



# Chapter 2

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**McGee Introduction:** We are in one of the great sections of the Word of God as far as prophecy is concerned. The multimetallic image (ch. 2), the four beasts (ch. 7), and the seventy weeks of Daniel (ch. 9) form the backbone and ribs of biblical prophecy. You could never have a skeleton of prophecy without these passages of Scripture in the Old Testament.

Everything the Lord Jesus said in the Olivet Discourse was based on the Book of Daniel. The disciples asked Him, "... Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" He replied, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet ..." (Matt. 24:3, 15). This chapter, then, is a very important chapter in the Word of God.

Men everywhere are asking, "What is this world coming to? How are things going to be worked out today? There are crises everywhere." My friend, the times of the Gentiles are going to run out. The Gentiles have not done a very good job of running the world. We can see the beginning of that way back in the Book of Daniel, and we may come close to seeing the end of it. However, the church of Jesus Christ will leave this earth, bringing to a close the fullness of the Gentiles; and, not long after the church leaves, Christ will come back to the earth to rule.

This prophetic chapter is basic to the understanding of all prophecy. That is why I keep insisting that to know just a few little verses of Scripture and to be able to interpret them can be a dangerous thing. This is the way the cults begin: they use only certain verses of Scripture. The men who start these cults understand history and human nature; they know man's need for a doctrine which satisfies the natural mind. Liberalism and the social gospel appeal to the natural mind.

A young preacher in the East told me of a minister in a neighboring town who was building a great empire of his church. Yet that man drinks and curses and goes out with the boys, probably doing everything else the boys do. The young preacher asked me, "How is that man drawing people to his church? They come to hear him and to join his church—not mine. But I am attempting to preach the Word of God!" I told that young man that we need to realize that if we are going to represent God in the ministry, we are going to be in the minority. The other minister was appealing to the natural mind. He may have baptized many—he may have got them under the water and got a lot of water on them—but he had not led people to a saving knowledge of Christ.

Saint Augustine, who became a great man of God, was asked why he had succumbed earlier to the Manichean heresy of his day. He replied that it was "so complete and reasonable." The philosophical approach used by so many preachers today is probably the most dangerous approach to the Word of God that is imaginable. They never think to go to the Word of God as the foundation and the authority. Rather, they want to give you the interpretation of some man of the past, such as Plato. When I was preparing to enter the ministry, that is the direction I wanted to take because it appeals to people and it shows how smart you are. Thank God that I got under the assistance and influence of two men who put me on the track of simply teaching the Bible, letting the chips fall where they may. It is so important to study the *entire* Word of God, and therefore this section is important to us.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:532). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

### **Introduction Deffinbaugh:**

There are times when it seems we have set something disastrous and irreversible in motion. The second chapter of the Book of Daniel describes one such time. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had a disturbing dream. He wanted to know its meaning, and he summoned a number of his senior staff: magicians, conjurers, sorcerers, and Chaldeans. Their assignment was more difficult than any he had ever given them before. Nebuchadnezzar wanted not only to know the meaning of his dream; he insisted they first tell him his dream!

For any king to ask this would be distressing. For Nebuchadnezzar to demand this of his staff was disastrous. The king's dream nearly became a nightmare for his advisors. Nebuchadnezzar, known for being brutal, demanding, and tyrannical, had no hesitation in dealing severely with those whom he considered his enemies. We know that he ordered Daniel's three friends to be cast into a fiery furnace. From Jeremiah 29:22-23, we learn that the king of Babylon roasted Zedekiah and Ahab in the fire. Our text in Daniel 2 tells us he intended to put all the wise men in his land to death because they could not do the impossible.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream started something which appeared impossible to stop. He demanded that his dream be told, and only after this that it be interpreted. His advisors sought to reason with him, but to no avail. Finally, in frustration, they told him that what he asked was unreasonable. They not only admitted their limitations, they even acknowledged the inability of their gods. The king's demand was beyond what they or their gods could do. It would take a God of a very different kind, a God whose "dwelling place is not with mortal flesh" (Daniel 2:11).<sup>2</sup> Nebuchadnezzar soon heard about the only God who could accomplish the king's demand. It was the God of Daniel and of his three Hebrew friends, the "God who is in heaven" (Daniel 2:28).

The first four chapters of Daniel are a unit. While Daniel and his three friends are prominent in these chapters, king Nebuchadnezzar is also a central character. In chapter 1, he defeats Jehoiakim, king of Judah, a victory which God brought upon the king and his kingdom (Judah) as a judgment for their sin and rebellion.

Nebuchadnezzar took captives (including Daniel and his friends) to Babylon and made some a part of his administration. He also placed some of the vessels from the temple of God in Jerusalem in the house of his god in Babylon as a sign that his god was better than Israel's God. He was wrong and will say so in the fourth chapter of Daniel. In chapter 1, Nebuchadnezzar made Daniel and his three friends part of his administration. He did so, not because he thought so highly of Daniel's God or because he respected Daniel's convictions, but simply because Daniel and his friends were "ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm" (Daniel 1:20). At first thought, this evaluation, "ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers," seems like an exaggeration. We will see from our text it is not an exaggeration at all.

Now in Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar comes to have respect not only for Daniel but also for his God:

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<sup>2</sup> How much greater God is than these wise men could even imagine. He is a God who "dwells in heaven" (2:28), but He would also be the God who dwells in human flesh (Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:21-23; 1 John 1:1-4).

The king answered Daniel and said, “Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery” (Daniel 2:47).

Nebuchadnezzar has come a long way, but not yet far enough. He is hardly in the household of faith. In chapter 3, Nebuchadnezzar acts on the basis of the revelation given to him in chapter 2, but in a way that is inconsistent with the message of his dream. If the king learned in Daniel 2 that the God of Israel is the giver of wisdom and revelation, he will learn from chapter 3 that He is also the God who delivers his people. In the last chapter of this unit, Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar bows before Him as the only true God (see Daniel 4:3,34-37).

Chapter 2 describes a significant step forward for the king of Babylon and also a step forward for Daniel and his three friends. If the wisdom of these young Hebrews is recognized in a general way in chapter 1, it is even more evident in the crisis of chapter 2. As a result of Daniel revealing the king’s dream and its meaning, he is elevated to a high level position in Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom.

The meaning of his dream, of vital importance to Nebuchadnezzar, is also of great importance to us. What did the dream mean for Nebuchadnezzar and what is its meaning for us?

### **Guiding Principles for the Interpretation of Daniel 2 - Deffinbaugh:**

Serious students of Scripture disagree over the interpretation of the king’s vision in chapter 2. Scholars do not agree concerning the nations and periods of time depicted here. How, then, are we to approach this chapter? What are the guiding principles for our interpretation?

First of all, we should remember this is prophecy. Until all of these prophecies are completely fulfilled, we will not understand them. Unfulfilled prophecies always cause us confusion, even as they confused the prophets who revealed them (see 1 Peter 1:10-12). Second, when Daniel interpreted this dream to the king, he did not supply all the details. He did not identify the kingdoms or the kings (except for the first kingdom and Nebuchadnezzar himself). The interpretation and even the application of this dream did not require a complete understanding of the vision and all of its details. It only required a general, overall grasp of the dream and its meaning.

Third, we should seek to understand the dream and its interpretation in light of the way Daniel and the king understood it. Daniel’s words to the king are critical to the interpretation of the dream. Daniel’s own response to the dream, in verses 20-23, indicates his understanding of the dream. The king’s response to the revelation of the dream and its meaning, recorded in verse 47, tells us what the dream meant to him. In this lesson, our approach to the king’s dream and its meaning will not focus on what Daniel, the king, or biblical scholars today find perplexing. We will try to grasp the dream and its meaning from that which Daniel and the king did understand. The meaning of the dream for Daniel and the king should be the same for us. Let us seek to walk in their steps, to learn what they learned, and then to apply this to our own lives, by God’s Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, deffinbaugh@bible.org, Biblical Studies Press, [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org), 1995

## **Daniel 2:1**

**And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.**

Some critics make a great deal that here we are told it was the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, contending this contradicts the reference in Dan. 1 to a three year training period (1:5). Several answers can be given. First, fractions of a year may be counted as an entire year in Hebrew usage. Second, Daniel and his friends may have commenced their training before Nebuchadnezzar formally became king.

I see no real problem in the first place. In Dan. 1, we were told that Daniel had the ability to understand and interpret dreams and visions (1:17). The incident in chapter 2 may have occurred before the training of Daniel and the others was completed. Daniel's actions, described in chapter 2, may be the occasion when Daniel discovered his God-given ability to interpret dreams. This may also have been the incident which called the king's attention to the vastly superior wisdom of Daniel and his friends. Too much has been made here of too little, as is the way with the critics, who strain the gnats and swallow the camels of Scripture (see Matt. 23:23-24).

**[second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar]** About a year after Daniel was taken captive. This may show that Daniel was used even before his three years' training was up (Daniel 1:5 with Daniel 2:1; Jeremiah 25:1). This was a year after Jehoiakim rejected God and burned the scroll (Jeremiah 36).<sup>4</sup>

### **David Guzik:**

a. **In the second year:** Some commentators say this happened while Daniel was in his three-year training course; others say that it was soon after he was finished.

i. By Babylonian reckoning, the year 602 B.C. could be both the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign and after three years of training for the Hebrew youths.

b. **His spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him:** There was something disturbing about this dream and Nebuchadnezzar knew that it was unusually significant.<sup>5</sup>

**McGee:** I am confident that Nebuchadnezzar, who had now been lifted and exalted to a very high position, wondered about this great empire that had come into existence under his leadership. Actually, Babylon was the first great world empire. Nebuchadnezzar had done something that the Egyptians had not been able to do because Egypt was self-contained. The biggest mistake any pharaoh ever made was to leave the Nile River. If he just stayed there, he was well protected—he had a wall of desert around him which nobody could breach. All he needed to do was guard the Nile River which was the only entrance into Egypt. The Egyptians began to reach out, but they never did become what you would call a world empire, although they did influence the world as few nations have.

However, this man Nebuchadnezzar began as a petty chieftain and united several tribes. Then he took over the Assyrian empire, then the Syrian, and he was on the march. And he overcame the Egyptians. The Greeks would have been unable to offer resistance,

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<sup>4</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

<sup>5</sup> WWW. Blue Letter Bible, David Guzik Commentary on Daniel

but he made no effort to move in their direction. He didn't need to, as he was actually ruling the then-known world. Nebuchadnezzar had to think this thing over, and when he did, he found he had a world empire on his hands. It was sort of like the old bromide about getting a lion by the tail—you can't hold on and you can't turn him loose. That is the position Nebuchadnezzar was in, and God spoke to him at that time.

This man was troubled in his sleep, wondering about the future of this great empire he had founded: Where was it all going to end? Do you know that after about 2500 years of human history since Nebuchadnezzar we are still wondering about that. We have the answer here in this chapter, by the way.<sup>6</sup>

### **Daniel 2:2**

**Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to show the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.**

From Nebuchadnezzar's perspective, he was a young, successful victor who had conquered the known world! His old staff was inherited. Does he trust them? A calibration test emerges; the most famous in history.

[Chaldeans] = title, advisory leadership.

*chartom* diviner, magician, astrologer, practitioner of the occult

*ashshaph* necromancer, conjurer.

The practices of these groups may have overlapped extensively. Several times Daniel referred to these men under the general rubric of "wise men"

(Dan 2:12-14, 18, 24 [2X], 48; 4:6, 18; 5:7-8, 15).<sup>7</sup>

The magicians practiced magical arts. The astrologers read men's fortunes in the stars. The sorcerers used witchcraft, enchantments, and contacted the spirit world.<sup>8</sup>

### **Twelve Forbidden Practices (Dake)**

1. Enchantments—practice of magical arts (Exodus 7:11,22; Exodus 8:7,18; Leviticus 19:26; Deut. 18:10; 2 Chron. 33:6; 2 Kings 17:17; 2 Kings 21:6; Isaiah 47:9,12; Jeremiah 27:9; Daniel 1:20)
2. Witchcraft—practice of dealing with evil spirits (Exodus 22:18; Deut. 18:10; 1 Samuel 15:23; 2 Chron. 33:6; 2 Kings 9:22; Micah 5:12; Nahum 3:4; Galatians 5:19-21)
3. Sorcery—same as witchcraft (Exodus 7:11; Isaiah 47:9,12; Isaiah 57:3; Jeremiah 27:9; Daniel 2:2; Malachi 3:5; Acts 8:9-11; Acts 13:6-8; Rev. 9:21; Rev. 18:23; Rev. 21:8; Rev. 22:15)

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<sup>6</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:533). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>7</sup>Chuck Missler, Commentary notes on the Book of Daniel

<sup>8</sup>Chuck Smith, Commentary notes on the Book of Daniel, Costa Mesa, CA

4. Soothsaying—same as witchcraft (Isaiah 2:6; Daniel 2:27; Daniel 4:7; Daniel 5:7,11; Micah 5:12)
5. Divination—the art of mystic insight or fortunetelling (Numbers 22:7; Numbers 23:23; Deut. 18:10-14; 2 Kings 17:17; 1 Samuel 6:2; Jeremiah 14:14; Jeremiah 27:9; Jeremiah 29:8; Ezekiel 12:24; Ezekiel 13:6-7,23; Ezekiel 21:22-29; Ezekiel 22:28; Micah 3:7; Zech. 10:2; Acts 16:16)
6. Wizardry—same as witchcraft. A wizard is a male and a witch is a female who practices witchcraft. Both were to be destroyed in Israel (Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 19:31; Leviticus 20:6,27; Deut. 18:11; 1 Samuel 28:3,9; 2 Kings 21:6; 2 Kings 23:24; 2 Chron. 33:6; Isaiah 19:3)
7. Necromancy—divination by means of pretended communication with the dead (Deut. 18:11; Isaiah 8:19; 1 Samuel 28; 1 Chron. 10:13)
8. Magic—any pretended supernatural art or practice (Genesis 41:8,24; Exodus 7:11,22; Exodus 8:7,18-19; Exodus 9:11; Daniel 1:20; Daniel 2:2,10,27; Daniel 4:7,9; Daniel 5:11; Acts 19:19)
9. Charm—to put a spell upon (same as enchantment, Deut. 18:11; Isaiah 19:3)
10. Prognostication—to foretell by indications, omens, signs, etc. (Isaiah 47:13)
11. Observing times—same as prognostication (Leviticus 19:26; Deut. 18:10; 2 Kings 21:6; 2 Chron. 33:6)
12. Astrology and star gazing—divination by stars (Isaiah 47:13; Jeremiah 10:2; Daniel 1:20; Daniel 2:2,10; Daniel 4:7; Daniel 5:7-15)

All the above practices were and still are carried on in connection with demons, called familiar spirits. All who forsook God and sought help from these demons were to be destroyed (Leviticus 19:31; Leviticus 20:6; Deut. 18:11; 1 Samuel 28; 2 Kings 21:6; 2 Kings 23:24; 1 Chron. 10:13; 2 Chron. 33:6; Isaiah 8:19; Isaiah 19:3; Isaiah 29:4. See 1 Tim. 4:1-8; 2 Thes. 2:8-12; Matthew 24:24; Rev. 13; Rev. 16:13-16; Rev. 19:20).<sup>9</sup>

Nebuchadnezzar's second year as monarch was the setting for the strange dream. The king demonstrated his unreasonableness by demanding that the wise men produce the content of the dream as well as its interpretation, or else face execution as the fraudulent characters that he probably suspected them to be. Among those enlisted in the enterprise were four separate groups—magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and Chaldeans. "Magicians" is a translation of *ηαρτυμμιμ* (Heb.), referring to those involved in various kinds of divination. Originally an Egyptian word (Gen 41:8, 24; Ex 7:11), the term was used in Babylon of those skilled in dream interpretation. "Astrologers" translates the Hebrew *□ασηαπημ*, known in Babylon as those skilled at performing incantations, especially for healing (a related word is translated "heal" in 2 Kin 5:3, 6). "Sorcerers" renders *μεκασηεπημ* (Heb.), a more common word for those who used incantations in the practice of sorcery or witchcraft. "Chaldeans" translates *κασδιμ* (Heb.), the most distinguished priestly caste of wise men in Babylon, who probably served as custodians of the mysteries of ancient Babylonian religion (see Dan 1:4, note). In v. 27, a fifth group, the "soothsayers" (*γοζριν*, Aram.), is included. The five classes constituted a college of wisdom,

<sup>9</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

and as such exercised considerable influence on the affairs of state. Daniel and his three friends had been thoroughly trained in the wisdom of all these groups. This makes the contrast between Daniel's religion of revelation and the ludicrous expressions of superstition in Babylon even more amazing. Daniel had obviously learned their ways and methods without gullibly accepting their doctrines.<sup>10</sup>

**McGee:** Nebuchadnezzar called in all his wise men. These were the men who had been trained even as Daniel and his friends had been trained. They were the old boys who were called in for this conference. In other words, the king summoned his cabinet.

These wise men were men of great intellect and learning. It is true that they held many superstitions and concepts of a heathen religion, but, my friend, I don't know how much farther we've come today. I know some Ph.D.'s who reject the Bible—I think they are heathen and a little superstitious, by the way. Isn't it interesting that the Bible has been ruled out of our schools; yet they are teaching astrology and all kinds of superstitions which have been rejected by civilized people in the past. Don't look down on the wise men of Babylon—they are just as smart as some of our Ph.D.'s and Th.D.'s today.

These men comprised the brain trust of Babylon, and they were brought before the king to hear his unique command:<sup>11</sup>

**Jewish Study Bible:** List of court officers – and other items as well – occur often in chapters 1-6. The humorous tone of the pretentiousness of the list is meant to contrast with the understated power of Daniel's abilities. Unlike 1:4, Chaldeans here means courtiers, since the king would have been a Chaldean as well.<sup>12</sup>

### **Daniel 2:3**

**And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.**

**[dreamed a dream]** Daniel 2 is a vision of the great metallic image. In it we have the prophetic future of the world from Daniel's day into the eternal future when God will reign forever. It concerns the latter days in particular (Daniel 2:28,44-45). There are four parts to Daniel 2:

1. The details leading up to dream (Daniel 2:1-18)
2. The dream revealed (Daniel 2:19-35)
3. The dream interpreted (Daniel 2:36-45)
4. The effects of the dream (Daniel 2:46-49)

**[my spirit was troubled to know the dream]** All the king could tell the wise men of his dream was that he had had one and that it greatly disturbed his spirit (Daniel 2:1-3). Except for Daniel and his companions, his wise men had made claims of power to reveal

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<sup>10</sup> Believers Study Bible

<sup>11</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:534). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>12</sup> The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, Oxford Press

secrets and future events. Now, when the king needed them they could not live up to the claims of their supernatural powers. All branches of fortune telling and insight into the future by demons or by stars are limited. When God is involved in a case, as here, such other powers are absolutely helpless to operate even though under normal circumstances there may be a limited operation of those powers.<sup>13</sup>

**The king summoned** the wise men of his realm. They professed to be able to foretell the future by one means or another (cf. comments on 1:17). If the method used by one failed to produce the desired result, hopefully the method employed by another would reveal the dream's significance. They were called collectively to exercise their enchantments in order to give the king an interpretation that would placate him. **The king** challenged the wise men, saying, **I want to know what it means.**<sup>14</sup>

**Deffinbaugh:** At this point, the language changes from Hebrew, the language of the Jews, to Aramaic, the language of the Babylonians. There is no structural explanation for the change in language. The Hebrew language does not end at the close of one division and the Aramaic begin at a new division. You can, at best, find a paragraph break at verse 4, but this is at the beginning of the verse and the language changes to Aramaic in the middle of the verse.

The change in language occurs at a point of great interest in the story of king Nebuchadnezzar's dream--when king Nebuchadnezzar demands that his wise men tell his dream and explain its meaning or be put to death. Abruptly the language changes so the Jewish reader, who knows only Hebrew, cannot follow to the story's conclusion. What happened? A Hebrew could find out how the story ends only by learning Aramaic (which would be very humbling for a Jewish captive), or by asking a foreigner who knows Aramaic.

There is a message here for the Jews, in this change from Hebrew to Aramaic. God is reminding the Jews of their captivity, and thus of their sin and divine judgment (see, for example, Isaiah 28:11). He may be encouraging them to learn Aramaic. Although He had always spoken to the Jews in their own (Hebrew) tongue, God is now revealing Himself to the Gentiles through a Gentile tongue. (Remember that the New Testament was written in Greek.) This change in language is but another painful reminder to the nation Israel that the times of the Gentiles has begun.<sup>15</sup>

## **Daniel 2:4**

**Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.**

[Chapter 1 through 2:3 written in Hebrew... Now the narrative switches to Aramaic through Chapter 7, the Gentile language of their day...]

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<sup>13</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

<sup>14</sup> Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>15</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, deffinbaugh@bible.org, Biblical Studies Press, [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org), 1995

Dissembling ( v. 9): Professional development program explained more clearly...  
Negotiations concluded.

**[Then spake the Chaldeans]** The Chaldeans, a group of learned Babylonians who taught all the arts and sciences of that day, became the spokesmen for all the others.

**[Syriack]** Hebrew: *Aramiyth* (HSN-762), Aramaic, the language of Aram or Syria. The insertion of this word here is to call attention to the fact that what follows is NOT in Hebrew, but in Aramaic, which is true as far as the end of Daniel 7. The Syriac and Chaldee are properly the Western and Eastern Aramaic. Other Aramaic portions of Scripture are Ezra 4:8-6:18; Ezra 7:12-26; Jeremiah 10:11.

**[O king, live for ever]** This is a common form of addressing a king in the East.

Evidently the request to interpret a dream (v. 3) had been made of the wise men on other occasions for they were not surprised. (As stated under “Languages” in the *Introduction*, 1:1-2:4a is in Heb., and beginning with the words **O king** in verse 4b the language is **Aramaic** through 7:28.) The wise men confidently asserted that when **the king** revealed **the dream** to them, they would **interpret it** to him. They were confident that with their collective wisdom, they could satisfy the king with an interpretation.

**2:5-6.** Though **the king** may have made such a demand on the wise men previously and been satisfied with their answers, he evidently had never asked them to interpret a dream that he discerned had such significance. So he decided to test them. If they could predict the future by interpreting dreams, they should be able to reconstruct the past and *recall* the king’s **dream**. So he refused to share his dream with them. This does not mean he had forgotten it. Had he done so, the wise men, to save themselves from death, could easily have fabricated a dream and then interpreted it. The king reasoned that if they could not recall the past, their predictions concerning the future could not be trusted.

The king promised **rewards** and **honor** for the wise men’s recalling and interpreting **the dream**. **But** he put them under a death penalty (they would be **cut into pieces**) and their **houses** would be burned to **rubble** if they proved to be false prognosticators who could not recall **the dream**.<sup>16</sup>

**McGee:** “Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriac, O king, live for ever.” To me that seems to be about the silliest thing they could ever say, but that was the way they flattered the king—“O king, live for ever.” I am sure that many a king who sat there on the throne had a heart condition and might well have said, “Well, boys, you are wrong. I’m not going to live forever. I’m going to have a heart attack one of these days, and I won’t be around.” However, they seem to have avoided that issue.

It is important to note that at this juncture in the Book of Daniel there is a change from the Hebrew to the Aramaic or Syriac language, as it is called here in verse 4. From verse 4 of this chapter through verse 28 of chapter 7, the book is written in Aramaic or Syriac. Aramaic was the court language, the diplomatic language of that day. It was the language of the Gentiles, the language of the world. It would correspond to what French

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<sup>16</sup> Bible Knowledge Commentary

was a few years ago; today I think English is the language that has supplanted French in that position.

The significance of this change is quite remarkable: God is now speaking to *the world*, not just to His nation. Israel has gone into Babylonian captivity. God has taken the scepter out of the line of David, and He has put it in gentile hands. It will stay there until the day He takes the scepter back. When He does, nail-pierced hands will take the scepter, because it is God's intention for Jesus to reign.

The subject here is a worldwide kingdom. The idea that the Word of God is confined to some local deity and that the Bible has quite a limited view is entirely wrong. If we examine it carefully, we find that God has in mind a worldwide kingdom. In Psalm 89:27 He says of the covenant He made with David: "Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth." Then in verses 34–37 of the same psalm He says: "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven." In other words, God is saying, "If you can go out and see that the sun has disappeared from the heaven and the moon is not out at night, then you will know that I have changed My mind; but as long as you see the sun and moon, you will know that I am going to put *My* king over this earth."

We are talking now about that which is global and not some local situation. This concerns the first great world ruler, and the language used is the language of the world of that day.<sup>17</sup>

**Jewish Study Bible:** With the words O king, the text switches from Hebrew to Aramaic. The interpretation of royal dreams was common in ancient Near East (cf. ch 4; Gen. ch 41), but a twist is introduced when the king demands that the courtiers tell him the content of his dream as well as its interpretation. The king's threat indicates the high stakes and potential danger to the life of the courtier (cf. 2:12). Although there are many records of dream interpretation from the ancient Near East, there is no record of a courtier recounting the content of someone else's dream. The courtiers raise an objection on these grounds, setting the stage for Daniel, with the help of God (v. 30), to do what no ordinary human being could do. As in the other chapters, Daniel serves as a vehicle for expressing God's great power.<sup>18</sup>

### **Daniel 2:5**

**The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.**

This was arbitrary and tyrannical in the extreme, but God overruled it for His glory (Daniel 2:10-28).

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<sup>17</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:534). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>18</sup>The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, Osford Press

**McGee:** This would be a rather extreme judgment, but you can see what the king wants. Frankly, a faulty translation of this verse gives the impression that the king had forgotten his dream. He hadn't forgotten his dream. He knows the dream, senses its importance, and refuses to divulge it to the wise men. Why? He wants to get a correct interpretation of it. In the margin, the American Standard Version of 1901 translates "The *thing* is gone from me" as, "The *word* is gone forth from me." In other words, Nebuchadnezzar is saying to these men, "I will not change my mind about this judgment I am pronouncing. Don't beg me to tell you the dream—I'm not going to do it. You are going to come up with the dream if I am to listen to your interpretation of it." The Berkeley Version has a helpful translation at this point also: "The king answered the Chaldeans, 'This word I speak, I mean! If you do not tell me the dream and what it means, you shall be torn limb from limb and your houses will be destroyed.'" That translation really tones it down, but nevertheless the penalty is still excessive and extreme. Nebuchadnezzar is putting fear in these men. They have to come up with the interpretation of the dream, but they first of all have to give what the dream is.<sup>19</sup>

### **Daniel 2:6**

**But if ye show the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore show me the dream, and the interpretation thereof.**

Conversely, Nebuchadnezzar could be generous and charitable. This man was greatly governed by his emotions, as we are going to see. He tells them, "I am going to amply reward you if you give me the correct interpretation."

### **Daniel 2:7**

**They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation of it.**

The wise men realized their dangerous predicament, and they again cautiously suggest to the king that he supply the dream and they will supply the interpretation.

### **Daniel 2:8**

**The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.**

[**ye would gain the time**] Perhaps they were stalling for time in hopes that the king would remember his dream. They knew by his troubled spirit and extreme demands that he would seek to recall it so he could get the interpretation of it (Daniel 2:8-9).

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<sup>19</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:534). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The king says, “You see that I mean business and so you are stalling. You want a little more time.” The Berkeley Version clarifies this verse: “The king replied, ‘I see plainly that you are trying to gain time; because you see how capital punishment awaits you.’” That is taking a little liberty with the translation, but that actually is the meaning of it.

### **Daniel 2:9**

**But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, *there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can show me the interpretation thereof.***

Again the wise men (cf. v. 4) asked that **the king** share **the dream** with them, promising then to **interpret it**. **The king** complained that they were stalling for **time**. He again referred to the **penalty** (cf. v. 5) for failure to tell him **the dream**. He felt that the only way he could trust their interpretation of the future was by having them first recall his dream. Otherwise he would conclude that they were conspiring **to tell him misleading and wicked things**. Also Nebuchadnezzar may have become impatient with the wise men who were presumably older than he as he had inherited them from his father. Another reason for the test may have been that he was suspicious of their claims to wisdom.<sup>20</sup>

**McGee:** The king really reveals here his lack of confidence in the wise men of Babylon. I think they probably had failed him on previous assignments, just as the prophets of Baal failed old Ahab (but since Ahab died in battle, he didn't have a chance to retaliate). Nebuchadnezzar feels these men have been feeding him a great deal of malarkey, and he is now putting them to a real test. His reasoning at this point is very logical: If they can tell him his dream, then it is reasonable to conclude that their interpretation is genuine. If they cannot tell him his dream, any interpretation would be under suspicion.<sup>21</sup>

### **Daniel 2:10**

**The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter: therefore *there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.***

Indeed! Isa 41:21-23.

**[There is not a man upon the earth than can shew the king's matter]** They told the truth, thus making it all the more clear that Daniel got his dream and interpretation from God (Daniel 2:16-28).

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<sup>20</sup> Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>21</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:535). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

**[no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean]** They knew that no such thing had ever before been decreed by any king and that it was impossible for any man to know the answer of himself; so, when Daniel gave the dream and the interpretation they knew that it had to be by the Spirit of the holy Gods, as they ever afterward acknowledged (Daniel 4:8-9,18; Daniel 5:11).

This is the first true statement the wise men have made—no man on earth could give the dream, only God could. In desperation they are pleading for their lives, trying to show the unreasonableness of the king's demand. If you leave out the supernatural, of course his demands are unreasonable. However, they have made claim to be superior, and he is asking them to demonstrate that.<sup>22</sup>

### **Daniel 2:11**

**And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.**

The Chaldeans confessed that they were unable to help the king and that only "the gods" could tell the king what he had dreamed. When God revealed the dream to Daniel, God received the glory.<sup>23</sup>

**[except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh]** They held that there were gods who dwelled in men. Here is one of 213 times in Scripture that the word *Elohiym* (HSN-430) (Gods), plural of  $\square$ Elowah (HSN-433) is found. Its first use is in connection with the Gods of heaven—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (Genesis 3:5). Here it is clear as elsewhere that there is a plurality of persons in the Godhead, for "man is become as one of us" (Genesis 3:22).

To defend themselves, the wise men asserted that the king was making an unreasonable request, one never asked by any other potentate. They attested that the future belongs to the gods, not to men. Interestingly this was an admission that they had deceived the king in their past interpretations, a startling revelation from those held in high esteem in the court.<sup>24</sup>

The astrologers said that the gods "do not live among men." Of course their gods didn't—they didn't even exist! This exposed the limitations of the astrologers. They could invent interpretations of dreams but could not tell Nebuchadnezzar *what* he had dreamed. Although his request was unreasonable, Nebuchadnezzar was furious when his advisers couldn't fulfill it. It was not unusual in these times for astrologers to be in conflict with the king. They sometimes used their craft to gain political power. By answering that the gods "do not live among men," the astrologers betrayed their concept of the gods. Theirs was a hollow religion, a religion of convenience. They believed in the gods, but that belief made no difference in their conduct. Today, many people profess to

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<sup>22</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:535). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>23</sup> Chuck Smith, Commentary notes on the Book of Daniel, Costa Mesa, CA

<sup>24</sup> Bible Knowledge Commentary

believe in God, but it is also a hollow belief. In essence, they are practical atheists because they don't listen to him or do what he says. Do you believe in God? He *does* live among people, and he wants to change your life.<sup>25</sup>

What they are saying is that they have no communication with heaven. They even confessed that their gods were not giving them very much information. They conclude their argument by saying that no human being could meet the king's demands. This paves the way for Daniel to come onto the scene.

### **Daniel 2:12**

**For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise *men* of Babylon.**

**[For this cause the king was angry]** For the cause that the wise men were stalling for time and could not manifest their claimed supernatural powers. The king, seeing that he and his people were victims of deception, determined to rid his kingdom of them all, including Daniel and his companions (Daniel 2:12-13). In a sense, the king was more honorable and just than the bragging magicians, sorcerers, astrologers, and Chaldeans. They claimed powers to reveal secrets and make known divine revelations, but in a crisis they could not produce.

**[all the wise men of Babylon]** All included Daniel and his three Jewish companions (Daniel 2:13).

### **Daniel 2:13**

**And the decree went forth that the wise *men* should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.**

After the wise men revealed that they were unable to satisfy the king's demands, the king was angry and furious (cf. 3:13, 19). He issued an order for the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. The decree was not only for those currently serving the king's court, but on all who professed to be able to reveal the future. Since Daniel and his three friends were classified as wise men, the judgment also fell on them.<sup>26</sup>

**Jewish Study Bible:** In regards to chapters 13 through 23, it is possible that these verses were added to tie the chapters together; the mention of the three friends connects this episode with chapters 1 and 3, and the prayer is similar to those in chapters 3, 4, and 6; see also Neh. 9:5; 1 Sam. Chapter 2; and Prov. Chapter 8.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Life Application Notes

<sup>26</sup> Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>27</sup> The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, Oxford Press

**Deffinbaugh:** The dreams Nebuchadnezzar experienced in the night were God's response to his thoughts as he waited for sleep to come:

“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” (Daniel 2:29).

The king was pondering what the future held. Through his dreams, God revealed the future and its implications.

It is possible, as some have suggested, that the king actually forgot the dreams, and that is why he demanded that his wise men tell the dream and then its interpretation. I think the king remembered his dream, but wanted to be certain of a genuine interpretation, not a fabrication. Anyone can “interpret” a dream; few indeed can tell you what your dream was. The king required both.

King Nebuchadnezzar was in a bad mood when he called his wise men. His dream troubled him so greatly he could not sleep afterward (2:1). Two things caused the king such distress over his dream. First, he believed his dream was very important. In his culture and religion, dreams were a means of revelation from the gods.<sup>28</sup> He wanted to know what the gods were trying to tell him. Secondly, like the Pharaoh of Joseph's day who did not understand his dream, there was an ominous sense that something was wrong. Because he lacked the interpretation of his dream, he did not know what was wrong, or what he should do about it.

A great sense of urgency arose when the king's senior wise men gathered before him. After briefing them of the situation, he demanded they tell him his dream and its meaning. The assembled wise men, representing the various heathen methods for obtaining “divine guidance,” were unanimous about one thing: the king was being unreasonable in asking them to do the impossible. No king, they protested, had ever asked this of his counselors. They could promise an interpretation if he told them his dream, but he should not demand that they reveal his dream. This was beyond their ability and the ability of their gods.

Their response to the king not only reveals their impotence, but also that of their gods. It testifies to the futility of the heathen religions and introduces the God of Daniel, who can do what they and their gods cannot:

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. 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” (Daniel 2:10-11).

The king was now both frustrated and furious. He demanded all the wise men in Babylon be put to death. We are not sure whether the wise men were being killed as they were arrested, or whether they were all being rounded up for some kind of mass execution. It is

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<sup>28</sup> The dreams of Pharaoh, as recorded in Genesis 41, are similar. While Daniel was a “prophet,” he was not a typical prophet, like those who stood before Israel and spoke to men for God. His calling was like that which Joseph had with the Pharaoh in Egypt. Daniel was a prophet especially equipped to speak for God to a Babylonian king. Since this king believed that the “gods” spoke to men through dreams, God spoke to him through dreams, and sent his “prophet” Daniel to interpret these dreams. God revealed the future to this king in the way he was most inclined to recognize as a word from God.

uncertain whether any wise men actually died before Daniel spoke to the king. We do know, with certainty, that the king fully intended to kill every one of his wise men throughout the land. The process of execution was under way, whether or not any executions had actually occurred before Daniel took action.

At this point, the Jewish reader of the day would not be greatly distressed at the pronouncement of the death penalty for heathen wise men who worshipped and worked in the name of false gods. But in this instance, a strange and providential twist of fate takes place, putting Daniel and his three friends right in the middle of the crisis. Though the Hebrew youths were not among those whom the king summoned, they were nevertheless included among those sentenced to death.

To summarize the story up to this point, the situation looks dismal, if not disastrous, and by divine design. Only when things seem impossible is God's hand undeniably present. The king's demands were unreasonable because they were impossible, humanly speaking. Here at the point of impossibility, the powerlessness of the "gods" of the heathen became evident. The wise men who stood before Nebuchadnezzar confessed with their own lips that their gods could not accomplish what the king demanded. They even admitted that any "God" who could fulfill the king's request would be a "God" of a different (higher) order.

I am reminded of the words of the magicians of Egypt, who were attempting to reproduce the miracles God accomplished by the hand of Moses. For a time, their "miracles" seemed like those of Moses (see Exodus 7:11-12, 22; 8:6-7). But there came a time when these magicians had to throw up their hands and confess that they had come to their limit:

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, that it may become gnats through all the land of Egypt.'" And they did so; and Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff, and struck the dust of the earth, and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats through all the land of Egypt. And the magicians tried with their secret arts to bring forth gnats, but they could not; so there were gnats on man and beast. The magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had said (Exodus 8:16-19).

The "gods" of Egypt were no match for the God of Israel. Would Pharaoh ask who the God of Israel was, that he should obey His command?<sup>29</sup> God would let him know, along with all of Egypt.<sup>30</sup>

God providentially orchestrated the events of Babylon so that the "gods," along with all those who called on them, were shown to be worthless and powerless. At the same time, God created a situation in which His four servants would be in danger, and for whom He would prove to be their deliverer. Furthermore, in the midst of these circumstances, God would demonstrate that He could do what no other god could do—foretell history. All things are possible for God; there is no impossible situation. In situations which appear insurmountable, the faith of His saints grows strong, and His power and majesty is demonstrated to all. The crisis here

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<sup>29</sup> Exodus 5:2.

<sup>30</sup> Exodus 7:5.

is by divine design, as is every crisis involving the people and purposes of God.

The lesson for the kingdom of Judah, now captive, should be apparent. Assyria has captured and dispersed the tribes of Israel. Babylon has defeated Judah and taken the people captive. The temple and Jerusalem has been (or soon will be) destroyed. Chances for Israel's recovery and restoration seem to have vanished, and Judah's situation is humanly unalterable. Now God will show Himself able to do the impossible, in a way no one would have ever expected—through a heathen king (Cyrus) and a heathen kingdom (Persia).<sup>31 32</sup>

### **Daniel 2:14**

**Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise *men* of Babylon:**

**[Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom]** Here we have Daniel's wisdom again exercised. He sought for time only once. How much time is not stated, but there was one night at least before the execution (Daniel 2:19). The mission to slay was already being carried out (Daniel 2:14). He did get a certain stay of execution from the king himself (Daniel 2:16).

**[Arioch]** Arioch, an ancient Babylonian name first used as the name of a king from Assyria (Genesis 14:1,9). It is found elsewhere only in Daniel 2:4-15,24-25.

### **Daniel 2:15**

**He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel.**

**McGee:** Daniel is really puzzled at the hasty and unjust decree of the king, but he uses tact as he approaches Arioch. Arioch is the captain of the king's guard—he is in charge of the Secret Service of that day—and, naturally, is often in the presence of the king. It would be interesting to know all that Arioch communicated to Daniel. I wonder if he suggested to Daniel that the king was off his rocker or that the king didn't have all his marbles. It is not recorded here if he did, but I think he touched his head and said, "You know how the king is!"<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ezra 1:1-4.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, deffinbaugh@bible.org, Biblical Studies Press, [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org), 1995

<sup>33</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:536). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

## **Daniel 2:16**

**Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would show the king the interpretation.**

This verse not only shows that Daniel went to the king personally, but that he had absolute faith in God as to the revelation and interpretation of the dream. He promised the king both if he would only grant him time to pray to his God in the heavens—the One ruling all things.

What had transpired in the royal court was unknown to Daniel. Perhaps he had refused to answer the king's summons (v. 2) to avoid contact with the pagan leaders. When word came that he was under a death sentence, he tactfully asked Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, for the reason. Arioch... explained the incident that had exposed the wise men's deception of the king.

Daniel boldly approached the king with the request that the executions be stayed for a while so that he might interpret the king's dream. This took boldness because the king had already accused the wise men of wanting more time (v. 8).

Daniel was evidently held in high esteem by the king because he was permitted access to the king's presence and was able to petition the king directly. Though not recorded, Daniel had possibly interpreted dreams previously, though not necessarily for the king. So he was sure he could recall the dream and interpret it.<sup>34</sup>

**Deffinbaugh:** Daniel was indeed a man of great wisdom which came from God, evident especially in times of crisis. Imagine being a highly regarded resident of Babylon, a part of Nebuchadnezzar's government, and discovering there is a warrant out for your arrest. Worse yet, Daniel was marked for execution for something with which he had nothing to do. Did he know what was happening, or why?

Rather than reacting, Daniel approached Arioch, "with discretion and discernment," asking the reason behind the haste and urgency of these recent events.<sup>35</sup> Arioch, like Ashpenaz before him (see 1:9-10), showed kindness to Daniel by answering his questions.

Daniel, who did not initiate this crisis, did show initiative in responding to it. If something were not done, he and his three friends would soon die. Had Daniel ever interpreted a dream before? Whether he had or not, this incident displayed his divine gift. Daniel, like Joseph before him, was fully persuaded that what the king demanded, God was able to do, through those who called upon Him for mercy in time of need. On this basis, Daniel requested the king for time to discern the dream and its meaning in order to reveal it. The delay was granted.<sup>36 37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>35</sup> Daniel asked God to supernaturally reveal what men did not and could not know, but he asked men like Arioch what he did know. God gave Daniel favor with Arioch so that he was willing to tell him what he needed to know.

<sup>36</sup> The king reveals unusual confidence in Daniel here. While he would grant no delay to the wise men (2:8-9), he did grant time to Daniel.

<sup>37</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, [deffinbaugh@bible.org](mailto:deffinbaugh@bible.org), Biblical Studies Press, [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org), 1995

## **Daniel 2:17**

**Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:**

Daniel referred to his friends by their Hebrew names.

When Daniel got a stay of execution to fulfill his promise of getting the dream and the interpretation for the king, he went to his own house and laid the proposition before his three brethren. The four of them united in prayer for a definite answer to be given within the specified time. The situation was acute—their lives were at stake! It was an answer or death by execution (Daniel 2:18). Which would it be? Would God fail them after they had taken their stand for Him? Would not the God of the Hebrews show Himself strong in behalf of those who were depending upon Him for an immediate answer? The record is clear.<sup>38</sup>

## **Daniel 2:18**

**That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise *men* of Babylon.**

(No committees, task force, or research projects.) The God of Heaven, vs “gods of heaven”; Prayer: Jer 33:3; Ps 37:5; Phil 4:6-7; Heb 13:15; Jas 1:5; 1 Pet 5:7.

In this time of testing Daniel was calm. He returned to his house, sought out his three friends, and together they prayed for mercy from the God of heaven. (“God of heaven” is a title used of God six times in Dan.: 2:18-19, 28, 37, 44; 5:23, nine times in Ezra, and four times in Neh. Elsewhere in the OT it occurs only in Gen. 24:3, 7; Ps. 136:26; Jonah 1:9.)

Mercy is God’s response to a person’s need. Daniel recognized his own inability in the circumstances and turned to God in confidence, expecting the Lord to meet his need.

Daniel was at a crisis point. Imagine going to see the powerful, temperamental king who had just angrily ordered your death! Daniel did not shrink back in fear, however, but confidently believed God would tell him all the king wanted to know. When the king gave Daniel time to find the answer, Daniel found his three friends and they prayed. When you find yourself in a tight spot, share your needs with trusted friends who also believe in God’s power. Prayer is more effective than panic. Panic confirms your hopelessness; prayer confirms your hope in God. Daniel’s trust in God saved himself, his three friends, and all the other wise men of Babylon.

**McGee:** “That they would desire mercies of *the God of heaven.*” This is an expression which you will find only in the books of the captivity, including Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel. You see, after the departure of the glory of God from Jerusalem, from the Holy of

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<sup>38</sup> Dake’s Study Notes, Dake’s Study Bible

Holies in the temple, He is now addressed as “the God of heaven.” These Hebrew young men knew that God did not dwell in some little temple in Jerusalem. He is “the God of heaven.”

“That they would desire mercies” reveals the basis of their prayers. God does not answer prayer because of the worth or the effort or the character or the works of the one who is, praying. All prayer must rest upon His mercy. To pray today in Jesus’ name simply means that we come to God, not on our merit, but on His merit, looking to Him for mercy.<sup>39</sup>

**Jewish Study Bible:** *Mystery*, a Persian word, generally used in Jewish apocalypticism to mean the special, restricted knowledge of the heavens and what is to happen in the future. Daniel’s wisdom and knowledge provides another connection between chapters 1-6 and 7-12: He is capable of receiving extraordinary revelations from God.<sup>40</sup>

### **Daniel 2:19**

**Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.**

Then—when they prayed—that very night God gave the same dream to Daniel that He had given to Nebuchadnezzar. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven for the answer and made ready to go before the king (Daniel 2:19-26).

### **Daniel 2:20**

**Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:**

Praise (7). Job 12:13-22; Ps 31:15; 41:13; 75:6; 103:1,2; 113:1,2.

**[for wisdom and might are his]** Fifteen reasons for praising God: (Dake)

1. Wisdom belongs to Him (Daniel 2:20).
2. Power belongs to Him (Daniel 2:20).
3. He changes the times (Daniel 2:21).
4. He changes the seasons (Daniel 2:21).
5. He removes kings (Daniel 2:21).
6. He sets up kings (Daniel 2:21).
7. He gives wisdom to the wise (Daniel 2:21).
8. He gives knowledge to men who have understanding (Daniel 2:21).
9. He reveals deep things (Daniel 2:21).
10. He reveals secret things (Daniel 2:21).
11. He knows what is in darkness (Daniel 2:22).

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<sup>39</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:536). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>40</sup>The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, Osford Press

12. He dwells in light (Daniel 2:22; 1 Tim. 6:16).
13. He has given me wisdom (Daniel 2:23).
14. He has given me power (Daniel 2:23).
15. He has answered prayer by revealing to us the king's matter (Daniel 2:23).

**Jewish Study Bible:** The central words of the later Jewish Kaddish prayer are based on the beginning of the verse.<sup>41</sup>

### **Daniel 2:21**

**And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:**

Daniel acknowledged that God appoints and removes kings.

### **Daniel 2:22**

**He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.**

1 Cor 2:9-11.

### **Daniel 2:23**

**I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast *now* made known unto us the king's matter.**

Mt 11:25; 7:6.

Daniel responded appropriately by offering praise to God. He acknowledged that God is a God of wisdom, knowing the end from the beginning, and a God of power, for whatever He determines, He can do. Daniel began and concluded His prayer speaking of God's wisdom and power (cf. v. 23).

Evidences of His *power* are seen in His control of events (He changes times and seasons) and of the destiny of nations (He sets up kings and deposes them). Nebuchadnezzar was on the throne because God determined to use him there to fulfill His will.

Evidences of God's *wisdom* are seen in His imparting wisdom to the wise (v. 21b) and in His revealing deep and dark things (v. 22). Light dwells with God in the sense that all things are clear to Him though people are surrounded by darkness. God knows and can reveal the future. God, not Daniel's insight, gave him the dream and its interpretation.

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<sup>41</sup> The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, Oxford Press

Daniel's prayer of praise closed with thanks that God had revealed the king's dream to the four who had trusted Him.<sup>42</sup>

### **Daniel 2:24**

**Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise *men* of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise *men* of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation.**

**[Daniel went in unto Arioch]** Daniel went to the executioner and saved the lives of the other wise men, then announced that he had the answer to the king's problem.

**[bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation]** Note Daniel's absolute confidence that he had the dream and the interpretation.

**Deffinbaugh:** No evidence indicates Daniel wanted to be a hero. Daniel acted as he did because he was put "between a rock and a hard place." He was forced to act. If he did not act, not only he, but his three Hebrew friends would die, along with all the other wise men of Babylon.

Daniel acted on faith. Once he understood the problem, he knew the solution. What was impossible for the wise men of Babylon was possible for the God of heaven, the God of Israel. God knew the future. More than this, God planned the future, in eternity past. Daniel had every confidence that the king's dream not only came from God but would be revealed and interpreted to the king by God, if he and his friends but petitioned Him to do so.

Daniel hastened to his house, where he found his three friends. He told them what had happened in order that they might pray with him for God to have mercy on them and deliver them by revealing the dream and its message to Daniel.

As the dream came to Nebuchadnezzar in the night, so the dream and its meaning came to Daniel in a night vision (verse 19). Daniel's response seems immediate. His prayer of praise reveals Daniel's gratitude for receiving the answer to their prayers. It reveals more as well. Let us focus briefly on three dimensions of this prayer:

- (1) What the king's dream reveals about the superiority of God to the "gods" of Babylon;
- (2) What the king's dream reveals about God; and
- (3) What the revelation of the dream and its meaning reveals about God's love and care for His people.

First, Daniel's praise focuses on the superiority of God to the "gods" of Babylon. Neither the wise men nor their gods could satisfy the king's demands. They were too difficult for them. God revealed the dream and its meaning for the king. The God who answered the prayers of Daniel and his friends was the "God of heaven" (verse 19), the God about whom the wise men spoke but did not know. As opposed to the Babylonian gods, whose

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<sup>42</sup> Bible Knowledge Commentary

purposes and plans were determined by the stars and seasons, the God of heaven changes the times and epochs.<sup>43</sup>

Second, Daniel's prayer gives insight into the message which God was giving to Nebuchadnezzar through his dream. As the king pondered the future, God informed him through his dream that the future is in God's hands and is not determined by kings. Indeed, even the rise and fall of kings is the work of God and not men. Wisdom and power belong to God; and thus the king, who was looking to men, should have been looking to the God of Israel for wisdom.

Third, the dream demonstrated God's care for His people Israel. The four young Hebrew captives, about to be put to death, prayed for mercy and deliverance. Their request was answered with the revelation of the king's dream and its interpretation to Daniel. Even in captivity, God continues to care for His own.<sup>44</sup>

### **Daniel 2:25**

**Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation.**

Typical bureaucratic "humility."

Receiving from God the knowledge of the dream and its interpretation (v. 19) Daniel went to Arioch, the king's executioner (cf. v. 14), and informed him that he was ready to interpret the king's dream. Evidently the royal court knew of the king's agitation for Arioch took Daniel... at once to the king. Officer Arioch wrongly claimed credit for having found an interpreter for the king's dream. Actually it was Daniel who "went to Arioch." Arioch evidently expected to be highly rewarded for finding someone who could alleviate the king's agitation.

**[in haste]** Note the executioner's confidence in Daniel.

**[of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation]**

Many times in history it has been a despised Jew who has solved the problems of men. This has been true of Abraham's seed, beginning with Abraham himself (Genesis 14). Joseph (Genesis 37-50), Mordecai (Esther 1-10), Jonah (1-4), Daniel (2-12), Jesus Christ (John 3:16), and many others are among those who have saved great portions of humanity.

### **Daniel 2:26**

**The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?**

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<sup>43</sup> I think this expression, "times and epochs" is broad enough to include the various "dispensations." The God of heaven is the One who brings about the "times of the Gentiles."

<sup>44</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, [deffinbaugh@bible.org](mailto:deffinbaugh@bible.org), Biblical Studies Press, [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org), 1995

## **Daniel 2:27**

**Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise *men*, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king;**

Daniel's first answer was to give glory to God, proving that He is the only true God and greater than all the wise men of earth (Daniel 2:27-28).

## **Daniel 2:28**

**But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;**

Cf Joseph: Gen 40:8; 41:16.

**“Latter Days”** 14X OT.

Messianic Age: Hos 3:5; Isa 2:2; Mic 4:1.

Israel: Gen 49:1; Num 24:14; Deut 4:30; 31:29;

2nd Coming: Jer 48:47; 49:39; 23:20; 30:24;

Magog: Ezek 38:16. NT: Acts 2:17-21; Joel 2:28-32;

Last Days: Jn 6:39,40,44,54; 7:37; 11:24; 12:48; 2 Tim 3:1; Heb 1:2; Jas 5:3; 2 Pet 3:3;

Last Time: 1 Pet 1:5,20; 1 Jn 2:18; Jude 18.

**[what shall be in the latter days]** The primary object of the dream was to show Nebuchadnezzar what would befall his kingdom after his death, and to reveal all world empires from then into all eternity. The main part of the vision centers around what shall be in the latter days (Daniel 2:28-45).

The king inquired whether Daniel was able to tell him what he had dreamed and then to interpret it. Daniel was subjected to the same test of his veracity the king had demanded of the wise men. They had previously said that only the gods could reveal the future to man (v. 11). Now Daniel asserted that what the wise men of Babylon could not do (v. 27) by consorting with their false deities, Daniel was able to do because there is a God in heaven (cf. comments on v. 18) who reveals mysteries (v. 28; cf. v. 47). Daniel took no credit to himself (cf. v. 23).<sup>45</sup>

**McGee:** Daniel immediately makes a distinction between the wisdom of Babylon and the wisdom of God. The apostle Paul wrote, “... hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” and also, “... the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1 Cor. 1:20, 25).

Daniel now has the unique privilege of introducing to the darkened mind of this pagan king the living and true God. He says, “There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar *what shall be in the latter days.*”

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<sup>45</sup> Bible Knowledge Commentary

This is very important because it is going to be the emphasis in the Book of Daniel; this dream refers to the end of the times of the Gentiles.

The end of “the times of the Gentiles” runs concurrently with “the latter days” of the nation Israel: both come to their fulfillment during the Great Tribulation Period. The day in which you and I live is “man’s day.” Paul said in I Corinthians 4:3, “But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment [day]: yea, I judge not mine own self” We are living in the day of man.

It is also well to note that the term, “the times of the Gentiles,” is not synonymous with the term, “the fulness of the Gentiles.” Romans 11:25 says, “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” The fulness of the Gentiles ends with the Rapture of the church. The terms, “the latter days” and “the times of the Gentiles,” are not synonymous with “the last days” of the church which come to a fulfillment at the Rapture and PRECEDE the Great Tribulation. “The times of the Gentiles” will continue right on into the Great Tribulation, and at that time God will again turn His attention back to the nation Israel.<sup>46</sup>

### **Daniel 2:29**

**As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came *into thy mind* upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass.**

Prophetic significance identified.

### **Daniel 2:30**

**But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for *any* wisdom that I have more than any living, but for *their* sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.**

Daniel didn't try to strengthen his standing with the king by taking any credit for the work of God in his life. When God exercises His grace in us, we should minimize our part and maximize His part (Romans 12:3).

**[But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living]** Daniel took no credit to himself for the dream or the interpretation, nor did he claim any superiority over the other wise men, although Nebuchadnezzar himself had found the four Jews ten times greater in wisdom than all others (Daniel 1:20).

Daniel asserted at the outset that the king’s dream was prophetic (cf. v. 45, “what will take place in the future”), about things to come and what was going to happen. Nebuchadnezzar’s dream covered the prophetic panorama of Gentile history from his

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<sup>46</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:537). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

time till the forthcoming subjugation of Gentile powers to Israel's Messiah. This time period is called "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). This dream was given to Nebuchadnezzar, the first of many Gentile rulers who would exert power by divine appointment during the times of the Gentiles. God was not revealing spiritual truth to Nebuchadnezzar but facts concerning the political dominion that Gentiles would exercise. Everything in the dream would be readily understandable to Nebuchadnezzar.

Again Daniel humbly affirmed that the mystery was not revealed to him because he was wiser than others (cf. Dan. 2:27-28).

**[but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart]** Twelve reasons why an answer was given:

1. To save the lives of Daniel and his companions (Daniel 2:18,30).
2. To magnify God as greater than all the wise men of Babylon (Daniel 2:27-28).
3. To demonstrate that God answers prayer for those who depend upon Him (Daniel 2:18-23).
4. To reveal that He is sovereign over all nations (Daniel 2:19-23,39-45).
5. To demonstrate the fact that God is still guiding human affairs (Daniel 2:19-23).
6. To prove that God is infinite in knowledge and wisdom (Daniel 2:21-23; Romans 11:33).
7. To make it clear that God is the Author of prophecies (Daniel 2:23-45).
8. To prove that God is the only true God (Daniel 2:20-30).
9. To testify that the true God is the God of Israel (Daniel 2:23).
10. To prove that one receiving a revelation may or may not be a true child of God (Daniel 2:29-30,45).
11. To reveal the thoughts of men (Daniel 2:30).
12. To make known the plan of God from Daniel's day into all eternity (Daniel 2:29-45).<sup>47</sup>

**McGee:** The dream had to do with the future of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom and the outcome of his great world empire. Nebuchadnezzar was troubled about the future of this empire of which he suddenly found himself the possessor and dictator. The dream was God's answer to his problem.

Daniel makes it clear that he himself deserves no credit, that God in heaven has revealed the dream, that God was prompted to reveal the dream to spare the lives of the wise men as well as to satisfy the curiosity of this man Nebuchadnezzar.

God is going to speak to Nebuchadnezzar in a language that he will understand, the language of the outward splendor and glory of his kingdom. In the dream God showed him the outward splendor of his kingdom. This dream was also the dream of a Gentile, and in it God spoke to him by using an image. The image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream was not an image to be worshiped; but, because Nebuchadnezzar did fall down before images in the city of Babylon, God used an image in his dream. In this land of idolatry, such a vision was the only language Nebuchadnezzar could truly understand. Babylon was known as the fountainhead of pagan religion, the womb of heathen idols.

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<sup>47</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

We will see in this section the history of the rule of this world by the Gentiles. Because of the failure of the house of David, God is now taking the scepter of this universe out from the hands of the line of David, and He is putting it in the hands of the Gentiles. It will be there until Jesus Christ comes again to this earth. Then Christ will take the scepter and rule on this earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. From the day of Nebuchadnezzar right on down through our day until the Lord comes to reign is “the times of the Gentiles.”<sup>48</sup>

**Deffinbaugh:** What a contrast between Arioch and Daniel in these verses. Arioch is quick to take the credit for something he did not do. He attempts to claim the credit for finding someone who could interpret the king’s dream. Nothing could be further from the truth.<sup>49</sup> He may have attempted to find Daniel to arrest him, but there is no indication that he did find him. Daniel may have sought him out. Arioch’s words to Nebuchadnezzar expose his attempt to use the situation to further himself.

Daniel would have far greater opportunity to claim some of the credit for what he was about to do, and thus to gain from the gift God had given to him. Instead, at the outset of his meeting with Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel clearly stated that it was God who determines and reveals the future, not men. Daniel, simply an instrument of God, faithfully pointed to God as the One who should be the object of the king’s trust and praise.

Daniel reiterates what the wise men had already told the king. Neither wise men, conjurers, magicians, nor diviners were able to make this dream known to the king. It was impossible for them. It was also impossible for Daniel. It was only possible for God, who revealed the dream and its meaning to Daniel. The “God in heaven” of whom the wise men spoke (2:11) was Daniel’s God. He would make known to the king the dream and its meaning. God’s use of Daniel was due to grace, not because of any merit of Daniel on his own (Daniel 2:30).<sup>50</sup>

## **Daniel 2:31**

**Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.**

“Times of the Gentiles”; Luke 21:24; Hos 3:4, 5

[vs. “Fullness of Gentiles”: Luke 19:42; until Rom 11:25; James’ summary: Acts

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<sup>48</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:538). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>49</sup> There is actually no evidence that Arioch ever found Daniel, as he claims. While we might assume Arioch found Daniel to arrest him, this may not have been the case at all. Daniel’s friends were at his home, where he later joined them. Since his friends needed to be filled in on what was happening (2:17), it seems likely that Daniel was not at home, to be found or arrested, but that somehow he learned of the order to arrest all the wise men. I think Daniel sought out Arioch to find out what was happening. This would mean that Arioch did not really “find” Daniel in the first place. We know from verse 24 that Daniel “went in to Arioch.” In Arioch’s behalf, it should be pointed out that he had great faith in Daniel. By taking credit for finding Daniel and claiming he could meet the king’s demands, Arioch might benefit from Daniel’s success, but he also stood to suffer with Daniel if he failed. Arioch linked his fate with Daniel’s. The executioner could have been executed if Daniel was not able to tell the dream and its meaning.

<sup>50</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, [deffinbaugh@bible.org](mailto:deffinbaugh@bible.org), Biblical Studies Press, [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org), 1995

15:13-17 (Amos 9:11-12).]

"Terrible" here means "awesome."

The Dream of Nebuchadnezzar: (Dake)

1. The great image
2. Its brightness was excellent.
3. It stood before the king.
4. The form was awesome (Daniel 2:31).
5. The head of the image was of fine gold.
6. Its breast and arms were of silver.
7. Its belly and thighs were of brass (Daniel 2:32).
8. Its legs were of iron.
9. Its feet were of iron and clay (Daniel 2:33).
10. A stone cut out without hands smote the image on the feet, breaking them to pieces (Daniel 2:34).
11. The iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold were broken to pieces together, becoming like chaff of a threshing floor; and the wind carried them away and they were found no more (Daniel 2:35). "Together" indicates all of them being united under the beast of Rev. 13,17 in the last days
12. The stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth (Daniel 2:35)

**McGee:** That is, the image excited terror—it was aweinspiring. It was very glamorous, terrific, and stupendous. As Daniel began to describe the dream, I wish that I could have been there to see the expression on Nebuchadnezzar’s face change from cynicism to unconcealed amazement. When Daniel began to say, “You saw a great image, the brightness of which was terrific and stupendous,” I think the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar lighted up. He shifted to the edge of his throne and said, “Boy, that’s it! You are starting out right!”<sup>51</sup>

**Jewish Study Bible:** In regards to verses 31 through 45, portentous dreams of the fate of kingdoms were common in the ancient world; cf. Herodotus, *Histories* 1:108, 7:19. Here, however, the author uses an older prediction of four world kingdoms – understood as Babylonia, Media, Persia, and Greece – and emphasizes their decreasing value. They are followed by a mixed kingdom of iron and clay, which signifies the divided Greek kingdom and the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kings who ruled in the eastern Mediterranean. Although Daniel predicts the demise of the Babylonian kingdom and its ultimate replacement by the kingdom of God of Heaven, Nebuchadnezzar nevertheless reveres Daniel for his insight.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:538). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>52</sup> The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, Oxford Press

## **Daniel 2:32**

**This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,**

Four Metals: Specific Gravity:

Gold 19.5

Silver 10.5

Bronze 8.0

Iron 5.0

Iron + Clay 1.9

### **Head of Gold - Babylon (609-539 B.C.)**

"This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king. "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; 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. (Daniel 2: 36-38)

Babylon, under the leadership of king Nebuchadnezzar captured Israel and first took the upper class into slavery. It was during this first phase that the prophet Daniel was captured. Twelve years later, the rest of Israel were taken to Babylon after they rebelled against foreign occupation. Their king was removed and their sanctuary destroyed.

**One Head and One Neck.** The head represents the single strong nation who would rule and it would not be broken up when it was defeated.

**Seven Cervical Vertebra.** Seven kings from the eleventh dynasty placed it or kept it in power before it fell to Persia (609-539). (Nebopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach, Neriglissar, Labashi Marduk, Nabonidus, Belshazzar)

### **Chest and Arms of Silver - Medo-Persia (539-331 B.C.)**

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

The Medes and Persians next conquered Babylon and Cyrus allowed the Jews to go home. He made arrangements to have the temple rebuilt. But the nation was still ruled by foreigners.

**Two Arms and One Chest.** The two arms are the two empires of the Medes and Persians who succeeded the neck of Babylon. They progress to the chest which represents the fact that the Persian empire took sole control because they were more powerful than the Medes.

**Heart.** The heart in the chest is Cyrus whom God called to show great kindness to Israel.

**Twelve Ribs and Thoracic Vertebra.** The Persian rulers before it fell to Greece.

### **Belly and Thighs (Hips) of Brass - Greece (331-168 B.C.)**

The Greeks under the leadership of Alexander the Great were the third conquerors.

**One Belly and Two Hips.** The belly represents the first phase after they defeated the Persians, when there was one leader. It eventually was divided into four and then two sections at the end. These two divisions were called the King of the North and the King

of the South in prophecy. These final two divisions are represented by the two hips. These two were conquered by the next empire.

**Navel.** At the junction of the chest and stomach is the navel, the remnant of the umbilical cord. It has no purpose after the birth and is cut off. Alexander was the navel, who was cut off in his youth. He provided the life and growth of his empire and died at its pinnacle.

**Belly.** The seat of emotions (liver and kidney). This is the anguish of the temple desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes.

**Five Lumbar Vertebra and Five Fused Sacral Vertebra.** Alexander and his four generals whose kingdoms merged.

### **Daniel 2:33**

**His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.**

#### **Legs of Iron - Rome (168 B.C. - 476 A.D.)**

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

**Note:** The first three kingdoms existed in Daniel's day, but Rome did not. So Daniel did not identify it directly by name. Rome was known as the "Iron Monarchy". The Latin word "**Rome**" means strength, and iron is the strongest of the metals.

**Two Legs.** Prophetically, Rome was always a nation of two divisions. The two legs of iron represent the northern and southern divisions of Rome as it conquered each Greek division. Geographically, it later became the Western and Eastern (Byzantine) empire as it declined. Religiously, it had two phases, these are Pagan Rome and Papal Rome.

**Loins.** Seed of life. The Christ came at the beginning of the Roman rule over Israel to be circumcized.

**Thigh.** A hand under the right thigh is used to make a vow. God kept His vows by sending Christ, His right hand.

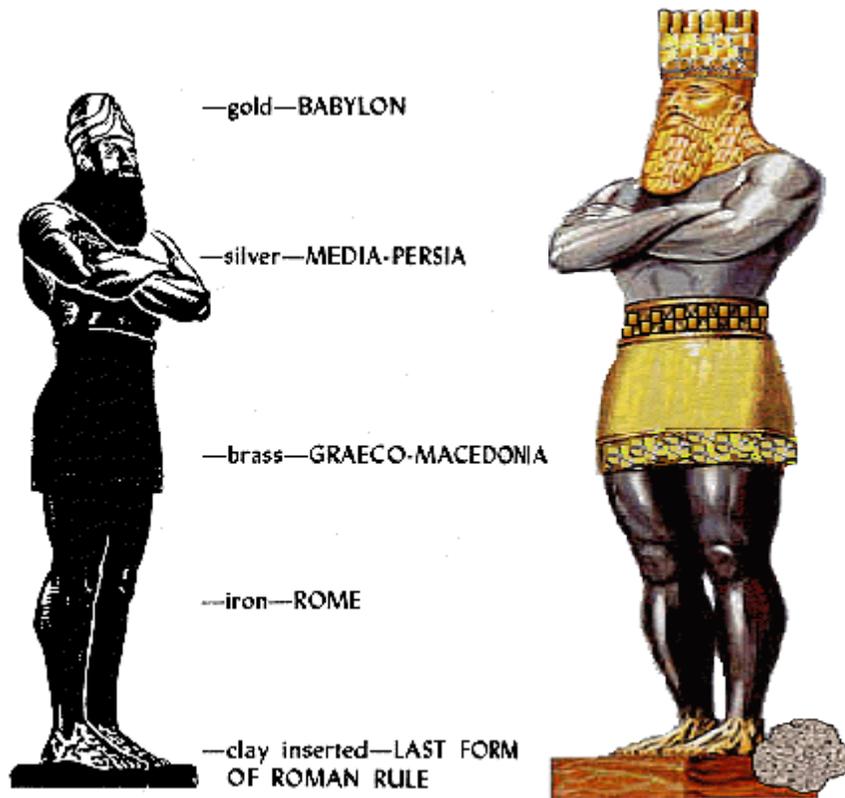
#### **Feet of Iron and Clay - Europe (476 to the end)**

"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, just as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. "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. (Daniel 2: 41-42)

**Ten Toes.** The Roman empire was divided in the eastern (Byzantine) empire and the western empire. The divided kingdom includes all the nations of Eastern and Western Roman empire. The western empire was plagued by the Barbarians and a Roman army had to help to secure the throne of the Pope by removing three of the most violent tribes. The emperor moved to a new capital in Constantinople and left the western empire and the old capital city of Rome to the church. So in the beginning, at a critical phase there were ten divisions. The ten toes are the ten European nations that formed the ten divisions

of the Western Roman Empire (476 A.D. to the end of time). The Middle East is the divided nations of the rest of the foot.

Metallic image = time line of four empires before God establishes His own... 4+1: Rome in two "phases"...



This tremendous image that is before him just stands there. There is no movement at all. It is simply awe-inspiring, glamorous, terrific, and stupendous. The head was of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet were iron and clay mixed together. The image therefore consisted of a very strange assortment of metals. It was not an alloy of metals, but a multimetallic image of four metals plus a silicon (that is, sand or clay).<sup>53</sup>

### **Daniel 2:34**

**Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet *that were* of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.**

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<sup>53</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:538). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

### **Daniel 2:35**

**Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.**

The statue was not permanent; it was struck on the feet by a rock (cut... not by human hands) which reduced the whole statue like chaff that was blown away. Chaff was the light, unedible portion of grain stalks which blew away when the broken stalks were winnowed (tossed up in the air) on a windy summer day. The rock that destroyed the statue grew into a huge mountain that filled the whole earth. The dream itself was simple. It was the meaning of the dream that agitated the king.

### **Daniel 2:36**

**This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.**

### **Daniel 2:37**

**Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.**

**[for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory]**

This confirms the statement of Daniel in Daniel 2:21, "He removeth kings, and setteth up kings." God is still sovereign and can do as He wills among men. There is no power but of God (Romans 13:1-8). He gives power to all created beings, but He is not responsible for how they use that power. He gave power to Satan and has not taken it away. He will judge him for the misuse of that power (Matthew 25:41). God has predicted the rise and fall of certain kingdoms, and if any overstep His will in the exercise of their authority they will be judged by Him. At times God has to use unsaved men as rulers to carry out certain of His necessary purposes on earth. He raised up Pharaoh who would resist His will so that He could make His power known (Exodus 4-15; Romans 9:17-24). The Assyrians were raised up to punish the ten tribes (2 Kings 17). Nebuchadnezzar was raised up to punish Judah for her sins and to fulfill prophecy (2 Kings 24; Jeremiah 25). Thus God has worked and is still working among nations to bring about His eternal purpose of testing man and bringing him back to the place he was before the fall, so His original program can be carried out in the new earth as if man had never fallen (Acts 3:21; Ephes. 1:10; Ephes. 3:10-11; 2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 21-22). Satan and his agents seek to thwart God's purposes in the earth (1 Chron. 21:1; Job 1:6; Job 2:1; Psalm 109:6; <sup>□</sup>Daniel 10:12-21, notes). Satan will be completely defeated at the second coming of Christ and God's kingdom will then be set up on the earth forever (Rev. 11; Rev. 12; Rev. 16; Rev. 19; Rev. 20).

## **Daniel 2:38**

**And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou *art* this head of gold.**

Extent of rule! by God of Heaven.  
Babylon = “City of Gold.” Isa 14:4

Daniel’s interpretation makes it clear that the image revealed the course of Gentile kingdoms which in turn would rule over the land of Palestine and the people of Israel. Nebuchadnezzar, head of the Babylonian Empire, was represented by the head of gold (v. 38). His father had come to power in Babylon by military conquest, but Nebuchadnezzar received his dominion and power and might and glory from God (who sets up kings and deposes them, v. 21). (On the God of heaven see comments on v. 18.)

Nebuchadnezzar’s rule was viewed as a worldwide empire, in which he ruled over all mankind as well as over beasts and birds. At the time of Creation the right to rule over the earth was given man who was to have dominion over it and all the creatures in it (Gen. 1:26). Here Nebuchadnezzar by divine appointment was helping fulfill what God had planned for man.<sup>54</sup>

## **Daniel 2:39**

**And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.**

Fall to Persians. Dan 5:28,31; 6:28; 8:20;

70 years fulfilled: 2 Chr 36:20,21.

Succeeded by Greece: Dan 8:21; 11:2.

Babylon = “City of Gold” ( Isa 14:4). Fall to Persians (Dan 5:28,31; 6:28; 8:20; 70 years fulfilled: 2 Chr 36:20,21). Succeeded by Greece: Dan 8:21; 11:2.

The second portion of the statue, the chest and arms of silver, represented the rise of the Medes and Persians (cf. 5:28; 6:8; also cf. 5:31). The Medo-Persians conquered the Babylonians in 539 B.C. The arms of silver evidently represent the two nations of Media and Persia that together defeated Babylon. Though that kingdom lasted over 200 years (539-330 B.C.), longer than the Neo-Babylonian Empire of 87 years (626-539), the Medo-Persian Empire was inferior to it, as silver compared with gold.

The belly and thighs of bronze represented the third kingdom to arise. This was the Grecian Empire (cf. 8:20-21). Alexander the Great conquered the Medo-Persians between 334 and 330 B.C. and assumed authority over its peoples and territory. By Alexander’s conquests he extended the Greek Empire as far east as the northwestern portion of India—an extensive empire that seemingly was over the whole earth.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>55</sup> Bible Knowledge Commentary

**McGee:** The kingdom which will come after Nebuchadnezzar will be inferior to his. The third one will be inferior to the second, and the fourth will be inferior to the third. That means the fourth one is the worst form of all. That is where we are today.

There are two kingdoms mentioned in this verse. The arms of silver represent Media and Persia. In Daniel 5:28 we are told the future of the Babylonian kingdom: “Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.” We don’t need to speculate as to who the second kingdom is—it is made clear. Remember that Daniel lived in both the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar and the kingdom of Media-Persia. We read in Daniel 6:8, “Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.”

The third kingdom would be a kingdom of brass and would “bear rule over all the earth.” This is the Graeco-Macedonian empire of Alexander the Great.

This brings us to the fourth kingdom. It is important to note that there are only four—there is no fifth kingdom. The period of the fourth kingdom is where we are today.<sup>56</sup>

### **Daniel 2:40**

**And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all *things*: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.**

4th Kingdom (Cf. Dan 7:7; 9:26.)

Fourth Kingdom (Cf. Dan 7:7; 9:26). Divided into pieces.

*Divided elements recombine:* Dan 2:42-44.

The legs of iron represent the Roman Empire. This fourth kingdom conquered the Greek Empire in 63 B.C. Though the Roman Empire was divided into two legs and culminated in a mixture of iron and clay, it was one empire. This empire was characterized by its strength, as iron is stronger than bronze, silver, and gold. The Roman Empire was stronger than any of the previous empires. It crushed all the empires that had preceded it. Rome in its cruel conquest swallowed up the lands and peoples that had been parts of the three previous empires and assimilated those lands and peoples into itself.<sup>57</sup>

### **Daniel 2:41**

**And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters’ clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.**

Divided into pieces. *Divided elements recombine:* Dan 2:42-44.

Re-collected, but mixed with *hasap*, clay (brittle pottery fragments).

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<sup>56</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:539). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>57</sup> Bible Knowledge Commentary

Clay = people?: Job 10:9; 13:12; 33:6; Isa 29:16; 45:9; 64:8; Jer 18:4-6; Rom 9:21.

Nebuchadnezzar held absolute rule. Subsequent rulers were restricted by the laws of their empires. The golden head symbolized the autocratic rule of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian empire. The breast and arms of silver symbolized the divided Medo-Persian empire. The stomach and thighs of brass symbolized the Grecian empire of Alexander the Great. The legs of iron symbolized the Roman empire. The feet and toes of iron and clay symbolized the ten nations of the European Community (Common Market).<sup>58</sup>

**[feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron]** The feet and toes are to be the last form of the Roman Empire in the days of the second coming of the Messiah. The feet represent the same as the two legs, the Eastern and Western divisions of the Roman Empire, the fourth kingdom of Daniel and the sixth kingdom of Rev. 17:9-11. The toes represent the final division of the Roman Empire into ten kingdoms, ruled by ten kings from ten separate capitals. The last form of this empire was to be "partly strong, and partly broken," that is, partly weak (Daniel 2:41-42). The weakness is symbolized by the clay which is easily broken, the strength by iron which breaks all other materials to pieces (Daniel 2:40).

**[miry clay]** Aramaic, *tiyn* (HSN-2917), mud. The same as the Hebrew: *tiyt* (HSN-2916), mire (2 Samuel 22:43; Job 41:30; Psalm 69:14; Jeremiah 38:6; Micah 7:10; Zech. 9:3; Zech. 10:5). Mud, not being very strong, represents the forms of government by popular majority which are weak in many respects compared to the rule of absolute monarchy, as symbolized by iron (Rev. 2:27; Rev. 12:5; Rev. 19:15).

### **Daniel 2:42**

**And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.**

Re-collected, but mixed with *hasap*, clay (brittle pottery fragments)

Clay = people: Job 10:9; 13:12; 33:6; Isa 29:16; 45:9; 64:8; Jer 18:4-6; Rom 9:21.

### **Daniel 2:43**

**And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.**

Miry clay is clay made from mire, dust. The context of the dream seems to imply that "they" constitute a significant *political* constituency!

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<sup>58</sup> Chuck Smith, Commentary notes on the Book of Daniel, Costa Mesa CA

Since the days of the Roman empire there hasn't been a world governing empire. The European Community is just beginning to gain strength and recognition. It will rule the earth for less than seven years.<sup>59</sup>

The empire that began as iron regressed to a state of clay mixed with iron. This mixture speaks of progressive weakness and deterioration. Two metals together form an alloy which may be stronger than either of the metals individually. But iron and clay cannot be mixed. If iron and clay are put into a crucible, heated to the melting point, and poured into a mold, when the pour has cooled the iron and clay remain separate. The clay can be broken out which leaves a weak casting.

The Roman Empire was characterized by division (it was a divided kingdom) and deterioration (it was partly strong and partly brittle). Though Rome succeeded in conquering the territories that came under its influence, it never could unite the peoples to form a united empire. In that sense the people were a mixture and were not united. (Other views of this mixture of strength and weakness are suggested: [a] the empire was strong organizationally but weak morally; [b] imperialism and democracy were united unsuccessfully; [c] government was intruded by the masses, i.e., mob rule; [d] the empire was a mixture of numerous races and cultures.)<sup>60</sup>

**McGee:** This is a remarkable passage of Scripture. More attention is directed to this fourth kingdom than to the other three kingdoms put together. Four verses are used here by Daniel to describe it and interpret it. Only one verse, verse 39, is used to describe the second and third kingdoms, the Medo-Persian and the Graeco-Macedonian empires.

The fourth kingdom is the kingdom of the latter days. Remember that Daniel had told Nebuchadnezzar that that was the reason for the image. God is speaking to Nebuchadnezzar, an idol worshiper, through this image, and He is telling Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. He is a world ruler, and he is concerned about where it is all going to end. My friend, we are living in the period of the latter days, and that is still the question today: What is this world coming to?

We need to stand back and look at this image again for a moment. It is awe-inspiring and of tremendous size. I think it towered over the entire plain of Babylon as Nebuchadnezzar saw it in his vision. It is a multimetallic image. It has a head of gold, and that speaks of Babylon. The breast and arms are of silver—Media-Persia. The brass is Graeco-Macedonia. The legs are of iron, and that is Rome. In the feet, clay is inserted into the iron, which is the last form of the Roman Empire.

The image represents four empires, and there are several observations to be made about them. There is a definite deterioration from one kingdom to another, and this is made clear in several very specific ways. This deterioration is contrary to modern philosophy and opinion. Our viewpoint today is that we are all getting better and better every day: evolution is at work, and it is onward and upward forever. We feel that we have the best form of government and that we are superior people—neither of which is true.

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<sup>59</sup> Chuck Smith, Commentary notes on the Book of Daniel, Costa Mesa CA

<sup>60</sup> Bible Knowledge Commentary

The human race has always liked to pat itself on the back as Little Jack Horner did:

Little Jack Horner  
Sat in the corner,  
Eating of Christmas pie:  
He put in his thumb,  
And pulled out a plum,  
And said, "What a good boy am I!"

However, what we have here is the *deterioration* from one kingdom to the other—each is inferior to its predecessor. This is revealed through the image in several ways:

1. The *quality* of the metals: gold is finer than silver, and silver is finer than brass. Brass is finer than iron, and iron is better than clay. There is definite deterioration.

2. The *specific gravity* of the metals: each metal shows deterioration; Tregelles (as quoted by Culver) is the scholar who called attention to this factor.

3. The *position* of each metal: the head has more honor than do the feet.

4. The specific *statement of Scripture*: "And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee" (v. 39). Scripture is clear that each kingdom is to be inferior to the one before it.

5. The *division of sovereignty*: the definite division of sovereignty denotes weakness. Nebuchadnezzar is the head of gold, but there are two arms of the Medo-Persian empire, The Babylonian Empire was strong because there was not that division. The Graeco-Macedonian Empire begins with one, but soon is divided into four. Rome has two legs of iron but it eventuates into ten toes which are composed of both iron and clay.

In the United States today we like to believe we have the very best form of government, and people eagerly say they "believe in democracy." Actually, our form of government is not a democracy, but a representative form of government. No one asks me to come to Washington, D.C., to make any decisions. There are many who do go to Washington to tell them how to do it, and I think somebody needs to tell them. The problem is that it is the wrong people who are doing the telling. I am of the opinion that a democracy is really not the best form of government.

God's form of government is going to be just exactly like that head of gold, only the ruler will be that Rock that is "cut out without hands"—none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He is going to reign over this earth, and He is not going to ask anybody for advice about it. He will not have a Congress, and He will not have a Cabinet, and He will not be calling upon you to vote for Him. In fact, if you don't make a decision for Him in this life, my friend, you just won't be there at all. Don't rebel against that fact, because this happens to be His world—He created it. You and I are just little pygmies running around down here. God has as much right to remove you and me from this little world as I have to remove those ants that get into my house and yard. I set out poison for those fellows—I want to get rid of them. Why? Because they don't fit into my program. There are a lot of us who don't fit into God's program. This is His world, and He is going to make it to suit Himself.

God's form of government is going to be one of the most strict forms of government that the world has ever seen. I do not think a rooster is going to crow in that day without His permission to do so. The Lord Jesus Christ is going to be a dictator, and if you are not willing to bow to Him, I don't think you would even want to be in His kingdom when He establishes it here upon the earth. Maybe it is good that He has another place for folk like

that, because it will not be pleasant for them to be here—they wouldn't enjoy it at all. God's form of government is the absolute rule of a king, the sovereignty of one ruler. It is going to be autocratic, dictatorial, and His will is going to prevail. That is the reason it is well for you and me to practice bowing to Him and acknowledging Him. He is going to take over one of these days.

Before we move on, we need to notice one more thing: No great world power follows Rome. The Roman Empire is the last, and it will be in existence in the latter days. Actually, it exists today. All of these other empires were destroyed by an enemy from the outside, but no enemy destroyed Rome. Attila the Hun came in and sacked the city, but he was so awestruck by what he saw that he realized he could not handle it. He took his barbarians and left town. The Roman Empire fell apart from within—no enemy destroyed it. Rome is living in the great nations of Europe today: Italy, France, Great Britain, Germany, and Spain are all part of the old Roman Empire. The laws of Rome live on, and her language also. No one speaks Latin today, but it is basic to understanding French, Spanish, and other languages. Her warlike spirit lives on also: Europe has been at war ever since the empire broke up into these kingdoms.

What is happening in Europe today? There is a new psychological viewpoint developing. The young people there do not want to be called Italians or Germans; they like to be called Europeans. Such thinking is creating a basis for the man who is coming someday to put the Roman Empire back together again. He is known in Scripture as the Man of Sin, or the Antichrist. They have a Common Market in Europe today, and they may be well along in restoring the Roman Empire. But not until God takes down the roadblock will that man appear and all this come to fruition. Because he is Satan's man, God will not let him appear until He has called out His people to His name. When He has done that, He will remove His church from the earth. God *is* carrying out His program whether it looks like that or not.

Therefore, there is one coming who will put the Roman Empire together again. I never speak of the *resurrection* of the Roman Empire; that implies that it died. Let me again quote a nursery rhyme:

Humpty-Dumpty sat on a wall,  
Humpty-Dumpty had a great fall;  
All the King's horses, and all the King's men  
Could not put Humpty-Dumpty together again.

You see, the Roman Empire fell apart like Humpty-Dumpty. There have been a lot of men who tried to put it together again, but they have not succeeded. That was one of the missions of the Roman Catholic church at the beginning. Also, Charlemagne attempted to put it back together. Napoleon tried to do so, and also several emperors of Germany. Hitler and Mussolini attempted it, but so far the man has not yet appeared who will accomplish it. God is not quite ready for him to appear.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:540). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

## **Daniel 2:44**

**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.**

**[in the days of these kings]** In the days of the ten kings symbolized by the ten toes on the image (Daniel 2:41-45) and the ten horns on the beasts of Daniel 7:7-8,23-24; Rev. 13; Rev. 17:12-17, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom on earth that shall never be destroyed. It will break in pieces and consume or take over all the ten kingdoms and shall stand forever (Daniel 2:44; Zech. 14; Rev. 19:11-21; Rev. 20:1-10). This proves that the ten kings are yet future and could not have been ten barbarous tribes which overran the old Roman Empire in the fourth and fifth centuries after Christ. For proof the ten kings are yet future, see Ten Kings, Not Barbarous Tribes.

It will be noticed in the headings of the text in Daniel 2:41 and Daniel 2:44, one kingdom is the seventh and the kingdom of God is the ninth. There is no eighth kingdom mentioned in Daniel 2, but there is in Daniel 7:23-24; Rev. 17:9-11. Daniel does not see a little toe coming out of the ten toes, plucking out three of the others by the roots; but in Daniel 7:7-8,19-24 there is a little horn coming out of the ten horns, and after them. He gets power over them by conquering three of them and by the others of the ten kings then submitting to him without further war. This is the same as Rev. 17:9-17. The ten kings give their power to the beast whose kingdom becomes the eighth kingdom. The seventh kingdom is that of the ten kingdoms being independent as separate kingdoms; the eighth is made up of the same ten kingdoms, only they are no longer independent. They continue under the beast for 42 months as subject kingdoms (Rev. 13:1-8; Rev. 17:9-17).<sup>62</sup>

## **Daniel 2:45**

**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.**

*Stone cut without Hands:* (supernatural) Ex 17:3-6; 33:22; Ps 118:22; Isa 8:14; 28:16; Zech 3:9 (Cf. Rev 5:6); Mt 21:43,44; Acts 4:11; Rom 9:33; 1 Cor 10:4; 1 Pet 2:4-8.

*Broke in pieces:* Ps 2:9; 110:5; Rev 2:6-9. All 3: Iraq, Iran, Greece recent...

*Mountain:* Isa 2:2; 9:6; Luke 1:32,33; Rev 17:9-11.

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<sup>62</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible



Jesus is the stone that will put an end to the world governments.

**[the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands]** The stone is a symbol of the kingdom of the God of heaven headed by Christ at His second coming (Daniel 7:9-14,18,27; Isaiah 9:6-7; Zech. 14; Luke 1:31-33; Rev. 11:15; Rev. 19:11-21; Rev. 20:1-10).

**[what shall come to pass hereafter]** These are the events that shall come to pass from Nebuchadnezzar's day into eternity when the God of heaven reigns on earth (Daniel 2:38-45; Isaiah 66:22-24; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Rev. 21-22).

Daniel then focused on the overthrow of those kingdoms. The time of those kings may refer to the four empires or, more likely, it refers to the time of the 10 toes (v. 42) since the first four kingdoms were not in existence at the same time as apparently the toes will be (cf. comments on the 10 horns of the fourth beast, 7:24). Nebuchadnezzar had seen a rock hit and smash the image (2:34). The statue was destroyed by the rock, not by human hands. In Scripture a rock often refers to Jesus Christ, Israel's Messiah (e.g., Ps. 118:22; Isa. 8:14; 28:16; 1 Peter 2:6-8). God, who had enthroned Nebuchadnezzar and would transfer authority from Babylon to Medo-Persia, then to Greece, and ultimately to Rome, will one day invest political power in a King who will rule over the earth, subduing it to His authority, thus culminating God's original destiny for man (Gen. 1:27).

In Nebuchadnezzar's dream the smiting rock became a mountain that filled the whole earth (Dan. 2:35). In Scripture a mountain is often a symbol for a kingdom. So Daniel explained that the four empires which would rule over the land and the people of Israel would not be destroyed by human means, but rather by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the striking Stone. When He comes He will establish the messianic kingdom promised to Israel through David (2 Sam. 7:16). At His return He will subjugate all...

kingdoms to Himself, thus bringing them to an end (cf. Rev. 11:15; 19:11-20). Then He will rule forever in the Millennium and in the eternal state.

Amillennialists hold that this kingdom was established by Christ at His *First* Advent and that now the church is that kingdom. They argue that: (a) Christianity, like the growing mountain, began to grow and spread geographically and is still doing so; (b) Christ came in the days of the Roman Empire; (c) the Roman Empire fell into the hands of 10 kingdoms (10 toes); (d) Christ is the chief Cornerstone (Eph. 2:20).

Premillenarians, however, hold that the kingdom to be established by Christ on earth is yet future. At least six points favor that view: (1) The stone will become a mountain suddenly, not gradually. Christianity did not suddenly fill “the whole earth” (Dan. 2:35) at Christ’s First Advent. (2) Though Christ came in the days of the Roman Empire, He did not destroy it. (3) During Christ’s time on earth the Roman Empire did not have 10 kings at once. Yet Nebuchadnezzar’s statue suggests that when Christ comes to establish His kingdom, 10 rulers will be in existence and will be destroyed by Him. (4) Though Christ is now the chief Cornerstone to the church (Eph. 2:20) and “a stone that causes [unbelievers] to stumble” (1 Peter 2:8), He is not yet a smiting Stone as He will be when He comes again. (5) The Stone (Messiah) will crush and end all the kingdoms of the world. But the church has not and will not conquer the world’s kingdoms. (6) The church is not a kingdom with a political realm, but the future Millennium will be. Thus Nebuchadnezzar’s dream clearly teaches premillennialism, that Christ will return to earth to establish His rule on the earth, thereby subduing all nations. The church is not that kingdom.<sup>63</sup>

**McGee:** The Antichrist, or the Man of Sin (he has about thirty-five aliases in Scripture), is the one who will bring back the Roman Empire. He will be a world dictator—he will rule the world just as Nebuchadnezzar did at the beginning (see Rev. 13). That is an ideal form of government, but if the wrong man is at the top, it is horrible. This was true of Nebuchadnezzar, as we will see, and it will certainly be true of the Antichrist.

When the Lord Jesus comes, He is going to rule as an autocratic ruler, and He is going to put down all rebellion against Him: “Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel” (Ps. 2:9). I don’t think He wants me to apologize for Him today. If you don’t like it, I suggest you get on the next trip to the moon or Mars and get off this earth. He is going to take over this earth, and I think He may take over the place you choose, also. This is His universe—it belongs to Him.

“The stone [which] was cut out of the mountain without hands” represents none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not a man; this is God’s Anointed. The Lord Jesus Himself made it clear that He is that Stone. In His day there were probably more people who understood what He was saying than there are today. In Matthew 21:44 He said, “And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.” He is the Stone, the living Stone, the foundation—“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11). If you fall on that Stone—that is, rest in Him by faith, come just as you are without one plea but that His blood was shed for you—you are broken, you come as a sinner, with nothing to offer. But He is a wonderful Stone to rest upon.

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<sup>63</sup> Bible Knowledge Commentary

The Stone is one of many figures of speech in Scripture which speak of Christ in His office as both Savior and Judge. He is the Rock of salvation (see Deut. 32:15), and He is the Rock of judgment (see Deut. 32:4).

These verses in Daniel speak of the time when He is coming to the earth as Judge to put down earth's rebellion against God. The reference here is to the second coming of Christ to the earth, which is depicted for us in detail in Revelation 19:11–21. His coming is going to be climactic, catastrophic, and cataclysmic. It is mentioned again and again in Scripture (see Zech. 14:1–3; Joel 3:2, 9–16 Isa. 34:1–8; Ps. 2).

Man's boast of ruling this earth and establishing a utopia will end in the dismal destruction of this so-called civilization. It is hard for us to get this fact in our thinking: We live in a world that is *judged*. This world is not on trial. I hear people say, "I'll take my chances." My unsaved friend, you do not have a chance. You are lost. You are without God. You have no capacity for God. All you have in your heart is perhaps a little desire to be religious. You'd like to win a few more ribbons for going to Sunday school—you don't intend to miss a Sunday. But, my friend, you need to trust Christ as Savior, and that is not easy to do, is it? It is not easy to bow to Him and to acknowledge Him. However, either you are going to come to that Stone, or that Stone is coming to you. I'd rather come to the Stone.

God is going to end man's little day down here. God's kingdom will prevail, and for one thousand years the earth will be tested under the personal reign of Christ. Apart from a brief moment in which Satan and sin will be permitted to make their last assault on the righteous reign of God, the kingdom will continue on into eternity (see Rev. 20).<sup>64</sup>

## **Dake: The Image Interpreted**

The great image of the dream of 5 different materials represents 5 great world empires: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and Revised Rome made up of 10 kingdoms in the last days (Daniel 2:44-45; Daniel 7:23-24; Rev. 17:12-17).

1. The Head of Gold (Daniel 2:32,35,38). The head of gold portion of the great image represents the first of 5 kingdoms in the vision—Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar's own kingdom (Daniel 2:37-38; Jeremiah 15:4; Jeremiah 24:9; Jeremiah 25:1-12; Jeremiah 29:18). The 5 kingdoms succeeded each other as the time came for them to fulfill God's plan in punishing Israel. They all existed before they were used to punish Israel in the times of the Gentiles, and each in turn, after fulfilling her mission with Israel, was absorbed in the succeeding kingdom. Babylon conquered Israel in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, about 606 B.C., and continued in power for 70 years (Daniel 9:2; Jeremiah 25).

Nebuchadnezzar reigned 43 years and was succeeded by Evil-Merodach (2 Kings 25:27; Jeremiah 52:31), and Nabonidus and Belshazzar who reigned jointly until Babylon was overthrown (Daniel 5). This empire oppressed Israel for 60 years, 606 B.C. to 546 B.C. (Jeremiah 25).

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<sup>64</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:542). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

2. The Breast and Arms of Silver (Daniel 2:32,35,39). This part of the image symbolizes the Medo-Persian kingdom which succeeded Babylon at the end of the 70 years' captivity of the Jews. It was the second kingdom of the dream to oppress Israel in the times of the Gentiles (Daniel 2:39; Daniel 5:1-31; Daniel 8:20; Daniel 9:1; Daniel 10:1; Daniel 11:1-3; 2 Chron. 36:22; Ezra 1:1-3). The two arms symbolize the two nations making the dual kingdom, the Medes and the Persians. This kingdom was inferior to the Babylonian Empire as silver is to gold. It was not inferior in power (for it overthrew Babylon), but in form of government, wealth, luxury, and glory (Isaiah 13:19). In Babylon the king was the absolute power (Daniel 5:19), but in Medo-Persia law was superior to the king who could not alter a law even for the best good of his subjects (Daniel 6:1,14). Similarly, in the third and fourth kingdoms, the forms of government were inferior as well as their wealth and glory. Babylon took Israel captive (Jeremiah 25) and Medo-Persia liberated them (Isaiah 44:28; Isaiah 45:1-5;

Ezra 1:1-4; Ezra 6:1-14). Medo-Persia continued until Alexander the Great who founded the old Grecian Empire, 334 B.C.

3. The Belly and the Thighs of Brass (Daniel 2:32,35,39). This part of the great image symbolized the third or Grecian Empire under Alexander the Great which also dominated Israel in the times of the Gentiles (Daniel 2:39; Daniel 8:20-21; Daniel 11:1-34). This third empire became the greatest in territory of the first three kingdoms. Alexander started from Greece and Macedon and conquered all the territories of the other two kingdoms and even part of India. The Grecian Empire began to decay with the death of Alexander. His vast territory was divided into four parts, as we shall see when we study Daniel 8.
4. The Legs of Iron (Daniel 2:33-35,40). This part of the great image symbolizes the old Roman Empire which followed Greece in the domination of Israel. It was the fourth kingdom of the dream to oppress Israel in the times of the Gentiles (Daniel 2:40; Daniel 7:23-24; Daniel 9:26; Luke 2:1; Luke 20:20-24; John 11:48; Matthew 24:1-2; Acts 16:21; Acts 22:25-29). This kingdom was to be stronger than all the preceding kingdoms as iron is stronger than gold, silver, and brass. Though called the fourth this is not the last of the Gentile world kingdoms to persecute Israel in the times of the Gentiles. There will yet be two kingdoms which will reign over Israel before the coming of their Messiah to deliver them and set up the kingdom of God in the earth forever. The two legs of iron represent the eastern and western divisions of the old Roman Empire.
5. The Feet and Toes of Iron and Clay (Daniel 2:33-35,44). This part of the image represents the future revised Roman Empire, the fifth kingdom in the image to oppress Israel in the times of the Gentiles (Daniel 2:31-43; Daniel 7:23-25; Rev. 17:12-17). This, the last part of the image, was to be destroyed by the stone from heaven. Revised Rome was to be a divided kingdom, partly strong and partly weak, as symbolized by the two materials of the feet and toes. The clay represents the rule by the masses and the iron the rule by kings. These two forms of government will not mix even as iron and clay will not mix. The final outcome will be that the iron will again become predominant. Kings will again rule inside the Roman Empire territory. The 10 kingdoms will be formed therein and be ruled by 10 kings (Daniel 2:44-45; Daniel 7:7-8,23-24). These 10 kingdoms represented by the 10 toes will exist in the

last days before the coming of Christ and will be destroyed at His coming (Rev. 17:8-17; Rev. 19:11-21). They will be ruled by 10 kings during the first 3 1/2 years of the 70th week, then by the Antichrist the last 3 1/2 years (Daniel 2:44,45; Daniel 7:7-14; Daniel 7:17-25; Rev. 13:1-18; Rev. 17:8-17; 2 Thes. 2:1-12). The 10 kingdoms will form what is known to Bible students as the Revised Roman Empire, dealt with in Daniel 7 and \*Rev. 17:12-17, notes.

#### The Stone That Smote the Image:

This symbolizes the kingdom of heaven headed by the Lord Jesus Christ who will, at His second coming, destroy the kingdoms of this world (Daniel 2:34-35,44,45; Daniel 7:13-27; Matthew 24:29-31; Matthew 25:31-46; Zech. 14:1-21; 2 Thes. 1:7-11; 2 Thes. 2:4-8; Jude 1:14; Rev. 11:15; Rev. 19:11-20:7). Christ Himself is called a "stone" (Psalm 118:22; Matthew 21:44; Ephes. 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:6-8). The phrase "without hands" is an expression emphasizing the absence of all human instrumentality and the act of God alone (Daniel 2:45; Daniel 8:25; Job 34:20; Lament. 4:6).

It will be noted in the outline of the text that Babylon is called the third, Medo-Persia the fourth, Greece the fifth, Rome the sixth, and Revised Rome the seventh world empire. This simply means that they are the third to the seventh of the eight world empires to oppress Israel in the times of the Gentiles. Two empires oppressed Israel before Babylon—Egypt and Assyria, the first and the second. The eighth will be the kingdom of Antichrist (\*Rev. 17:9-11, notes). These five kingdoms are the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth of the book of Daniel, but the third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh of the book of Rev. 17:8-11. See The Times of the Gentiles.

#### **Head of Gold - Babylon (609-539 B.C.)**

"This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king. "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; 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. (Daniel 2: 36-38)

Babylon, under the leadership of king Nebuchadnezzar captured Israel and first took the upper class into slavery. It was during this first phase that the prophet Daniel was captured. Twelve years later, the rest of Israel were taken to Babylon after they rebelled against foreign occupation. Their king was removed and their sanctuary destroyed.

**One Head and One Neck.** The head represents the single strong nation who would rule and it would not be broken up when it was defeated.

**Seven Cervical Vertebra.** Seven kings from the eleventh dynasty placed it or kept it in power before it fell to Persia (609-539). (Nebopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach, Neriglissar, Labashi Marduk, Nabonidus, Belshazzar)

#### **Chest and Arms of Silver - Medo-Persia (539-331 B.C.)**

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

The Medes and Persians next conquered Babylon and Cyrus allowed the Jews to go home. He made arrangements to have the temple rebuilt. But the nation was still ruled by foreigners.

**Two Arms and One Chest.** The two arms are the two empires of the Medes and Persians who succeeded the neck of Babylon. They progress to the chest which represents the fact that the Persian empire took sole control because they were more powerful than the Medes.

**Heart.** The heart in the chest is Cyrus whom God called to show great kindness to Israel.

**Twelve Ribs and Thoracic Vertebra.** The Persian rulers before it fell to Greece.

### **Belly and Thighs (Hips) of Brass - Greece (331-168 B.C.)**

The Greeks under the leadership of Alexander the Great were the third conquerors.

**One Belly and Two Hips.** The belly represents the first phase after they defeated the Persians, when there was one leader. It eventually was divided into four and then two sections at the end. These two divisions were called the King of the North and the King of the South in prophecy. These final two divisions are represented by the two hips.

These two were conquered by the next empire.

**Navel.** At the junction of the chest and stomach is the navel, the remnant of the umbilical cord. It has no purpose after the birth and is cut off. Alexander was the navel, who was cut off in his youth. He provided the life and growth of his empire and died at its pinnacle.

**Belly.** The seat of emotions (liver and kidney). This is the anguish of the temple desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes.

**Five Lumbar Vertebra and Five Fused Sacral Vertebra.** Alexander and his four generals whose kingdoms merged.

### **Legs of Iron - Rome (168 B.C. - 476 A.D.)**

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

**Note:** The first three kingdoms existed in Daniel's day, but Rome did not. So Daniel did not identify it directly by name. Rome was known as the "Iron Monarchy". The Latin word "**Rome**" means strength, and iron is the strongest of the metals.

**Two Legs.** Prophetically, Rome was always a nation of two divisions. The two legs of iron represent the northern and southern divisions of Rome as it conquered each Greek division. Geographically, it later became the Western and Eastern (Byzantine) empire as it declined. Religiously, it had two phases, these are Pagan Rome and Papal Rome.

**Loins.** Seed of life. The Christ came at the beginning of the Roman rule over Israel to be circumcized.

**Thigh.** A hand under the right thigh is used to make a vow. God kept His vows by sending Christ, His right hand.

### **Feet of Iron and Clay – Europe Future (Revived Roman Empire)**

"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, just as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. "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. (Daniel 2: 41-42)

**Ten Toes.** The Roman empire will be divided into ten nations or kingdoms. The divided kingdom includes all the nations of Eastern and Western Roman empire.

**Deffinbaugh:** That was it! That was the dream. Daniel's description exactly matched the king's vision. Now it was time for Daniel to tell the king what it all meant. The one statue was a composite, so to speak, of the kingdoms of the Gentiles, beginning with that of Nebuchadnezzar, and continuing through history. Nebuchadnezzar was the head of fine gold, an indication of the superiority of his kingdom to those which followed. Nebuchadnezzar was indeed a great king, but his power, strength, and glory were all from God.<sup>65</sup> The extent of his rule (2:38) sounds much like the rule which God gave to Adam and Eve, in the beginning (Genesis 1:26).

After Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, three others would follow. Almost nothing is said of the second and third kingdoms, except for one thing: they will become progressively inferior to the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar. A great deal is said of the fourth (and last) kingdom; more attention is given it than all the rest, which is most interesting because it was the farthest removed from the days of Nebuchadnezzar. Why should this kingdom receive such attention in the interpretation?

I think it is because this is the kingdom struck by the stone; it is the kingdom whose fall topples the entire statue, rendering it virtually non-existent in the end. This kingdom, while it receives much attention from Daniel, is not named, nor are all the details pertaining to it explained. The only detail is that the mixture of iron and clay, which weakens the statue, is that of a racial intermingling (Daniel 2:43).

When this final kingdom comes to power, the end is near. The final days will fulfill the details of this prophecy. The end of this kingdom is brought about by the mysterious "stone made without hands" —the stone which brings about a new, eternal kingdom. Daniel ends the interpretation by informing Nebuchadnezzar that the vision was from God, indicating to him what would take place in the future. The matter was certain,<sup>66</sup> and the interpretation reliable.

Before we consider the response of Nebuchadnezzar to Daniel's words, let us summarize some important observations concerning the statue:

**(1) There is a unity, a bond between the four kingdoms, as indicated by the vision.**

There is one statue, but four distinct kingdoms. Somehow these four kingdoms are related or share something in common. The common element seems to be that these were all Gentile kingdoms, kingdoms which subjugated and dominated the nation Israel.

**(2) There is a downward progression, a deterioration of the kingdoms.** The head of gold is glorious, the breast of silver of a lesser greatness. The belly of brass deteriorates

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<sup>65</sup> Note that wisdom is not included here as a description of Nebuchadnezzar, as it is linked with power in Daniel's prayer in verse 20.

<sup>66</sup> In the beginning (verse 1) of this chapter, we were told that the king had dreams (plural), not just a dream (singular). Nebuchadnezzar, much like the Pharaoh of Joseph's day, may have had more than one dream. Pharaoh's dreams were similar in nature and identical in meaning (see Genesis 41:1-8). Joseph pointed out to Pharaoh that since there were two dreams, the matter was determined and irreversible (Genesis 41:32). It may have been very much the same with Nebuchadnezzar's dreams. Daniel's words suggest this could be the case.

to legs of iron and feet which are a mixture of iron and clay.<sup>67</sup> Things don't get better, only worse.

**(3) There is, in the end, a disintegration of the entire statue.** Granted Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom was great, but when the stone strikes the feet of the statue, the entire statue collapses, disintegrates, and blows away. In the end, the greatness of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom (not to mention all the rest) is blown away. Somehow Nebuchadnezzar is to see the link between his kingdom and the other three, and to see that he shares in the final destiny of the entire statue.

**(4) There is an unknown, mysterious "king," who destroys the entire statue, who nullifies all of these kingdoms, bringing them to nothing while establishing his own kingdom.**

**(5) The kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar and those who follow him pass away, and a greater, eternal kingdom does not.**

**(6) Greater emphasis is on the first and fourth kingdoms than on the rest.** The first kingdom is given attention because Nebuchadnezzar is the king. The fourth kingdom receives more emphasis than the other three, I believe, because it is the final kingdom which will be struck down by Messiah at His appearance.

**(7) Much in this vision is not interpreted or explained, which neither Daniel nor Nebuchadnezzar seem to have understood.** In this vision, none of the kingdoms or kings are identified, except the first kingdom (Babylon) and its king (Nebuchadnezzar). What was not interpreted did not need to be known by Daniel or the king. The meaning and interpretation of these mysterious details will be evident when they are fulfilled.<sup>68</sup>

## **Daniel 2:46**

**Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him.**

### **Sevenfold Result of the Revelation**

1. It had an overwhelming effect upon the king (Daniel 2:46).
2. It brought glory to God (Daniel 2:47).
3. It made Daniel a great man (Daniel 2:48).
4. It brought him many gifts (Daniel 2:48).
5. It made him ruler over all the province of Babylon (Daniel 2:48).

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<sup>67</sup> As we discussed this trend from the greater (gold) to the lesser (iron and clay), Tom Wright, a colleague in ministry, suggested an explanation for this progression from gold to silver, to brass, to iron, to iron and clay. He remembered the Old Testament precedent in the tabernacle. As one moved away from the holiest place, which is nearest to the presence of God, the metals used in the tabernacle became less precious. In the holy of holies, there was gold. Then, as one moved away from this most holy place, the items became silver, then bronze, and finally iron. Tom's observation is worthy of our reflection and further study. During these first years of Babylonian captivity, God was still close (so to speak) to His people. He was surely close to Daniel and his friends. But as this nation continued to rebel, God became more and more distant, until, in the 400 silent years, God was silent, and seemed almost to have completely forsaken His people. As the Gentile kingdoms came and went, God became increasingly distant from His people and from the Gentile governments which ruled over them.

<sup>68</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, [deffinbaugh@bible.org](mailto:deffinbaugh@bible.org), Biblical Studies Press, [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org), 1995

6. It made him chief of the wise men (Daniel 2:48).
7. It exalted Daniel's three brethren (Daniel 2:49).

**[worshipped Daniel]** There is no indication that Daniel accepted this worship (cp. Rev. 19:10; Rev. 22:8-9).

Prostrated..paid homage implies that he king worshipped Daniel, but Jewish interpreters assumed that Daniel declined this reverence (Gen. Tab. 96.3). The Rabbis were often quite critical of Daniel however, for enjoying such a positive relationship with the tyrant who destroyed the first Temple.<sup>69</sup>

### **Daniel 2:47**

**The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth *it is*, that your God *is* a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.**

Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the God of Daniel.

The king was so moved at Daniel's interpretation that he prostrated himself before Daniel and ordered that an offering be made to Daniel, an honor that would normally have been given only to the gods of Babylon. Such was Nebuchadnezzar's recognition of Daniel's divine authority. Through Daniel's revelation and interpretation of the dream, Nebuchadnezzar was led to confess that Daniel's God is superior to all the gods of Babylon and that He is Lord over the earth's kings. Daniel's God was exalted in the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar because He through Daniel revealed the course of forthcoming history. God is, the king said, a Revealer of mysteries, as Daniel had said (cf. v. 28). Nebuchadnezzar apparently accepted the fact of his own appointment to power by Daniel's God (cf. vv. 37-38) and recognized His authority.

**McGee:** The effect of Daniel's interpretation upon Nebuchadnezzar is so profound that he actually worships Daniel and commands others to do likewise. He doesn't know any better; he only knows the worship of physical objects, and he intends thus to worship the living and true God. This was his introduction to the God of heaven. In this book we can watch the growth of faith in the heart of this idolatrous king. It will break through the darkness of paganism, and he is going to come into the marvelous light of the knowledge of God.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Jewish Publication Society, Oxford University Press.

<sup>70</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:542). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

## **Daniel 2:48**

**Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise *men* of Babylon.**

## **Daniel 2:49**

**Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel *sat* in the gate of the king.**

[**sat in the gate of the king**] Daniel became chief officer of the palace and the greatest counselor of the king.

Nebuchadnezzar appointed Daniel to a position of responsibility in the government and rewarded him materially with royal gifts. Babylon was divided into many provinces, each one under the leadership of a satrap (3:2). Daniel was evidently made a satrap over the province in which the royal court was located (the province of [the city of] Babylon). Daniel did not forget his friends but asked that they be promoted too. So the king made Shadrach (Hananiah), Meshach (Mishael), and Abednego (Azariah) administrators to serve under Daniel in the same province. Daniel was able to remain in the royal court, perhaps as an adviser to Nebuchadnezzar.

In a remarkable way God elevated Daniel to a position in the royal court so that he could serve as a mediator between the king and the exiles from Judah who would shortly (in 597 and 586) be brought to Babylon.<sup>71</sup>

**McGee:** Sitting in the gate of the king is a practice that is mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. In Genesis, Lot sat in the gate of Sodom; that meant that he was a judge. And in the Book of Esther, Mordecai was also given that office—he sat in the gate as a judge.

Daniel now is rewarded and elevated by Nebuchadnezzar, but he does not forget his three Hebrew friends. They likewise receive high positions in the government of Babylon. This young boy Daniel is moved into a position of sitting in the gate. He was a judge, a Supreme Court Justice, but he also acted in the capacity of prime minister. Throughout this book we will find that he is the one with whom Nebuchadnezzar confers. He judges the people, and he is also prime minister of the kingdom of Babylon.<sup>72</sup>

**Deffinbaugh:** The response of Nebuchadnezzar is truly amazing. Imagine Saddam Hussein, falling before a Jewish Christian, acknowledging the God of Israel as the only true God, and falling prostrate before one of His servants. Nebuchadnezzar was a much greater man, in power and in reputation.

In chapter 1, the king thought of the God of Israel as a lesser “god,” as one defeated by his “gods” (see 1:1-2). He seems to have cared little about Daniel’s God, or about

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<sup>71</sup> Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>72</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (3:543). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Daniel's convictions. He is impressed only by Daniel's superior performance (1:18-20). But now, in light of the events of chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar falls prostrate, acknowledging the superiority of the God of Israel as the "God of gods," "Lord of kings," and a "revealer of mysteries." Nebuchadnezzar has not yet come far enough to be called a saint, but he has come a long way in his understanding of the God of Israel.

Nebuchadnezzar was a man of his word. He gave Daniel many gifts, just as he promised the wise men, if they would but tell him his dream and its meaning (see 2:6). Along with the gifts, Daniel received a promotion. He was made ruler of the entire province of Babylon and placed in charge of all the wise men of Babylon. Here was something for the wise men of Babylon to ponder. Their gods had nearly gotten them killed. Daniel's God had saved their lives.

While Arioch attempted to use Daniel's God-given gifts and abilities to further his own position, Daniel used his newly gained standing with Nebuchadnezzar to further his three friends. He spoke to the king on their behalf, and they were appointed with charge of the whole province of Babylon during the time Daniel was at the king's court.<sup>73</sup>

## **The Times of the Gentiles**

By the times of the Gentiles we mean the administration of the Gentiles, as the rod of chastening upon Israel, to further God's purpose concerning them. It began with Israel's first oppression by the Gentiles in Egypt, and will continue with the history of Israel through this dispensation of Grace. It will end at the return of the Messiah in glory when he will deliver Israel from the Gentiles and exalt them as the head of all nations in the Millennium and forever (Luke 21:24; Romans 11:25; Rev. 19:11-20:10).

The Door of Mercy Open to Gentiles:

This dispensation of the Gentiles is mentioned only in Luke 21:24 and referred to in Romans 11:25 as "the fulness of the Gentiles." The term in Romans is often taken to mean that a time will come when God will no longer save Gentiles, but will give salvation only to the Jews. Such a doctrine is not once mentioned in the Bible. During the future tribulation both Jews and Gentiles can and will be saved (Acts 2:16-21; Romans 1:16; Romans 10:11-13; Rev. 7:9-17).

The term "the fulness of the Gentiles" could not mean that God will some day cut off Gentiles from salvation and become a cruel tyrant, damning the souls of men in eternity regardless of what those men may desire to do about their own destiny. This term means the same as the times of the Gentiles and has nothing to do with the salvation of the Gentiles. It refers to political domination over the Jews by the Gentiles, off and on, from the Egyptian bondage to the second coming of Christ.

Regarding the whole length of the times of the Gentiles it has already been over 3,700 years and will continue until the second coming of Christ, who will deliver the Jews from the Gentiles under Antichrist and set up an earthly kingdom over them forever

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<sup>73</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, [deffinbaugh@bible.org](mailto:deffinbaugh@bible.org), Biblical Studies Press, [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org), 1995

(Zech. 14; Luke 1:32-33; Rev. 11:15; Rev. 19:11-21; Rev. 20:1-10; Daniel 2:44; Daniel 7:13-14,18,27; Isaiah 9:6-7).

It is generally taught that the times of the Gentiles are 2,520 years, based upon a human theory about the seven times of Leviticus 26, where God predicted that when Israel sinned He would punish them seven times for their sins. It is believed that a prophetic year is 360 days long and that one can make a day mean a year when he so pleases. Thus, a year of 360 days is made a period of 360 years. Seven periods of 360 years makes 2,520 years. Many teach that these 2,520 years began with the fall of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar about 606 B.C. Others teach they began at certain other dates in the past. This is why we have many endings for the times of the Gentiles. The following are some of the dates given in modern books of prophetic students for the ending of the times of the Gentiles: 1914, 1917, 1918, 1925, 1927, 1932, 1935, 1937, 1938, 1942, 1945, 1948, 1954, 1958, etc. It stands to reason that all these dates cannot be right. Furthermore, it is clear that there is no definite date stated in the Bible for the ending of the times of the Gentiles, or someone would have found it by now. That the Bible does not teach such a false theory of 2,520 years as the whole length of the times of the Gentiles is clear from the following points:

1. The expression "seven times" is used 31 times in the O.T. The Hebrew word for times is  $\pi\alpha\alpha\mu$  (HSN-6471), meaning a stroke. In no place does it mean a set period of time as does the Aramaic word  $\text{ܩܝܕܕܐܢ}$  (HSN-5732) used in Daniel 2:21; Daniel 4:16,23,25; Daniel 7:25; Daniel 12:7.
2. If the word time means a period of 360 days it cannot also mean 360 years. No one has been given authority to change a day to a year in any passage he pleases. If God, who knows the difference between the words day and year, said days in a certain scripture, He meant days, and if He said years He meant years. Just because He commanded Israel to wander in the wilderness 40 years according to the number of days the spies were in Canaan (Numbers 14:33-34) and appointed years according to the same number of days in the case of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 4:5-6), we need not conclude that in every place in prophecy the word days means years and years means days. Even in these passages days meant days and years meant years, for the spies were in Canaan 40 actual days, not 40 years. If it is Biblical to make days and times mean years whenever we please to prove a human theory, then let us be consistent and do this with all passages where these words are found.

If "seven times" means 2,520 years in one passage, it surely means it in all passages unless otherwise stated. According to this we would then have Jacob bowing down to Esau 2,520 years (Genesis 33:3), the Jews sprinkling blood of their sacrifices 2,520 years during each day (Leviticus 4:6,17; Leviticus 8:11), the cleansing of each leper for 2,520 years (Leviticus 14:7,16,27,51), Israel marching around Jericho for 2,520 years on the seventh day (Joshua 6:4,15), Elijah's servant looking for rain for 2,520 years (1 Kings 18:43), and the resurrected child sneezing for 2,520 years (2 Kings 4:35).

An objection may be that these are historical facts and we are not to give "seven times" a meaning of 2,520 years except in prophetic passages. But we answer that this is just as ridiculous, for we would have Naaman dipping himself in Jordan 2,520 years, for the prophecy was that if he should do this "seven times" he would be clean (2 Kings 5:10-

14). Nebuchadnezzar would have been a maniac for 2,520 years, for the prophecy was that he would be one for "seven times" (Daniel 4:16,23,25).

3. The expression "seven times" is used four times in Leviticus 26, and if one "seven times" means 2,520 years, then the other three also mean the same. Then, four periods of "seven times" would mean 10,080 years during which Israel was to be punished. Furthermore, according to Leviticus 26:14-17, if Israel broke His covenant, God predicted He would send eight different plagues upon them. These, He predicted before mentioning the first "seven times." This explains why He said, "If ye will not YET for all this (the former eight plagues) hearken unto Me, THEN (after the period taken up by the eight plagues) I will punish you seven times MORE for your sins" (Leviticus 26:18).

It is clear from Leviticus 26:27-39 that all four "seven times" of punishment was to be before Israel was scattered among the nations, and anyone knows that 10,080 years did not take place before this. Thus, it is clear that the 2,520-year theory of the whole length of the times of the Gentiles, based upon one of the four "seven times" of Leviticus 26, is false and proves nothing as to its length.

The phrase "seven times" means severity of punishment instead of 2,520 years. When a parent says "I will whip you seven times harder than I did yesterday," we certainly do not believe he means to beat a child 2,520 years. Such is merely a figure of speech expressing severity of punishment, and that is all God intended to express in Leviticus 26. He wanted Israel to know that if one punishment would not correct them and bring them to repentance, He would bring more severe punishments upon them and finally abandon them to captivity among the nations.

Because there have been about 2,500 to 2,600 years from Daniel's day to ours is no proof that the times of the Gentiles are 2,520 years long. Neither does the fact that Daniel pictured Gentile oppression of Israel from his day to the second coming of Christ prove that he saw the full length of the times of the Gentiles, nor does it prove that these times started in his day. Daniel merely predicted the oppressions of the Gentiles from his day on, not the beginning of them back in Egypt or the whole length of them. He could not have foretold what was already history concerning Gentile oppression of Israel.

John, in Rev. 17:8-18, predicts events concerning the beast, the eighth and last kingdom that will oppress Israel, in the times of the Gentiles. He explains that the seven heads on the beast are seven kingdoms that precede the eighth and last kingdom which will fight against Christ at His second coming. He says that five of these have already passed away before his day; that one is in his day (the sixth, or old Roman Empire); that the seventh is yet to come between the sixth and the eighth (the Revised Roman Empire made up of ten kingdoms, as foretold by the ten toes on the image of Daniel 2:40-44, and the ten horns of Daniel 7:7-8,23-24; Rev. 13:1-8; Rev. 17:8-17); and that the eighth will be the last kingdom on earth before Christ comes to earth. The five that have passed away before John's day are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. They are the only empires oppressing Israel before John's day that could be referred to. See notes on Rev. 17:8-17; note, Psalm 80:13; and Eight Mountain Kingdoms and Israel.

4. We know that the Gentiles in Egypt oppressed Israel for a much longer period than Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon did, for when Moses was born Israel was already

being oppressed, as proved by the law to kill all male children. He was 80 years old when he led Israel out of Egyptian bondage. Israel was in Babylon only 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11). What would this oppression of Israel be called if not the times of the Gentiles? Then, after this kingdom oppressed Israel off and on for hundreds of years, the Assyrian Empire oppressed them and took the 10 tribes captive. What was this but the times of the Gentiles? It is but a human theory that the times of the Gentiles began with Nebuchadnezzar. The fact is, they had already been going on for about 1,200 years by the time of Nebuchadnezzar. See Eight Mountain Kingdoms and Israel.

5. If the whole length of the times of the Gentiles was to be 2,520 years, then they have already ended, for 2,520 years of 360 days each (as a year is supposed to be by this theory) make 907,200 days. But from 606 B.C. (when Judah was taken to Babylon, at which time, according to most prophetic scholars, the times of the Gentiles began) to A.D. 1958 there have already been 2,564 years of 365 1/4 days or a total of 936,501 days. This makes a difference of 29,301 days between the two periods or approximately 80 years. According to this the times of the Gentiles ended around 1878 and that is long before any modern prophetic student has placed a date for their ending.

Thus it is clear that the times of the Gentiles began with the first oppression of Israel by the Gentiles and that they have continued as the Gentiles have oppressed the Jews off and on for over 3,711 years up to 1959 A.D. The Jews are still being oppressed by the Gentiles, and Jerusalem is still being trodden down by them and will be until the second coming of Christ, except for a short period when Israel will again have control of the city before Antichrist breaks his 7-year covenant with them in the future (Daniel 9:27; Rev. 11:1-2). The Scriptures show clearly that Christ will deliver the Jews from the Gentiles at His second advent (Zech. 14:1-21; Luke 21:24; Romans 11:25; Daniel 2:44-45; Daniel 7:13-14, 18, 27; Daniel 8:20-25; Rev. 11:1-2, 15; Rev. 19:11-21). Because Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles during the last 42 months of this age, it is certain that the times of the Gentiles will continue until then (Rev. 11:1-2; Daniel 9:27; Daniel 11:45-12:7). How many more years there will be before Daniel's 70th week begins and the Antichrist comes to make this 7-year covenant with the Jews is not stated in Scripture, and all speculation is valueless. The times of the Gentiles have already continued through 6 world empires the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman—and they will continue through 2 more in the near future—the Revised Roman made up of 10 kingdoms, and the Revived Grecian made up of the same 10 but headed by the Antichrist who will be defeated by Christ at His second coming (Daniel 7:23-24; Rev. 13:1-8; Rev. 17:8-17). \* Dake

### **Conclusion Deffinbaugh**

Before we focus our attention on the central theme and message of the king's vision, consider three secondary lessons which we can learn from our text.

**(1) Our text contributes to our understanding of spiritual leadership.** Daniel did not seek prominence. He did not set his sights on spiritual leadership. He sought to be faithful to His God and to his calling. It was only when he was put "between a rock and a hard place" that he stepped forward. It is often in the crisis situations of life that leaders emerge. So it was with Daniel. He was, in a sense, forced to lead. Had he not acted as he

did (humanly speaking), he and his three friends would have died. Daniel's leadership came about when he acted out of necessity and out of faith, in a way that set him apart from the rest. This seems to be the way most of the leaders in the Bible were set apart.

**(2) Impossible situations expose the futility of human wisdom and power and of false gods and religions.** At the same time, they provide the setting for which the power and wisdom of God to be undeniably demonstrated. God brought about the crisis of Daniel 2. In so doing, He showed the wise men of this world to be unwise, and by testimony of their own lips showed their gods powerless. God's power was so evident through the faith of Daniel and his friends that the king fell before this man and his God.

**(3) Evangelism is the work of God, brought about by the workings of the Spirit of God.** I am greatly impressed by what Daniel could have said, but did not. Daniel told the king his dream and its meaning. He did not tell the king what to do about the message God had revealed to him. He did not press the king to "close" the matter of his faith in God. The events of chapter 2 brought Nebuchadnezzar a long way from where he had been, but he was not yet ready to profess his faith in this God. All too often Christians are telling others what to do, when they should be concentrating on the proclamation and interpretation of God's Word, trusting in the Holy Spirit to prompt men to take action as He guides them.

There are times when God does give clear application. Joseph not only interpreted the Pharaoh's dreams, but then went on to recommend a specific plan of action. This was in order to preserve men from starvation, and especially to save the nation Israel. But often we make applications where God has not. Let us be careful not to rush beyond biblical revelation. The Holy Spirit knows better how to apply the Word of God than we do. The major thrust of the king's dream, as revealed and interpreted in Daniel 2, is so obvious we almost miss it. I fear that we usually miss this "camel" because we are too busy looking at the "gnats." The lesson for the king can be summed up in these words:

THE KINGDOMS OF MEN FADE AWAY AND ARE FORGOTTEN;  
THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS ETERNAL.  
THE GLORY OF HUMAN KINGS IS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE  
GLORY OF THE KING OF KINGS.

Nebuchadnezzar lay on his bed that eventful night, thinking about what the future held. No doubt his thoughts were focused on his reputation, his role in changing the course of history, and especially on his glory and fame. How humbling was the message of his dream!

His kingdom did have fame and glory. He was the head of gold. But his kingdom would pass, only to be replaced by another, and then another and another. In the end, One was coming who would put an end to all human kingdoms and establish a kingdom that was eternal. "Gone With the Wind" —that was the message of this king's dream and the way it is with all human glory and power and works.

If the king wanted to be a part of a kingdom filled with glory, which lasted forever, he must "look to the rock" of his vision. It is not the head of gold, nor the breast of silver, nor even the entire statue which is glorious and eternal, but the stone. The stone brings the destruction of the statue and the creation of an everlasting kingdom.

Throughout the New Testament, our Lord taught the people of His day the same lesson God was teaching Nebuchadnezzar through his dream. Jesus warned men that the kingdoms of the world would pass away and that they should set their hearts and minds

on the kingdom of God, which He had come to establish. He is the stone “fashioned without hands” (see Luke 1:35). He is the One whose kingdom is eternal and glorious. Nebuchadnezzar was thinking of his empire. God instructed him in his dreams to submit to a great King and to be a part of an eternal empire, an eternal kingdom. Jesus is that King, and the kingdom of Heaven is the empire. Those who trust in Him have not only obtained immortality, but salvation, eternal life, glory, and peace. May we, like Nebuchadnezzar, turn from our own earthly empires to the heavenly empire of God.

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).

Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written, “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love him.” For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God (1 Corinthians 2:6-10).

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire (1 Corinthians 3:10-15).<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, [deffinbaugh@bible.org](mailto:deffinbaugh@bible.org), Biblical Studies Press, [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org), 1995

<b>Correlation of Dreams and Visions in Daniel</b>				
	<b>Image— Chapter 2</b>	<b>Beasts— Chapter 7</b>	<b>Beasts— Chapter 8</b>	<b>Kingdoms Represented</b>
<b>The Times of the Gentiles</b>	Head of fine gold	Like a lion with eagle's wings		Babylon
	Chest and arms of silver	Like a bear	Ram with two horns	Medo-Persia
	Belly and thighs of bronze	Like a leopard with four wings and four heads	Male goat with one great horn, four horns and little horn	Greece
	Legs of iron, feet of iron and clay	Incomparable beast with ten horns and little horn		Rome
	Stone that becomes a great mountain	Messiah and saints receive the kingdom		Kingdom of God

## Dreams and Visions in Daniel

Daniel's God-given ability to interpret "visions and dreams" (1:17) served him well in his role as advisor to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, a man noted for his mysterious and troubling dreams. The following brief comparison of a dream of Nebuchadnezzar and a dream and vision of Daniel reveals a common theme in the Book of Daniel—the successive rise and fall of four kingdoms.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream	Daniel's Dream	Daniel's Vision	Interpretation
An image with a head of fine gold (2:32)	A beast like a lion with eagle's wings (7:4)		Babylon would establish itself as the first world empire (2:38; 7:17).
An image with a chest and arms of silver (2:32)	A beast like a bear with three ribs in its mouth (7:5)	A ram with two horns, one of which was higher than the other (8:3)	Medo-Persia would defeat Babylon and establish itself as the second world empire (2:39; 7:17; 8:20).
An image with a belly and thighs of bronze (2:32)	A beast like a leopard with four wings (7:6)	A male goat with a large horn, later replaced by four horns and a little horn (8:5–9)	Greece would defeat Medo-Persia and establish itself as the third world empire (2:39; 7:17; 8:21).
An image with legs of iron and feet of iron and clay (2:32)	A beast with iron teeth and ten horns (7:7)		Rome would defeat Greece and establish itself as the fourth world empire (2:40–43; 7:17).