

BATTLEGROUND EARTH

The human journey through time is now reaching a climax. People the world over feel it. Many are anxious and fearful. Some extremists from many different religious and ideological persuasions are pushing for it. They believe God is orchestrating end time events toward an unavoidable catastrophe for the human race. Misguided zealots seem bent upon forcing monumental clashes amongst mankind: east against west, developed nations against the third world, religion against religion. Level headed, more rational people seek to calm frayed nerves and keep the antagonists apart. Valiant efforts are being made to disarm the world by using ever more expensive, more sophisticated and more lethal weapons to do so. However, history keeps repeating itself.

The crucible of war has been used to deliver humanity from tyranny and oppression many times over the ages. The cold war, World War II, World War I, the American and other civil wars, the French, Russian and Chinese Revolutions and on and on it goes, as far back as history is recorded. It is the same old story. All of this untold human carnage and cost has never, and will never, deliver mankind permanently from the need for more war to stop future tyranny and oppression. History proves otherwise. Another tyrant, despot or maniac inevitably rises.

God has now determined that this is the time and season for change. This physical carnage must stop! Physical warfare cannot win permanent peace, because the ultimate form of warfare is spiritual. Mankind fights a phantom foe, an unseen enemy, an invisible enemy, that exists in dimensions that we cannot see, touch or measure.

Modern science has learned much in the last one hundred years. Physicists, mathematicians, astronomers and inventors have worked hard enlarging, developing and utilizing mankind's fund of knowledge in these last days, as prophesied in Daniel 12:4 and 9. "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." Verse 9: "And he said, 'Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.'"

We have now come to the time of the end, and modern weaponry is so terrible that God must intervene and cut time short before catastrophe really does occur. In order to save us from catastrophe, our real enemy must be defeated. It is now time to humbly and prayerfully search God's words asking Him to unseal His thoughts for us.

Science and math can only take our understanding so far. It is wonderful that science has proven other dimensions and realms exist. Amazing inventions can peer to the edge of the universe and listen to the sounds of its creation. It is truly astounding that mathematics can take us back to one billionth of a second after the big bang of billions of years ago! None of these developments, however, can get us into the mind of God. The Bible can, but only when God opens it up to our understanding. God is determined to share His beautiful thoughts with us in these latter days. *Digest No. 6* showed us some of the mysteries of God and His soon-coming kingdom. *Digest No. 7* will now take what we

have learned and apply it to God's own prophecies and the historical record of His chosen people.

We have learned so far that physical creation helps us to understand spiritual concepts. We have defined a number of terms God's way in order to grasp deeper meanings. We are now ready to plumb some of the extraordinary passages in your Bible that will unveil our amazing future and help us to make sense of the times and seasons in which we live. What we learn will prove that physical warfare is useless in offering permanent solutions. Physical warfare is also useless in defeating our real enemy. We will see how the prophecy in Isaiah 2:4 will very soon be reality fulfilled! "He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." How awesome it will be when the waste in human lives and treasure will be over!

To understand our present circumstance and the future, we must go back in time to a period more than five hundred years before Christ, back to the Jewish captive, Daniel, one of God's faithful prophets who risked his life that we may have important understanding at this very critical time!

During the 70 year captivity of Judah after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., King Nebuchadnezzar had a remarkable dream. No one could unlock the meaning of his dream either by human mental prowess, astrology or mysticism. God had to reveal it to one of his firstfruit servants, the prophet Daniel. Daniel 2:1-3 begins this fascinating account.

"Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. 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. And the king said to them, 'I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream.'" He went on to demand that they both tell him what he had dreamed and its interpretation on pain of death. Enter Daniel starting in verse 16: "So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon."

Continue in verse 19. "Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven." Let's carefully read the contents of Daniel's prayer to God starting in verse 20. "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He **changes the times and the seasons**; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him. I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of You, for You have made known to us the king's demand."

Before we get to the actual dream and its interpretation, we can see by Daniel's prayer that God's answer has to do with changes in times and seasons and changes in kings and kingdoms. Let's continue the account in verse 27 and 28. "Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, 'The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the **latter days**. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these...'"

Now we can see that to changes in times and seasons and changes in kings and kingdoms another critical statement is added. Quoting Daniel, "what will be in the latter days." Now that is for our time, events to take place in our day. "Latter" is in Hebrew number 320 in your Strong's Concordance: *achariyth* which means last or end, future, posterity. So, therefore, the dream of Nebuchadnezzar ends up giving us a time line of events utilizing successive major empires in history that would have an impact on God's chosen nation Israel and the world. Other great empires are not mentioned in the scriptures if they do not have impact upon the nation of Israel. It is most astounding however, that within that dream is valuable information for our time now, long after those empires have disappeared from the world stage.

Continuing Daniel's account starting in Daniel 2:31, "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. This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 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. 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." Remember the main import of this dream has to do with the latter days and changes in times and seasons.

Continue starting in verse 36. "This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 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. But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 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. 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. 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."

These words were penned by Daniel almost 2,500 years ago. At the time he explained to Nebuchadnezzar that the image in the dream portrayed a succession of physical empires starting with Nebuchadnezzar himself. The empires covered in Daniel 2 have all come and gone, by and large. These empires are in scripture because they had contact with God's chosen people, Israel. There were significant events over the course of time from Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, until Rome. Some of the main ones are:

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| Head of gold – 586 B. C. | The fall of Jerusalem and destruction of Solomon's temple and exile to Babylon. The prophet Daniel was one of the exiled Jews at that time. |
| Chest of silver – 539 B.C. | The time of the handwriting on the wall and the Medes and the Persians conquering Babylon. King Cyrus of Persia then allowed a remnant of Jews and Levites to leave captivity and return to build the temple in the city of Jerusalem. |
| Belly of bronze – 167 B.C. | Greece has now replaced the Medes and Persians as the occupying power and once again defiles the temple and sacks Jerusalem. |
| Legs of iron – 30's A.D. | Jesus Christ was crucified by the Romans who were then occupying Jerusalem. |
| 70 A.D. | Destruction of Jerusalem and the second temple by Roman legions. |

We can certainly see that Daniel's prophecy was fulfilled in proper sequence, but his prophecy is supposed to take us up to the end time. Let's see how.

Up to 70 A.D. these earthly kingdoms had much impact on God's chosen people. We learned in *Digest No. 6* that ancient Israel was God's first holy nation, His first congregation. From them came the prophets. These prophets brought God's rain, His truth, to His vineyard. They also wrote down truths, as well as history and prophecy for the generations to follow. They worked hard in a world covered by darkness, which God considered a wilderness.

Part of their job was to guide Israel and Judah in the paths of righteousness and warn them of impending danger if they veered from these paths. The people had agreed to be God's holy nation at Mt. Sinai after being freed from Egypt as recorded in the Book of Exodus 19:5-9. God told Moses: "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.' So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the Lord commanded him. Then all the people answered together and said, 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do.'" What followed were the details of the agreement starting with the Ten Commandments. Over the following centuries the prophets guided the people to live up to their agreement or lose God's protection and suffer the consequences at the hand of the

nations. What ensued for this chosen people would all be simply black and white, cause and effect, if it had only remained physical.

The experience of ancient Israel is of the utmost importance. Their experience reveals the utter hopelessness for all mankind unless God miraculously delivers. He miraculously delivered them from Egypt, wrote their laws in stone with His finger, and sent prophets to teach and to warn. Yet they repeatedly could not live up to their end of the agreement! Why? Because they are physical flesh and blood just like the rest of us! We all, however, owe them a huge debt of gratitude, for without their written history and the foundation of the truth laid down by their prophets, we would not have a single reliable clue as to what is going on here at the time of the end!

For all intents and purposes, they were sent on a suicide mission with the odds stacked against them. Their mission impossible laid the foundation for the future redemption of mankind and the preservation of earth itself. Their valiant efforts assured us the incomparable gift of the Old Testament! Their failures flagged the dangers and pitfalls for those of us who would follow. To this day Jewish people are valuable assets for the world, preserving written records and God's calendar that are so useful in studying God's word. That is why Romans 3:2 says in referring to the Jews, "to them were committed the oracles of God," oracles being His utterances which they were faithful in preserving to this very day! Now let's get back to those oracles recorded in Daniel and see how they hold valuable knowledge for us today.

The image in Daniel 2 ended at the two feet, which were struck by a stone miraculously cut out of a mountain which hits the image and destroys it. That stone represents Christ, and we know Rome killed Christ, so there must be something more here than meets the eye. For our first clue we turn to Revelation 12:1-6. "Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days."

Looking closely we see that Satan was waiting for Christ at His birth to devour Him. How Satan was waiting is important to know. Matthew 2:13 tells us how. "Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, 'Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.'" Satan, without doubt, was using a human being to try to kill Christ. Eventually Christ was killed, so let's read about His betrayer, Judas, in Luke 22:3-6. "Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. And they were glad, and agreed

to give him money. So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.”

These scriptures make it absolutely certain that Satan and his spirit realm influence mankind in an effort to thwart God’s plans. Satan and his demons constitute an invisible enemy who want to stop God from advancing the times and the seasons. As God’s plan to redeem this earth ticks forward like a clock, they know that their hour glass is running out of sand.

In a war spanning the ages, Satan and his realm are undergoing a series of falls from power. Satan’s original name was Lucifer meaning “light bringer”, truth bearer, in essence. He had been created perfect as an archangel, able to serve at the very throne of God. He sinned and became exceedingly evil to the point of trading in evil amongst God’s angels, eventually taking one-third with him. Ezekiel 28:12-16 explains the beginning of the horrible war that ensued. “Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God... You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. By the abundance of your trading [merchandise in the King James Version meaning lies, attitudes and influence] you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones.”””

Christ mentioned this round of warfare in Luke 10:18. “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.” This was round one in the spiritual war for the universe. God won this round by destroying Satan’s position at the throne of God the Father, casting him away as a profane thing. The seat of authority then only existed over the earth, but he still had access to heaven as an accuser of mankind. Notice in Ezekiel 28 how once Satan lost influence in heaven he quickly moved on to the Garden of Eden, the city state of Tyre, then on to Babylon, the first world empire.

Christ engaged round two when He lived His life as a physical man. After Satan tried unsuccessfully to kill Christ as an infant, he went on to try to defeat Him spiritually in a head-to-head clash recorded in Matthew 4. Let’s read verses 1-4 and 8-11. “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, ‘If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.’ But He answered and said, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.””” Verses 8-11: “Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Away with you, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.”” Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.”

This terrific clash of wills was the opening salvo in the three and a half year battle between Christ and Satan. Satan did all he could to try to get Christ to sin. Hebrews 4:15 assures us that our Champion came out victorious. "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." In one act of demonic frustration Satan went for broke and had Christ murdered. This only sealed the fate of Satan and his evil hoards because we now have a King qualified to rule in his stead. We also now have a Champion's blood to remove the sins of mankind. Satan's eventual defeat is now assured, but he fights on to extend his time as much as possible.

Christ defeated Satan by His perfect life resulting in Satan being cast down to the earth. There is no more war in heaven because Satan was cast down. This is the war Daniel saw that destroyed the image in latter days. John also saw this war, but at the point of Christ's first coming when the battle shifted from heaven to battleground earth as spoken of in Revelation 12:7-12. "And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, 'Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.'" Revelation 13 refers to this battle as a mortal wound to the beast, but more of that in *Digest No. 8*.

Satan and his demonic government will not let go of mankind willingly. They hold mankind in a spiritual iron grip that will take spiritual warfare to break. That is why guns, tanks and bombs are useless in this fight. Physical weaponry can only destroy physical enemies. The family of man is not our ultimate enemy. Rather, it is Satan, prince of the power of the air, god of this world. It is his unseen kingdom which is about to be replaced.

With Christ's first coming a second congregation, or chosen people, joined the fray – a people equipped to engage in spiritual warfare. This is the New Testament Church of which Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:10-16. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”

This congregation fights with truth, righteousness and faith. From the time of Christ’s death, Satan knew his days were limited. A spiritual war is now being waged on the earth. It is a war that will soon become apparent to all, but for now many of the details are still shrouded in mystery. It is a war God will not lose, and this is what Daniel saw when the image collapsed. Let’s talk more about that image so we can see exactly what will collapse and be blown away.

This word “image” in Daniel is the Hebrew word *tselem* which is defined in Strong’s as number 6754 and 6755: an idolatrous figure, to shade, a phantom, an example, figuratively an illusion, a representative figure. So by putting together what we learned in Ephesians 6 about the real enemy in heavenly places, Revelation 12 with Satan being cast down and Daniel 2, we gain valuable insight in these last days when we study this image just like the prophecy was told by the angels. Now we see that the image was a shadow of the principalities above the earth who rule: Satan and his demonic government.

Worldly empires are the sea of humanity, part of the whole world that is deceived and mentioned in Revelation 12:9. That is why Christ said of the Roman centurions who drove the nails into His hands and killed Him, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” It is from Luke 23:34. The people who dwell in the sea of Satan’s deception and influence really have no clue as to what has driven the world to the point of madness time after time. The time and season of change has come so that Satan may be defeated and he does not like it one bit, but lose he will. We will now look at a few more scriptures to solidify this concept of spiritual warfare in our minds. Return once again to our good friend, Daniel, only this time to a message received from an angel sent by God.

Let’s read Daniel 10:1. “In the third year of Cyrus King of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision.” Note that at the time Daniel was serving under Cyrus, King of Persia. Daniel had started serving under Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. This was after the silver empire of the Medes and the Persians had conquered Babylon. Continue in verse 2. “In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks.” He was fasting and praying for three weeks. Then in verses 5-6 he records that an angel appeared to him. “I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.”

Continue with verses 9-14. “Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground. Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. And he said to me, ‘O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that

I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.’ While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling. Then he said to me, ‘Do not fear Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come.’”

That was not a human prince who could fight an angel of God to a standstill for three weeks. That was one of Satan’s chief demons who had been given charge over Persia which was the physical empire Daniel was in at that time. We are seeing how Satan has laid out the boundaries of his principalities mentioned in Ephesians 6. One of God’s chief angels, Michael, had to come and assist the angel sent with the message. Remember that the physical empire of Greece then followed the Medes and the Persians, and that is the bronze belly. So we clearly see that invisible principalities exist in parallel fashion over physical nations and empires. With that in mind, let’s read more in Daniel 10:20.

“Then he said, ‘Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come.’” This messenger angel is giving us a glimpse of spiritual warfare fought between angels. He is also revealing how Satan has divided responsibilities among his demons over the earth! Indeed, the human empires and governments pictured by the image in Daniel 2 are just that: an image, a shadow of something above. The physical nations were motivated by their spiritual counterparts to wage war on God’s first congregation, and now on His second congregation. We will now prove that Satan is the chief prince over the entire image that we cannot see that casts its shadow on the earth. We will see also that he is called the king of Babylon, the head of gold, the brains behind the operation. We see all this by turning to Isaiah 14:3-4.

“It shall come to pass in the day the Lord gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve, that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: ‘How the oppressor has ceased, the golden city ceased!’” Note that Babylon here is now called a city. By dropping down to verse 12 we will see that the head of this city is, indeed, Satan, who originally was called Lucifer.

Isaiah 14, verses 12-15: “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.” We can see here now that Satan is ruler over stars, referring to his demons, who have tried to take over God’s throne and now plague the congregation of God.

This Babylon is a name of a spiritual city, a capital city that is a head of a spiritual kingdom that will be smashed by Christ at His second coming! The world is not about to be destroyed. Satan's realm is about to be destroyed and replaced by Christ's perfect government. The battle for earth and for all mankind is almost over! Read the next Digest to see how the war has continued right down to today. Round three is almost over!

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