



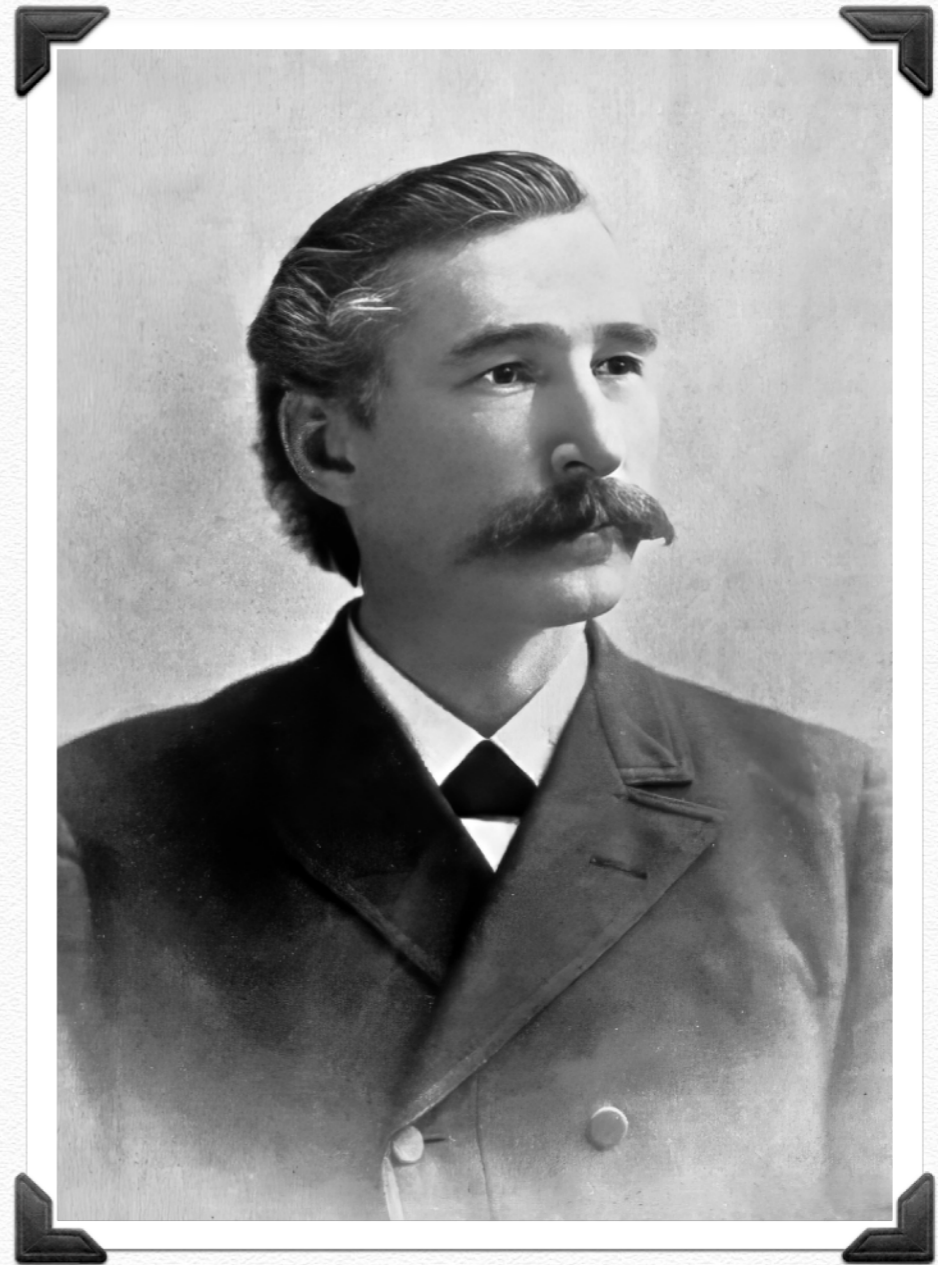
Daniel 3, 6

Daniel 3

The Image of Gold

The Medical Missionary

- ❖ November 20, 1907, pp. 369–371, a series entitled “Religious Liberty” (Volume 16)
- ❖ December 4, 1907, pp. 385, 386—The Supremacy of the Law
- ❖ December 11, 1907, pp. 397–399, “The Supremacy of the Law”
- ❖ December 25, 1907, pp. 413–414, “The Church Itself”
- ❖ *Individuality in Religion*



The Empire of Babylon embraced the civilized world, as the world then was. Nebuchadnezzar was monarch and absolute ruler of the empire. "Thou, O king, art a king of kings; for the God of Heaven hath given thee a kingdom, and 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. (A. T. Jones, *MEDM* November 20, 1907, p. 370.4)

In the form and system of government of Babylon the authority of the king was absolute. His word was the law. In this absolutism of sovereignty King Nebuchadnezzar assumed that he was **sovereign of the souls**, as well as the bodies, of the **religious life** as well as the civil conduct . . . (Ibid., p. 370.5)

Accordingly, he made an image of gold about ninety feet tall and nine feet broad and summoned the officials of the empire to worship the golden image.

Jones explains it this way: The Lord had brought all nations in subjection to the king of Babylon. By messages of His own prophet He has commanded His people, the Jews, and these three young men among them, to “serve the king of Babylon.” Yet these three had explicitly refused to serve the king of Babylon in this thing which he had personally and directly commanded them; and in this refusal the Lord himself had most signally **stood by them** and delivered them.
(Ibid., p. 370.17)

Jones said that God couldn't more clearly show through this experience of the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace that while he commanded his people to be subject to the king of Babylon and to serve him, he never commanded or intended that they should be subject to him *in the realm of religion*.

(Ibid., p. 370.18)

. . . God had not given him to be head of the religion of even a solitary individual: that while the Lord had brought all nations and peoples under the king's yoke as to their political and bodily service, this same Lord had unmistakably shown to the king that he had given no power nor jurisdiction in any way whatever as to their soul's service: (Ibid., p. 370.19)

And for the instruction of all kings and all people,
forever, all this was done that day, and it was written for
our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are
come. (Ibid., p. 371.1)

In 1907, Jones was not giving a history lesson or a lesson of Scripture alone, although both are important. His purpose was to apply both history and Scripture to our situation today.

Daniel 6

Medo-Persia

The world power and empire of Babylon passed away forever; and another took its place—the power and empire of Medo-Persia. Here was another principle of government, and here there is given to the world another lesson in religious liberty.

In the Medo-Persian empire the principle of government was different from that of Babylon. (Ibid., December 4, 1907, page 385.1, 2)

In Babylon, the word of the kings was the law, and the law was changeable as the will and word of the king might change. The king was the source of the law; his word was the law for all others, but as for himself there was no restriction of law. (Ibid., p. 385.3)

In Medo-Persia the word of the king was the law, but with this all-important difference from Babylon, that when once the word of the king had gone forth as the law, that law could not be changed nor reversed even by the king himself. The king himself was bound, even against himself, by his own word or decree that had once become the law. The government of Medo-Persia, therefore, was **a government of law**; its principle was the supremacy of THE LAW. (Ibid., p. 385.4)

Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing,
that it be not changed, according to the law of the
Medes and Persians, which altereth not. (Daniel 6:8)

The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and
Persians, which altereth not. (Daniel 6:12)

Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is,
That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth
may be changed. (Daniel 6:15)

In Darius' empire there were three presidents, of whom Daniel was first, and the king had it in mind "to set him over the whole realm." This excited the jealousy of the other two presidents and of the princes, and they conspired to break him down.

They sought "to find occasion against Daniel" concerning his conduct of the affairs of the empire. But after long and diligent search, and the closest possible scrutiny, they were obliged to cease their endeavor and confess that "they could find none occasion nor fault;" because "he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him." (Ibid., p. 385.5,6)

Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.
(Daniel 6:5)

Daniel answered, "O king, live forever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me; forasmuch as before Him, innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt." **And therein the demonstration is made in perfection forever that the person who disregards any law that touches service to God is innocent before God,** and also does "no hurt" to the king, nor to the state, nor the society, nor to any principle of law or government.
(Ibid., p. 386.3)

And when religion or religious observance or prohibition is fixed in the law, even though the law be as supreme and inflexible as that of the Medes and Persians, **the divine right** and perfect liberty of individuality in religion then extends [over and above] to the law that incorporates the religion, and such law is simply no law.

(Ibid., p. 386.5)

The realm of religion is the realm of God. In that realm
—God alone is Sovereign, and his will is the only law.
And in that realm the individual stands alone with
God, and responsible to him alone. (Ibid., p. 386.9)

. . . in the case of King **Nebuchadnezzar** and the three Hebrew young men, there was made plain for ever the divine truth and principle that **with the religion of the people no monarch can of right have anything to do . . .** (Ibid., p. 397.1)

. . . in the case of the **Medo-Persian government** against Daniel there was made plain forever the divine will and truth and principle that **with the religion of the people no law, nor any government by means of law, can of right have anything to do . . .**
(Ibid., p. 397.2)

These two examples and the principles which they illustrate cover every phase of earthly government as such, and so make plain the great and vital truth that religion, with its rites, institutions, and observances, is totally excluded, and is to be totally exempt, from the cognizance of earthly government of whatever phase or form; that **religion**, with all that is incident to it, **pertains to the individual alone in his personal relations to God.** (Ibid., p. 398.1)

And as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar the **principle** is that no monarch may ever of right do as that monarch did; as in the case of the law of the Medes and Persians the **principle** is that no law may ever of right be similar to that law . . . (Ibid., January 8, 1908, p. 40.6)

We have now traced in the Word of God the principle of the divine right of individuality in religion, as that principle is applied and illustrated as relates to **autocracy**, to government of the supremacy and inflexibility of **law**, to the **union of Church and State**, to the **church itself**; and to **individuals**. (Ibid., February 19, 1908, page 146.1)

Please let no one think that all this is **only a series of studies in ancient history**, nor yet that it is **a study of principles and Scriptures only** as such; though on either ground the study would be amply justified. However, it is nothing of the kind. It is a study of principles which in one phase or another are fully, as alive and active **today** as ever. And the day is **yet to be**, and that not far distant, when the whole series of illustrations covered in these studies will again be all alive and active, and all at once, as truly and to the like purpose as each was in its place and day. (Ibid., p. 146.2)

The day is coming, and it is not far distant, when autocracies, governments of the supremacy and the inflexibility of the law, unions of church and State, and churches as such, will all be standing unitedly, and bent as from one mind, to compel submission and uniformity in religion; and to crush out every suggestion of individuality in religion and every kind of right of it. (Ibid., p. 146.3)

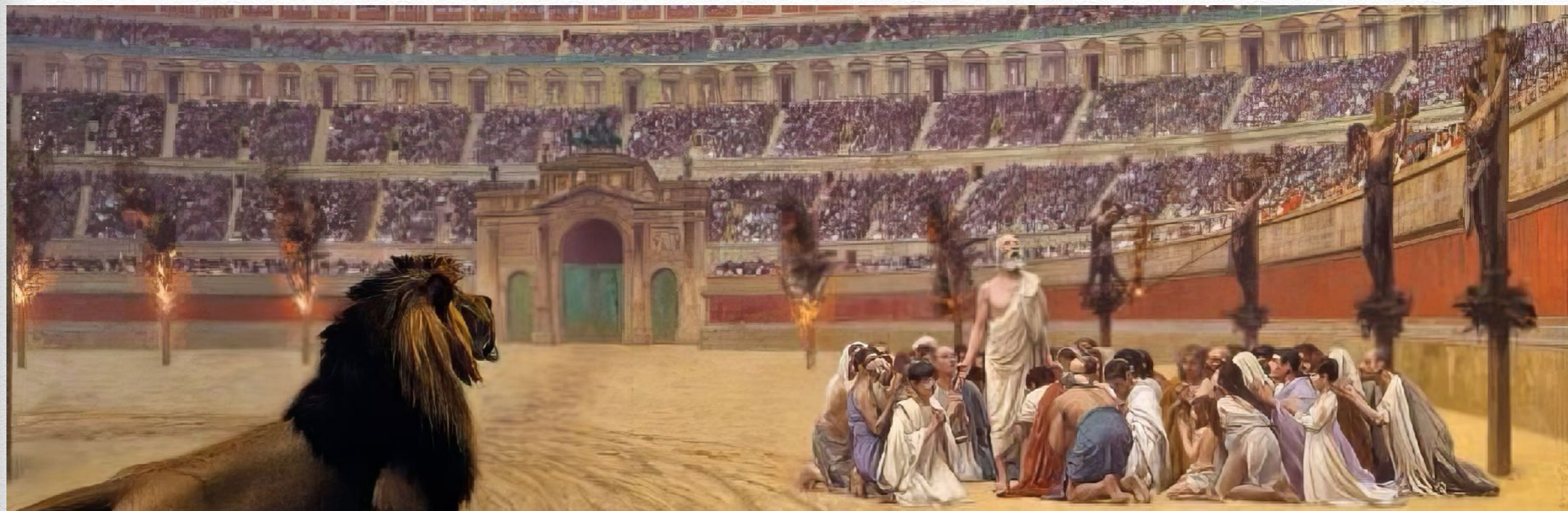
It is particularly in view of what is soon to come **that these studies have been published**. All these things written in the Scriptures were set down there by the Spirit of inspiration, not only for the instruction of people always, but, particularly “for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.” The mightiest contest, and this upon the grandest scale, between the forces of evil and the reign of righteousness that this world’s experience shall ever know, is yet to be. This mightiest conflict is to be in the time when the ends of the world are come. That time is even now at hand. For this reason these lessons from the inspired record are all-important just now.

(Ibid., p. 146.4)

In view of the mighty pressure from all these sources and by all these forces, that is soon to be put on every individual, it is of the greatest importance that **each individual shall know for himself**, and know by the surest possible evidence—to know by very certitude itself—just what is his **place**, his **responsibility**, and his **right**, individually, **in the presence of principalities and powers, and before God and with God.** (Ibid., p. 146.5)

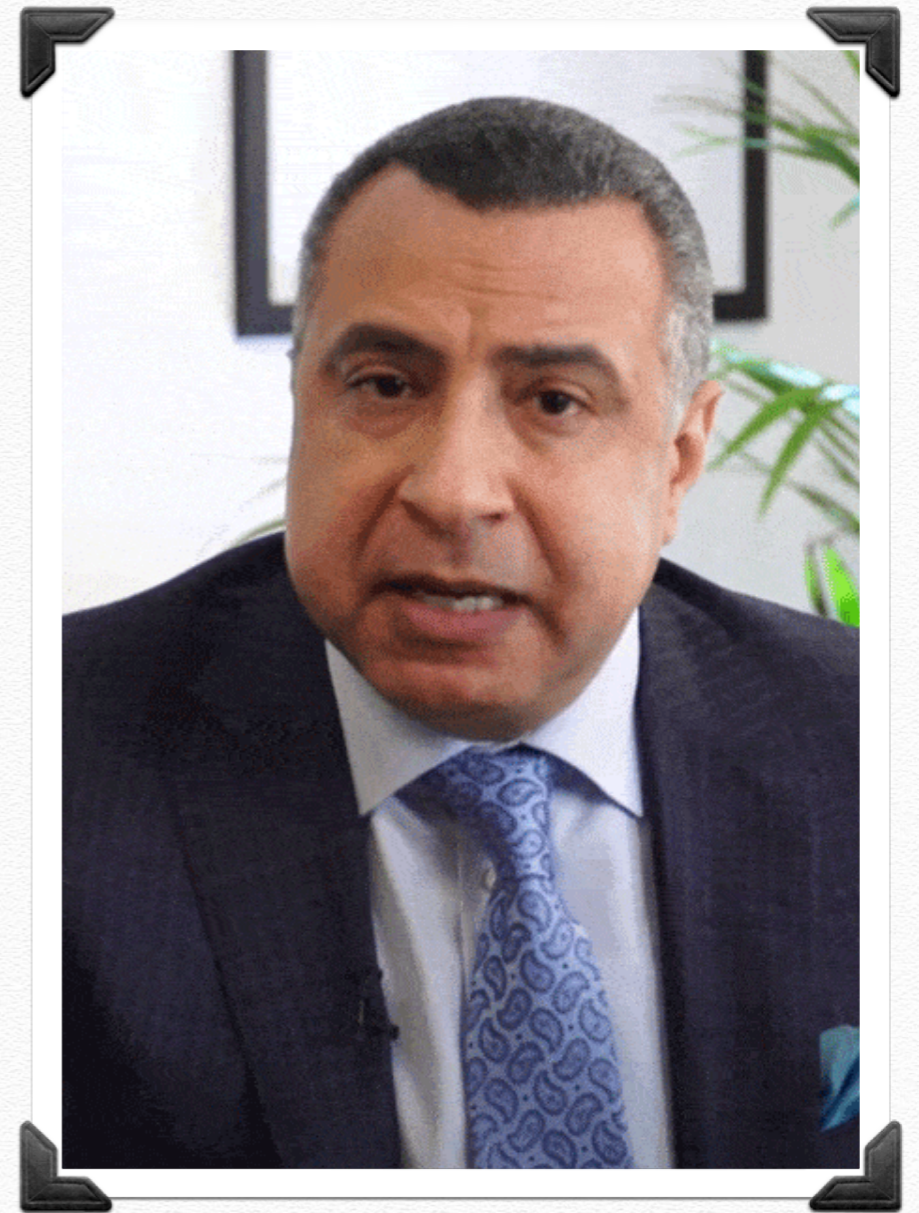
It is true that Nebuchadnezzar was entirely out of his place and did wholly wrong when he attempted to exercise authority in religion; and the story is written to show to all people forever that every autocracy is just as much out of place, and just as far wrong, when it presumes to assert authority in religion. At the same time it is true, and equally important to remember, that the three Hebrew individuals openly and uncompromisingly disregarded that autocratic assertion of authority in religion. And **the story is written to teach that all other individuals forever must do as did those three individuals**, if these, too will be true to God, to the right, to themselves, and to their kind. (Ibid. p. 148.3)

It is true that, notwithstanding its principles of supremacy and inflexibility of the law, the Medo-Persian government did wrong when it by its law entered the field of religion; and the story is written to show to all governments and people forever that every government is equally wrong in entering by law the field of religion. It is equally true, and equally important to remember, that the individual,—**Daniel, —did absolutely and uncompromisingly disregard that law, and that the story is written to teach all individuals forever that in all like circumstances they must do as did that individual,** if they will honor God and the right and be true to themselves and to their fellowmen. (Ibid., p. 148.4)



Majed El Shafie

- ❖ Was arrested in Egypt on August of 1998, because of his faith. “I was tortured very severely. They put me underground, and I was there for seven days. And every day is a higher level of torture,” he recalled.
- ❖ On Day 3 the officer came and said they would release three dogs trained to attack human flesh. He opened the door of his prison cell, and three dogs came. “All three dogs sit around me. None of them moved,” he testified. The officer even took his belt and beat the dogs to attack him, but nothing happened. “These dogs been trained to listen to their Master, but there is no higher master than Jesus Christ,” he added.
- ❖ The soldier brought another set of dogs, but then they just sat, and one of them moved forward and licked his face. “Talking about my strength, I was alone in this room, but I was not lonely,” he said. Majed knew that Jesus protected him. He felt our Savior’s presence even during suffering.



. . . it is the blessed INDIVIDUAL with God and in God; it is those who have known and maintained the divine right of individuality in religion, it is the Daniels, the Christ, the Paul, the Wycliffes, the Luthers, who have stood alone in the world and in the church, and against both the church and the world—it is THESE, who have maintained the honor of God, who have kept alive the knowledge of God, of the right and of the true, and so have kept alive the world. (Ibid., p. 149.5)

And **now, and for the time to come**—when there is being pushed forward among the churches and urged upon the world, denominational, national, international, and world FEDERATION in religion and of religion; when all this is aimed expressly to the one end of asserting by autocracies, by governmental law, by churches allied with and in control of civil power, by churches of themselves; when all these shall work at once and together to the assertion and exercise of absolute authority in religion—in view of all this, just now, as never before, it is essential to know, to proclaim, and to maintain,—

The Divine Right of Individuality in Religion (Ibid., pp. 149.6, 150.1)

Daniel 2

The head of gold represents Babylon (626–539 B.C.).

In the history of nations the student of God's word may behold the literal fulfillment of divine prophecy. Babylon, shattered and broken at last, passed away because in prosperity its rulers had regarded themselves as independent of God, and had ascribed the glory of their kingdom to human achievement. (*Conflict and Courage*, p. 250)

The power exercised by every ruler on the earth is Heaven-imparted; and upon his use of the power thus bestowed, his success depends. To each the word of the **divine Watcher** is, "I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me." Isaiah 45:5. And to each the words spoken to Nebuchadnezzar of old are the lesson of life: "Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor: if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity." Daniel 4:27. (*PK 502.1*)

Every nation that has come upon the stage of action has been permitted to occupy its place on the earth, that the fact might be determined whether it would fulfill the purposes of the **Watcher and the Holy One**.

Prophecy has traced the rise and progress of the world's great empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. With each of these, as with the nations of less power, history has repeated itself. Each has had its period of test; each has failed, its glory faded, its power departed. (*PK* p. 535)

The history of nations speaks to us today. To every nation and to every individual God has assigned a place in His great plan. Today men and nations are being tested by the plummet in the hand of Him who makes no mistake. All are by their own choice deciding their destiny, and God is overruling all for the accomplishment of His purposes. (*PK 536.2*)

The prophecies which the great I AM has given in His word, uniting link after link in the chain of events, from eternity in the past to eternity in the future, tell us where we are today in the procession of the ages and what may be expected in the time to come. All that prophecy has foretold as coming to pass, until the present time, has been traced on the pages of history, and we may be assured that all which is yet to come will be fulfilled in its order. (*PK 536.3*)

The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place—that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis. (*PK 537.1*)

The Bible, and the Bible only, gives a correct view of these things. Here are revealed the great final scenes in the history of our world, events that already are casting their shadows before, the sound of their approach causing the earth to tremble and men's hearts to fail them for fear. (*PK 537.2*)

Babylon passed away because in her prosperity she forgot God, and ascribed the glory of her prosperity to human achievement.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1168.

Our kingdom is not of this world. We are waiting for our Lord from heaven to come to earth to put down all authority and power, and set up His everlasting kingdom. Earthly powers are shaken. We need not, and cannot, expect union among the nations of the earth. **Our position in the image of Nebuchadnezzar is represented by the toes**, in a divided state, and of a crumbling material, that will not hold together. Prophecy shows us that the great day of God is right upon us. It hasteth greatly. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 360)

The head of gold represents Babylon (626–539 B.C.).

The chest and arms of silver stand for Media-Persia (539–331 B.C.). The Medo-Persian empire never attained the splendor of Babylon.

The belly and thighs of bronze symbolize Greece (331–168 B.C.)

The legs of iron represent Rome (168 B.C.–A.D. 476).

The feet partly of iron and partly of clay **represent a divided Europe** (A.D. 476–Second Coming of Christ).

(Elias Brasil de Souza, Director of the Biblical Research Institute;
2020)

The prophecy is specific. It has to be understood on its own terms. It is not talking about the entire habitable globe up to this point but about Babylon and its successors. It does not say that no group of nations till the end of time will be able to unite for any common action. It says that “they,” that is, the divided nations that replaced the Roman Empire, will never be politically united into a single empire. The British Empire at its peak united a complex group of widely scattered nations, but that is not the concern of this prophecy. Individual citizens from the nations of Europe have linked hands with astonishing friendliness in the United States of America, but this amalgam of nationalities is also not the focus of this prophecy. **The feet and toes represent the nations of modern Europe—some strong, some weak—that dwell in the territory of the western Roman Empire.** These are the nations that will never be politically united. (C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares Vol. 1: The Message of Daniel*, p. 37; 1981)

The **mingling of churchcraft and statecraft** is represented by the iron and the clay. This union is weakening all the power of the churches. This investing the church with the power of the State will bring evil results. Men have almost passed the point of God's forbearance. They have invested their strength in politics, and have united with the papacy. But the time will come when God will punish those who have made void His law, and their evil work will recoil upon themselves. (14LtMs, Ms 63, 1899, par. 31)

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I saw that it is our duty in every case to obey the laws of our land, unless they conflict with the higher law which God spoke with an audible voice from Sinai, and afterward engraved on stone with His own finger. "I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people." He who has God's law written in the heart will obey God rather than men, and will sooner disobey all men than deviate in the least from the commandment of God. God's people, taught by the inspiration of truth, and led by a good conscience to live by every word of God, will take His law, written in their hearts, as the only authority which they can acknowledge or consent to obey. The wisdom and authority of the divine law are supreme.

(1T 361.1)

The ten precepts of Jehovah are the foundation of all righteous and good laws. Those who love God's commandments will conform to every good law of the land. But if the requirements of the rulers are such as conflict with the laws of God, the only question to be settled is: Shall we obey God, or man? (*1T 361.2*)