

8. BABYLON

The last world empire, symbolically called 'Babylon' is a coalition of many, if not all the countries of the world. King Nebuchadnezzar had a vision of a great statue representing four empires, generally interpreted as Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The fourth kingdom is described as being strong as iron, shattering and crushing everything. The feet and toes made partly of clay and partly of iron represent a divided kingdom. It will still have the strength of iron, but this latter kingdom will be both strong and brittle. The people will be mixed, multicultural, and they won't remain united. That is the final world empire. During the reign of the final empire's kings, God will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. He will shatter and crush the final world kingdom and all of the preceding kingdoms with it, and God's kingdom will stand forever (Dan 2:40-45).

In Daniel's vision, the fourth empire (Rome) was represented by the legs of iron (Dan 2:40), but Daniel goes on to talk in detail about the feet and toes (Dan 2:41-43), which represent the same empire, but at a later time and in a different form. The people are mixed through immigration and interracial marriages, as is happening all over the world today, and they won't be truly united. It is during the time of this last unstable empire, that the Messiah will come and destroy the evil world kingdom of man and set up a righteous and just kingdom that will never be destroyed. This is the kingdom of God that Jesus proclaimed, the world kingdom ruled by the Jewish Messiah.

Daniel had another vision of four beasts that represented the same four empires of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. He described the fourth beast as an awe-inspiring, terrifying, and viciously strong animal who would devour the whole earth. It had large iron teeth with which it devoured and crushed things, and then trampled under its feet whatever remained. Different from all the previous animals, it had ten horns. In the end, it is the saints who inherit the earth (Dan 7:7, 17-18, 23).

The renegade kingdoms established by man oppose God and his plans, but God has allowed their establishment and will eventually establish his kingdom, replacing their rule. The fourth kingdom was the Roman Empire, represented by the legs of iron, but the feet and toes represent

an extension of that kingdom, which in the last days will be defeated at the second coming of Jesus, the Messiah. The final form of this 'Roman' empire may have a European base, as Rome did. It will probably include the Middle East as the previous empires did, but it will devour the entire earth, a form of political globalization, or a transnational state apparatus. The ten horns are leaders, or perhaps they represent leaders of the most powerful countries. The Antichrist will uproot three of them when he comes to power. There is a lot of economic, social, and political integration happening in the world today; the possibility of a single-world empire is great, if not inevitable. It will be driven by ever-developing technology, faster transport and communications, and multiculturalism – more than half the population growth in Western countries is currently due to migration. The European Union currently has 28 states, and there are ongoing negotiations with a dozen others.

Babylon is a symbolic name, representing world dominion. It may represent all the megacities of the world, which are interconnected by banks, share markets, shipping, trade pacts, and political alliances. The world system is characterized by pride, greed, corruption, immorality, and godlessness. In a single day, at the end of the age, the cities will collapse, and Babylon will fall.

Babylon's fall is described in Revelation 17 – 18 and is clarified further by the final events of this age that are described at the opening of the sixth seal (Rev 6:12-14), the blowing of the sixth trumpet (Rev 9:13-16), the pouring out of the seventh bowl of wrath (Rev 16:18-21), and also in Ezekiel 38:19-20. The biggest ever earthquake will occur, and all the people on the face of the Earth will tremble. Every wall will fall to the ground, darkness will cover the Earth, 45-kilogram hailstones will fall, and every mountain and island will be dislodged. Along with the earthquakes, there will be volcanic eruptions and tsunamis. This is the wrath of God that is aroused by the armies of the world descending on Israel and God's city, Jerusalem, to fight against the Lord and his anointed.