



Have you ever wondered if history and the Bible actually line up together? In this study, we test that question. If we can't trust the reliability of God's Word, then we can't trust anything. We'll begin this journey into history by looking at an ancient dream that an ancient king named Nebuchadnezzar had thousands of years ago.

***Daniel 2:1-2*** Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. <sup>2</sup> Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

Here we have Nebuchadnezzar having a nightmare, but not any nightmare. This was a prophetic dream. He couldn't remember the dream, so he called all his wise men to come and tell him the dream and give its interpretation. None could except for Daniel the Israelite. Daniel prayed for God to reveal the dream and its interpretation to him. This is what God revealed to Daniel, who then told the king:

**Dan 2:31-35** "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. <sup>32</sup> This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, <sup>33</sup> its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. <sup>34</sup> You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. <sup>35</sup> Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.



Now for the interpretation...

**Daniel 2:36-40** *"This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. <sup>37</sup> You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; <sup>38</sup> and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold. <sup>39</sup> But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. <sup>40</sup> And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.*

**Daniel 2:41-45** *Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. <sup>42</sup> And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. <sup>43</sup> As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. <sup>44</sup> And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. <sup>45</sup> Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."*

So, what can we learn from the interpretation? A lot actually. Let's try to wrap our minds around what we just read.

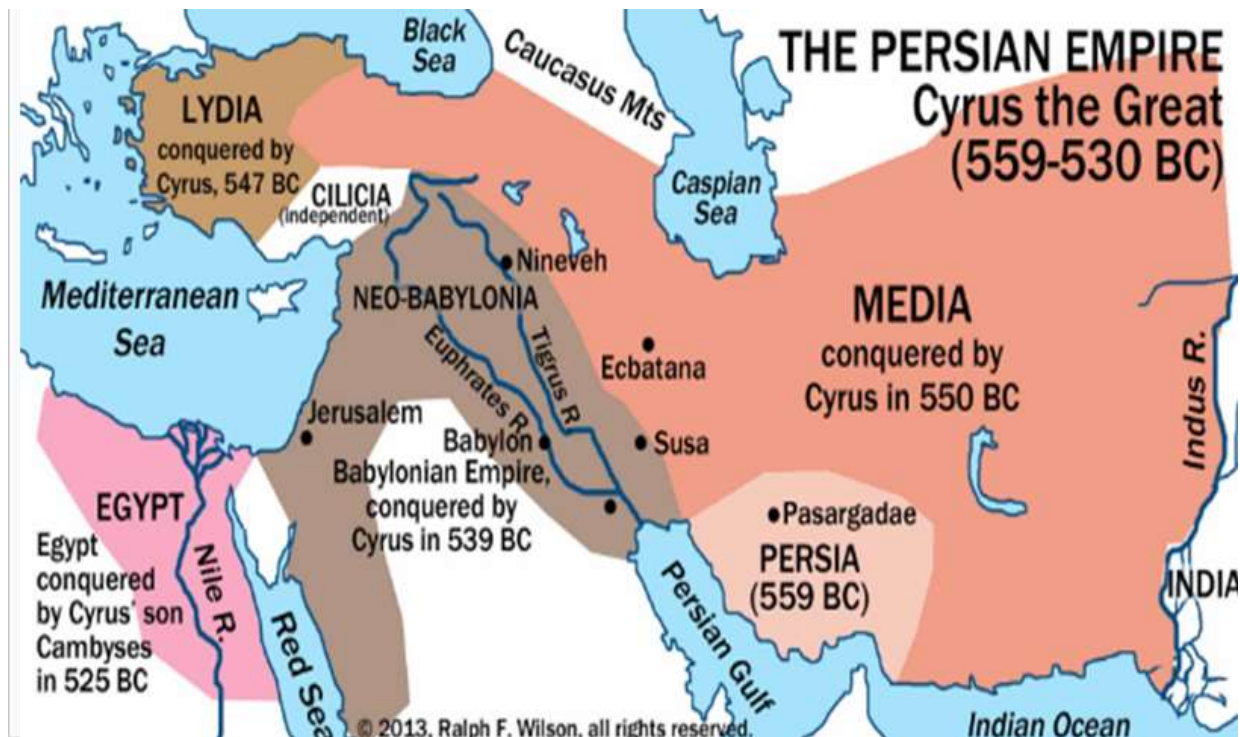


I want to point out something about these metals... the same way they gradually get less valuable but more strong, so too will the empires they represent, be less wise but more powerful. All except those feet of clay and iron, that's the weakest and least valuable of all. We'll dig into that in a bit, but first let's get into some history and see if the Bible is accurate in prophesying events far into the future...

To bring us up to speed to the time of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the Kingdom of Judah was conquered by the Babylonian Empire around 607 BC and over the course of the next 20 or so years, the temple is destroyed, and Jerusalem is abandoned.

About 4 years after first conquering Judah, Nebuchadnezzar has this dream, which spans thousands of years into the future. Daniel tells him that his mighty empire will be conquered by an inferior empire, but one which is stronger, and so on, each empire being conquered by an inferior yet stronger empire, until the end.

In the history books, the empire that conquered Babylon was called the Medo-Persian empire, or simply the “Persian Empire”, and it was ruled by a king named Cyrus the Great. These are all the kingdoms he conquered to form this empire. Notice that Media, (which was his first conquest,) was much bigger than Persia, but Cyrus wasn’t called “the great” for nothing. Also, he was the grandson of the king of Media, so when he conquered the Medes, they accepted his rule and teamed up with the Persians, creating the Medo-Persia empire.



Before we look deeper into this empire, I’d like to highlight Cyrus. He’s actually mentioned several times by name in the Bible as the king that set the Jews free and ordered the temple rebuilt, but what’s awesome, is that two of the mentions were written by the prophet Isaiah around 150 years before Cyrus was even born.



Isaiah 13:17-19 "Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, Who will not regard silver; And *as for* gold, they will not delight in it. <sup>18</sup> Also *their* bows will dash the young men to pieces, And they will have no pity on the fruit of the womb; Their eye will not spare children. <sup>19</sup> And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

Isaiah 44:28 Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid."

Isaiah 45:1 "Thus says the Lord to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, To subdue nations before him And loose the armor of kings, To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut:

There aren't a lot of accounts about Cyrus before he became king, but the ancient historian Herodotus records something dramatic about his early life and rise to power.

Before he became king, Persia was ruled by Astyages, the king of Media. Astyages consolidated his power over Persia by giving his daughter to marry his subordinate in Persia, a prince called Cambyses. From this marriage Cyrus was born. One night, Astyages had a dream that his grandson would grow up to overthrow him, so he ordered Cyrus to be killed.

But his chief adviser, instead secretly gave the baby to a shepherd to raise, (look at that verse in Isaiah 44!!). When he was 10 years old, Cyrus began to shine with his intelligence and outstanding qualities, so he was discovered by King Astyages. Because of the qualities the boy possessed and despite the dream, Astyages was persuaded to let him live. But, when Cyrus

reached manhood and became leader of Persia, he revolted against the cruelty of his grandfather and overlord. So, King Astyages marched against Cyrus and the Persians, but his army deserted him and they surrendered to Cyrus in 550 BC. That gives more depth to that prophecy about Cyrus in Isaiah 44.

Now for some interesting historical facts about the Medo-Persian empire. When they would conquer a kingdom, they demanded all the taxes be paid in silver. The Medo-Persian empire was renowned for its stockpile of silver. It had the largest quantity of silver in the ancient world. They had so much silver, they didn't even bother to strike the coins with an emblem. What cemented their status as an empire was that they conquered 3 of the mightiest kingdoms in the known world at the time: Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt. And lastly, they are known for having 2 powerful rulers: Cyrus the Great and eight years after Cyrus' death, Darius the Great, both of which are also in the Bible. Can you see the two arms and chest made of silver?

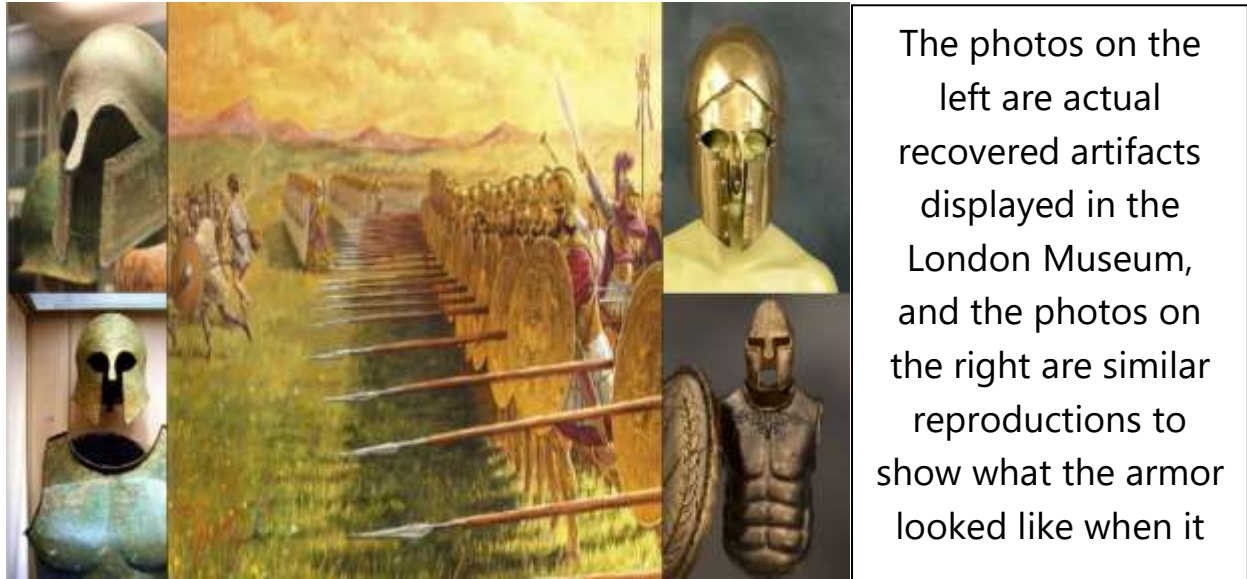


Ok, the Bible seems pretty accurate in describing the empire that took out Babylon, but what about the next empire that takes out the Persians? According to history, the Persian empire was conquered in 331 BC, by Alexander the Great and his Greek Empire. Alexander became a king at the age of 25 and is famous because he had conquered most of the known world in only 8 years and then he suddenly and mysteriously died at the age of 33. Some interesting facts about him is that he never lost even one battle. He was a personal student of the famous philosopher Aristotle. His mother was a devoted follower of the Greek god Dionysus and he believed he was a god himself. We'll learn more about good ole Alexander in the next study, but for now, let's get back to his empire.





The ancient Greeks rose up well into the Bronze Age and were famous for wearing bronze armor into battle. They would be draped in bronze from their helmets to their shields. Even their swords were bronze. That's why this time period was called the Bronze age.



The photos on the left are actual recovered artifacts displayed in the London Museum, and the photos on the right are similar reproductions to show what the armor looked like when it

Can you imagine being in a rag-tag army made up of large villages and small city-states where all of your weapons and armor are whatever you have handy, and you go into battle against this army of glittering, shining soldiers? This is literally the bronze kingdom that conquered the Persians, represented by the torso of bronze on the statue. So now we move to the strongest empire of all... the kingdom of iron that conquered the Greeks...





Rome rose up in the middle of the Iron Age. The Roman Empire officially began around 27 BC, but they had begun to slowly chop down the nations and kingdoms around them hundreds of years before that, and after almost two centuries of battles with the Greeks, they finally conquered the last outpost of the Greek Empire in 31 BC, 4 years before being officially recognized as an empire. There are a few stand out leaders of the Roman Empire. Names you're probably familiar with, Julius Caesar, Caesar Augustus, (which is where we get the names of July and August from btw), but none of them rose to caliber of Cyrus or Alexander. None of them were called "THE GREAT", well, none except for one. We'll get to him in a minute.

The Roman Empire was so successful because more than any of the previous Empires, they would absorb the cultures they conquered into their own and force it into the Roman identity. That included religion, government, and warfare. The previous empires did this to some extent, but none like the Roman Empire. Where the Greeks were prideful, hence wearing bronze armor to look impressive in battle, the Romans were ruthless. They would smelt iron and bronze together and forge their weapons and armor out of this metal. It had the strength and ability to keep a sharp edge like iron, and the ability to resist rust and corrosion like bronze. When a Roman sword met a Greek shield, the shield didn't stand a chance. Neither did the Greek.



The Roman Empire eventually got so big that it had to divide in two in order to maintain control over its territory. It split into the Eastern Empire and the Western Empire.

Before Rome's final split, the last emperor of a unified Roman Empire, was that leader I mentioned before, a man called Constantine the Great. He deserves a study all by himself, but we'll touch on a few interesting facts about him. He was "converted" to Christianity in the early 310's AD after seeing a vision of a Christian symbol in the sky before a battle. He later made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. He made it possible for the Body of Christ to come out of hiding and not only be accepted but celebrated. That all sounds great, doesn't it? But he also made it possible for some very damaging doctrines and traditions to enter the Body of Christ and become not only accepted but also eventually celebrated. But that's for a different Bible Study



After Constantine's death, the Roman Empire began to fracture and the split was final, a little less than 60 years after Constantine died. The Western and Eastern. Two separate legs, both made of iron.

True to the vision, after a century or so of being two separate entities, the once mighty Roman Empire finally fell. The Eastern Empire, (which was stronger and had basically led both East and West for a time) transformed its identity and became known as the Byzantine Empire. The Western Empire (which is where our nation descends from btw) maintained its Roman identity until about 476 AD, when it broke apart completely into 10 different kingdoms. These are the 10 kingdoms and who they became in this day and age.



Notice that 3 of those kingdoms are rooted up. They no longer exist at all. 10 kingdoms and 3 rooted up... that sounds familiar. But for now, let's look closer at this clay and iron.



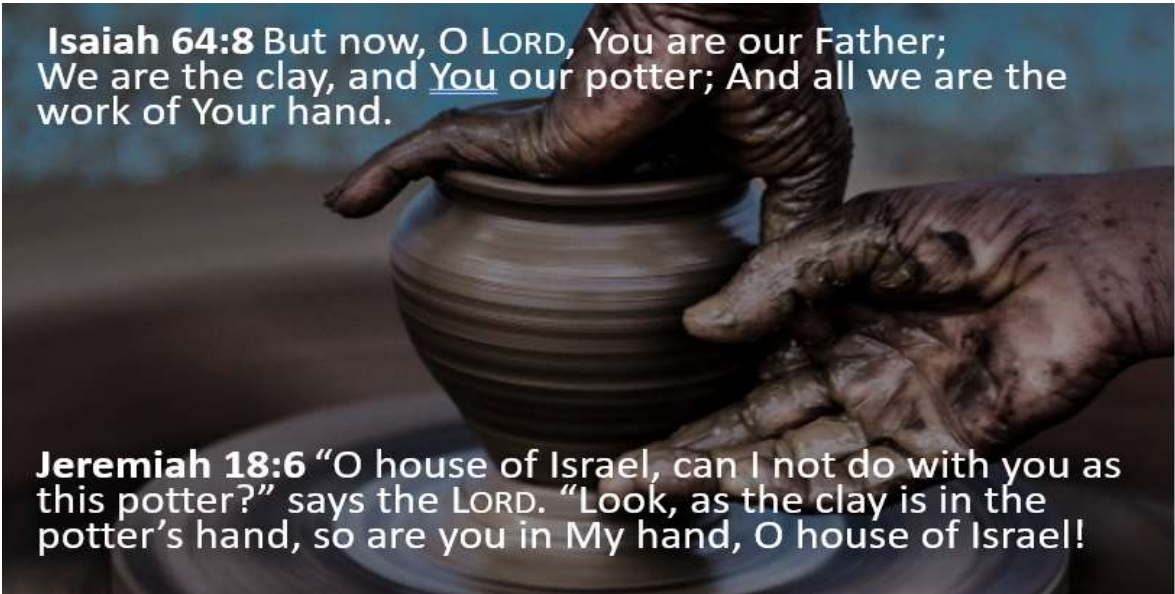
These 10 Kingdoms/toes are made of iron and clay. Iron is used to make tools and weapons and clay is used to make pottery and art. Iron and clay

don't mix very well. The iron becomes weaker and the clay becomes less pliable. You can't make good weapons with clay and you can't make good pottery with iron. We know now that the kingdom of iron represents Rome, with all of its beliefs, its systems of hierarchy, its violence, and its lust for power. But what does the clay represent?

Well, this has been a highly debated subject for centuries. I honestly can't tell you what it represents with the same certainty of the different metals.

Some believe that the clay and iron represent the old kingdoms trying to reunite and reform into their former glory. Some believe it represents the United Nations or some other world governmental body. And it very well could be, but for me, I lean more towards an interpretation closer to home. Can I try to share it with you?...

Ok, so this is just the view I lean towards, so take it with a grain of salt and ask the Holy Spirit to guide us all into Truth as we study His Word. We had to look in history to see what the different metals represent, but thankfully, the Bible does the heavy lifting for us when it comes to explaining the clay.



**Isaiah 64:8** But now, O LORD, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand.

**Jeremiah 18:6** "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the LORD. "Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!"



Something very significant about that verse in Jeremiah is that the entire chapter is God telling the prophet to tell Israel that He is gonna take the Kingdom away from them. Later in the Book of Matthew chapter 21, verse 43, Christ reaffirms this when He says the kingdom would be taken away and given to those that produce fruit. This clay is similar to a Kingdom in the fact that it's a group of people that share the same goals and purpose. But unlike a kingdom in the fact that it doesn't glorify its own strength and beauty.

This kingdom that isn't quite a kingdom... represents us, the believers and followers of God, regardless of race or nationality. Formed from clay and made in His image. Just like jars of clay, we are created to be filled with Living water that quenches the thirst of those around us. We are created to be filled with Holy oil that flows with anointing and lights the lamps in a dark world. The followers of Christ, the seed of the Son of Man are the Clay. But we aren't perfected yet. We still live in a fallen world, and we still sometimes make bad choices based on bad emotions, so the current state of our existence as the church is temporary.

Christ has established God's Kingdom, the kingdom of clay, but it hasn't come into its full glory yet, and the flawed state we're in as the Body, with all of our divisions and church hurts and bad doctrines, will come to an end and will be replaced with the Rock of Salvation, God's Kingdom in all its glory. The true Kingdom.

Ok, so if we, in our imperfect state are the clay, what does it mean that we are mixed with the iron?

Well, that can be a confusing knot to untangle, but I'll do my best...



Our culture, and even the culture of most of the “civilized” world except for a few places, is directly descended from the Roman Empire. There may be some differences in the extent of how deeply engrained it is in a specific society, depending on what country you visit, but as a whole, no matter where you go, you’re gonna find Western Culture that came from the Western Empire. You can see proof of this by the way governments are set up, by the laws that are instituted, and even by the names of the weekdays and calendar months. But Western Culture goes much deeper than this.

You see, Western Culture has a distinct pagan flair. The day we’re in right now is called Wednesday, that actually means Woden’s Day, which is another name for the Norse god Odin. Tomorrow will be called Thursday, meaning Thor’s day, Odin’s son. In French, Wednesday is called Mercredi, which means Mercury’s Day, as in the Roman god Mercury, and Thursday is called Jeudi, Jupiter’s Day. Jupiter is the Roman version of Zeus.

Speaking of France, in 1884 they gave America a giant statue of a Roman goddess named Libertas. That statue, known as the statue of Liberty, has become one of the most recognized symbols of America.

These are just a few of many examples where paganism has influenced different aspects of our culture, and unfortunately, the church isn’t immune.

It was only around 500 years ago that the Body of Christ was held captive by the Roman Catholic church. Even to this day, it's the biggest denomination in the world. 1 out of every 8 people in the entire world is a member of the Roman Catholic Church.

Now let me clarify here, that I'm not attacking anyone that's a Catholic. I've known some wonderful people that were practicing Catholics. I'm speaking on the system of beliefs and structure of authority that the Roman Catholic Church has in place.

One of the reasons those empires were so successful, was because they would assimilate different aspects of the cultures they conquered into their own society. Persia conquered Babylon and took some of the culture. Greece conquered Persia and took some of the culture, and the Roman Empire was the master of this tactic and took some of everybody's culture, so when the Roman Catholic Church came into existence, it carried on that strategy.

During the early centuries of its existence, it fought "Holy Wars" against the heathen in order to convert them to Catholicism. What made this an easier transition for the new "converts" was the fact that the church would allow the pagans to keep many of their religious traditions and holy days, with the stipulation that they make it honor Christ instead of whatever false god those pagans served. The high priests of the different pagan cults would be given the opportunity to "convert" and train as a catholic priest. As you can imagine, this created a confusion and mixture of religions.

Centuries later, here we are. We are protestants, meaning we protest the doctrines and structure of the Roman Catholic Church, and we've distanced ourselves from it in an effort to be more Biblically grounded believers, but that also means we are descendants of the Roman Catholic church.

Every protestant denomination, (including "non-denominational") came from movements out of the Roman Catholic Church. And just like our Western culture still bears the symbols of the pagan Roman Empire, our

Western Christianity still bears the marks from the confusion and mixture of the Roman Catholic Church.

This confusion and mixture goes all the way back to the beginning of the vision, with Babylon.

Transliteration	Pronunciation
<i>bābel</i>	baw-vel'
Part of Speech	Root Word (Etymology)
proper locative noun	From בָּבֶל (H1101)
Dictionary Aids	
TWOT Reference: 197	
KJV Translation Count — Total: 262x	
The KJV translates Strong's H894 in the following manner: Babylon (257x), Babylonian (with H1121) (3x), Babel (2x).	
Outline of Biblical Usage [?]	
I. Babel or Babylon = "confusion (by mixing)"	
A. Babel or Babylon, the ancient site and/or capital of Babylonia (modern Hillah) situated on the Euphrates	



Before the time of Nebuchadnezzar, before the time of his grandfather, even before the time of his great-great-great grandfather... Babylon was a mighty kingdom. We're all familiar with the Tower of Babel and what happened there. The interesting thing is that in the Hebrew, Babel and Babylon mean "Confusion by mixing". The vision began with physical Babylon as the golden head, but ends with spiritual Babylon as the confusing mixture of iron and clay in the feet.

I'm not gonna spend a lot of time on Babylon right now, that'll be a later study. But I do want us to make a connection with all that we've learned so far, and this...

*Revelation 18:2-4 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a*



*prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! <sup>3</sup> For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.” <sup>4</sup> And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.*

In order for God's people to come out of Babylon, that means that we are in Babylon. And the warning is given, because the Rock of Salvation is coming... Christ is that Rock. He is the stone cut without hands. The Chief Cornerstone. The Rock of offense, but don't take my word for it, here's God's Word...

- **Psalm 118:22** *The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.*
- **1 Peter 2:7-8** *Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, “The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,” <sup>8</sup> and “A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense.” They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.*
- **Matthew 21:44** *And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.”*



To put this study into perspective, we can look through the history of our world and see that the prophetic dream of Nebuchadnezzar was true. We can see all those Kingdoms and Empires rise up and fall down. We can follow the timeline all the way to the present. Thousands of years have passed away and we're right on the tippy toes of the feet of the statue. The Final Kingdom to rise up will be the eternal Kingdom of God and it rises to its glory only after the Stone of Stumbling strikes the feet and crushes the old creation to make way for the New Creation. Amen!