

The Dream of the Latter Days

Nebuchadnezzar's Statue

ESV Daniel 2:28 But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these:

²⁹ To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be.

³⁰ But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.

³¹ "You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening.

³² The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze,

³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

³⁴ As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

³⁶ "This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation.

³⁷ You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory,

³⁸ and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—
you are the head of gold.

³⁹ Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

⁴⁰ And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these.

⁴¹ And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay.

⁴² And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle.

⁴³ As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay.

⁴⁴ And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people.

It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and

it shall stand forever,

⁴⁵ just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure."

⁴⁶ Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him.

⁴⁷ The king answered and said to Daniel, "Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery."

⁴⁸ Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.

⁴⁹ Daniel made a request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king's court.

(Daniel 2:28-49)

Idolatry

What is an Idol? This is a question that a lot of people get mostly wrong. Today we talk about idols as anything that captures a person's attention more than God. Some people make **money** their idol. Others make **sex** their idol. Other idolize knowledge. Still others make **sports** their idol. While I understand the sentiment of putting things before God, if this is as far as your understanding of idolatry goes, you have missed the most basic point the second commandment teaches.

Listen carefully to the commandment. “**You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them**” (**Ex 20:4-5**). Idolatry involves two things. *The making of a carved image of something that you bow*

down to and worship. We have spiritualized the latter in our thinking (by saying all you have to do is metaphorically bow down, we don't actually get on our knees and bow down); we have little room for the former (unless we are talking about Rome).

I think what has happened in the modern mind is that when we think of a carved image, we *inadvertently confuse it with the first commandment* and in this way merge the two commandments together, causing serious harm to both. The problem is that people think that the carved images *are* the gods. But since carved images have no life—they are just “sticks in the mud”—the entities they represent are not real. Therefore, mankind has basically evolved past this superstitious, primitive form of idolatry (creating images of non-existent entities) and now worship other *real* things instead.

So what is an idol? “In the ancient world, idols were thought to *contain* spirits (*'elohim*) to localize a deity for worship and negotiation. When an idol was destroyed the *'elohim* was not thought of as dead, but in need of another *host*.”¹ The carved image was thus considered the “*body*”

¹ Douglas Van Dorn, *The Unseen Realm: A Question & Answer Companion* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), Q. 18, n. 16.

of the gods,² while that which gilded it was its “flesh.” Gold laced over the statue was the “flesh of the gods.” The idea of an idol then was that through the proper incantation and magic, it could be brought to “house” a spiritual entity that was being summoned. This is what is strictly forbidden in the second commandment, because God does not want his people “crossing over” and committing adultery with entities that reside in the unseen realm. In this way, you must understand that when an idol is present, so also are these other entities. They are inextricably linked together. If you don’t understand this, then you could easily miss the big picture of the last portion of Daniel 2 and Nebuchadnezzar’s famous dream.

Structure and Theme of Daniel 2:

Daniel 2 is divided into **three main headings** in the ESV, but **four clear chiasms** in the actual text.

² “I will destroy your high places and cut down your incense altars and cast your dead bodies upon the dead *bodies of your idols (gillulim)*, and my soul will abhor you” (Lev 26:30). *Gillulim* is “the designation of deities and/or their images,” and so does not refer merely to the physical object. It is translated into Greek by *eidola*, a word which Paul refers to as demonic powers (1Co 8, 10), showing that they have real existence. See **M. I. Gruber**, “Gillulim,” ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden; Boston; Köln; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999), 346-47.

Simple Outlines of Daniel 2

Logical Outline	Literary Outline (4 chiasms)
Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (2:1-16)	2:1-12
God Reveals Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (2:17-30)	2:13-28
Daniel Interprets the Dream (2:31-45)	2:29-36
	2:36-45

We looked at two of these chiasms last time as we saw the story that **prefaces a troubling dream** that had the king of Babylon and ruler of the known world deeply upset. We can divide this third portion of the chapter into two parts which roughly correspond to the last two chiasms. These two parts fit the conflict of the earlier part of the chapter, which is that Nebuchadnezzar wanted both **an interpretation** of his dream, but also to be **told what he had dreamt**. Thus, the first chiasm tells us the dream:

- A. "O king ... Your dream and the visions of your head ... are these" (2:29-30).
- B. "A great image ... stood" (2:31).
- C. "Gold" (2:32a).
- D. "Silver" (2:32b).
- E. "Bronze" (2:32c).
- F. "Iron and clay" (2:33)
- G. **A stone was cut out by no human hand, it struck the image on its feet and broke them in pieces (2:34)**
- F. "iron and clay" (2:35a)
- E'. "Bronze" (2:35b).
- D'. "Silver" (2:35c).
- C'. "Gold" (2:35d).
- B'. "Broken in pieces ... the image became a great mountain" (2:35e).
- A'. "This was the dream" (2:36a).

The second gives us its interpretation:

- A. “We will tell the king its interpretation” (2:36).
- B. “O king ... the God of heaven has given you your kingdom” (2:37-38)
- C. “Gold ... inferior ... brass ... iron ... clay” (2:37-43).
- D. “Never be destroyed” (2:44a).
- E. **“The kingdom shall not be left to another people. It will break in pieces all the kingdoms” (44c).**
- D¹. “Stand forever” (2:44c)
- C¹. “Stone ... iron ... bronze ... clay ... silver ... gold” (2:45).
- B’. A great God has made the future known to the king (2:45b)
- A’. “The dream ... and interpretation are sure” (2:45c)

This means that we have, again, **two centers** that become **the main points**. In the dream itself, that there is **a strange stone** that comes into view and does something remarkable. The second tells us **what it is and what it does**. In this way, we will see that the entire dream of Nebuchadnezzar was given to him that God the Father might exalt the coming of his son to dwell with human flesh (see **2:11**). How will he do that? This question leads us to our passage.

Neb’s Dream Told to Him (Dan 2:28-36)

The unfolding of the dream begins in **vs. 28** when it says, **“Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these.”** You must see that the contents of the dream

concern “the latter days.” I’m going to come back to this phrase later.

Before Daniel explains the dream, however, he wants to **make it clear up front** something that he has already told the king when he said, “No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show the king the mystery that the king has asked, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries” (27-28). Now he adds something that he wants the king to know about this God. “To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be. But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind” (29-30). It is **God who gives the interpretation**, knows the dream, and gave the dream. Daniel’s **God is therefore the foundation** of all the events that will unfold. Get this wrong, get everything wrong.

He begins, “You saw, O king, and behold, a great image” (31). Now, “image” is **the same word** used in the very next chapter when it says, “King Nebuchadnezzar made an *image* of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its

breadth six cubits” (Dan 3:1). Given that the two “images” are clearly meant to be understood together, what Nebuchadnezzar dreamed was not mere picture or ordinary statue. It was a great idol. What is an idol, I asked earlier?

“This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening.” Brightness was attributed to the heavenly beings, the gods. In the ancient context, Nebuchadnezzar was probably thinking to himself something along the lines of this ancient Egyptian hymn to Osiris, “Homage to thee, King of kings, Lord of lords, Prince of princes, who ... hast ruled the world ... Thy body is of bright and shining metal, thy head is of azure blue, and the brilliance of the turquoise encircleth thee.”³ But if this was an image of a god, which one? No wonder he was so troubled! And no wonder he was so purposed in his mind to find out the truth. He had to know the true source and meaning of the dream, especially if it was about a powerful god.

Daniel goes on to explain what this “god” looked like. “The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, and its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay” (32-33). The image is

³ Wallace E. Budge, *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt* (Mineola, NY: Courier Dover Publications, 1988 reprint), 424.

that of a complete man (the gods were also depicted as men). It is covered mostly with different metals, as a craftsman would cover an idol. Widder notices, “The statue was a multi-layered masterpiece of metals: gold head, silver torso, bronze midsection, iron legs with iron-clay feet. As you move from head and shoulders to knees and toes, the metals decrease in value, but as long as you stop at the ankles, they increase in strength.”⁴ That’s all that we learn about the statue.

Suddenly, we are introduced to the center of the first chiasm. “As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces” (34). This stone is the center. As you can probably tell from the Osiris hymn, we have all kinds of examples in ANE of statues made of different metals, but there is nothing like the rock that crushes them in all of ancient literature outside of the Bible.⁵

Essentially, out of nowhere, a giant stone crashes down upon the brittle toes and feet of the statue and causes them to disintegrate. You might think that what the stone does is therefore parallel to ANTIFA and BLM desecrating and

⁴ Wendy L. Widder, *The Story of God Bible Commentary: Daniel*, ed. Tremper Longman III & Scot McKnight (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), n.p.

⁵ Wendy Widder, “Dr. Wendy Widder, The Book of Daniel, Session 5 – Daniel 2,” *Youtube* (Sept 15, 2019), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7ajvLCqu8I>.

toppling statues throughout our great land this summer.⁶ They pull and pry, using hammer and chains and muscle, until they get the statue to start toppling. This usually happens at the feet. When the feet go, the whole statue collapses to the ground. The text even kind of hints that you should think this because the parallel is that the statue was “standing,” so we are probably thinking now it will “fall.”

If you thought this, you would be greatly mistaken. Yes, attacking the feet does have a purpose, and yes it does harm the rest of the statue. But what this stone does is infinitely more powerful than merely pushing over a humanoid monument. “Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found” (35a). What kind of a stone has the power to cause a whole statute to disintegrate into Thanos dust simply by pulverizing the toes? If this dream is about a god, what kind of stone must this be?

We can't find out yet, because Daniel isn't even done explaining what happened to the king. “But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the

⁶ In the context of the LXX, one is easily reminded of the story Bel and the Dragon.

whole earth” (35b). This mountain grew because it hit and destroyed the idol. Somehow the destruction of the idol is related to the growth of the stone. It grew into a rock so big and even “mountain” can barely describe it. It filled all things. “This was the dream” (36a). With that, our first half, and easiest half, of our passage today concludes.

Neb’s Dream Explained to Him (Dan 2:37-45)

“Now we will tell the king its interpretation” (36b). With these words we are made to understand that Daniel’s three friends are there in the court with Daniel and the king. So what does it mean? Is the statue a god, several gods? That makes a lot of sense, given that it is a giant idol and, like idols, is decked out in precious metals. If it is, what could possibly cause something like that to vanish into thin air?

The God of Heaven

We begin to get a hint of the answer before the actual interpretation begins. Vs. 37 grounds the interpretation. “You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might,

and the glory, and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all ...”

Against, **the grounding is the God of heaven**. This is the God who has given Nebuchadnezzar all that he has: power, might, glory, and a kingdom that is the largest in the history of earth up until that point in time. No single man had ever ruled over more territory than Nebuchadnezzar. Think of it! Everywhere you could think of going in the known world, wherever there were people, wherever there were beasts or birds, Nebuchadnezzar ruled over them all. And **God gave this to him**. Guess what that makes God compared to the title of the Babylonian ruler “king of kings?” The point of this is to humble this great king that he himself might come to bow before the one who is truly the King of kings. **Do you know who gets that title in the NT?**

The Idol-Statue

Daniel continues, “... **you are the head of gold**” (38b). **Nebuchadnezzar is the head of gold?** You mean, **it isn't some other god** that he dreamed about? It was himself? Be careful how you answer this. Remember our discussion about how

the supernatural beings cannot be extracted from the idol? This is in fact an idol. Furthermore, I you need to understand the thinking that went behind the title “king” itself. This is something we have almost completely lost touch with in modern centuries of democracies and republics where leaders are voted in by the people.

First, the king himself was considered “**divine**.” We will see this when we come to the very strange **vv. 43-44**. **Why he was considered divine** is even more interesting. Across the board, from Israel in the OT to the ANE to Greece and Rome to Japan and Meso-America, everyone believed that the king was **directly chosen by the god of their nation** to rule as his right-hand over his people as a kind of vassal in their stead. Thus, the kings were even called gods, though never in Israel, and all were just men. It is called **the divine right of kings**; it is the god who directly gives the king his right to rule.

Listen to the words of **Hammurabi** (c. 1810 BC - 1750 BC), who lived 1,000 years prior to Nebuchadnezzar, but in the same area. The famous law-giver was also the sixth king of the First Babylonian Dynasty. This is how he prefaces his law-code:

At that time [the gods] Anu and Enlil *called me*, Hammurabi, by name [= commissioned me] *to show justice* in the land, *to destroy the evildoers* and those filled with hatred, so that the strong may *not oppress the weak*, to arise for the people like the sun god to light the land, to care for the welfare of the people ... as Marduk commanded me, to lead the people and to provide for morality in the land, I placed law and justice in the mouth of the land and cared for the welfare of the people. At that time I issued the following laws ...



Left: Code of Hammurabi (front). Right: Relief from the black diorite stele on which the Code of Hammurabi (18th century b.c.) is engraved (now in the Louvre, Paris): The sun-god (note the rays) installs Hammurabi as king by handing him the royal insignia (scepter and ring) and with them the task of establishing and guaranteeing social order with just laws.⁷

⁷ Description: Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, [Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51-100](#), ed. Klaus Baltzer, trans. Linda M. Maloney, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 212.

Or how about the words of this 15th century B.C. [Egyptian tractate](#) that says, “*Re [or Ra, the creator— and sun—god] has established the king [Pharaoh] on the earth of the living forever and ever, to speak justice to the people and to satisfy the gods, to realize Maat (justice, world order) and drive away Isfet (chaos).*”⁸ This is what the Holy Scripture means when Solomon says, “*As the LORD lives, who has established me and placed me on the throne of David my father, and who has made me a house, as he promised*” (1Kg 2:24).

All this said, though the gods are in the big picture of the idol, it is [the very human Nebuchadnezzar](#) who is singled out, not the gods of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar is the head of gold.⁹ [This will make a lot more sense when we read the next story to find out if his dream humbled him or went to his head, but that is getting ahead of ourselves.](#)

The next verse explains that Nebuchadnezzar actually represents through metonymy,¹⁰ his Babylonian [kingdom](#). “*Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you*” (39a). Its inferior nature is shown in its metal. It is not gold, but

⁸ In [Lothar](#), 211.

⁹ To see both the god and the human king together in the same prophecy, see also [Isa 14](#) with the king of Babylon and the Shining One Son of Dawn, [Ezek 28](#) with the king of Tyre and the anointed guardian cherub, [Ezek 31](#) with Pharaoh and the Trees of Eden, and so on.

¹⁰ Metonymy is the substitution of the name of an attribute or adjunct for that of the thing meant. For example, sometimes the nation of “Israel” is simply called “Jacob.” Jacob substitutes for the whole nation.

silver. “And yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over the earth” (39b). This kingdom corresponds to the bronze torso, which is cheaper than silver. But the strength of bronze surpasses that of silver, and so this kingdom is in some sense stronger than that of the former. That makes sense, because it overthrew the former.

“And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these” (40). Again, iron is cheaper metal. But it is the strongest of them all, which is why in history class we all learned about how the iron age came after the bronze age.

Speaking of ages and history, God is revealing to the king a future history of the world through the use of different metals and the various parts of an idol. The metal idea is not unique. Two hundred years prior to Daniel, Hesiod (8th cent. B.C.) referred to “Five Ages” of which gold, silver, and iron are mentioned,¹¹ but he was not predicting the future, he was

¹¹ “First of all the deathless gods who dwell on Olympus made a golden race of mortal men ... they lived like gods without sorrow of heart, remote and free from toil and grief ... Then they who dwell on Olympus made a second generation which was of silver and less noble by far ... they lived only a little time and that in sorrow ... for they could not keep from sinning ... Zeus the father made a third generation of mortal men, a brazen race ... They loved the lamentable works of Ares and deeds of violence ... Zeus the son of Chronos made yet another, the fourth ... which was nobler and more righteous, a god-like race of hero-men ... And again far-seeing Zeus made yet another generation, the fifth ... for now is truly a race of iron, and men never rest

explaining the past. Two Zoroastrian texts from the land where Daniel now resides (which cannot be dated earlier than Daniel) speak of **four ages** symbolized as four branches of a tree (rather than a statue)¹² and depicted by four metals: gold, silver, steel, and mixed iron.¹³ These are explained as “**four periods which will come**” (kingdoms) in the millennium of Zoroaster.¹⁴ So God is using imagery that the king could certainly understand in his own context.

Four Kingdoms

Here’s where the difficult part comes. **What are these kingdoms?** Christians and Jews have disagreed on this since before the time of Christ. One option, defended as early as **Josephus** (*Antiquities* 10.10.4; 10.11.7) and **2 Esdras** 12:10-51, view them as 1. **Babylon** (612-539 B.C.), 2. **Medes and Persians** (539-331 B.C.), 3. **Greece** (332-146 B.C), 4. **Rome**

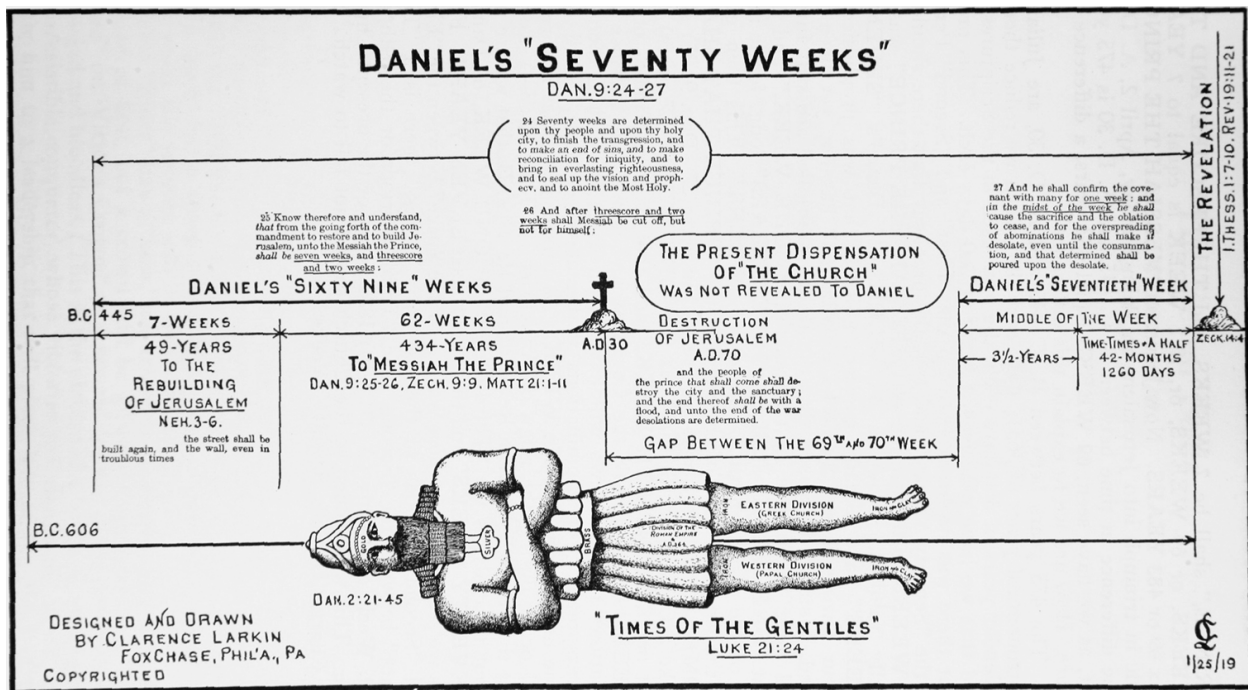
from labour and sorrow by day and from perishing by night” (**Hesiod**, *Works and Days* II.109-120).

¹² The reference to the tree is the same in meaning to that of the statue. See Dan 4:10ff.

¹³ See ***Bahman Yasht* ch. 1** where Aura Mazda shows “the wisdom of all-knowledge” to Zoroaster. “The trunk of a tree, on which there were four branches: one of gold, one of silver, one of steel, and one of mixed iron.”

¹⁴ Ibid. “That of gold is that when I and thou will hold a conference of religion, king Vistasp shall accept the religion.... That of silver is the reign of king Artakshir of the Kae. And that of steel is the reign of Khvashrui son of Kavat, of immortal soul. And that of mixed iron is the evil sovereignty of the ‘divs’ having dishevelled hair.” (See also *Denkard* 9.8). See **J.J. Collins**, *Daniel*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 163.

(146B.C. - 476 A.D.). This became the dominant interpretation among the early Christians and continued through the Reformation on into today. In fact, some of you may have a Bible that actually names these kingdoms in the headings, even though Daniel doesn't actually tell you.



Note in this drawing by Clarence Larkin (1917), how from the torso down everything is fulfilled after Christ's first's coming.¹⁵

There are two versions of this view. One is that the prophecy has been completely fulfilled in 70 A.D. The other is that it still has some fulfillment in our own future. Dispensationalists point out that the fourth empire has "two legs" and this, they say, corresponds to the divided kingdom of Rome long after the close of the NT. They see a revived

¹⁵ Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Revelation: A Study of the Last Prophetic Book of Holy Scripture* (Philadelphia, PA: Rev. Clarence Larkin Estate, 1919), 53.

Roman empire and a 10 member European union (corresponding to the 10 toes).

A couple of things to point out here. First, Daniel does not make a big deal of the toes (later he will talk about 10 horns). He makes nothing of the legs. If the two legs correspond to a divided Roman empire, what do the two arms and two thighs correspond to? The whole project seems rather arbitrary. The focus is on the four empires and what comes immediately afterwards.

A second option is 1. **Babylon** (or Assyria), 2. **Medes**, 3. **Persians**, 4. **Greece**. This view is found as early as the **Fourth Sibylline Oracle** (3rd cent. B.C., redacted around 80 A.D.). This view has come back into vogue in **modern times** mostly because of Liberal scholarship which denies that Daniel wrote the book. It fits best with their 2nd cent. B.C. date for the book and allows their skepticism to remain intact. However, it should not be assumed that conservatives cannot and should not hold to the view. Many do.

A third view is that the statue is depicting **four kings** mentioned in Daniel: **Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus**. The biggest problem with this view is that it seems from the chiasm that Nebuchadnezzar's dream and

Daniel’s vision in ch. 7 are describing the same thing. While this view does see Daniel’s vision as depicting one of the two previous future kingdom schemes, it does not see the same with Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. And so most discard this as a viable explanation.

Three Views of Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream (Daniel 2)				
Dream	Interpretation	Roman	Greece	Four Kings
Gold	Neb.	Babylon	Babylon	Neb.
Silver	2 nd , inferior	Medo-Persia	Media	Belshazzar
Bronze	3 rd , rules earth	Greece	Persia	Darius
Iron	4 th , crushes/breaks	Rome	Greece	Cyrus
Iron clay ft.	divides			
Rock	God’s Kingdom	God’s kingdom	God’s kingdom	God’s Kingdom

While **Babylon is certain**, because Daniel identifies it for us, there are many historical questions and some difficult challenges for each view. Should Media-Persia be considered one kingdom or two? We know hardly anything about the Medes to make an educated guess. Can we identify the “ten toes?” Can we insert huge gaps of time in for fulfilment? These are questions that we **will return to when we come to chs. 7-8**, but we can say some things about them today.

The iron kingdom concludes (at least in the vision)¹⁶ at “**the feet and toes**” which are “**partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron**” (41). In other words, we are **many years into**

¹⁶ Obviously, if you take any of the Rome views, Rome continues long into the future.

the history of this iron kingdom. Something happens to it. “It shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle” (41-42).

Roman “Toes” (Ten Caesars)	Greek “Toes” (Alexander’s 10 States)
Julius (49 B.C. – 44 B.C.)	Ptolemaic Egypt
Augustus (27 B.C. – 14 A.D.)	Seleucia
Tiberius (14 A.D. – 37 A.D.)	Macedon
Caligula (37 A.D. – 41 A.D.)	Pergamum
Claudius (41 A.D. – 54 A.D.)	Pontus
Nero (54 A.D. – 68 A.D.)	Bithynia
Galba (68 A.D. – 69 A.D.)	Cappadocia
Otho (69 A.D., three months)	Armenia
Vitellius (69 A.D., eight months)	Parthia
Vespasian (69 A.D. – 79 A.D.)	Bactria
Terminus: Destruction of Jerusalem	Terminus: Birth of Christ (slightly after Greece is destroyed) ¹⁷

It is generally inferred that there are ten toes, even though it doesn’t actually say this, and that these ten toes correspond to what is in another vision ten horns. Under a

¹⁷ On Greek view: Hank Hanegraaff, *Has God Spoken? Proof of the Bible’s Divine Inspiration* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011), ch. 12; John Walton, “Four Kingdoms of Daniel,” *JETS* 29.1 (1986): 25-36, https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/article_daniel_walton.html; H. H. Rowley, *Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel: A Historical Study of Contemporary Theories* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1964), <https://www.amazon.com/Darius-Mede-World-Empires-Daniel/dp/159752896X>;

On the Roman view: Jay Rogers, *In the Days of These Kings: The Book of Daniel in Preterist Perspective* (Clermont, FL: Mesia House International, 2017), 53. <https://www.forerunner.com/daniel/structure-composition-and-authorship>; and most modern commentators.

Roman scheme, they are usually interpreted as the ten Caesars up until the destruction of Jerusalem. Increasingly, there was turmoil in the ranks of these dictators, with the last four being separated fully by less than two years. Under the Greek scheme, they refer to the ten states or districts that came about after Alexander the Great's untimely death. In a Dispensational view, they refer to a revived Roman Empire in days that are still in the future where something like 10 nations will join a union to usher in the Antichrist.

Vs. 42 adds that “the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle.” Calvin refers to “the general condition of the world” becoming worse “as men's vices and corruptions increase more and more.” The brittle nature of this kingdom it added to in the next verse, “As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay” (43). I want to spend a moment on this interesting verse.

Return of the Nephilim?

In the ESV, you can see that they seem to have some kind of intermarriage going on. Those who hold the Greek

view commonly see this as “marriages contracted between the Ptolemies and Seleucids” (11:6, 17). However, the expression need not be limited to marriages. ‘The figure of mixing by seed is derived from the sowing of the field with mingled seed, and denotes all the means employed by the rulers to combine the different nationalities, among which the *connubium* is only spoken of as the most important and successful means’ (Keil). However, this mixing together will fail.”¹⁸ The latter would thus be the Roman view.

However, in the last 20 years, another interpretation has arisen due to the KJV translation, and since I get asked about it from time to time, I wanted to address it. It says, “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” (Dan 2:43 KJV). This view keys in on the strange language “mingle themselves with the seed of men.” This futurist interpretation takes the “they” to be referring to angels and, ala Genesis 6:4, they are mixing with the seed of *men* and

¹⁸ Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 77.

therefore Daniel is predicting a return of the **Nephilim** in the last days.¹⁹

As far as the language goes, the KJV is correct to translate it as “**the seed of men.**” “**With one another**” is an interpretation. The ESV seems to get the idea of marriage from the word “**hold together**” which is found in **Gen 2:24** and means “**clinging**” to his wife. The preposition “with” could be translated that way, or it could also be “in” or “amongst,” so you could say they “**mingle themselves amongst the seed of man,**” which could be literal or metaphorical. Any way you look at it, this is **rather strange language**, and the Nephilim interpretation is using that to its advantage. If someone is doing this with the seed of mankind, it must mean they are *not* the seed of mankind.

There are **a couple of problems** with this. First, “mankind” is not the word “*adam*” but a more general term. Angels are often called “men.” So, importing angels here doesn’t really help if they, too, are “men.” Maybe green reptilians or something would? Of course, **that’s the second**

¹⁹ **Chuck Missler**, “The Return of the Nephilim? ‘And Also After That,’” *khouse.org* (Sept 1, 1997), <https://www.khouse.org/articles/1997/22/#notes>; You can find an overview of this at Tom **Horn** (overview of Missler at), “PART 18 – Forbidden Gates: How Genetics, Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Synthetic Biology, Nanotechnology, & Human Enhancement Herald the Dawn of Techno-Dimensional Spiritual Warfare,” *DefenderPublishing* (Oct 5, 2010): <http://defenderpublishing.blogspot.com/2010/10/part-18-forbidden-gates-how-genetics.html>.

problem. There are no green reptilians in this chapter or anywhere in the Bible. In fact, how you could even get angels from the context. “**Angels**” is said to come from the word “**they.**” “**They shall mingle with...**” Pronouns always have an antecedent noun to which they refer. In this case, it would either be part of the **toes or part of the feet.** But what are those?

We have seen that the **iron clearly refers to either kings or to their kingdoms.** The parts of the idols are human kingdoms, this is very clear. Interestingly, **vs. 44** seems to refer to them as **kings.** If taken as parallel to **vs. 43** it says, “**And in the days of those kings ...**” What kings? Presumably those mixing in the former verse. All of this would seem to be perfectly normal mixing.²⁰

But this is Daniel. I’ve made a big deal of the whole image for just this moment. This image *is* an idol and where there are idols, there are spiritual beings. Let me just say, I do not think the Nephilim view makes good sense of this passage,²¹ because if fallen angels are here, it is at best

²⁰ The Old Greek reads, “**They will be commixed into lines (races?) of humans.**” Theodotion reads, “**There will be commingling among the seed of humanity.**”

²¹ As for me, if the fulfillment of this passage takes place in the first century and not in our future, then it should be obvious that Nephilim are not involved, since there was no “return of the Nephilim” in the first century, save in the form of their disembodied demonic state, which Christ conquered easily. See below. A couple of interesting articles on this whole question are **Paradox Brown**, “No Nephilim in Bible Prophecy Part 2 – Dan 2:43,” *Nephilim Hybrids*,

indirectly through the whole image where there is a heavenly mirror of ruling angels over the nations. I am willing to think that this view is picking up on something that most commentators miss, which is that there may in fact be something supernatural here.

One points out, “*the seed of men ... is obviously chosen with reference to the following contrast to the divine Ruler.*”²² Though he probably doesn’t mean it this way, recall the *divine right of kings*. Where does their kingship come from? Why were kings considered divine? This is Daniel, a book where we have in the next chapter a “*son of the gods*” (Dan 3:25), in the next chapter “*watchers from heaven*” (Dan 4:13, 17, 23), in ch. 7 a divine council scene with “*thrones in heaven*” (7:9), in ch. 10 (importantly, since both kingdoms are in this idol) the angelic “*prince of Persia*” (10:13, 20) and “*prince of Greece*” (10:20), and of course Gabriel (8:16; 9:21) and Michael (10:13, 21; 12:1). The whole book is full of the heavenly assembly of the sons of

<http://www.nephilimhybrids.com/bible-prophecy/no-nephilim-in-dan-243/>; Paradox Brown, “No Nephilim in Bible Prophecy Part 3 – Dan 2:43 not even if ‘they’ were fallen angels,” *Nephilim Hybrids*, <http://www.nephilimhybrids.com/bible-prophecy/no-nephilim-dan-243-not-even-if-they-were-fallen-angels/>.

²² Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 9 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 560.

God. Therefore, it is not stretching it at all to think that there could be some kind of supernatural thing happening here.

If that's true, I could see [the mixing of families](#) into ever bigger kingdoms being inspired by supernatural entities' desire for ever more power in the corresponding heavenly realm. They stand behind the kingdoms, after all. They are the idol. They would be, as it were, mixing among the seed of mankind like a supernatural inciting of men to war and conquer and assimilate, which is precisely what we find happening from head to toe in this bizarre idol. I'll say more about why this matters later.

Summing up these views, the [two chief arguments](#) of the [Greece view](#) are 1. Without question, Alexander's conquest of the world was the most dominating war machine the world has ever known. He was only 32 when he died, and he had conquered more land than anyone in history. He was barely getting started. 2. His kingdom was "[divided](#)" [into states or districts](#). The best points of the Roman view are there are 10 Caesars up until the destruction of the temple and 2. The destruction of the temple in fact brought about the end of the old covenant or the end of an age. The Nephilim futuristic view is the only one that has anything supernatural in it, and this to me is important, given that we

are talking about an idol, but Nephilim are not returning our future because of a prophecy from this verse.

The Stone

At this point, we have to turn to what is by far **the most important feature of the dream**—the **stone**. No matter what view you take of the idol, the stone must and almost always does remain the same.²³ It says, “**And in the days of those kings that God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people**” (44). It hasn’t explained the stone yet, but it sets it up, for this stone is bringing with it **a kingdom**. This is **the kingdom of God**. It says that his kingdom is an **everlasting kingdom**. And this kingdom will not fall to someone after it. This is a direct prophecy against Nebuchadnezzar, for we have a sixth century B.C. text called the Uruk Prophecy which speaks of Nebuchadnezzar and says, “**After him his son will arise as king in Uruk and rule the entire world. He will exercise authority and kingship in Uruk and his dynasty**

²³ **Walton**, “Four Kingdoms of Daniel;” Keith Mathison, “Daniel’s Vision of the Son of Man,” *Ligonier* (July 1, 2020).

<https://www.ligonier.org/blog/coming-son-man-unfolding-biblical-eschatology/>. This is adapted from his book *From Age to Age* (P&R Publishing, 2014).

will stand forever. The kings of Uruk will exercise authority like the gods.”²⁴ It seems that God is telling the great king which prophecy will hold true. Here’s a hint. It isn’t Babylon’s.

It begins to identify the kingdom as the stone in a sense in the next words. “It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever.” But this kingdom has as its head a King. Daniel says, “Just as you saw that the stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure” (45). What is going on here?

To interpret this properly, we need to consider other prophecies in the OT. Let Scripture interpret itself. Isaiah predicted, “It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it” (Isa 2:2). The mountain is God’s kingdom, and in the prophecy the LORD is judging between the nations (4). He ends with a call to,

²⁴ John Joseph Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 171.

“Enter into the rock and hide in the dust from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty” (10).

What is this rock? It is none other than God. “The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he” (Dt 32:4). “Where are their gods, the rock in which they took refuge?” (Dt 32:37), that seems like a fitting question given how this idol vanishes into nothing.

Isaiah calls him a stone. “He will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (Isa 8:14). “Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste’” (Isa 28:16).

The Apostles tell us that these words are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. “The Rock was Christ” (1Co 10:4). Jesus told us that he is the stone of offense (Matt 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17). Peter told us he is the stone rejected (Acts 4:11; 1Pe 2:7). Paul told us that the one who believes in him shall never be put to shame (Rom 9:33). This is what Isaiah meant when he said enter into the rock and hide in the dust from

the terror of the Lord. For he is coming and with him is coming a kingdom.

Do you know that **the most discussed topic** of Jesus in the Gospels is the **kingdom of God**? 53 times we find that phrase in the Gospels. 32 more times we find “**kingdom of heaven**.” Jesus tells us that he came to bring this kingdom of God. He tells us that his kingdom is **not of this earth** (no human hands). He tells us that his kingdom **has come**, it is not in the future. We learn that **he is the King** of this kingdom and that any who trust in him will never be put to shame. He tells us that his kingdom is **eternal** and that it is more precious than gold or silver or silver. He tells us that he has **a people** that he will bring into this kingdom and nothing will be able to take them out of it.

Importantly, we learn that this all takes place, to use Daniel’s language, “**In the latter days**.” Peter uses the phrase, “**In the last days**” to talk about the events of his day in his very first sermon where he tells the world about Jesus the King of kings (**Acts 2:17ff**). Hebrews says, “**In these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things**” (**Heb 1:2**). To put this all another way, the fulfillment of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream **has already taken place** (through there is room for some kind of ongoing

fulfillment). It is not future, but past (hence, no Nephilim coming in our own future).

If you take [the Greek view](#) of this, these things happen after the last kingdom (Greece) is taken down. Jesus was born only a handful of years after Rome succeeded Greece as the world power. Many of the Fathers thought that [Jesus' virgin birth](#) was specifically what Daniel's interpretation pointed to. If you take the [Roman view](#), you are looking for the culmination of the kingdom at the "and of the age," that is the end of the old covenant, when God supernaturally ordained the destruction of the second temple in [70 A.D.](#) The last of the ten kings, [Vespasian](#), is the one responsible for its demise. But they are really the same thing, for these both deal with the First Coming of Jesus Christ in human flesh.

The futurist view, that is that Nebuchadnezzar's dream speaks of the rapture before the millennium, does [not](#) see this dream as fulfilled in Jesus' [First Coming](#). Sure, Jesus came and did all these vital things, but that isn't what Daniel is talking about, they say. Furthermore, it has to insert [huge gaps of time](#) between the fourth kingdom and the toes and feet when the stone crushes them. To me, this is unfortunate, because the greatest need of any hour is not to

speculate about the Second Coming, but to call people to **put their trust in the Jesus** who has already come. We will see when we come to Daniel 7 that he ushered it in at his death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and put it into pictorial form in the final destruction of the old covenant monument—the temple of Israel in 70 A.D.

You must **understand** the nature of this kingdom. It is **not a geo-political economic kingdom** of men, but a supernatural and spiritual kingdom that gives God's people citizenship in heaven. You need to **learn** that those trusting in Christ are citizens of this kingdom and that the reason it will not be left to other people is because they cannot attain to it or attack it or destroy it, for it is heavenly. You need to **see** that Christ conquered the supernatural powers behind the kingdoms of men, so that even if Rome continues (or America or whatever), the powers behind them (the idol) cannot harm God's people. **Satan cannot harm us!** Maybe not his person yet, but his power has been disintegrated, pulverized by the Rock that is becoming a mountain and is even now filling the whole earth.

You need to **trust** that no war, no revolution, no change of earthly kingdoms can ever harm our kingdom, because it is eternal. It outlasts Babylon, Greece, Rome, Spain, the

Netherlands, Britain, France, China, Russia, the United States. It is the only kingdom that endures; its God is Lord of time, powerful to bring it to pass, wise enough to predict its coming; its King has done all that a person needs to enter into it by faith alone. **Are you in the kingdom of Jesus Christ?** Have you confessed your sins and turned from the world's kingdoms, the gods of this age, and followed him? Humble yourself and pray to the Lord, the King of king. He will hear your prayer and answer quickly.

Neb's Exaltation of Daniel & his God (Dan 2:46-48)

All that is left in the story is the epilogue. It shows you that the king of Babylon had, let's call it a good start for a response. If the world's most powerful man can do that without having these things come to pass, certainly your response on this side of its fulfillment can be better. **His response falls into three stages.** First, he **humbled** himself. **"Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him"** (Dan 2:46). Daniel's boldness to even approach the king was incredible. But the king was not a believer and so he did so something wrong. He began

to worship Daniel! He forgot for a moment that God is the foundation, not this man. This was improper, for Daniel himself told the king that no human can reveal the dream of another man. But there is a God in heaven who can.

Next, Nebuchadnezzar recognized this and in the next verse **confessed Daniel's God**. “The king answered and said to Daniel, ‘Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery’” (47). At this point, the king is **not a true believer**, as will be made clear soon enough. He has a necessary but not sufficient condition for salvation—knowledge of the Most High. He had this knowledge revealed to him by a prophet. He now knows the power of a true God.

Finally, “The king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon” (48). This **sets the stage for the rest of the book**. Daniel is highly exalted (like Joseph before him). But high positions do not mean God's people will always live a life of luxury and peace. There is trouble ahead. Daniel and his friends must keep faith in Christ. That is what each Christian must remember all their days. Will you?

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