

## DISCOURSE

By Elder ORSON PRATT, Delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday afternoon, February 4th, 1872.

REPORTED BY DAVID W. EVANS.

I WILL call the attention of this congregation to a portion of prophecy which will be found in the 44th and 45th verses of the 2nd chapter of the Book of Daniel:

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

I have often, in my remarks in former times, addressed the Latter-day Saints upon these passages; but as there are some strangers in our midst who have not, perhaps, heard our views in regard to setting up the kingdom of God in the latter times, it may not be amiss for us to set forth before them, the views of the Latter-day Saints in regard to this prediction. We have, during the last six thousand years, or nearly so, had a very great variety of human governments established on the earth. Governments began to be established in the days of our first parents. As they lived to be very aged—or almost a thousand years before they were taken from the earth, they saw their children multiplying around them in vast numbers, and governments began to be established. Among those governments, however, was maintained also the government of God,—a patriarchal government; that continued with the righteous from the days of Adam down till the days of Enoch, and for a short period after his days. This government was patriarchal in its nature, or, in other words, directed and dictated by the Creator of man,—the Great Law-giver. He directed and counselled his servants, and they obeyed his counsels. In other words a divine government existed on the earth in those ancient times; but at length, about the period of the death of Adam, or a little after, human governments rooted out of the earth the government of God: mankind apostatized from the great principles which were revealed from heaven, and all flesh corrupted its way in the sight of God to that degree that the just anger of their Creator was kindled against them and he decreed that they should be swept off from the face of the earth by a flood of waters. Again, after this great destruction, a divine government was organized on the earth, Noah being the great Patriarch, Revelator, and Prophet, to whom was given laws and institutions for the government of his posterity. This order, however, continued only for a short period of time, and human governments again prevailed. The Lord sought, from time to time, in the midst of these human governments, to select a people who would give heed to his law and be governed by him as the Being who had the right to govern; inasmuch as he had created the earth and the inhabitants thereof, he had the right to give laws and institutions for the government of man. But few, indeed, there were that gave heed to these divine institutions. The Lord, at length, called out a people from Egypt, and took upon himself the power and gave revelation to them in a very conspicuous and wonderful manner. He came down in the sight of some twenty-five hundred thousand people, and gave them laws; they heard those laws proclaimed from Mount Sinai. Male and female, old and young, throughout all the hosts of Israel, had the opportunity of learning something in regard to the laws of Heaven. However, they quickly corrupted themselves in the sight of God, and while Moses yet tarried in the mount, not being satisfied with the laws which God had revealed and which he intended to give unto them, they devised institutions of their own. They gathered together their jewels, their gold and their silver, and so forth, and began to make gods of their own for the people to worship, among which we have an account of two calves that were made by Aaron, while Moses was yet in the mount talking with the Lord and receiving oracles and laws for the government of that people. Having received these laws, written upon tables of stone, Moses departed out of the mount, by the command of God, to go down and visit the people. The Lord had told Moses that they had corrupted themselves, and he went down, being filled with the justice of the Almighty, or, as it is written, his anger was kindled against the people, which I interpret as a spirit of justice. He found that they had made gods and bowed down before them, and said: "These be thy gods, oh Israel, that brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." However, a revolution was performed in the midst of the people, and Moses succeeded in bringing most of the people to their senses again, that they were willing to receive the divine law. Their sin, however, was so great that the

first law which the Lord intended to bestow upon them, namely, the law of the gospel, was withheld.

Now, here is something, perhaps, that may be a little new to strangers, to hear the Latter-day Saints say that the gospel of the Son of God was withheld from the people of Israel. But in proof of my assertion, I will refer you to Paul's declaration to the Hebrews, wherein he says, "The gospel was preached unto them in the wilderness as well as unto us; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." From this we learn that the children of Israel, at first, were not placed under the law of carnal commandments. They were not placed under the law which exacts an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and if a man smite thee on the cheek, turn and resist the evil. This was not the first law that was given to Israel. The law of the gospel, the same gospel that was taught in the days of Christ, was given to them first, with this one exception—the children of Israel were required to look forward to the coming of their Messiah, and to the atonement that he should make upon the cross, that they, by faith in the future atonement that was to be made, might be partakers of the blessings of the gospel. But having hardened their hearts against Moses and against God, the Lord determined to take away this higher law from the midst of the children of Israel and give them a law which is termed by the apostles the law of carnal commandments,—a law by which they should not live. They could have lived by the law of the gospel; they could have entered into the Lord's rest by that law, even into the fulness of his glory, but having transgressed the higher law, God gave them an inferior law adapted to their carnal capacity. This law is mentioned in the 20th chapter of Ezekiel, in these words: Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live." Why is it that the Lord gave to Israel statutes, and judgments, and laws that were not good? Because they were incapable of receiving anything greater or higher. He gave them this law as a schoolmaster, to school them and bring them to the higher law, namely, the law of Christ, and they continued under this law, under this condemnation for a long time, and the Lord swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest in consequence of having broken the higher law.

Moses again went up into Mount Sinai, and was gone a second time forty days and forty nights, without eating and drinking, and received this law, this carnal law that is generally denominated the law of Moses, upon second tables of stone, the first covenant having been dashed to pieces, or in other words the first law, the higher law of the gospel contained on the first tables, was destroyed and the covenant broken, and a new law was introduced. Incorporated on the second tables of stone were the ten commandments, which pertain to the gospel, which were also on the first tables. In addition to these ten commandments which pertain to the gospel, were many of those carnal laws that I have been speaking of. By this second code of laws it was impossible for Israel to enter into the fulness of celestial glory; in other words they could not be redeemed and brought into the presence of the Father and the Son; they could not enter into the fulness of that rest that was intended to be given to such only as obeyed the higher law of the gospel.

After the days of Moses the children of Israel, from time to time, corrupted themselves before the Most High; they would not abide even in the lower law; but there were a few individuals in the various generations of Israel, such as prophets, schools of prophets, &c., which received the higher law, and obtained the higher priesthood, and were blessed of the Lord, and had the privilege of entering into his rest, being filled with the spirit of prophecy and revelation, having the power not only to prophecy and to obtain revelation, but to come up by virtue of the higher law, into near communion with the Father and the Son, having the privilege to behold, by vision, the face of the Lord.

About six hundred years before Christ the children of Israel, or rather the house of Judah, that was still left remaining in the land of Palestine, had again so far apostatized from the Lord their God that the Lord threatened, by the mouth of the prophets, that he would destroy that great city Jerusalem, and that the people should be led away captive into great Babylon. We find this was fulfilled. But eleven years previous to this great captivity, the Lord led one of the prophets, whose name was Lehi and his sons, and one or two other families from the land of Jerusalem to this American continent. That was about six hundred years before Christ; of these families the American Indians are the descendants. But we will leave this branch of Israel on the American continent and return again to the house of Judah. While they were in captivity in Babylon the Lord raised up Daniel, the Prophet, from whose words I have taken my text. Daniel had the great privilege given unto him of knowing concerning the rise and fall of kingdoms and empires, of beholding the kingdoms of the earth, from his day, down until that universal kingdom of God should be established on the earth never more to be destroyed.

First, Nebuchadnezzar, the heathen king,

was visited by the Almighty in a heavenly dream, but his dream was taken from him, and he could not remember it when he awoke. He called for the wise men of Babylon—the astrologers, soothsayers, magicians and the wisest men that could be found, requesting them to tell him his dream, and then give him the interpretation of it. The dream left a deep impression on the mind of this great heathen king, and he believed that it was something of great importance, but still it could not be remembered.

I will here remark, by the way, that the heathen nations in those days were not so far corrupted, and had not so far apostatized from the religion of heaven but what they believed in dreams and in revelations, and thought there might be something contained within them that related to the future that would be advantageous to understand. What man, at this day, at this enlightened era, among the Christian nations, is so near to the Lord as to acknowledge new revelation as did Nebuchadnezzar? Far have they fallen beneath the standard of heathen idolaters!

King Nebuchadnezzar was so earnest in regard to this matter that he sent forth a decree that unless the wise men of Babylon would interpret to him his dream and also tell the dream itself, he would destroy the whole of them. I suppose he had not much confidence in them, and consequently concluded that if they could not tell the dream he would not put confidence in their interpretations. When Daniel heard of the decree of the king, to destroy all the wise men, he sent in a request that the king would not be quite so hasty in his measures, but give him a little time, during which he and his fellows besought the God of heaven that they might know concerning the dream and the interpretation thereof. The Lord heard the prayers of his servants and revealed to Daniel concerning the dream, and also gave him the interpretation. Daniel requested to be brought before his majesty the king, and he promised to give the dream and the interpretation. He was brought in before him, and addressed him in language something like the following: "The wise men, astrologers, soothsayers, magicians, &c., can not interpret this dream, O King, neither is there any wisdom in me that I can; but there is a God in heaven who is able to give the interpretation thereof. Thou, O King, art a king of kings, and the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, and dominion over all the nations. Thou art a part and portion of the dream; or, in other words, you represent a portion of the dream you had. Thou, O King, sawest and beheld a great image. This image's head was of fine gold, the breast and the arms of silver, the belly and the thighs of brass, the legs were of iron, the feet were part of iron and part of potter's clay. Thou sawest until that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, which smote the image upon the feet that was part of iron and part of clay, and brake them to pieces, then was the iron, the clay, the silver, the brass and the gold all broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and the wind carried them away, and there was no place found for them, but the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. This was the dream: he then gives the interpretation. "Thou, O King, art this head of gold." That is, the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar, that bore rule over all the earth, was considered the head of gold. "After thee shall come another kingdom represented by the breast and the arms of silver." That is the Medo-Persian kingdom. After that another kingdom still inferior, called the kingdom of brass, forasmuch as gold is better than silver, silver more precious than brass, so these kingdoms that were to arise, to succeed each other, were to be inferior as time should pass along. The third kingdom, of brass, represented the Macedonian empire; then after that another kingdom, great and terrible, whose legs were of iron, strong and powerful. The fourth kingdom bore rule over the earth; that is, admitted, by all commentators, to be the great Roman Empire, and by and by the division of the Roman empire into two divisions, representing the legs, and afterwards into the feet and toes. I shall not go through and bring up historical facts to show the particular divisions that grew out of the Roman empire, but will merely state that the present modern kingdoms of Europe that have grown out from the Roman empire represent the last vestiges of that great and powerful empire of Rome; that is, it fills up and makes the image complete. First the head of gold—the Babylonian empire; second, the breast and arms of silver—the Medo-Persian empire; third, the belly and thighs of brass, the Macedonian kingdom; fourth, the great Roman empire represented by the two legs of iron, the eastern and the western empires of Rome. Afterwards a division of the Roman empire into feet and toes, constituting all the modern European governments and those governments that have grown out of the European governments located in North and South America.

Do we wish to understand the geographical position of the great image? If we do, we must consider the head located in Asia; the breast and the arms of silver a little west of the great Babylonian Empire, the belly and thighs of brass still westward; the legs of iron and the modern kingdoms

composing the feet and toes, part of iron and part of clay, as extending throughout Europe and branching across the Atlantic Ocean, and extending from the East Sea even to the West, from the Atlantic unto the Pacific. This will constitute the location of the great image, running westward.

The image being now complete, all that we need now is to find something that will represent the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, something distinct entirely from the image, having no fellowship with it, that has not grown out of it, and that has no authority that comes from it, but a distinct and entirely separate government that should be established in some mountain. "Thou sawest until that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands." What shall that stone do? It shall smite the image upon the feet and toes. Not upon the head, at first, not upon the breast and arms of silver, not upon the belly and thighs of brass, not upon the modern kingdoms of Europe that have grown out of the legs of iron, but shall smite upon the feet and toes of the great image; there is where it is to commence its attack.

Now let us inquire, for a few moments, how or in what manner this kingdom, called the stone cut out of the mountain, commences this severe attack. Is it to be with weapons of a carnal nature, with sword in hand and weapons of warfare to wage a war against the kingdoms or governments of the earth? The kingdom of God cannot be organized on the earth without truth being sent down from heaven, without authority being given from the Most High; without men again being called to the holy priesthood, and apostleship, and sent forth to publish the truth in its naked simplicity and plainness to the inhabitants of the earth. This truth will be the weapon of warfare, this authority and power, sent down from heaven, will go forth and will proclaim the message of the everlasting gospel, the gospel of the latter-day kingdom, publishing it first among the nations that compose the feet and toes of the great image. "Will they be broken to pieces? Yes, when this message is published to them. When they are sufficiently warned, when the servants of God have gone forth in obedience to his commandments, and published in their towns, villages, cities, states and governments these sacred and holy principles that God Almighty has sent down from heaven in the latter times, it will leave all people, nations and tongues, that hear the gospel, and the principles and message pertaining to that kingdom, without any excuse. It will be a warning that will be everlasting on the one hand, or on the other, either to the bringing of the people to repentance, reformation and obedience to the gospel of the kingdom, or the judgments which are predicted in this prophecy of Daniel will be poured out upon the heads of those nations and kingdoms, and they will become like the chaff of the summer threshing floor, even all those kingdoms that compose the great image; for be it known that the remnants of the Babylonish kingdom, represented by the head of gold, still exist in Asia; the remnants of the silver kingdom, of the brass kingdom, and the kingdom of iron still have their existence; but when the Lord Almighty shall fulfill this prophecy, the toes and feet and legs of iron of that great image, or all these kingdoms, will be broken in pieces, and they will become like the chaff of the summer threshing floor; the wind will carry them away and no place will be found for them.

This prophecy of Daniel will give a true understanding of the matter to our wise men and statesmen, and all who desire to know the future destiny of the American government, the European governments and all the kingdoms of the earth. Their destiny is total destruction from our earth, no matter how great or powerful they may become. Though our nation may grasp on the right hand and on the left; though it may annex the British possessions, and extend its dominions to the south and grasp the whole of this great western hemisphere, and although our nation shall become as powerful in population as in extent of territory, its destiny is foretold in the saying of the prophet Daniel, "They shall become like the chaff of the summer threshing floor, the wind shall carry them away and no place shall be found for them." So with the kingdoms of Europe, so with the kingdoms of Western Asia and Eastern Europe.

Let us now say a few words in regard to this stone which shall be cut out of the mountains without hands. Now there must be something very peculiar in regard to the organization of the latter-day kingdom that is never to be destroyed. All these other governments that I have named have been the production of human hands; that is, of human ingenuity, human wisdom, the power of uninspired men has been exerted to the uttermost in the establishment of human governments, consequently all has been done by human ingenuity and power. Not so with the little stone. Man has nothing to do with the organization of that kingdom. Hear what the Prophet has said: "In the days of these kings the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom." It is not to be done by human means or power, or by the wisdom of man, neither by mighty conquests by the sword; but it is to be done by him that rules on high, who is