

## Revelation (2020) – 4A

- Our study of Revelation enters a new and important section of study tonight

### 4A-1

- And before we begin that section, we need to revisit our outline, the one Jesus gave to John in Chapter 1
  - Jesus told John to write this prophetic book in three parts
  - First, John wrote the things “he saw” (past tense), which referred to the brief events of Chapter 1
  - Secondly, John wrote the things that “are” (present tense), which we refer to as the letters to the churches in Chapters 2 & 3
  - And thirdly, John was to write the things that must happen after the things that are (future tense), which are Chapters 4 and on

### 4A-2

- So far we’ve studied Parts 1, the authentication of the book, and Part 2, the history of the Church Age found in the letters to the churches
  - Each of the seven letters represents a period of time during the existence of the church on earth...seven periods in total
  - Yet each description is very brief...so brief that it can’t possibly give us enough information to act upon
  - Furthermore, the Church couldn’t appreciate the prophetic quality of these letters until the benefit of hindsight
  - So the prophetic value offered by these letters went unused for most of the last 2,000 years
- So why did Jesus give the Church this prophetic roadmap if it wasn’t going to be understood nor appreciated in its day?
  - The answer is because these letters weren’t given so that the early Church could know its future
  - They were given so that the Church of the last days could awaken to its present circumstances
  - So that those who will be alive right before the events of Chapters 4-22 would recognize the significance of their day
- And therefore, we are living in the privileged period that has been called to understand the signs of the times and to be ready for them

- But in order for us to fulfill that mission, we must understand not only our present circumstances but also our history
- Specifically, we must take our understanding of the Church and its seven periods of existence and place it in a larger framework

## 4A-3

- The Church comes into existence at a certain point in history and it has a certain course and an appointed end as well

## 4A-4

- And of course we desire to know what comes next, and the outline of Revelation tells us more is coming after the Church
- But first, we must understand what came before the Church
- Because the events that lead to the start of the Church also explain what comes afterward
- And to answer those questions, we must venture outside the book of Revelation and into other Scripture

## 4A-5

- Beginning with an understanding of two important terms: “age” and “last days”
  - Age (*aion* in Greek) is a long but finite time in God’s program of history
  - Ages follow one after another, and the division between ages serve as important milestones in God’s program
  - We can see how ages follow one another in a comment by Jesus from Mark 10

**Mark 10:29** Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake,

**Mark 10:30** but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.

## 4A-6

- Jesus says we live in one age now, and in the age to come we will experience eternal life in our glorified bodies
- So the ending of our current age leads to the beginning of the next age coinciding with us receiving glorified bodies

4A-7

- The Bible uses a second term in relation to God’s program for history: the “last days”
  - The last days refers to the final period of an age which signals the approach of the next age
  - But this term can be confusing because we assume last days will be brief, like a 2-minute warning at the end of a football game
- But that’s not correct, because the last days are not necessarily a short period of time...for example

**James 5:3** Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure!

**Heb. 1:1** God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,

**Heb. 1:2** in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

- So last days are the culminating period of an age, yet James told the Church in the first century that they were in the last days
  - They were storing up treasure on earth in the “last days”
  - And the writer of Hebrews referred to his present time as “these last days”
  - Since we know it’s been 2,000 years or so since those letters were written, clearly the last days can last a long time
- So what makes them the “last days?” According to Hebrews, last days are when all revelation is complete and no more mile markers remain
  - Hebrews says that in the past the Lord provided revelation and insight in bits and pieces
    - So as long as there was still yet revelation remaining, we could know that we were not yet in the last days...more was planned
    - Most importantly, until the Messiah had been revealed, the age couldn’t end

4A-8

## 4A-9

- Because His appearing was the focus of the age and the culminating event
- So the writer said now that Jesus has appeared and the canon of Scripture is complete, the stage is set for the end to come
  - And therefore we are in the last days of this age
  - Our age can conclude without further warning and at any time
  - But even still, the last days run for an unknown period of time, which we now know is 2,000 years and counting
- Knowing how ages and last days work in Scripture, we naturally come to ask a series of questions
  - Questions like, what is this age? When did it begin? Does it have a name? What's its purpose? When does it end? What comes next?
    - The answers to all these questions are given in the Bible...just not in the book of Revelation
    - Revelation 4-22 tells the story of how this age gives way to the next
    - So as we move out of the times that "are," it's especially important we understand this age before we get to the next
  - And the first questions we need to answer are what is this age called and why did God establish it
    - Jesus gives us this answer in a passage about the end times in Luke 21

## 4A-10

[Luke 21:24](#) and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

- Jesus refers to a period of history called the "times of the Gentiles"
- The word translated signs is *kairos* which can also be translated age

## 4A-11

- So Jesus called our age the "age of the Gentiles"
- Gentiles refers to all non-Jews, which means Jesus says we live in an age when Gentiles have a greater position than Israel

- And more specifically, Jesus says that Gentiles will have two specific advantages over the Jewish nation in this age

## 4A-12

- First, the Jewish people will suffer under persecution by Gentiles, being scattered out of their land suffering death and captivity
- Secondly, the Jews' capital city would be "trampled" by Gentiles
  - "Trampling" implies defilement and control of the city of Jerusalem, at least to some degree
- So if this age will be marked by Jewish persecution by Gentile authorities and a trampling of Jerusalem, we have several things to consider

## 4A-13

- Obviously, our age, which includes the time of the church according to Jesus and to the New Testament writer, had a beginning
  - So there must have been a time in the past when these two things were not true
  - There must have been a time *before* Israel began to be persecuted by Gentiles and before the city was defiled
  - If we can identify that time in history then we will find the start of this age
- And by the same token, when this age ends, these two things must also end
  - That is, the persecution of Jews by Gentiles will end and the city of Jerusalem will no longer be subjected to Gentile trampling
  - So if we can determine when these things cease, we will know the end of this age
- And there is one book of Scripture that gives us both of these points and much more in between
  - The book is called the Revelation of the Old Testament, and in a real sense it's a prologue to the Book of Revelation
  - It's literally impossible to understand the book of Revelation without understanding this Old Testament book
  - It's the book of Daniel
- Studying the entire book of Daniel is very helpful to understanding Revelation, but there are a handful of chapters that are essential

- In particular, Chapters 2 & 7 are the chapters that explain the Age of the Gentiles
- Jesus gave the age its name in Luke, and we learn the details of how this age ends in Revelation
- But Daniel gives us the beginning of the age and a spectacular overview of all that this age will contain
- And we will refer back often to what we learn tonight and in the next few weeks
- We're going to move through the first part of the chapter quickly to set the scene

4A-14

**Dan. 2:1** Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him.

**Dan. 2:2** Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king.

**Dan. 2:3** The king said to them, "I had a dream and my spirit is anxious to understand the dream."

**Dan. 2:4** Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic: "O king, live forever! Tell the dream to your servants, and we will declare the interpretation."

**Dan. 2:5** The king replied to the Chaldeans, "The command from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap.

**Dan. 2:6** "But if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and a reward and great honor; therefore declare to me the dream and its interpretation."

**Dan. 2:7** They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell the dream to his servants, and we will declare the interpretation."

4A-15

**Dan. 2:8** The king replied, "I know for certain that you are bargaining for time, inasmuch as you have seen that the command from me is firm,

**Dan. 2:9** that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is only one decree for you. For you have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words before me until the situation is changed; therefore tell me the dream, that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation."

**Dan. 2:10** The Chaldeans answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king, inasmuch as no great king or ruler has ever asked anything like this of any magician, conjurer or Chaldean.

**Dan. 2:11** “Moreover, the thing which the king demands is difficult, and there is no one else who could declare it to the king except gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh.”

- The nation of Babylon invaded the southern kingdom of Judah and captured the city of Jerusalem around 600 BC
  - That was the first time the city had fallen to a foreign invader since King David declared Jerusalem to be the Jewish capital
    - Babylon eventually attacked the city three times and each time it did more damage and took more of the city captive
    - Nebuchadnezzar succeeded where others failed because the Lord granted him permission to take the city
    - Babylon’s invasion and destruction of the city was part of a much larger plan that God was working for the benefit of Israel
    - Yet the king didn’t understand his role in God’s plan until years later, when one of his Jewish captives, Daniel, explains it to him
  - Daniel was among a contingent of Jews that the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, took captive as slaves and led back to Babylon
    - The first chapter of Daniel’s book recorded Daniel’s flight to Babylon and how he came to serve the king in his court
    - Daniel was raised up by the Lord to influence the king and protect Israel while in captivity
    - And Daniel 1 tells us that the Lord gave Daniel wisdom ten times better than all the magicians of Babylon
    - And in Daniel 2, we see that wisdom on display as Daniel solves a riddle for the king
- In v.1 we hear that in Nebuchadnezzar’s second full year as king, he had dreams
  - God has given these visions to the king intentionally, yet the Lord also made sure the king couldn’t understand the dreams on his own
    - The Lord withheld the meaning from the king to ensure the king would reach out for explanation
    - So Nebuchadnezzar calls in all his counselors in Babylon seeking their advice

- These men were called to give an interpretation, but first the king proposed a test to make sure they were telling the truth
  - He wisely required that the men tell him both the dream and the interpretation
  - Normally, a leader would describe the dream first, then the advisor offered an interpretation
  - Apparently, Nebuchadnezzar had seen this before and wasn't very impressed, so this time he wanted dream and interpretation
- Predictably, the counselors object to the new rules, since it makes their job much harder and will expose any fraud
  - When these men protest, the king sees right through their scheme and calls their bluff
  - He says if they can't tell him something he already knows (i.e., the content of the dream), then how can he trust the rest?
- In their protests they claim that only gods could reveal the things that the king seeks to know
  - And that is precisely the conclusion the Lord wanted Nebuchadnezzar to reach
  - Specifically, this was a dream that came from the Lord so it was a dream that only the Lord could interpret
  - And the Lord willed to reveal it through Daniel
- Which sets up the entrance of our hero

**Dan. 2:12** Because of this the king became indignant and very furious and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.

**Dan. 2:13** So the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they looked for Daniel and his friends to kill them.

**Dan. 2:14** Then Daniel replied with discretion and discernment to Arioch, the captain of the king's bodyguard, who had gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon;

**Dan. 2:15** he said to Arioch, the king's commander, "For what reason is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch informed Daniel about the matter.

**Dan. 2:16** So Daniel went in and requested of the king that he would give him time, in order that he might declare the interpretation to the king.

4A-17

**Dan. 2:25** Then Arioch hurriedly brought Daniel into the king's presence and spoke to him as follows: "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can make the interpretation known to the king!"

**Dan. 2:26** The king said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen and its interpretation?"

**Dan. 2:27** Daniel answered before the king and said, "As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians nor diviners are able to declare it to the king.

**Dan. 2:28** "However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed.

**Dan. 2:29** "As for you, O king, while on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future; and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place.

**Dan. 2:30** "But as for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind.

- Daniel offers to give an interpretation to the king, both to save himself and his friends but also to glorify the Lord
  - Daniel must have felt the Lord was leading him into this moment, and so he seized it by promising that his God could interpret the dream
    - And as Daniel meets the king he gives us an important detail about the context
    - Daniel says this prophecy concerns things that will take place in the future, and specifically in the latter (or last) days
    - So this dream tells the story of our current age, including the period of time that we currently occupy – the last days
  - The dream comes in four parts, and the first part follows

4A-18

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

**Dan. 2:32** "The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze,

[Dan. 2:33](#) its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

[Dan. 2:34](#) “You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them.

[Dan. 2:35](#) “Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

[Dan. 2:36](#) “This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king.

[Dan. 2:37](#) “You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory;

[Dan. 2:38](#) and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold.

## 4A-19

- First, we note the obvious: the dream concerns a statue, and this statue has divisions or parts that are quite strange
  - The parts are like different statues stuck together to form a single entity
  - And we notice that the statue’s materials change from gold to silver to brass to iron and pottery
  - And these materials decrease in value while increasing in strength
- Daniel describes the divisions of the statue from head to toe, and then he describes what brings the statue to an end
  - A stone, uncut by human hands, descended from above, like an asteroid, and struck the statue at the feet
  - Though it struck at the feet, nevertheless, the statue was completely destroyed and obliterated leaving nothing
  - The stone remained, however, and it grew to a giant mountain that filled the entire earth
- This is the dream, and obviously despite its simplicity, no one could imagine its meaning simply by hearing the description
  - It could mean almost anything but it has a specific, assigned meaning given by God

- So unless we know and accept the Lord's own interpretation, we will not have the correct understanding
- That's why it required God provide the decoder ring for the dream
- Turning to Daniel's interpretation, he first gives the meaning of the first part, the head of the statue
  - Daniel says the head of gold at the top of the statue represented Nebuchadnezzar as ruler of Babylon
    - Daniel tells the king that his power to conquer the nations of the world was a direct result of Israel's God giving them into his hand
    - And the Lord's decree was even more comprehensive than the king may have imagined
    - By God's decree, Nebuchadnezzar ruled over every inch of the physical earth
    - Jeremiah confirms Daniel's words:

4A-20

**Jer. 27:5** "I have made the earth, the men and the beasts which are on the face of the earth by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and I will give it to the one who is pleasing in My sight.

**Jer. 27:6** "Now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and I have given him also the wild animals of the field to serve him.

**Jer. 27:7** "All the nations shall serve him and his son and his grandson until the time of his own land comes; then many nations and great kings will make him their servant.

- Now, we know Nebuchadnezzar didn't travel to every inch of the globe during his time as king, so can he be said to rule the entire earth?
  - God assigned to Nebuchadnezzar the authority to rule the earth, regardless of whether Nebuchadnezzar exercised that authority
  - For a time in history, this one man was ruling all the earth and nothing could have challenged him during that time
- But at the same time, this rule wasn't going to last forever, for what God gives, He takes away

- And in a day appointed by God, Nebuchadnezzar's rule would end
- More than that, Babylon's dominance would end as well
- And then in a time assigned by the Lord, another power would rise up and take what Babylon had
- In v.39 Daniel continues his interpretation

4A-21

**Dan. 2:39** "After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth.

- Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that another kingdom will arise to replace Babylon and then a third kingdom will replace the second one
  - Before we look at the second and third kingdoms, let's understand how this narrative relates to the statue
  - The head of gold stood for the kingdom of Babylon, and then the silver breast and arms stand for the second kingdom
- So each of these parts represents a kingdom that replaces the prior part in history
  - Therefore, the statue represents a timeline of history, running from head to toe
  - No two parts can exist at the same time, because one part must end before the next part begins
  - So the statue represents a timeline for our age, this age that Jesus called the age of the Gentiles
- And now we know it begins with the head, with Nebuchadnezzar's rise to power
  - And that matches what Jesus said in defining the age itself
  - He said it would be an age marked by the defeat, enslavement and scattering of the Jewish people
  - And it would be an age in which Gentiles trampled over the city of Jerusalem
- That's the definition of our age, and the very first time any of those things happened was in 605 BC when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah

4A-22

- So literally, Babylon's invasion of Israel began our current age
- And that beginning is represented in this statue by the head of gold
- So where does our age go next?
  - Daniel says the silver, second kingdom will be inferior to Babylon
    - The inferiority of the second kingdom is represented by the lesser value of silver as compared to gold
    - We can understand why silver is less than gold, but what does that say about the second kingdom it represents?
    - How will the Babylon's conqueror be less than Babylon?
  - To understand this question, we must know which kingdom replaced Babylon in history, since Daniel doesn't name it
    - And to determine which kingdom replaced Babylon, we should establish criteria for what qualifies a kingdom to be considered
    - The criteria to be one of the kingdoms in the statue is found in the definition of the age itself

4A-23

- First, each kingdom must be a Gentile kingdom, for this is an age of Gentile dominance Jesus said
  - Secondly, each kingdom must be the most powerful kingdom on earth in its day, since it replaces the previous world power
  - Thirdly, each kingdom must defeat its predecessor
  - And finally, it must assume control over Jerusalem
- In effect, we're saying that each world power in this state must hold two properties: Babylon and Jerusalem
  - Since the first world power was Babylon, then it stands to reason that the kingdom to replace Babylon must defeat the capital city
  - And of course, Jerusalem is always to be trampled

4A-24

- The second kingdom is that of the Medo-Persians, who replaced the kingdom of Babylon in 550 BC

## 4A-25

- This kingdom was formed by the alliance of the Medes and Persia, represented by the two arms of the statue
- Some have taken to drawing the arms crossed to represent the union of these two powers, though Daniel never says how the arms are set
- Medo-Persia grew in power until it challenged and defeated Babylon under Cyrus the Great
  - The kingdom was strong enough to defeat Babylon, but according to the statue it was less majestic
  - Medo-Persia was less majestic than Babylon because the Medo-Persian king was not as powerful as Nebuchadnezzar
- He had checks on his own authority that the Babylonian king did not suffer
  - In particular, the Medo-Persian laws stipulated that a king could not reverse the decisions of prior kings
  - So the rule of a Medo-Persian monarch was like silver compared to Babylon's gold, because it wasn't as absolute
  - Nevertheless, the Medo-Persians will defeat the Babylonians and the Age of the Gentiles marches onward
- In v.39 Daniel also says that a third kingdom will assume power over the world
  - That kingdom will replace the second, and will likewise exhibit lessor majesty in its rule
    - Based on our criteria above, the next kingdom to qualify for the statue was the Hellenistic Empire of Alexander the Great
    - Alexander extended the Greek empire out of central Europe and into the East, defeating the Persians in 330 BC

## 4A-26

- He is represented by bronze because the leader of the Greek empire was far less powerful than either the Medes or Babylonians
  - He competed with the leaders of city-states within the empire and with land aristocracy
  - Ultimately, the sovereign enforced his control through a powerful military that could impose his will

## 4A-27

- So while the Greek King was strong enough to defeat the Persians, he ruled with less power over his subjects
- Notice that this section of the statue begins with the belly, as a single piece but as the period ends, it's divided into two thighs
  - And that detail also reflects the nature of the Hellenistic Empire of Alexander the Great
  - Alexander the Great died barely four years into his reign but not before he had conquered much of the known world
- At that point, he had no heirs, so his kingdom was dissolved into four parts assigned to his four generals
  - Two generals in the Western end of the Empire formed an alliance against the two generals in the East
  - This created an east-west political divide that still exists to this day
- The concept of the Western world and the Eastern world originated in this division, and the statue's legs reminds us of that historical effect
  - Just as the legs never rejoin in the statue, so will this East-West divide remain through the end of the age
  - Even today we still speak of the East and West politically
- Daniel's interpretation sped past the second and third empires because they were not important details in this timeline
  - They must be covered, of course, but only because they occupy points along the path that leads us to more important things
    - Primarily, they lead us to the fourth kingdom and to the end of the statue
    - The fourth kingdom gets the most treatment in Daniel's interpretation

## 4A-28

**Dan. 2:40** "Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces.

**Dan. 2:41** "In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay.

[Dan. 2:42](#) “As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle.

[Dan. 2:43](#) “And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.

- The final kingdom features the least valuable and most brittle materials, which is reflected in the tendency to break and crush into pieces
  - This kingdom replaces the prior kingdom but it does so in a unique way
    - Rather than holding territory together as did the previous kingdoms, this one conquers by breaking and crushing into pieces
    - Just as clay and iron do not stick together, this kingdom’s various pieces combine for periods of time and then break apart again
    - Some of these pieces will be stronger than others, resulting in an empire that is unbalanced in power
  - Nevertheless, this combining and separating pattern does not mean the kingdom itself ends at any time
    - It continues to exist throughout the time it experiences this confining and breaking process
    - Collectively, the loosely associated pieces of this fourth kingdom serve the same function as the previous kingdoms in the statue
    - They persecute, enslave and scatter Israel while trampling under Jerusalem
  - What kind of earthly Kingdom fits this unique set of details?
    - We know from history that the next Gentile power to follow Greece was the Roman Empire
    - Roman Republic defeated the Hellenistic Empire in 168 BC
    - Rome eventually defeated Judea in 63 BC and took control of Jerusalem and Babylon
    - And Rome continued to expand even over the next several centuries

4A-29

- As Rome conquered, it transitioned from a republic to a monarchy ruled by Caesars
  - Yet it added territory by assimilating cultures and lands without changing the culture of these lands
  - As a result, the Roman Empire could very well be described as iron held together by clay
  - The Romans conquered like iron, crushing those who opposed them and cutting up land into new divisions
  - But because these lands retained their cultures, they continued to see themselves as independent of Rome
- At this point we ask the natural question, what came after the end of the Roman Empire?
  - Well in a word...nothing, because the Roman Empire was never completely replaced, at least not like the prior kingdoms
    - Remember, this fourth kingdom dissolves into “pieces” rather than being replaced by anything new
    - These pieces combine for periods of time, but like iron and clay, they don’t adhere so they eventually break apart again
    - In fact, the “Holy” Roman Empire didn’t official cease to exist until 1806!
  - That’s exactly the pattern we’ve seen over the course of history
    - But it’s only increased in the centuries since the Roman Empire disappeared
    - Western and Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and even north Africa and Western Asia have all experienced this pattern
    - New alliances are created and then later dissolved
  - So given this unique pattern, as reflected in the statue, we can’t call this fourth kingdom the Roman Empire
    - Certainly, the Roman Empire began this fourth period, but the period extends beyond the Roman Empire itself
    - In later centuries, the kingdom was still operating, but different pieces and different unions were at work

4A-30

4A-31

- So we must understand the fourth kingdom in the way the statue represents it
- It's a single entity consisting of "pieces" combining and breaking apart over history
- So instead of calling this fourth kingdom "Rome" we must give it a more generic title
  - I call this kingdom the Imperialistic-Democratic Alliance
  - This name better reflects the changing nature and identity of the actors that combine to make up this kingdom
  - Over 2,000 years, this alliance has continued to dispossess Israel and keep Jerusalem under Gentile authority
- But as we reach the end of the statue and therefore the end of this timeline, things get very interesting
  - Before the fourth kingdom reaches its end, the kingdom experiences a division into ten parts represented by the ten toes
  - Daniel doesn't explain what the ten toes represent here but we do get our explanation in Daniel 7
  - But for now let's understand how this age ends by understanding how the statue comes to an end

4A-32

4A-33

**Dan. 2:44** "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

**Dan. 2:45** "Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy."

- Finally, the last piece of the puzzle, the stone falling from the sky
  - Daniel says the stone that fell and crushed the statue is itself a new kingdom
    - The kingdom represented by the stone is not connected to the prior Gentile kingdoms

## 4A-34

- We see this because the arrival of the stone coincides with the destruction of the statue
- We know the statue represents the Age of the Gentiles so by definition the stone's destruction of the statue means the end of this age
  - And the stone sets up a new kingdom, a new age to replace the prior age
  - Therefore, those features that defined the Age of the Gentiles must also change
  - For example, in the Age of the Gentiles Israel was scattered, so in the next age Israel must be regathered in their land
  - In the Age of the Gentiles, Israel was persecuted by Gentile nations, so now it must be safe and secure
  - And in the Age of Gentiles, the city was defiled by Gentiles, but in the next age it must be free of Gentile defilement and attack
- So we know that this coming kingdom represented by the stone cannot be another Gentile Kingdom
  - Just as in the statue, whatever replaces the prior dominant power must itself become the dominant power
  - So as the Age of Gentiles ends, we will enter an age when the Jewish nation will be dominant
- Daniel confirms this assumption for us in v.44 when he says this new kingdom will end all other kingdoms on earth
  - Furthermore, this new kingdom will endure forever...no more transitions, hence the end of the statue
  - And this kingdom will be set up by God Himself
- This time God Himself will be the King on Earth and He personally sets up the Jewish Kingdom that replaces those Gentile powers
  - Daniel says that uncut stone represents some arrival that puts an end to the Age of the Gentiles
    - Notice that arrival comes from the God of Heaven and the stone falls from above

- Furthermore, the stone was uncut by human hands reminding us of a requirement in the Law of Moses:

4A-35

[Deut. 27:5](#) “Moreover, you shall build there an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones; you shall not wield an iron tool on them.

[Deut. 27:6](#) “You shall build the altar of the LORD your God of uncut stones, and you shall offer on it burnt offerings to the LORD your God;

- The Lord commanded that Israel only use uncut stones for His altar
  - The use of natural, unworked stones signified that our atonement could not be earned through our own works
  - The altar of sacrifice would be a place where only God’s work (i.e., the Creator of the stones) was applied
- Likewise, the uncut falling stone represents the work of God, and since it falls on the statue, we conclude that it comes from the sky (i.e., Heaven)
  - It grows into a mountain that fills the earth, and when used symbolically in Scripture, mountains represent kingdoms
  - And here we see that pattern confirmed, since Daniel says the mountain represents a kingdom filling the earth
  - Furthermore, that kingdom will endure forever, never to be replaced
- So what future Kingdom is centered on Israel, follows after this age is over, and begins with a “rock” uncut by human hands falling from Heaven?

4A-36

- The only conclusion that fits the data is the Kingdom Jesus promised to set up at His Second Coming

- Notice the stone falls “on the feet” of the statue, indicating that the coming of Christ happens at the end of this age

- Therefore, Jesus is the rock returning to earth at His Second Coming

- And the mountain is the Millennial Kingdom He establishes for Israel after His return

4A-37

- It will be a Jewish Kingdom, in that Jesus is Jewish and the Kingdom was promised to Israel

- It will replace all other ruling authorities on Earth
- It brings an end to the Age of the Gentiles and ushers in a new age on Earth
- And it will result in the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel to grant them an eternal Kingdom in their land
- As we stand here in history, the coming of that rock is the next milestone in God's prophetic plan for this age
  - That's why the writers say we are in the last days now
  - Everything Daniel said would happen in the Age of Gentiles has come to pass exactly as Daniel predicted
  - Only the events of the very end remain, and so we are in the last days waiting for the end to come
- Where do we go next? We need to augment our understanding of the Age of the Gentiles with a few more pieces of information from Daniel 7
  - Then with a full appreciation of this age, we can move back to Chapter 4 of Revelation
  - And from there we begin to add more pieces to the puzzle for how this age proceeds into the things that must happen after these things

4A-38