

A READY ANSWER

A KINGDOM WHICH SHALL NOT BE DESTROYED

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(Editor's Note - This month's article is the second in a two part series examining the establishment and identity of the church.)

The second chapter of Daniel is a curious and wonderful chapter. We noticed in the last issue that Daniel described the fate of four earthly kingdoms. He accurately describes the rise and fall of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. Each of these powerful kingdoms ruled by mighty men, was eventually overthrown by another people. Daniel then states that it would be in the days of these kings that another kingdom would arise which would consume all of these kingdoms and stand forever. What is this mighty kingdom? When did it arise and is Daniel a true prophet? Let us consider the answer.

The Romans had unified the world. There was a common written language, Greek, and a system of roads that made travel throughout their empire relatively easy. In addition, the Romans maintained a peace that made such travel safe. It was no accident that God chose the Roman Empire as the time to establish His kingdom.

The first Caesar of Rome was Augustus Caesar. He ruled from 31 B.C. to A.D. 14. It was during his reign that Jesus Christ was born. Luke 2 says that Mary and Joseph had traveled to Bethlehem due to a decree by Augustus and there Jesus was born. The second Caesar was Tiberius. He ruled from A.D. 14 to A.D. 37. It was during his reign that Christ was crucified. Prior to his crucifixion Jesus preached a coming kingdom.

The Jews were well aware of the prophecies of Daniel and the other prophets and they expected the Messiah to come and build an earthly kingdom. They wanted to rule much like Rome and the kingdoms which had come before her had ruled. Even the disciples of Jesus expected Him to overthrow the yoke of Rome with an earthly battle. Gathering with Jesus after his resurrection they inquired about the restoration of the kingdom.

But Jesus had declared to Pontius Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world or else His servants would fight in a great battle. He instructed His servants to do no such thing. Christ's kingdom was different. His was a spiritual kingdom and His servants would fight a spiritual battle. The battleground for His kingdom would be in the hearts and minds of men. In [Luke 17:20-21](#), Luke records, ***"And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."***

Like the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, His kingdom would not be established by the hands of men. Christ's kingdom would be established by God. It would not be made up of men from any particular city or nation fighting to establish superiority, but God would draw men from all nations into His kingdom. Isaiah foretells this day in [Isaiah 2:2-3](#). ***"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."*** It would not be the power of man but the mercy of God that would establish His kingdom.

Each of the kingdoms that had arisen before had a succession of kings. One king would die and give way to another. The kingdom that God would establish would not be given to others. Christ is and would be its one and only king. In **Matthew 28:18** Jesus declares that **"...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."** In verse 20 he concludes with **"and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."** Paul states in **1 Timothy 6:13-15** that Christ's profession before Pilate that His kingdom was not of men will truly show that He is the **"only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords."** He was immortal and His kingdom would not be given to others.

All of the kingdoms of men faced enemies. Christ's kingdom is no different. There are many enemies attacking Christ's kingdom. Like the kingdoms of men, the enemies of God's kingdom come from within and without. God's kingdom, however, will last forever. Daniel said it would never be destroyed.

The men of old often had to make a choice as to who they would align themselves with. In 597 B.C. and again in 586 B.C. the Jews withheld tribute from Babylon. Each time they believed that Babylon had become weak due to pressures from Egypt and despite warnings by God's prophets, they paid the price for not giving allegiance to Babylon. In 597 B.C. the king and most of the people were taken captive. In 586 B.C. the city and temple were destroyed. These events took place because the Jews aligned themselves with the wrong people.

Today we must choose to align ourselves with Christ or not. The difference is that we can be assured that Christ's kingdom will never be overthrown. Daniel states in **Daniel 7:13-14** that **"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."** His is an everlasting dominion.

What is this everlasting kingdom? It is the church Christ established on the Day of Pentecost. In **Matthew 16** Christ asks His disciples who men believed Him to be. They answered that some thought He was some great prophet like Elijah, John the Baptist, or Jeremiah. When asked who they thought Jesus was, Peter stated in verse 16, **"...Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."** Jesus goes on to praise Peter and say, **"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."**

Christ spoke of building a church that even death, His death, could not overthrow. He told Peter that he would be given keys to this kingdom which would open it for all men. This happened on the Day of Pentecost when Christ's church was established. This kingdom would be a spiritual kingdom and the promises offered would be given to the Jews, their children, and all that are afar off. God would save any who called on His name.

This great spiritual kingdom would break in pieces and consume all the kingdoms of men. When the realms of men had passed away the kingdom of God would remain. Then when all enemies including death have been destroyed Christ will deliver His kingdom back to God. **1 Corinthians 15:24-26** says, **"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."**

Even now Christ is reigning over His kingdom. You have the opportunity to be a part of Christ's everlasting dominion. God is calling you to enter a kingdom which will stand forever. Where will your allegiance lie? The choice is yours.