consider this at our study day next week). Then Daniel sees the one who is given all power and dominion.

Daniel 7:13-14 *"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. [14]And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed*

a. Jesus used the term **Son of Man** over sixty-five times to describe Himself. He identified Himself as the Son of Man of Daniel 7:13, who sits at the right hand of God and will return to the earth on clouds of heaven. (Mt. 16:27, 24:30, 26:64; Mk. 8:38, 13:26, 14:62; Lk. 9:26, 21:27, 22:69).He will come to the earth on heavenly clouds and will be seen by every person (Zech. 9:14; 12:10; Mt. 24:30; 26:64; Rev. 1:7).

Matt. 24:30 *Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

b. So the stone is King Jesus bringing His Kingdom to rule and reign over all the earth having totally destroyed all other kings and kingdoms. We will consider the significance of the title Son of Man next week.

4. Heaven on earth

a. However, many of us have no grid for what is to come when Jesus returns. Most of us have grown up with a Greek mind-set that has separated the earthly from the heavenly and seen the heavenly as something ethereal and without substance. So the idea of heaven coming to earth is confusing and hence often ignored.

b. Our Greek thinking is based on Platonic thought. According to Plato, because Heaven could not be experienced by the human senses and there was nothing concrete or solid about it at all it was purely an abstract concept. This philosophy has greatly influenced the church down through the centuries and led to a disconnect between heaven and earth which means we rarely think of heaven as a real place. (We will consider this in much more depth next Saturday)

c. Therefore, many Christians only have a view of heaven as some ethereal place where we escape to at the end of this life and live with Jesus for evermore as spirit beings. An eternal Kingdom on earth is not even part of their mind-set. Yet Paul is clear about God's eternal purpose – heaven is coming to earth:

Eph. 1:9-10 *making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ [10] as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*

d. God created the universe in two distinct realms (Gen. 1:1).

   i Earth: This speaks of the physical realm, where human process and physical sensation reach their fullest expression.

   ii Heaven: This speaks of the spiritual realm, where God's power and presence are openly manifest. Heaven is where believers have gone when they die for the last 2,000 years since Jesus' resurrection as a "temporary holding place" before they receive a resurrected body.

e. Understanding the biblical perspective of heaven as a real place which is coming to earth is important because it affects how we see our future, which affects how we live today. The biblical text is clear - Heaven will come to earth at the time of Jesus' return.

f. When Jesus rules the earth, the natural human processes will not be suspended, but will be significantly enhanced by the supernatural dimension of the Spirit. This truth is a key to

understanding many end-time passages, including the saints reigning with Jesus over all nations.

g. The messianic kingdom is one of the major revelations of Scripture. It pertains to God's destiny for the earth and His people living on the earth. Jesus' core message was that God's kingdom is to be released on earth as it is in heaven (Mt. 6:10). The New Testament makes it clear that the kingdom is **already here** (in a limited way), but is **not yet fully here** until Jesus returns.

5. The Messianic Kingdom

Rev. 19:20; 20:1-3 *And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulphur.* *[1]Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain.* *[2]* *And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,* *[3]* *and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.*

a. Immediately after dealing with the armies that have gathered around Jerusalem Jesus begins to deal with the unholy trinity. The Antichrist and the False Prophet are thrown into the Lake of Fire and Satan is bound and thrown into the pit for 1,000 years. This incarceration is clearly given a time frame of 1,000 years and this time frame is repeated six times in this brief chapter.

b. This one chapter in Revelation gives us a clear and succinct description of the beginning and end of this thousand-year time span but to gain more understanding of what the bible teaches will happen during those thousand years, and what life will be like, we need to look at many other scriptures many of which are in the Old Testament.

c. All through the Old Testament the prophets speak of a glorious future when God will reign from Jerusalem and the earth will be filled with peace and justice. What will life during these thousand years be like?

d. Firstly, who are those who are alive as Jesus instigates His Kingdom?

Isaiah 65:20-23 *No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.* *[21]* *They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.* *[22]* *They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.* *[23]* *They shall not labour in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD, and their descendants with them.*

i **The resurrected and glorified saints** – that is all those who were resurrected when Jesus returned along with those who were raptured. These resurrected saints, in resurrection bodies, will return with Jesus to the earth and reign with Him as a kingdom of priests.

ii **Christ's "brothers"** (the faithful Jewish remnant), **and the "sheep"** (faithful Gentiles) who survive the Tribulation and enter the kingdom to form its initial population. Children will be born to those who enter the kingdom in their natural bodies and life will be greatly blessed by the rule of Christ

e. Secondly, The New Jerusalem will come down to earth, bringing a supernatural, eternal dimension to the millennial kingdom. This will release a greater measure of resurrection life on the earth. The New Jerusalem is the place where resurrected saints will live.

Rev. 3:12 12 *The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.*

f. God will rule in the person of Jesus Christ on the throne of David. The ***kingdom of David*** will bring a *political and social* aspect to the Millennium. This will include governmental, economic, and social institutions. Righteousness and justice will be established in every sphere of life as the government of every nation on earth is brought under Jesus' authority.

Isaiah 9:6-7 *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.*

g. Christ's rule will extend both spiritually and literally over the entire earth – this is the time of "the restoration of all things". The earth will have been ravaged by three and a half years of violence, bloodshed, plagues, pestilence, earthquakes, sea-life destruction, plant-life incineration, removal of mountains. Solar disruption, poisoned water supplies and depleted food resources. As Jesus brings together the heavenly and earthly realms so His government will progressively spread to all nations.

Daniel 7:27 *And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them.'*

h. The heavens and earth will be renewed to restore the creation to Eden-like conditions and repair the damage from man's long reign of abuse and the judgments of the Tribulation period. As the saints ruling and reigning with Christ we will be working with Jesus to restore and rebuild a devastated earth.

Isaiah 61:4 *They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.*

i. The *garden of Eden* will be restored, bringing a *physical paradise* aspect to the Millennium, with a fully renewed environment (agriculture, animals, atmosphere, etc.) including physical pleasures. We will live in a resurrected, physical body with supernatural capacities to enjoy an earthly paradise that is filled with beauty and pleasure. The food will be delicious with no negative side effects.

j. God's original intention was to fill the whole earth with conditions of Eden. The sin of the first Adam put a temporary pause on this. Jesus came as the second Adam (1 Cor. 15: 47). Jesus will fulfil God's original purpose of the conditions of Eden spreading across the whole earth.

Ezekiel 36:35-36 *And they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.' 36 Then the nations that are left all around you shall know that I am the LORD; I have rebuilt the ruined places and replanted that which was desolate. I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it.*

6. A new heaven and a new earth

a. Although the millennial earth will be renovated in order to recover from the judgments of the Tribulation and to restore Eden-like conditions, sin and death remained and the earth, in one sense, remains unclean. However, once all evil has finally been removed and consigned to the Lake of Fire the first heavens and earth are replaced by a new heavens and earth.

Rev.21:1-4 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.* ***2*** *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* ***3*** *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.* ***4*** *He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away."*

b. The high point of history is the Father dwelling on earth with humans (Rev. 21:3). God's purpose has always been to live together with His people face to face on this earth. The Father's throne permanently coming to earth is the ultimate reality that God accomplished through Christ.

c. The Eternal City is:

i a worshipping City with no temple (21:22; 22:4a);

ii an illuminated City with no sun (21:23; 22:5);

iii a governmental City with God's Throne (21:24, 26; 22:3-5d);

iv a servant City that works (21:25b; 22:3c, 5a),

v and a holy City without any sin (21:27, 8; 22:14-15).

7. Daniel's response

Dan.7:28 28 *"Here is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts* ***greatly alarmed*** *me, and my* ***colour changed****, but I* ***kept the matter in my heart****."*

a. This revelation is not given for simple factual information. It is meant to impact our heart and provoke us to further understanding and fervent intercession. Daniel's thoughts after the vision and interpretation are still troubling him greatly.

b. His countenance changes and he enters into a vigilant pursuit of understanding. A sobriety and intensity is now birthed in the life of Daniel. He keeps the matter in his heart and enters into a personal pursuit of understanding for over ten years in obscurity.

c. If we desire to respond like Daniel, then we will set our hearts in a spirit of prayer to understanding and diligent study of God's eternal purposes and allow it to produce an intercessory burden for understanding and deliverance.

8. Conclusion

a. All of this brings us back to Mike's teaching in Philippians and Paul's encouragement to the church there.

Phil.3:13-14 *But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,* ***14*** *I press on towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

b. This present life is but a short internship that prepares us for our eternal glorious destiny with our God. How we relate to Him and serve Him in this life impacts on our future destiny but it is not the fulfilment of all He has promised in His Word. Having a biblical understanding of our eternal life is essential in motivating us to press on in this life. **The best is yet to come!**