

# Churchcraft and Statecraft

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*The Messenger and News Review, December 1995*

**W**E HAVE already noted that with the fall of the fourth world power, there was a change in the pattern of the rise and fall of nations. A single sovereign state ruling the world was to give place to miscellaneous strong and weak powers as symbolized by the mixture of iron and clay.

## **Daniel 2**

<sup>41</sup> 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.

<sup>42</sup> 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.

<sup>43</sup> As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

## **Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 360:**

We need not, and cannot, expect union among the nations of the earth. Our position in the image of Nebuchadnezzar is represented by the toes, in a divided state, and of a crumbling material, that will not hold together.

What an accurate picture that is of the state of the nations since the fall of the last power to rule the world, the Romans. We note that this situation remains despite the repeated attempts on the part of men to unite themselves under a single head. In their aim to achieve these restorations of single world powers, various devisings have been employed. Alliances and treaties have been drafted and signed into law. Some have attempted union through marriage, and others have used military might. Every one of them represents man's attempt to build a stable, enduring world empire in which its citizens will hopefully find peace and prosperity.

Each in turn was a failure. The mixture of iron and clay points to the human efforts by which men will attempt to achieve this objective.

However, the iron and clay have a double symbolism. They not only represent the nations, they also represent the mingling of churchcraft and statecraft.

**The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 4, p. 1168-1169:**

We have come to a time when God's sacred work is represented by the feet of the image in which the iron was mixed with the miry clay. God has a people, a chosen people, whose discernment must be sanctified, who must not become unholy by laying upon the foundation wood, hay, and stubble. Every soul who is loyal to the commandments of God will see that the distinguishing feature of our faith is the seventh-day Sabbath.

If the government would honor the Sabbath as God has commanded, it would stand in the strength of God and in defense of the faith once delivered to the saints. But statesmen will uphold the spurious Sabbath, and will mingle their religious faith with the observance of this child of the Papacy, placing it above the Sabbath which the Lord has sanctified and blessed, setting it apart for man to keep holy, as a sign between Him and His people to a thousand generations.

**The mingling of churchcraft and statecraft is represented by the iron and the clay.** This union is weakening all the power of the churches. This investing the church with the power of the state will bring evil results. Men have almost passed the point of God's forbearance. They have invested their strength in politics, and have united with the papacy. But the time will come when God will punish those who have made void His law, and their evil work will recoil upon themselves.

There is a great deal which we will learn about the attempted mixing of church and state as we progress through the books of *Daniel* and *Revelation*, but we will leave much of it until we come to the appropriate portions of *Revelation* where more information is provided. There the beast and his image is exposed in further detail. The beast was formed when the church received the power

of the civil authorities in order to enforce her decrees. The failure of any person to comply with these decrees was met by persecution which became more and more severe until the death penalty was applied. Then it was that thousands upon thousands sacrificed their lives rather than yield to the persecuting might of the papacy, the beast of *Revelation* 13. For all those who did this in true faith, there is reserved a place in heaven where they will sit on the throne of God's glory.

By the end of the eighteenth century the papacy had been greatly weakened as a result of internal corruption coupled with the damage done to her power by the great Protestant Reformation. In 1798 the Roman Pontiff, Pope Pius VI, was taken prisoner and died in exile the following year. His being taken prisoner is called the "deadly wound" of the beast in *Revelation* 13:3.

But a great recovery of the lost powers of the papacy is prophesied, and is called the healing of the deadly wound. *Revelation* 13:3. Then there is the lamb-like beast of *Revelation* 13:11-18 who persuades the multitudes to make an image of the papal beast. This will involve the successful solicitation of the power of the state by the churches. Thus churchcraft will work hand in hand with statecraft to bring about "the great new order."

It is very important for us to know which symbol refers to which power so that we can identify the image of the beast wherever and whenever it arises. As we have already seen from the statement quoted above, the feet of iron and clay indicate a mingling of churchcraft and statecraft. But which is which? In *Daniel* 2:41 it says,

**Daniel 2**

<sup>41</sup> ...yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.

The government of the Roman Empire including its military force has been used as a pattern for many present day governments. That is the iron.

The clay is the weak element, namely the church, which has lost God's power through apostasy from the truth. Because of this loss of power she is forced to seek the power of the state to accomplish her goals. Of course she will not admit this weakness, but relates herself to the state in such a way as to gain control of its power and hide her own weakness. This has already happened once. That was during the rise of the beast in the early centuries after Christ's return to heaven.

**The Great Controversy, p. 443:**

When the early church became corrupted by departing from the simplicity of the gospel and accepting heathen rites and customs, she lost the Spirit and power of God; and in order to control the consciences of the people, she sought the support of the secular power. The result was the papacy, a church that controlled the power of the state and employed it to further her own ends, especially for the punishment of "heresy."

In order for the United States to form an image of the beast, the religious power must so control the civil government that the authority of the state will also be employed by the church to accomplish her own ends.

All power in heaven and on earth has been given to the Son of God. It is by that awesome, infinite power, that Christ empowers His church in her holy mission of bringing salvation to all men everywhere. In carrying forward the mission of the gospel, the church is to exercise no other power than this. It is therefore a sign that the church has lost the only rightful power she can have when she seeks and acquires the power of the state to enforce her will on the world.

**A.T. Jones, Great Empires of Prophecy, p. 472:**

The church was fully conscious of her loss of the power of God before she sought the power of the State. Had she not been, she never would have made any overtures to the imperial authority, nor have received with favor any advances from it. There is a power which belongs with the gospel of Christ, and is inseparable from the truth of the gospel; that is, the power of God. In fact, the gospel is but the manifestation of that power; for the

gospel “is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes.”

As long, therefore, as any order or organization of people professing the gospel of Christ maintains in sincerity the principle of that gospel, so long the power of God will be with them, and they will have no need of any other power to make their influence felt for good wherever known.

But just as soon as any person or association professing the gospel loses the spirit of it, so soon the power is gone also. Then, and only then, does such an organization seek for another kind of power to supply the place of that which is lost.

Thus was it with the church at this time. She had fallen, deplorably fallen, from the purity and the truth, and therefore from the power, of the gospel. And having lost the power of God and of godliness, she greedily grasped for the power of the State and of ungodliness. And to secure laws by which she might enforce her discipline and dogmas upon those whom she had lost the power either to convince or to persuade, was the definite purpose which the bishopric had in view when it struck that bargain with Constantine, and lent him the influence of the church in his imperial aspirations.

The appropriateness of clay as the symbol of churchcraft is confirmed by God through Jeremiah the Prophet:

### **Jeremiah 18**

<sup>1</sup> The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying:

<sup>2</sup> “Arise and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause you to hear My words.”

<sup>3</sup> Then I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was, making something at the wheel.

<sup>4</sup> And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.

<sup>5</sup> Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: “O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?” says the Lord.

<sup>6</sup> “Look, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel!”

Jeremiah was instructed to go and observe the potter at work. When he did, the word of the Lord came to him defining the symbols used. The clay represented “the house of Israel,” or the professed people of the Lord. God, the skilled potter, was represented by the maker of the vessels on the wheel.

An earthenware pot has a number of things about it which illustrate the lives of God’s people. In the beginning before the pots are either sun-baked or thoroughly fired in a kiln, they can be shaped again and again. So with our lives. If the individual believer in Jesus keeps his mind open and responsive to the influences of the Holy Spirit, mistakes can be rectified, and fresh beginnings can be made. This is symbolized by the marring of the vessel while the potter was trying to make it, and his attempt to make it again.

But once the baking process has set the clay beyond any further change, it is then too late to remodel the vessel. So it is with human life. If the time comes when prejudice, pride of opinion, and stubbornness blind the eyes and lock the mind, it becomes impossible to penetrate the darkened chambers of the soul. Such a development makes the individual incapable of receiving light and being changed by it.

There is a lesson in the fact that the vessel begins as a wet, shapeless lump of pottery clay. Quite unable to shape itself, it is utterly dependent upon the potter to fashion it into a vessel worth having. So it is with a human messenger of living truth. I think of the helplessness of a human infant. There is nothing it can do for itself except cry for help. So in spiritual matters we are as helpless as a new baby or a lamb which had wandered from the flock.

**Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 187:**

The sheep that has strayed from the fold is the most helpless of all creatures. It must be sought for by the shepherd, for it cannot find its way back. So with the soul that has wandered away

from God; he is as helpless as the lost sheep, and unless divine love had come to his rescue he could never find his way to God.

**The Signs of the Times, January 12, 1915:**

Nothing can be more helpless and yet more invincible than the soul that feels its nothingness, and relies wholly upon the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour. God would send every angel in heaven to the aid of the one who places his whole dependence on Christ, rather than allow him to be overcome.

For those with a true sense of their helplessness and their great personal need, the following promise is written.

**The Desire of Ages, 669-670:**

At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer.

Earthenware vessels come in a very wide range of shapes and sizes usually designed to fit specific needs. Some are used to store liquids such as oils, fruit juices, and water. Others are for the storage of grain, seeds, and flour. But whatever their occupation, their basic way of using them is much the same. They usually stand vertically on their bases and need to be filled by someone else, for they cannot fill themselves. In addition, they usually need to be filled from above. Once filled, they stand ready to serve by their contents being poured out as needed.

So it is that the true believer can only be filled from above, that is, from the infinite supplies which find their Source in heaven above. Then as needed, his life is to be poured out in tender, loving service to others. Thus, he is a channel through which the blessings from above reach needy souls below.

This system of supply meeting the pressing need, is beautifully illustrated when Christ miraculously fed the multitude by starting with only a few small loaves of bread and a couple of fishes.

The supply of power which Christ through His prayer life had received from His Father, served to create the food. He handed this out to His disciples who in turn distributed it to the people until all were satisfied.

**The Desire of Ages, p. 370:**

The disciples were the channel of communication between Christ and the people. This should be a great encouragement to His disciples today. Christ is the great center, the source of all strength. His disciples are to receive their supplies from Him. The most intelligent, the most spiritually minded, can bestow only as they receive. Of themselves they can supply nothing for the needs of the soul. We can impart only that which we receive from Christ; and we can receive only as we impart to others. As we continue imparting, we continue to receive; and the more we impart, the more we shall receive. Thus we may be constantly believing, trusting, receiving, and imparting.

A well-filled pot may contain very valuable contents, however, the worth is not found in the vessel but in the contents of the vessel, as Paul wrote:

**2 Corinthians 4**

<sup>7</sup> But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

This is another way of describing the Christian's life as being "Christ in you, the hope of glory." *Colossians* 1:27. The treasure in the vessel is Jesus Christ. When He was upon this earth, He was the greatest treasure ever to dwell in an earthen vessel which was His humanity. The humanity of Christ, though filled with this priceless treasure, was but an earthen vessel still. The presence of the treasure in it did not change it from being an earthen vessel into a golden or silver vessel.



Therefore no matter how powerful a witness for Christ you might become, you will still bear the gospel in an earthen vessel, or in other words, your witness for Christ will still be given through your fallen, sinful, mortal flesh and blood humanity. God could have used much more spectacular ways of inviting men to partake of the gospel feast, but, in His infinite wisdom, He elected to use humble vessels of clay through which He offers salvation to the lost.

**The Acts of the Apostles, p. 330:**

“We have this treasure,” the apostle continued, “in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” God could have proclaimed His truth through sinless angels, but this is not His plan. He chooses human beings, men compassed with infirmity, as instruments in the working out of His designs. The priceless treasure is placed in earthen vessels. Through men His blessings are to be conveyed to the world. Through them His glory is to shine forth into the darkness of sin. In loving ministry they are to meet the sinful and the needy, and lead them to the cross. And in all their work they are to ascribe glory, honor, and praise to Him who is above all and over all.

The final manifestation of human devising, when man will seek on a worldwide basis to establish his ways of kingdom-building in the place of God’s, will be the most masterful counterfeit he has ever conceived and executed. But instead of the treasure in the vessel, there will be the mingling of the clay vessel with iron. The mingling of statecraft and churchcraft will be the setting up of the image of the beast. This will be the devotion of the civil powers to the enforcement of religious legislation. The law of God will be the object of attack as men issue laws requiring all people everywhere to regard Sunday as being the sacred day of the week.

**The Great Controversy, p. 593:**

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20. The people of God are directed to the Scriptures as their safe-

guard against the influence of false teachers and the delusive power of spirits of darkness. Satan employs every possible device to prevent men from obtaining a knowledge of the Bible; for its plain utterances reveal his deceptions.

At every revival of God's work the prince of evil is aroused to more intense activity; he is now putting forth his utmost efforts for a final struggle against Christ and His followers. The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested.

**The Great Controversy, p. 464:**

The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work [of the latter rain]; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit. Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world.

For us to have any prospect of penetrating that disguise, we must sharpen our spiritual perceptions and increase our capacity to cope with the powers of darkness. That which leads up to the establishment of the master counterfeit of God's system will be the deepest spiritual darkness ever to develop on this planet. The most recent cause of the magnitude of this counterfeit was the failure of the Advent people to complete the work which God gave them to do. No longer willing to advance in aggressive Christian warfare, they sank back into the Laodicean condition from which deceived state they have never recovered. Thus there has been no significant stemming of the flood tide of apostasy in the world.

Apostasy is always attended by ruin. The deeper the apostasy, the more terrible and extensive the ruin. Finally the ruin will be total in nation after nation, until the destruction becomes global.

In the meantime the forces of law and order will be plagued by increasing impotency, and they will be viewed as having lost the power to control the criminal elements in the world. The state will become ready for any solution while the arguments are advanced that the true Sabbath-keepers are the real cause of all the troubles in the world:

**The Great Controversy, p. 590:**

And then the great deceiver will persuade men that those who serve God are causing these evils. The class that have provoked the displeasure of Heaven will charge all their troubles upon those whose obedience to God's commandments is a perpetual reproof to transgressors. It will be declared that men are offending God by the violation of the Sunday sabbath; that this sin has brought calamities which will not cease until Sunday observance shall be strictly enforced; and that those who present the claims of the fourth commandment, thus destroying reverence for Sunday, are troublers of the people, preventing their restoration to divine favor and temporal prosperity.

Thus the accusation urged of old against the servant of God will be repeated and upon grounds equally well established:

**1 Kings 18**

<sup>17</sup> And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Are you he that troubles Israel?

<sup>18</sup> And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but you, and your father's house, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and you have followed Baalim.

As the wrath of the people shall be excited by false charges, they will pursue a course toward God's ambassadors very similar to that which apostate Israel pursued toward Elijah.

These arguments will be perfectly calculated to excite the fury of the people who, up to the time of these events, will have shown no noticeable disposition to blame others for the fearful losses of health, property, and lives. The peoples of this earth

have endured incredible natural disasters and crimes over the past few years in particular—earthquakes, floods, droughts, volcanic eruptions, terrorism, and much more. So far, all of this has remained largely free from “Sunday desecration” charges and agitation.

But it will come. It will start with the effort to establish Sunday worship as the solution to all men’s woes and troubles. Those who set about this work will do so with the gravest concern for the security and well being of the people. They will be deeply religious and will truly believe that they are the actual messengers of the Most High. They will emerge upon the scene in earnest and claim to be totally dedicated to the Lord and His people. They will sing the same hymns as true Sabbath-keepers, confess that Jesus Christ is the Saviour and coming King, quote from the same Bible, and work miracles of healing and conversion. Powerful will be their assertions that they are totally committed to building God’s kingdom, and the true people of God must be prepared to recognize that they mean what they say. Not one, but both sides will be determined to achieve the same general objectives.

Where then does the difference lie? It lies in the fact that the unified church and state will set about building the kingdom of God in the wrong way. They will insist on the continuation of these wrong procedures despite the repeated Scriptural warnings to the contrary. This way of kingdom building is unacceptable to God because it produces the greatest possible evils and eventually results in total destruction.

That which will accentuate the situation once the Sunday agitation begins will be the sounding forth of the most fearful warnings ever addressed to mortals. This will be given in the awesome power of the latter rain. Men and women will rise up against this light which will greatly publicize the truth of God’s ways of kingdom building as opposed to man’s. Everywhere there will be intense agitation as men and women strive with all their powers to either stifle the message or to understand and then proclaim it.

### **The Great Controversy, p. 449:**

The most fearful threatening ever addressed to mortals is contained in the third angel's message. That must be a terrible sin which calls down the wrath of God unmingled with mercy. Men are not to be left in darkness concerning this important matter; the warning against this sin is to be given to the world before the visitation of God's judgments, that all may know why they are to be inflicted, and have opportunity to escape them.

Prophecy declares that the first angel would make his announcement to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." The warning of the third angel, which forms a part of the same threefold message, is to be no less widespread. It is represented in the prophecy as being proclaimed with a loud voice, by an angel flying in the midst of heaven; and it will command the attention of the world.

That warning will be directed against the beast and his image which is the union of churchcraft and statecraft. But as surely as these two will not mix, so surely will the immense, worldwide problems not be solved but rather become worse and still worse, until there will be nothing left, apart from the seven last plagues to complete the work of total devastation.

When the plagues fell on ancient Egypt, and ever since, most people have unquestionably believed that each scourge was a deliberate punishment administered by God on His enemies, but the closing up of the great controversy will reveal that all plagues, whether they be in the past, present, or future, are the fruit of the transgression of God's law of life. The mingling of churchcraft and statecraft will likewise stand exposed as the source of the most terrible woes which could ever happen to mankind.