

The Boeing 747 Dreamlifter is the modified plane that can haul more cargo than any plane in the world. It weighs about 600,000 pounds and usually requires a runway of 9,200 feet. But in November 2013, a wayward Dreamlifter missed its intended destination of McConnell Air Force Base near Wichita, Kansas. Instead, the jumbo cargo plane landed nine miles north at the wrong airport—the city owned Jabara Airport. Jabara has no control tower and a 6,100-foot runway.

A spokesperson at McConnell Air Force Base—the right airport—said, "*The tower was in contact with the pilot ... [but] the guy had no clue where he was landing.*" The pilot told the McConnell radio tower, "*Apparently, uh, we, uh, have landed at Beech Factory Airport*" (a third airport located between McConnell and Jabara).

Eventually it got sorted out. The aimless pilot finally figured out which wrong airport he had landed his plane. A replacement crew came and, after removing most of the cargo, they were able to take off on the shorter runway and (after considerable more expense)... get the plane to McConnell, the correct airport.

Can you think of anything with more potential for disaster... than a clueless, disoriented airline pilot... flying a massive jumbo jet...? And with all of the navigation equipment available... can you think of any potential disaster that could be so easily avoided...? In order to be a pilot... we must assume he was trained and certified... with all of his equipment. It seems as it would be a simple matter of paying attention to what he had been furnished with...

But perhaps even more unthinkable... is the navigation equipment you and I have available to us. And yet many believers are just as aimless... because they are not paying attention to what they have been furnished with...

Whenever I feel like I am straying off course... in my Christian faith... because of doubt... Bible prophecy has served as an excellent navigation system... in keeping me on course.

I was interviewed last week by a student on the college campus where I teach. (The student knows that I am a pastor, as well as a college professor.) One of her questions was if I ever doubted my faith. I answered her in the positive... while adding that I think struggling through doubt makes us stronger in our faith. I also told her how God has used Bible prophecy in this process with me.

I hope that our study through the Book of Revelation... has been like that for you. We have been furnished with a super-sophisticated navigation system... And our paying attention to it... can have the effect of keeping us course with our Christian faith.

Through prophecy... we can see where history has taken us... and why. We can be far less aimless... and have much greater confidence for where we are going.. and where we will eventually land. ... That is my prayer for you in this study. ... Let it do more than just answer your curiosity. Let it build your faith... and encourage your participation in God's eternal plan of the ages.

**- OPENING PRAYER -**

I have been treating our study in the Book of Revelation as a big river into which many tributary rivers flow... all moving in the same direction as one.

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum says:

“The value of the Book of Revelation is not that it provides us with new information, but rather that it takes scattered Old Testament prophecies and puts them in chronological order so that the sequence of events may be determined.”

The Book of Revelation contains about 550 references to the Old Testament. (There is not really much new in this New Testament book.) Only the last two chapters of Revelation provide us with material that is totally new.

So... for the last few weeks we have been investigating these tributaries that flow into the big river. After completing chapters 1-3 of Revelation... we need to explore a few water ways that pour into the river... between chapter 3... and chapter 4.

Revelation 2 and 3 provided us with a marvelous prophetic picture of seven periods of church history. (Seven represents “completion” in prophetic literature.) When we studied those... we saw how closely these prophecies related to the actual events of six distinct periods of our times past... and how the seventh prophetic picture describes our current era of the church today.

Now Revelation chapter four begins with the scene in Heaven... just before the tribulation. It is followed by several descriptions of that great and awful day. ... But there are a few things that must take place before the great tribulation... and there are tributaries to explore... which flow into our river at this point.

We have watched the flow of Matthew 24... and Ezekiel 22... and Ezekiel 37-39... and we saw several prophecies that have already been accurately fulfilled. These needed to happen between Revelation chapter 3 and 4. They include a distinctive war... different from all others... nation against nation... accompanied by distinctive famines and earthquakes. Israel had to be brought from the 4 corners of the earth into their own land. The prophecy said that they would come (unbelieving) out of wrath... and once in place... would face God's wrath to bring them back to the Lord.

God bringing His people back to Himself... will be the primary focus of the Great Tribulation. This is still future... and so is the event of our study last week... which will bring many of them back. ... Last week we saw how God is going to draw an alliance (led by Russia) with Iran... Ethiopia... Somalia... Germany... and Armenia... to attack Israel – but God will intervene in a way that is clearly His working... and defeat Israel's attackers. This will bring many Jews back to the Lord... but not all.

Today... I would like to zoom out... to a much larger picture that is given in prophecy... so we can see why that Russian-led invasion was necessary... and why it will happen just before the tribulation. ... For this... I will have you turn with me to the Old Testament Book of Daniel.

As you locate Daniel... chapter two in your Bible's... let me brief you on where we pick-up the action of our passage. ... The King of Babylon... King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that disturbed him. None of his advisors could meet his demand to tell him what the dream was – followed by its interpretation... but God brings Daniel in. Daniel will tell the King what the dream was... and then interpret it. ... Then later... God will give Daniel his own dream... which concerns the very same thing as King

Nebuchadnezzar's dream... (only Daniel's dream offers a few more details.) So we will be looking at Daniel chapter 2 (King Nebuchadnezzar's dream)... and then Daniel chapter 7 (Daniel's dream about the very same thing.)

### **Daniel 2:31-45**

This vision is the big picture of the times of the Gentiles. From King Nebuchadnezzar forward... there will be four periods of world history... altogether known as the "times of the Gentiles."

Jesus also spoke of the "times of the Gentiles."

#### **Luke 21:24 (ESV)**

*They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*

"The times of the Gentiles" is the long period of time from the Babylonian Empire to the time when Gentiles no longer have dominance over the city of Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar's dream shows that Gentile dominance will continue until the stone (Jesus) returns and utterly destroys them.

The dream that King Nebuchadnezzar had covers the four eras of Jerusalem being trampled under-foot (being dominated) by Gentiles. Only the return of Jesus will end the "Times of the Gentiles." Jesus is the stone that will topple all human government – and will then establish an eternal rule.

Both Nebuchadnezzar (and later) Daniel dreamed about these four periods of "The Times of the Gentiles." ... In both dreams... Babylon is the first of the four Gentile empires to dominate Jerusalem. This is followed in the first (Nebuchadnezzar's dream)... by two arms of silver that are united by a

breast of silver. This corresponds with the Medo-Persian Empire that did follow the Babylonian Empire. The Meds and the Persians never fused into one people. It was a weaker Empire than Babylon. To show this, the arms and breast are made of silver. Gold has more value than silver.

Then came... in the vision... a belly and thighs of brass. (Again... a material of lesser value than the previous.) ... This was the Hellenistic Empire... which was comprised of Macedonia and Greece. Alexander the Great (and his father, Philip of Macedonia) attempted to conquer and unify the world with Greek culture.

The belly and thighs flowed down into two distinct legs and feet... (first being united at the waist... before separating... made of strong iron.) The fourth Gentile empire to trample Jerusalem would involve three stages (a strong united stage... followed by an Empire divided into two sections - the legs - and this is followed by a much weaker stage of ten toes that are made of a brittle iron and clay mix.)

The united stage of this fourth Empire is Rome. When Rome conquered a nation... they sent Roman officials to the land to rule the people. This Imperial form of running an Empire was the first of its kind. The Imperialism of Rome continued... as the Roman Empire split into an East-West division in AD 364 under Emperor Valentinian. Never again would it be unified. Rome remained the capitol for the Western Roman Empire and Constantinople was the capitol for the East. But both Empires remained Imperialistic.

(NOW STICK WITH ME even if history is not your strong suit. When you see how close Bible prophecy matches world history... it ought to raise a hallelujah from you.)

The Western division of power remained for 112 years. But in 476 – Rome fell. In A.D 800 the center of the Western division of power resurfaced through the Imperialism of Charlemagne... who moved it's center to France. Charlemagne called it "The Holy Roman Empire." However in 962... Otto I of Germany took over the Imperialist movement. Now the Holy Roman Empire was centered in Germany. And it's ruler was given the German name for Caesar – which is "Kaiser."

(OK... we are done with the western leg for now. That wasn't too bad... was it...?)

What about the other leg of the vision...? ... The Eastern division of power also went through its own adjustments... while it continued its Imperialistic ways. In 1453 the Turks over-ran Constantinople... and the Eastern division of power fled to the North – into Russia. The Imperialism movement of the East continued from Russia... and eventually Russia gave herself the official title of the "Third Roman Empire." Russia re-named her rulers. Czar is Russian for Caesar. Russia and it's neighboring nations is known as the "Eastern Block" of nations. This is the continuance of the Eastern division of Power in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

(Now here is where this starts to get exciting...)

Today... you will often hear in the media... many references to the balance of powers between the East and the West. The West holds the East's imperialism in check... while the East holds the West's imperialism

accountable. It is a strong tension (felt around the world.) It has been this way since the World Wars.

Have you ever wondered if the United States is in Biblical prophecy...? Yes... we are! We are part of the Western leg in Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

But this two-legged balance of power will not remain forever. Russia and her allies will attack Israel. When they suffer defeat... we saw in Ezekiel 39:6 that even the homeland of Russia and her allies will be forever destroyed. The Eastern leg will crumble as a result of the future Russian invasion of Israel.

At this point... the Western leg does not take over. Instead... Imperialism will continue on... through a ten division stage of power. And finally... Christ will return... bringing down the third and final stage of this fourth kingdom (the ten toes)... and set up His world-wide rule for eternity.

The fourth kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar's dream is different than the other three. It has three different stages... starting with the Roman Empire... and continuing its Imperialism through our day... and into the very near future.

When Daniel has his dream... he also notices that the fourth is quite unlike the other three kingdoms... and he is fascinated by it. Daniel asked specifically about the fourth and unusual kingdom... and he is given greater detail. So let's learn now from Daniel's dream about the "Times of the Gentiles" – which we are so close (right now) to the end of... And then we will see how all of this flows into the big river of Revelation.

### **Daniel 7:1-8, 15-18**



The first beast represents the Babylonian Empire once again. It is like the King of the Forest... the most powerful of beasts. But it has wings like eagles – probably showing how fast they conquered the world.

The second beast is the Medo-Persian Empire. It is lopsided. So was the Medo-Persian Empire. Still strong... and fierce - like a bear... but the Persians dominated the Empire. It was indeed lopsided. ... As they rose to power... they devoured the super-powers of the day (Lydia, Babylonia, and Egypt)... and so we have three bones in the bear's mouth.

Next we have the Hellenistic Empire seen as a leopard with four wings. Leopards are fierce and extremely fast... and so was the conquests of Alexander the Great. But Alexander died young... and his conquests were turned over to four of his generals (seen as four wings) ... Ptolemy... Seleucus... Cassander... and Lysimachus. Alexander's Empire was divided into four sub-kingdoms and ruled by these men.

The fourth beast does not have an earthly creature comparison. But it has ten horns. "Horns" is symbolic in apocalyptic literature for "Kings." The fourth beast will have ten kingdoms. (This is probably the third stage of the last beast in Nebuchadnezzar's dream... ten kingdoms.) ... And Daniel is fascinated in particular with this fourth beast.

### **Daniel 7:19-27**

Once again... as we saw in Nebuchadnezzar's dream... the fourth Empire will have different stages. In verse 23 we learn that this empire includes a one-world government. "...it shall devour the whole earth, and trample it down, and break it into pieces..." - It will rule the entire world.

Out of the one-world government (verse 24 tells us) that the 10 kingdom rule will come. ... Out of this... a little horn rises and begins to dominate all the others. He rises to power by defeating three other kings. This is the Anti-Christ. He will rule for 3 ½ years. (The phrase in verse 25 “a time, times, and a half” is an idiom that means 3 ½ years.)

The Anti-Christ will be defeated after a 3 ½ year domination... and his rule is followed by Christ’s eternal rule. The stone will come and topple “the times of the Gentiles.”

... ..

So where do we stand today... in the flow of Bible prophecy...? We are in the final church age of Revelation chapter 3. The countdown to the last days has begun according to Jesus’ words in Matthew 24. Israel has returned to their homeland from the 4 corners of the world. This means that God’s method for bringing His people back to Himself is about to start – The invasion of Russia and her allies... bringing the collapse of the East – West division of Power... the final stage of the last empire... and the great Tribulation.

If Jesus comes and takes His church... by rapturing us off the earth... the Western leg of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream could easily collapse. The balance of power would be no more... and Russia would be free to invade Israel.

The rapture is very imminent... my friend. It can happen at any second. God has shown that His prophecy can be trusted... and we are seeing all things in perfect alignment today for the next events of prophecy to unfold.

Will you allow the proven truth of God's Word to navigate you to a right faith? God's Word is true. It can be trusted!

When the infamous September 11 airplane barreled into the Pentagon, Officer Isaac Hoopii was nearby but outside the building. Immediately he began helping people straggle out of the building—in some cases, carrying them out.

But Hoopii wanted to do more. Wearing only his short-sleeved blue police uniform—no mask, no protective coat, not even a handkerchief—he ran into the inky blackness of the Pentagon. Someone yelled at him to stop. "We gotta get people," he shouted back.

Suffocating on smoke, Hoopii heard the building cracking. He called out, "Is anybody in here? Anybody here?"

Wayne Sinclair and five coworkers were crawling through rubble and had lost all sense of direction when they heard Hoopii's voice. They cried out, and Hoopii responded. "Head toward my voice. Head toward my voice." Following his voice, Sinclair and the others soon made their way out of the crumbling building.

Jesus saves us in the same way. His Word calls out, "Head toward my voice."