

## PASSION FOR GOD

Greg Deuble

PSALM 42: 1-2 As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for Thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God.

PSALM 63: 1 O God, Thou art my God; I shall seek Thee earnestly; My soul thirsts for Thee, my flesh yearns for Thee, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

PSALM 111: 1 Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with all my heart, in the company of the upright and in the assembly.

Did you notice the heart-hunger, the passion the psalmist has for God? “My soul pants for Thee”. “My soul thirsts for God”. “You are my God, my flesh yearns for Thee.” “O, that I may dwell in the house of the LORD.” “I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart.”

Every ounce of the psalmist's being is passionate towards the LORD. As believers in the one true God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are very comfortable with the knowledge that God is one and that we are to love this one God. A favourite text of ours is the *Shema Yisrael*:

Hear O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one, And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might (Deut. 6:4).

We are familiar with and comfortable with the first part of the *Shema*, the idea of the singular unity of God, that He is not a Three in One, or a One in Three: Yahweh is one Lord. God calls Himself, “I” not “We”, whenever He speaks of Himself.

In this session, I am not going to speak on the subject of the oneness of God. I don't want to try to sell ice to the eskimos, so to speak, I want to rather speak on the second part of the command...”You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”

The men and women who made an impact in their generation were men and women who had an intensity towards Him that bordered on extravagance. The psalmist's joy was so great it took his whole body to give it full expression.

Truth be known, probably most of us have a certain unease about the Psalmists abandon and emotional demonstration towards God. I think it was C.S. Lewis who said, “We have a terrible concern about good taste.” Because many of us have encountered emotional fanaticism in religion, we have a hidden reserve, even unease, for the Psalmist's passion for God.

AUSSIE CULTURE: In Aussie culture, most blokes think that showing emotions is a sign of weakness. Strong people do not cry with joy or sadness ... except on the sporting field.

MY MUM and MY BOYHOOD.

NANA: “You are now the man of the family!”

The thing that disturbs me about the Psalms is that they do not share my view of emotions. The Psalmist gives full vent to his feelings. He is passionate for God. He weeps over his sins. He rejoices in God with unbridled joy, and clapping, and dancing even. And the thing that bothers me is this: Is this display of emotions towards God meant to be normal?

CALVINISTS: They distrusted human emotions. They endeavoured to drive emotional expression from their worship and religious life-style. Their religion and dress was sombre, dour, formal, colourless.

DON HARGREAVES: You were too animated!

I want us today to honestly ask ourselves: Is there a gulf between the way the Psalmist loves

God and experiences God, and our experience? I wonder whether we might have to admit that we have somehow lost this intense, continuing passion for God? If we have lost it, we must get it back. If we have lost it, we might have to re-examine a theological system that gives us an excuse for our coldness.

**OBJECTION:** Feelings are deceptive. Not to be trusted. They are too subjective to be reliable. Love is not primarily a feeling, it is an attitude. Jesus said, after all,

If you love me, you will obey my commandments ... He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me ... If anyone loves me, he will keep my word ... (John 14:15,21,23).

So we rationalize: Right feelings will follow right actions. Even if they don't, then the most important thing is to obey God's word. Since the Bible is an objective record of God's commands, it will be an easy thing to tell whether we are obeying His commands and therefore, loving Him.

**NAVIGATOR'S TRAIN: FACT, FAITH, FEELING.**

But does the Bible radically separate obedience and feelings? "Obedience without emotion is nothing more than discipline or will power. It is not love. You cannot take the passion out of love and still have love. True love manifests itself not only in acts but also in feelings. Affection and passion are indispensable aspects of love for God." I was defending a system that actually justified lukewarm feelings toward God and His children. (Deere p. 185).

**JONATHAN EDWARDS:** In 1746 published a book, *The Religious Affections* in which he argued that "true religion must consist very much in affections." Edwards saw that one of the chief works of Satan was:

To propagate and establish a persuasion that all affections and sensible emotions of the mind, in things of religion, are nothing at all to be regarded, but are rather to be avoided and carefully guarded against, as things of a pernicious tendency. This he knows is the way to bring all religion to a mere lifeless formality, and effectually shut out the power of godliness, and everything which is spiritual and to have all true Christianity turned out of doors.

Edwards went on to say:

As there is no true religion where there is nothing else but affection, so there is no true religion where there is no religious affection ... If the great things of religion are rightly understood, they will affect the heart ... This manner of slighting all religious affection is the way exceedingly to harden the hearts of men, and to encourage them in their stupidity and senselessness, and to keep them in a state of spiritual death as long as they live and bring them at last to death eternal.

Edwards took great pains to prove from the Scriptures that true Christianity is a religion of the emotions as well as the will. He showed that the Scriptures place a great deal of value on "fear, hope, love, hatred, desire, joy, sorrow, gratitude, compassion, and zeal."

"We cannot love God or obey God without these sanctified emotions" (p. 186).

The irony is that almost everyone begins the Christian life with a passionate love and longing for fellowship with God Himself. But somehow along the way we lose that driving hunger. But it does not have to stay lost, unless our theology and surrounding Christian culture says it's normal to live the Christian life without passion for the Lord.

**DENOMINATION:-** And this process of seducing us away from being lovers of God Himself is so subtle. Having started off with a hunger to know God Himself, we can get side-tracked into loving our church denomination. This is easy because the people in our fellowship

group like what we like. And doesn't God command us to love His people? But the deception moves slowly, until our loyalty and love is transferred from the Lord Himself over to other people. I suggest that one of the sure-fire tests as to whether we are being deceived is to check whether our loyalty is to a group, a church, a denomination, a leader, rather than to God Himself.

BIBLE:- It is even possible to love the Bible more than the Author of the Scriptures. C.S. Lewis refers to this error this way: "One is sometimes glad not to be a theologian; one might so easily mistake it for being a good Christian." (*Reflections on the Psalms*, N.Y. Harcourt, Brace & World, 1958, p.57) This is an easy trap to fall into when one is living in an academic community, or when one is a preacher of the word, or a lecturer and has to come up with the goods so to speak on a regular basis. Knowing the Bible is not the same thing as knowing and loving God. Reading the Bible is not the same thing as hearing God.

The Pharisees knew and loved the Scriptures, but they did not know, and love, or even hear God:

And the Father who sent me, He has borne witness of me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. And you do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe him whom He sent. You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of me; and you are unwilling to come to me, that you may have life. (John 5: 37-40).

Here were men who spent hours every day studying the finer points of the Scriptures. Yet Jesus said they had never heard God's voice nor seen His form, nor understood what He is truly like. What a tragedy: It is possible to know and love the Bible all our lives, yet never hear the voice of God!

One of the signs that we have fallen into this trap is when having right doctrine becomes more important than having a right life. The ultimate test for admission to the groups of those who think this way is what you believe, not how you behave. Their leaders can be judgmental, even critical, often nit-picky. Sins of religious harshness and spiritual pride are often overlooked. Preaching the Word becomes more important than modeling the Word. The aim of all our knowledge is surely to lead us to God Himself, and to conformity to the image of His Son.

SERVICE: The trap for others is to substitute Christian service for loving God Himself. Christian service is the outflow, or the overflow of a beautiful and living relationship with God. It is even possible to escape intimacy with God by drowning oneself in Christian activities.

And have you ever found yourself caught up in the joy of worshipping worship rather than actually worshipping the Lord God? We love the atmosphere, the ambiance of worship.

We must not equate any of these good things with loving God Himself. God is not a doctrine, a theology, an abstract principle, a ministry, a church denomination, an activity. He is a *Person*. And He asks that we love Him for Himself. He hungers for our personal fellowship. He wants to be above all these things, helpful and good as they are. He wants to be our God, our Father. He wants us to delight in Himself.

#### HOW GOD LOVES US:

The LORD your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy (Zeph. 3:17)

How intense God is in His love towards His own! He will joy over you with singing! He is passionate in His love. What then makes us think anything less in our response to Him will satisfy His big Fatherly heart?

More than anything else then, a passion for God has to be guarded and cultivated or it can be

lost. Almost any good and proper thing is ready to compete for our time and intimacy with the Father. The essence of our created lives is to love God and then to love His people. (Matt. 22: 36-40).

Perhaps the word 'love' has lost its meaning and become insipid. It has been robbed of its Biblical content. There has been a consistent attempt to equate loving God in terms of obedience and duty without any reference to its emotional quality. "A love for God that is devoid of emotion is a fictional product created by the minds of modern teachers. The Bible never defines love that way." (Deere, p. 192)

Maybe we should talk more about passion for God, for that word in our modern ears restores the emotional side of love. Passion is any kind of feeling by which the mind is powerfully effected or moved. Passion carries the idea even of vehemence, overpowering and commanding emotion. Passion is a feeling that moves the mind and the will into action. Passion covers the whole range of feelings that are appropriate with loving God. Passion for the LORD our God refers to zeal, hunger, craving, thirst, intensity.

I want these passionate feelings to characterize my relationship with the Lord Jesus and with the Father. Of course, I want to be obedient. Of course I want to be a dutiful son of God. But I want to love Him for higher motive than out of fear of failure, or fear of punishment. I want to live for Him simply for the joy of being able to please the God of my life. I want my life to be characterized by an unrestrained affection for the Father who has redeemed my life through His Son.

#### MICHAL

2 SAM. 6:14 And David was dancing before the LORD with all his might, and David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouting and the sound of the trumpet. Then it happened as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David that Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. After bringing the ark into its tent and after offering sacrifices and giving gifts to all the people, David returned to his own house...But when David returned to bless his household, Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, "How the king of Israel distinguished himself today! He uncovered himself today in the eyes of his servants' maids as one of the foolish ones shamelessly uncovers himself!" So David said, "It was before the LORD, who chose me above your father and above his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel; therefore I will celebrate before the LORD ... And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death. (2 Sam. 6:16ff).

I don't know about you, but when I read of David's passion for God, I find myself asking to love the one true God with the same burning heart. Sure, the world like Michal may despise us. But God is well able to look after His own. Like Michal, this world is cursed with barrenness and can offer nothing of lasting value anyway.

DON HARGREAVES: "YOU WERE TOO ANIMATED!"

#### MARY & MARTHA

The affection that Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus had for Jesus is legendary. She sat at the feet of Jesus and soaked up his every word. It was dinner time (supper time to you Americans, and tea time to us Aussies!) And according to the social rules of hospitality of the

day, Mary along with Martha was responsible for preparing a meal for Jesus and the disciples.

But Mary had an intense desire rather to be with Jesus. Her affection and hunger for Jesus overpowered the normal rules of etiquette. I am sure that if Jesus had asked her to go to the kitchen Mary would have gladly obliged. But she could not bare to be away from Jesus unless commanded to do so.

When Martha tried to get Jesus to rebuke Mary for her lack of help in the kitchen, Jesus not only refused to rebuke Mary, he actually commended her. Mary had chosen him even above service to him. According to Jesus, Mary had chosen the best part, the part that could never be taken away from her (Luke 10: 38-42).

Preachers often use this story to argue for the necessity of Bible study. But Mary was not studying the Bible, she was sitting at the feet of her favourite person. And here is the telling part. When Lazarus, Mary's brother died, Jesus came to their home four days later. Martha rushed out of the house and was the first to greet him. She poured out her grief-stricken heart to Jesus: "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11: 21).

Jesus responded to Martha, by giving her one of the greatest theological teachings, "I am the resurrection and life, he who believes in me shall live even if he dies" (John 11:25).

A few minutes later Mary comes out of the house and says to Jesus the identical words that Martha had first said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (v. 32).

When Mary spoke these words, "Jesus wept" (v.35). He then walked to the tomb and raised Lazarus from the dead.

Did you get that? A person like Martha could evoke a great theological teaching out of Jesus. But a person like Mary could break his heart, and move him to action. People like Mary who have a passion for Jesus can move him in a way that others cannot. Passion for Jesus gave Mary access to the power of Jesus. Passion for Jesus broke him to tears.

ANOINTED FOR BURIAL:- Mary's passion for Jesus was graphically seen just 6 days before Jesus' last Passover. There were just 6 days before the crucifixion. Jesus was staying at the home of Lazarus, Mary & Martha, in Bethany. Mary walks in during the middle of the dinner with "a pound of very costly, genuine spikenard ointment" (John 12:3).

It is estimated that ointment was worth a full year's wages. Mary proceeded to "waste" the perfume by pouring it over the feet of Jesus. Next, she let down her hair in public, and wiped the feet of Jesus with her hair.

What was this extraordinary act of Mary's? Those present thought it an improper act. Mary was being immorally suggestive. But Jesus knew the inner motive. He saw her faith. He *felt* her love. She was actually anointing the Son of God for burial. And she would show him his worth. The gift was extravagant, but it demonstrated how passionate her love for Jesus was.

Not only so, but in the face of criticism even from his own disciples, Mary found the loving support of Jesus: "Let her alone, she has done it for the day of my burial" (John 12:7).

Those who love God and His Son Jesus, will discover God backing them up.

Listen friends. There is not one biblical hero of the faith who did not come into the presence of God on a regular basis. Don't be passive about passion for God. Make intimacy with God the focus of your life. This is why you were born. To know God. This is why you have been born again. To love God with all your soul.

Be like the Psalmist and ask God for His presence ... "Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law" (Ps. 119: 18) Come to the Scriptures desiring to meet with a Personal God. Ask God to give you a heart to love Him. Ask the Father for a consuming passion

for His Son. Jesus' prayed this for us...

And I have made known Thy name to them, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou didst love me may be in them, and I in them (John 17: 26).

Such passion for God, such knowledge of God, will not only conquer a thousand sins in your life but will move His great Fatherly heart on your behalf. Spiritually mature people love what God loves. They hate what God hates.

Spiritual maturity is not necessarily possessing huge quantities of Bible knowledge. Spiritual maturity is not necessarily found in Christian service. Spiritual maturity is not found in loyalty to a denomination.

Spiritually mature people are the ones who love the one true God with all their heart, and with all their strength, and with all their mind. Those who love God, yearn for God, hunger for God, seek God, pant after God, thirst for God Himself, can't help but get a little emotional about it. They take on an infectious quality. They can move God mightily on their behalf and make a difference. After all, they know His heart, and they are the ones who are like God. So, go on. Be like God Himself. Be like His Son Jesus. Be conformed to the image of God in Christ Jesus. Be passionate for God. After all, He Himself is passionate in His love for His own!

## 'AND THIS IS THE INTERPRETATION'

Greg Deuble

### **Daniel 2:1-49**

It would be hard to find anywhere in the Scriptures a better known or more commented upon prophecy than this one. The story is full of human drama. Nebuchadnezzar has a nightmare. He is spooked by what he sees in his head as he lies asleep on his pillow. But awakening he cannot pluck from his sub-conscious memory the details of his dream. The imagery floats evanescently through his head. Nebuchadnezzar is disturbed. A sense of dread and foreboding grips the king and all subjects below him.

Although Nebuchadnezzar lived thousands of years ago, there is a sense in which he is our contemporary. I see his troubled face everywhere in the crowd of this 21<sup>st</sup> century. These last few decades to us have been like a terrible dream. What is the meaning of the events of our modern generation? The images are real. But they somehow elude interpretation. The significance of their interpretation, as with Nebuchadnezzar, eludes us. What is the meaning of these events?

Ah yes, I see Nebuchadnezzar's face plainly all around us today. Surely, he is one of us. The dream he cannot recall, and the interpretation he cannot find are shared by this generation. So Nebuchadnezzar does the logical thing. He turns to the intellectuals for help. "Make known to me the dream and its interpretation!" he demands of his wise men.

These men of the books, the brains trust, the intelligentsia, squeal in protest. "Tell us the dream O king, and then we'll give the interpretation." Nebuchadnezzar senses their bankruptcy. And even when the sword is dangling over their heads, the Chaldean wise men cannot produce the goods. The dream and its interpretation elude them all.

But when Daniel learns of the king's death-decree he asks for time to pray. He will seek the living God of Heaven. "God will tell me! God will show me the dream and its interpretation" he confidently affirms.

I am convinced that if we believers in the God of the Bible would do what Daniel did, we could make such a difference. Oh, how we need to shut ourselves up with God and pour out our hearts to Him for wisdom. He promises that "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all men generously, and without reproach, and it shall be given to him (James 1:5). Yes, there is a wisdom from heaven that is different from the wisdom of men. God is the living God. He can speak and He can give the answer.

### THE INTERPRETATION

Carefully note and consider these matters.

1. The vision concerns "the end of days" (v. 28). "God has made known to king Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the end of days." Other Scriptures make it clear that this expression "end of days" or "latter days" refers to when Messiah will establish the house of the LORD at the top of the mountains...

Now it will come about that in the last days, the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all nations will stream to it, and many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways..." (Is. 2:1ff. See also Jer. 23: 20; 30:24)

2. An important feature of the image is the deterioration in the quality of rule. The metals

deteriorate from gold, to silver, to brass, to iron, to clay. God announces to Nebuchadnezzar (v.39) that “After you there will arise another kingdom *inferior* to you.” The deterioration in the quality of the metals is seen all the way down to the toes of iron mixed with clay ...(v.41) “...you saw the iron mixed with common clay “, or literally, “clay of mud”. The iron speaks of strength, steely brutality. The clay speaks of underlying brittleness. God tells us that human history is progressively going to deteriorate. What started out as a fine upstanding and glorious statue finally at the end of this age, dissolves into mud!

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come ... [for] evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived (2 Tim.3:13).

3. Nebuchadnezzar is personally said to be the head of gold. “You, O king ...you are the head of gold.” This is even more emphatic in the old KJV version, “Thou, O king ...thou art the head of gold.” First person singular. Nebuchadnezzar is *himself* the head of gold.

The assumption that the whole duration of the Babylonian empire is included under the golden head of the image is unwarranted. “When 'thou' can be made to mean a long succession of persons covering a century and a half, grammar would seem to have lost all force. “ (Lang, G.H. p. 26).

“The times of the Gentiles” started with Nebuchadnezzar. Since 586 BC when Nebuchadnezzar razed the Temple in Jerusalem and carried off the Jews into exile, Israel has been put aside as the administrative centre for world blessing. To this very day, Israel has been in remnants, in parts and pieces, mostly buried among the Gentile nations of the earth.

4. The fourth kingdom has no name. This is critical to rightly understanding the interpretation. By and large it has been generally taught that the two legs of iron and the feet and toes of iron and clay represent the Roman Empire, in its eastern and western divisions. After the attacks of the Vandals and Saracens (Muslims) the Roman Empire passed away but will at the end of days be “revived”. [Roman Catholic Church].

“Now all these details have been imported by interpreters. The divine explanation through Daniel does not suggest any one of them. They have been invented to explain what the wisdom of God saw fit not to explain, to fasten a special meaning upon things to which *He* did not assign a meaning.” (Lang, G.H. p.28-29).

But I repeat. The fourth kingdom of iron has no name. This is the more striking when we note that Nebuchadnezzar is named. So is his city, Babylon. The second empire is named. It is Persia (Dan. 5:28; 8:20, etc.). The third kingdom is called Greece (Dan. 8:21). But where is the name of the fourth empire of iron given?

Lang states that “It has been most confusing that writers have universally assigned to it the name of its place and origin, for thus thought has been concentrated intensely upon the city of Rome as its centre throughout its existence. But in prophecy Rome has no special place and is not even mentioned.” (p. 29). Thus the 'historical' interpretation is without foundation, and 'futurism' also must be modified.

Babylon had existed since the days of Nimrod (Gen. 10:10), but the ups and downs of that state during those 1500 years do not matter *prophetically*. **It was when Nebuchadnezzar made Babylon the centre of a world empire that the first kingdom of prophecy arose.**

The Medes and Persians had had an almost equally long history, but that is of no account *prophetically*. **It was only when Cyrus made Babylon the centre of his rule that the second kingdom of prophecy appeared.**

The Grecian states had been fighting, developing, colonizing for long centuries before Alexander, but prophecy takes no account of this also. **It was when Alexander made Babylon**



**his world-centre that the third kingdom of *prophecy* became present.**

So it is with the fourth empire of iron. The developments and mutations of its long course are of small concern *prophetically*. *The Divine interpretation entirely ignores the legs*. **The divine interpretation and profound interest concentrate on the final stage, the toes, the closing days when Antichrist will make Babylon his capital.**

This may be inferred from the fact that the image is standing on its feet. The image is vertical. The centre of gravity of each successive metal is exactly under that of the preceding kingdom above. The feet stand directly beneath the head, the chest, the abdomen and the legs. These facts rule out all attempts to fit the history of this age into the legs of iron, for Rome never has been centred in Babylon. To attempt to make the legs of iron fit into the Roman Empire distorts both history and image. For there is no way that all through these centuries there have always been two legs (east and west) and ten toes (or kingdoms) in the territory once occupied by Rome.

If the two legs represent the Roman Empire in its eastern and western parts, the image Daniel saw should be lop-sided. One leg should be longer than the other. For historically the eastern part of the Roman empire fell a thousands years before the western half. As Lang pithily remarks, "If the two legs represented the divided Roman Empire, why was not the image shown as standing on one leg for perhaps a third of its course? For the western part succumbed in A.D. 476 while the eastern portion survived almost a thousand years, till A.D. 1453. That the image was *standing* was noted by the prophet. (Lang, p.30).

You, O King, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendour, was *standing* in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. (Dan.2:31).

Not only is the statue standing, vertically on the one spot -- on the city of Babylon -- but it has no break in continuity from beginning to end. Nebuchadnezzar was not shown the legs as broken off and later re-joined or revived. The notion of the iron-kingdom as Rome passing away and then re-appearing is a needless invention arising from the misleading attempt to fit into the interpretation a period the Spirit of prophecy passes over untouched because it is unimportant to the prophecy.

**The ups and downs of the fourth empire prior to its final stage are as immaterial to prophecy as are those of the first kingdom.** The fourth iron-kingdom only takes the prophetic main stage when its administration is centred in the city of Babylon.

"It would have been of great gain to the study of Daniel and the Revelation if the term "Roman" empire had never been employed. It is not Scriptural. In the Word of God, the first three empires are named from the countries of their origin, Babylon, Persia, Greece (Dan. 1:1; 2:48; 8:20,21), but the next is not named, it is simply the "fourth beast." Of its rise and career little is said." (Lang, p.188). It will be like iron, strong, merciless, violent. Its course and development is unnoticed until the final stage when ten kings should arise out of it, and then an eleventh, who should be its last head and who will be destroyed by the Son of Man, whose kingdom will smash and supersede his.

The interest and details of the prophecy centre on this concluding stage and final king, the Antichrist. There is no ground for supposing him to be the emperor of *Rome*, but, on the contrary, [he has] his centre at Babylon (Is. 14:4, etc.). **It is the city of Babylon that ties the whole statue together.**

"It is to be noticed further that the Babylonian kingdom did not become the first empire of prophecy until the time when Nebuchadnezzar had made his city, Babylon, the capital. The

century and a half during which the kingdom had existed, and the changes that it had undergone, were not of moment prophetically; but at the same time that a king of Babylon had gained world-dominion, the hour had come when Israel no longer could be held worthy of that dominion, and the sovereignty was for a time transferred by God to the Gentiles, whereupon commenced “the times [viz. The opportunity of world-authority] of the Gentiles,” and the first empire of prophecy emerged. (Lang, p.188).

Similarly, the inter-tribal conflicts and changes of the Medes and Persians throughout the long period preceding Cyrus are of no moment prophetically and are unnoticed in Scripture. It is when Cyrus seizes Babylon and fixes there in Babylon his centre, that his kingdom becomes the second empire of prophecy.

So with the Grecian kingdom. The Word of God makes no reference to the long history of the tribes of Greece, nor to the schemes and wars by which Philip of Macedon and his son Alexander brought Greece under one sovereignty. It is only when Alexander attacks the Persians, and makes himself master of Babylon (the he-goat rushing upon the ram, Dan. 8) that his kingdom becomes the third empire of Daniel.

Thus will it be with the fourth empire. Its ferocity and supremacy are emphasized, but that it would commence, or had commenced, at a city named Rome, is not even mentioned, and what its course would be is unnoticed. It is when the Antichrist will have made Babylon his centre of (world?) government that the empire will become what is so vividly and minutely portrayed in prophetic Scripture.

This central geographical feature is learned from one fact, because the four kingdoms are represented by an *upright image*, therefore the centre of gravity, of each of the three upper portions is exactly over the spot on which the feet stand. **The centre of each empire would be at the same place ...Babylon!** Babylon is Satan's original centre of operations amongst the nations (Gen. 10) and will be his final earth centre, just as Jerusalem is the Divine city. Today's world movements are unceasingly towards the Middle East! And they hasten “the day of the Lord” when Messiah will return from heaven like a crushing stone that will destroy all earthly kingdoms, for:

In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom ... will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever (Daniel's interpretation in Dan. 2: 44).

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