

- We are in one of **the great sections of the Word of God as far as prophecy** is concerned. The multi-metallic image (here in ch. 2), the four beasts (ch. 7), and the seventy weeks of Daniel (ch. 9) **form the backbone and ribs of biblical prophecy – especially END TIMES PROPHECIES.**
- Everything Jesus said in the **Olivet Discourse** (Matthew 24-25) 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). Jesus Himself authenticated this book, and the author. He is the ultimate authentication.
- **This prophetic chapter is basic to the understanding of all prophecy.** It is particularly unique because most of history or prophecy in the word is presented through the “lens” or eyes of Israel. This book, however, and especially this chapter (in fact chapters 2-7) are focused on Gentile history – **all of it, from that point forward to the end.**
- When Babylon captured the kingdom of Judah (the remaining southern kingdom of Israel), we began a **TEMPORARY period of time that we refer to as the “Times of the Gentiles.”** It is important to remember that this is a **temporary time.** It will end at the Second Coming of Jesus.



SOME (of many) SIGNS WE ARE APPROACHING “THE END TIMES:”

- The restoration of the Jews to Israel from the four corners of the world
 - the re-establishment of Israel as a Nation in 1948
 - the rebuilding of Jerusalem as a city, the re-control of Jerusalem during the 6-day war in 1967
 - the current Arab/Israeli conflict over Jerusalem and all the territory of Israel
 - the restoration of Europe as a conglomerate Gentile world power
 - AND many other signs, all indicators that we may be near the end of the Times of the Gentiles.
- In chapter two we have an **overview of the entire Times of the Gentiles.**

VARYING INTERPRETATIONS...Something new? For many years, as commentators and scholars attempted to interpret these passages, one particular interpretation was the accepted dominant understanding of these verses and their prophetic meaning. However, in recent years, perhaps mostly in the past decade or so, a different interpretation has surfaced, based mostly on current geo-political and religious conditions in our world, and on a decidedly eastern understanding of prophetic scriptures. Gentiles have notoriously viewed scripture through a “westernized” lens (western-centric), but with changing world conditions, it may be time to look at them more from the traditional eastern (Middle eastern) standpoint. We will present the prevailing “western” interpretation first, then offer information about a provocative alternate interpretation that seems to have some strength based on scripture, AND WORLD EVENTS. It is important to remember that the **entire book of Daniel is “sealed.”** God directed this, and has no doubt kept this book from being fully understood until the end times. That time appears to be now, and as our world changes, it may be time to revisit old interpretations as God reveals more and more understanding of the words of Daniel. Much of scripture prophecy is subject to that dangerous “speculation” of man. We must always line up all interpretations with actual scripture before we come to any conclusions. And even then, much can remain a mystery to us. We only have hindsight, but God has foresight. Some of the things prophesied in this book will only be understood after they have happened, or as they are happening. The Holy Spirit will show those who are looking and waiting on Him for their understanding.

¹*Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him.* ²*Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.*

- God **troubled the sleep** of Nebuchadnezzar. He had something to say to him and to the world. He spoke often to Nebuchadnezzar, through dreams, through Daniel, through experiences, and through his angels. Nebuchadnezzar was the ruler of the “world” at this time, and the Babylonian kingdom, the first true world empire, began the “Times of the Gentiles.”



- **ABOUT WORLD EMPIRES:** 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 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 could be

called a world empire, although they did influence the world as few nations have. The other great so-called empire was Assyria, but was short-lived, and not considered a complete “world empire.” Thus, Babylon is considered the first complete world empire (especially in God’s view).

- *“...the second year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign...”* This probably indicates a time prior to the close of the three-year preparation period of Daniel and his friends. They were apparently still in training since they were not summoned with the other wise men in verse 2 and seemed to know nothing of the entire situation in verses 14–15.
- *“...the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans...”* were different groups within the general category of wise men. They were men supposedly capable of giving wise counsel and could supposedly contact supernatural powers. They were all associated with the occult and pagan practices. (see the notes on chapter 1 for more information about these advisors.)
- We know that **these ancient detestable acts are still practiced today** – and are in fact, enjoying a resurgence. The “Tale of Two Cities” (Babylon and Jerusalem) has not ended yet. Here are just a few comments *(we could cite hundreds more)*:
 - *“The New Age is dominated by the spirit of Babylon.” (Hal Lindsey)*
 - *A news report estimated at least 300 of today’s Fortune 500 companies use astrologers in one way or another. (CNN news, 1996)*
 - *Abadie (a New York psychotherapist, psychic counselor, and professional astrologer) cites trade publications showing that Americans spend more than \$12 million per month calling psychic hotlines, an average of about 10,000 calls per day. (Jackson Sun Newspaper, 1996)*
- Remember, even the seemingly innocent practice of checking your daily horoscope is not innocent. It is an abomination! Why do anything that would possibly endanger you, or open a door to something dangerous, and anger God as well???

- The Bible records **numerous incidents where God imparted revelations to men by means of dreams and/or visions** (Gen 20:6–7; 28:12–15; 37:5–11; 41:1–7; Mt 1:20; 2:12, 19). Sometimes the intent of the dream was immediately apparent, as with those of Joseph in Genesis 37:5–11; but on other occasions the recipient might be uncertain as to its meaning. This occurred with Pharaoh (Gen 41:8), and also with Nebuchadnezzar in this instance. The usual custom was to employ men who would interpret the dreams; but if a dream was sent from God, the true meaning would also have to come from Him.

³And the king said to them, “I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream.”⁴Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, “O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation.”

- *“...and my spirit is anxious to know the dream.”* The king explains that he has had an unusual dream which he believes to have some significance. God made it clear the dream was important, but **Nebuchadnezzar knew nothing other than this**. He did not understand it, but knew he needed to know about it.
- 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 is quite logical that these passages would be written in the language of that day.
- The significance of this change is quite remarkable: God is now speaking to the world, not just to His nation. The subject here is a **worldwide kingdom**. God has determined an ultimate worldwide kingdom. This dream speaks about that which is global and not some local situation. Israel has gone into Babylonian captivity. God has caused a long interruption to the throne of David. Power is now 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.
- *“Tell your servants the dream...”* The wise men wanted to hear the dream so they could devise an interpretation to suit it. But perhaps Nebuchadnezzar sensed that on previous occasions the wise men had deceived him with “creative” explanations, so he refused to tell them the dream and demanded instead that *they tell him* so he could be sure they had the correct interpretation.
- Remember that **Nebuchadnezzar inherited the kingdom from his father**, Nabopolassar, including all the so-called “wise men.” It is likely that Nebuchadnezzar was a fairly young guy at this point, and did not trust these men. He believed, and rightly so, that they would say just about whatever they thought the king wanted to hear. This was probably **Nebuchadnezzar’s test** of these wise guys.

⁵The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, “My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap.”⁶“However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation.”

- The original KJV has a phrase included in verse 5 that is not included in other translations. Verse 5 in KJV reads: *“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.”* The missing section is *“the thing is gone from me.”* Some commentators indicate that this means that Nebuchadnezzar forgot the dream, or at least SAYS he forgot it (as a test).

- However, the word used for “thing” can also be interpreted as an ordinance, command or law. It could be interpreted, as other versions do as “this is the command or ordinance that has gone from me...” Notice in the NKJV they have used “My decision is firm...” and in NIV it is “This is what I have firmly decided...” Most commentators agree that “the thing” is his word, his decree. The dream was probably not easily forgotten.
- *“My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap.”* **Nebuchadnezzar is not fooling or exaggerating here.** He is prepared to do just as he says if these wise crackers can’t tell him his dream. Their cockiness earlier has most likely turned them into a cowering bunch of frauds who knew they were being asked to do the impossible. By law, what the king said could not be reversed. Now they are in really big trouble!
- *“However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor.”* Nebuchadnezzar is also prepared to lavish great gifts on them if they CAN tell him the dream. He really wanted to know what it meant, but he wanted to be sure he could trust the interpretation. It’s a very shrewd way of finding the truth and testing his fraudulent wise men.

⁷They answered again and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation.” ⁸The king answered and said, “I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: ⁹“if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation.”

- These so-called “wise men” are getting more than a little nervous now. They **realize that the king is serious**. They can’t believe what Nebuchadnezzar is asking of them, so they **ask him again** to tell them his dream and let them interpret it.
- *“...you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed.”* The king really reveals here his lack of confidence in the wise men of Babylon. They probably had failed him on previous assignments, as many other Old Testament false prophets had done. Nebuchadnezzar apparently believes these men have been feeding him a bunch of baloney, 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,...and they are most likely frauds! (which of course, they are.) He gives his ultimatum one more time.

¹⁰The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, “There is not a man on earth who can tell the king’s matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. ¹¹“It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.”

- 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. In some ways, this is an admission that they are nothing but imposters.
- Even the pagans sometimes know and say the truth. Here is one – **the gods do not dwell among men** (New Agers today would disagree, arguing that WE are gods). What they are saying is that they have no communication with heaven, the source of all information. They have no relationship with the One true God, who by the power of His Holy Spirit, does indeed dwell with men. Only one who has this relationship will be able to report and interpret this dream. The wise men don’t think this is possible. It certainly is not possible for them.

¹²For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave a command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. ¹³So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.

- *“...the king was angry and very furious, and gave a command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.”* The king’s **decree includes Daniel and his friends**. Although they are just being trained, they are being taught by the same crowd in which the king has now lost confidence. This angry and impulsive order to destroy the wise men of Babylon (which secular history reveals is typical for this king) is going to take in a great many men who were really innocent and who could not be held responsible. But Nebuchadnezzar could, and would, do what he wanted to. His word was law.
- **Nebuchadnezzar’s violent reaction is probably a sign that he knows the importance of the dream** and desperately wants an interpretation. The wise men could not give it to him, so he responded in anger and frustration. He may also have had previous occasion to distrust his cadre of “advisors.” But his actions are also a sign of his **well-known temper and sometimes unreasonable actions**. Some commentators think it is a sign of his coming “psychosis” which we will see in chapter 4. This may or may not be true. Nebuchadnezzar was the world’s most powerful man, and that kind of absolute power goes quickly to your head, as it did with Nebuchadnezzar. Besides that, from what we read in chapter 4, God brought on this so-called psychosis, which was a sudden condition for this king.
- *“...and they began killing the wise men...”* It is likely that some of the advisors to the king did in fact lose their lives before the guards got to Daniel.

¹⁴Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon; ¹⁵he answered and said to Arioch the king’s captain, “Why is the decree from the king so urgent?” Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel. ¹⁶So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation.

- *“...with counsel and wisdom...”* This describes how Daniel addressed Arioch. Much of Daniel’s favor with those around him had to do with his great tact, diplomacy, gentle nature, but uncompromising stand on the truth.
- **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 state police of that day—and, naturally, is often in the presence of the king.
- *“So Daniel went in and asked the king...”* These words make it appear as if Daniel merely strolled into the presence of Nebuchadnezzar. No one would do this. It would mean death, if not handled appropriately. Arioch may have arranged for Daniel to approach the king, but no matter how it happened, Daniel **got an audience with Nebuchadnezzar—this alone is an amazing fact and shows he is already in favor**—and he requested the king give him time to tell him the dream. This seems presumptuous; in fact, it seems very brash and even a bit arrogant at first. However, succeeding events will reveal that it was the confidence of a young man with a strong faith in God.



- Daniel asked for time (we are not told how much) **and promised that he would interpret the dream.** Daniel promised all this by faith. He knew that only God could give him what others could not produce.
- **COMMENTARY: Daniel needed time, not to look up answers in a dream manual, consult the stars, or the nearest psychoanalyst, but to do what all of us should do in tense situations, and that is to pray!** (D. Jeremiah/C.C. Carlson)
- We're going to see another very important aspect of Daniel's role model in a moment.

¹⁷Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, ¹⁸that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

- Notice that **Daniel's friends are still referred to by their Hebrew names** (even though this text is now in Aramaic – the common language of Babylon) –this is a reminder that these young men are still Jews, and still followers of Yahweh – the only true God. The God who reveals – the God who truly listens and answers prayers (not a god of wood, stone, iron or bronze).
- *“...that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven...”* The expression “the God of heaven” is found only in the books of the captivity, including Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel. After the departure of the glory of God from Jerusalem, from the Holy of Holies in the temple (see Ezekiel 10) He was addressed as “the God of heaven.”
- That they would desire *“mercies”* reveals the basis of their prayers. God does not answer prayer because of the worth, the effort, the character or the works of the one praying. All prayer rests on His mercy, and these young men knew this. What a role model – all of them!!

¹⁹Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision.

- That night Daniel and his three friends spent some time in prayer, and then apparently they went to bed and fell asleep still with no answer to give the king. What faith they must have had to be able to sleep that night. They knew what fate awaited them if they didn't come up with the right answer.
- Like Daniel, we must remember to pray as the first resort, not the last, and then rest and wait on Him to provide the answer. We must also not forget to thank God when He graciously answers our requests.
- God's revelation came to Daniel **in a night vision**, indicating that he had gone to sleep. Daniel immediately thanked the Lord for answering his prayer.
- The word for “secret” here means something hidden. The answers and interpretation that Daniel sought from God were hidden to everyone else. Only God can reveal what is hidden. Quite often He is the one doing the hiding!

So Daniel blessed the God of heaven. ²⁰Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His. ²¹And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. ²²He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him. ²³“I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, And have now made known to me what we asked of You, For You have made known to us the king's demand.”

- This is one of the several recorded prayers of Daniel. **Daniel was a man of purpose, a man of prayer, and a man of prophecy.** God alone revealed this secret to Daniel, and this is his tremendous prayer of thanksgiving. Now, only after thanking and praising God, Daniel is ready to go in and ask for another audience with the king.
- Daniel’s prayer tells a lot about the way we should pray. He first **blessed** God for who He was. He recounted some of God’s attributes and activities before specifically mentioning his own thanksgiving. Godly prayer should include both adoration and asking. We shouldn’t be in such a hurry to ask for our favors that we forget this. God is not a spiritual vending machine.
- Notice that this is a **7-fold praise**. Daniel praised God because He is in **absolute control** of
 - 1) the **times and seasons** – He can end one age and begin another
 - 2) **kings and rulers** – He can raise them up or bring them down - We must always remember that God is always in control. Daniel fully realized this and for this reason was not overly-concerned about the seemingly tragic situation in which he found himself.
 - 3) **Wisdom** – he can give people the ability to rightly use their knowledge
 - 4) **Knowledge** – He can impart information and the ability to learn**And he praised Him because absolutely nothing is hidden from God**
 - 1) He reveals deep and complex secrets
 - 2) He reveal hidden things that no one else knows
 - 3) He is the source of all revelation and enlightenment
- The writer of Hebrews stated all this: *“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”* (Hebrews 4:13)
- Nebuchadnezzar’s wise men were completely in the dark, but God provides the light that reveals all knowledge and exposes all secrets. He IS the light!
- There is something important for us to remember here, a **pattern for our own prayers**. Think of what Daniel did as a 4-step formula (**can call it the 4-P’s**) for prayer today:
 1. **PARTNERS** – he told his friends what was going on and asked them to pray with him
 2. **PRAYER** – They prayed together for the answers they needed
 3. **PATIENCE** – They waited (actually rested!) for God to provide the answer
 4. **PRAISE** – They praised God for the answer
- Daniel’s problem moved him to PRAYER. The answer that he got moved him to **PRAISE**. And the opportunity moved him to **ACTION**. That should be a constant reminder for us.
- **COMMENTARY: Times and seasons are not under the control of chance, but are regulated by established laws; yet God, who appointed these laws, has power to change them, and all the changes which occur under these laws are produced under his power and control.** (Oliver Greene)
- Notice how Daniel says to God that He has *“... now made known to me what we asked of You,...”* He is not taking the credit. He knew that God’s answer was not just in response to his own prayer, but to those also of his friends. **This is an important note** – we must always give credit and thanks to those who pray for and with us.

²⁴Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: “Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation.”²⁵Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, “I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation.”

- Daniel's great concern for others is shown in his first words to Arioch, **don't destroy the wise men**. He could have merely worried about his own life, but he was concerned for all of them. These so-called wise men literally owed their lives to Daniel, but their appreciation was short-lived as we will see in chapters 3 and 6.
- It doesn't appear as if Arioch has any desire to kill these wise men either. But he is probably as afraid of Nebuchadnezzar as everyone else was. He seems excited about Daniel's request. Arioch rushes Daniel into the presence of the king with the good news that the dream will be revealed.
- **Arioch seems to be taking the credit for finding Daniel** (most commentators point this out), and perhaps he was. Some have called this bureaucratic "humility" – but it is probable Arioch was greatly relieved at the possibility of not having to "off with their heads!" Notice that **he brought in Daniel "quickly" to the king**. He wants to side-step this nasty task.

²⁶The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?"

- Quite obviously, and logically, the king was probably rather skeptical. All of these wise men had not been able to come up with the dream and its interpretation, but here comes this young kid Daniel who says *he* will be able to. In essence, the king asks him, "Do you mean to tell me that all the other wise men had no answer, but you think you can answer me? Maybe this is just another attempt of the wise men to stall for time!" The wise men were not in very good graces at this time. Remember that Nebuchadnezzar probably inherited these guys, and did not trust them.
- However, we must also remember Nebuchadnezzar's **favorable impression of Daniel** and his friends after their "testing" from their 3-year course in the king's class of servants – AND the fact that Daniel was granted an audience with Nebuchadnezzar to request time to interpret the dream.
- By asking Daniel this question, the king is really asking "**Was YOUR God able to help you?** Did he hear YOUR prayers? Is YOUR God more powerful and wiser than the gods of the astrologers and wisemen of Babylon? Well, the answer is, quite frankly – YES!

²⁷Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. ²⁸"But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.

- Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that no one can declare to the king what he wants to know, not even him. However, **now Daniel introduces Nebuchadnezzar to "the God in heaven"** – the real God, the only one who can reveal secrets. He is essentially qualifying these "Chaldeans" as frauds, which is exactly what Nebuchadnezzar suspected – but notice now tactful Daniel is!
- Notice that **Daniel takes absolutely NO CREDIT for this interpretation**. He gives all the credit to his God in heaven. Something we should remember: **GOD IS JEALOUS OF HIS GLORY!** When He does something, He expects the glory!
- Also, this could be considered a **mild rebuke to the king**. Daniel certainly has a lot of courage – which translates into FAITH.
- Daniel immediately makes a **distinction between the wisdom of Babylon and the wisdom of God**.

- We should be reminded of what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:18-20 and 25: *“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.’ Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ...For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength.”*
- Daniel now has the unique **privilege of introducing this pagan king to the living and true God**. He says, *“But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.”* This last phrase is very important because it is going to be the **emphasis in the Book of Daniel**; this dream refers to the times of the Gentiles – all the way from that day to the end of Gentile times.
- **LATTER DAYS**: This is a phrase which is used 14 times in the Old Testament: 3 X in regard to the Messianic age; 4X in regard to Israel, 4X in regard to the 2nd Coming of Jesus, and 3X in regard to Magog (in some Bibles the term “last days” is used). It is obvious that Daniel is referring to the last days before the 2nd Coming of Jesus – a time in which many believe we live now.
- **TIMES OF THE GENTILES**: “The times of the Gentiles” is from the day of Nebuchadnezzar right on down through our day until the Lord comes to reign. The **“latter days”** basically refers to the future, with special reference to the coming of the Messiah (Heb 1:1–2) and the establishment of His kingdom (Micah 4:1–8). 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. *“They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”* (Luke 21:24)
- We should note that the term, “the times of the Gentiles,” is different than 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 fullness of the Gentiles be come in.”* **The fullness of the Gentiles ends with the removal 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 removal of the Church and *precede* the Great Tribulation. **“The times of the Gentiles” will continue into the Great Tribulation**, and at that time God will again turn His attention back to the nation Israel.
- **An interesting prophecy in Hosea**: *“For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or idol. Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the LORD and to his blessings in the last days.”* (Hosea 3:4-5) This is an indication of the fulfillment of God’s plan, His dispensation for Israel that will most likely happen during the Tribulation (evidence of this in Zechariah 10-12).

²⁸ *...Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: ²⁹“As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be.*

- Daniel makes it very clear that no MAN can give Nebuchadnezzar the answer he needs, but only the “God in heaven” (unlike all other gods).
- **Daniel calls his God the one who reveals secrets**. This phrase is repeated a number of times in this book. He is indeed the only One who can always reveal any secrets, literally something hidden.

³⁰ *“But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.*

- Daniel was quick to inform Nebuchadnezzar that it was **God in heaven**, and not himself, who was going to reveal to the king **what will be in the latter days**. It is not Daniel's wisdom – it is God's. Daniel is making it very clear that he is not to get the praise or glory for any interpretation. This belongs to God alone.
- God had something to say, and for this reason only was the dream revealed. God used Daniel, a very willing vessel, to bring this incredibly important information to not only Nebuchadnezzar but to the entire world. Daniel also indicates that God is providing the answer for their personal benefit (to spare their lives) as well.
- This may also be seen as a **rebuke** for this great, temperamental world leader. Daniel is showing a great deal of courage here, setting Nebuchadnezzar straight, showing him exactly Who is in control.

³¹***You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome.***

- No more chit chat. Daniel immediately launches into telling Nebuchadnezzar his dream.
- Nebuchadnezzar was troubled as he lay in bed at night, wondering what the future held. Although he started out as a minor world player, he now finds himself the greatest world ruler. And his thoughts turned into a frightening, confusing dream. Daniel stated that the king had stood before and contemplated a great magnificent statue of a man.
- The word used here for **“awesome”** is translated as **“terrible”** in the King James Version. The Chaldean word is *dechal*, which literally means formidable, terrifying, dreadful and inspiring fear. It is no wonder Nebuchadnezzar was so anxious to know about it. “Dechal” is a form of “zachal” in Hebrew and means literally to *fearfully creep away* from something, to crawl in a timid manner. “Dechal” is only used in the book of Daniel, a number of times, to describe apparently very incredible, terrifying images seen in the various dreams and visions here. - **this image elicited terror**—it was awe-inspiring. It was glamorous, terrific, and stupendous.
- Great images were something Nebuchadnezzar could relate to. Remember that Babylon is the cradle of all pagan religions, the occult and every other form of evil religious practice can be traced to Babylon. This image was not to be worshipped, but I am sure that Nebuchadnezzar had seen a few such things in his day. It was always the practice of pagan kings to have images erected to their own glory. There is a great deal of archeological evidence to support this. We have pictures of grand edifices and statues erected in honor of kings and great warriors. But this statue was more terrifying and fear-inducing than anything he had seen before.
- **Remember also that God is speaking now to Nebuchadnezzar in his own language, the language of the Gentile world then.** God wants Nebuchadnezzar to understand this dream, but He also wants the entire world to understand. This dream relates to the whole of Gentile history.
- We may assume that there is probably some sort of **relationship between this image and the one we'll see in Chapter 3**. *“King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.”* (Daniel 3:1) If chapter 3 is any indication, this bright metallic image may have been as tall as a ten-story building (3:1). It was, however, not only majestic, but also terrifying and troubling. What Nebuchadnezzar erected in chapter 3 probably does not compare with what he saw in his dream. This is no man-made image.

³²“This image’s head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,
³³“its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. ³⁴“You watched while a stone was cut out
without hands, which 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 were crushed together, and became like chaff
from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found.
And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

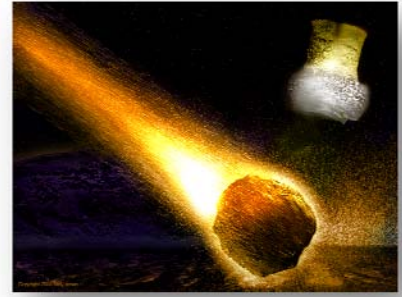
- **We can immediately see some very interesting facts about this strange image:**

The image was composed of four different metals:

- (1) the head was made of gold;
- (2) the breast and arms of silver;
- (3) the belly and thighs of bronze; and
- (4) the legs of iron, with clay mixed in at the feet

- **The image was top heavy.** The atomic weight of gold (197.2) is far heavier than that of silver (107.88), or bronze which is composed mainly of copper (63.57) and tin (118.70). Iron’s number on the periodic table is even less (55.85). In addition, these metals not only **decrease in value from top to bottom**, but also diminish in splendor and glory. However, they increase in overall strength, until the feet.
- This image indicates a continual deterioration in world empires.
 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.
 2. The **specific gravity** (and atomic weights) of the metals: each metal shows deterioration
 3. The **position** of each metal: the head has more honor than the feet.
 4. The specific *statement of Scripture*: “**And after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to you**” (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 (2 arms are Medes and Persians, lots of infighting – first Medes ruled, then Persians). The Babylonian Empire was strong because there was no division. The Graeco-Macedonian (Greek) Empire begins with one, but soon is divided into four. Rome has two legs of iron (Roman Empire was subsequently split into “2” empires, or areas of one empire under different leaders, but it eventuates into ten toes which are composed of both iron and clay. The more divisions, the weaker a world power.
- As each empire decreases in value and solidarity, they also INCREASE IN STRENGTH. This was true historically. **Rome was the strongest, most barbaric and cruel of all.**
- **DEFINITE CORRELATION TO CHAPTER 7:** Many commentators compare this statue at this point with the vision of the beasts in chapter 7. We don’t want to cause confusion here with such a comparison. It is important that we completely understand this statue and its implications before we see the vision of Daniel in chapter 7. Right now, just keep in mind that they **DO correlate**. The greatest distinction is that in chapter 2, the vision shows the kingdoms through a Gentile human’s eyes – splendid metals, shiny awesome terrifying image. In chapter 7, the same kingdoms are seen through God’s eyes, much later in the time of the Jewish captivity, and they are portrayed as horrible beasts. Interesting contrast.
- “*...while a stone was cut out without hands...*” This phrase indicates that the stone is not of human making. It is not a human empire or government. This is God-made, or divine origin.

- **WHAT, OR WHO, IS THIS STONE?** From The Old to the New Testaments, the Messiah Yeshua is referenced as the “stone” and the “rock.” **Jesus is the Stone**, the living Stone, the foundation of our faith: *“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.”* (1 Corinthians 3:11) Deuteronomy chapter 32 is full of references to God being the Rock of our salvation. The ROCK – Jesus Christ – is found throughout scripture. Both in terms of safety and in terms of judgment. **The Stone is one of many figures of speech** in Scripture which speak of the Messiah in His office as both Savior and Judge. He is the **Rock of salvation**, and He is the **Rock of judgment**.



--*“I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.”* (Deuteronomy 43:3-4)

--*“Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; filled with food, he became heavy and sleek. He abandoned the God who made him and rejected the Rock his Savior. They made him jealous with their foreign gods and angered him with their detestable idols. They sacrificed to demons, which are not God-- gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear. You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth.”* (Deuteronomy 32:15-18)

--*“There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.”* (1 Samuel 2:2)

--*“He said: “The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior...”* (2 Samuel 22:2-3) (Read this whole chapter – it is a blessing.)

--In Psalm 27 the Rock is our fortress, our safety in times of trouble. (Psalm 18 mirrors the words of 2 Samuel 22 – Ps 28, 31, etc. all refer to Rock – throughout book of Isaiah, and many other places)

--In the New Testament, Matthew 7, we have the beautiful and practical story of building our houses either on sand or on the Rock. The scriptural concept of Jesus as the Rock of both salvation and judgment are commonly repeated throughout the Bible.

- **Jesus is the Stone, and the Rock.** Scriptures tell us that we can either fall on Him (*that is to give ourselves completely to Him in faith and life*) and be broken (a sinner, contrite, with nothing to offer) but also to be protected by Him, OR the Stone itself will fall on us, and we will indeed be broken, crushed and taken by the enemy.

--Isaiah says this: *“The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; Let Him be your fear, And let Him be your dread. He will be as a sanctuary, But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense To both the houses of Israel, As a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble; They shall fall and be broken, Be snared and taken.”* (Isaiah 8:13-15)

--Peter declares this and combines it with other Old Testament scriptures (this is the New Century Version, where Old Testament scriptures are identified in the text): *“Come to the Lord Jesus, the “stone” that lives. The people of the world did not want this stone, but he was the stone God chose, and he was precious. You also are like living stones, so let yourselves be used to build a spiritual temple—to be holy priests who offer spiritual sacrifices to God. He will accept those sacrifices through Jesus Christ. The Scripture says: “I will put a stone in the ground in Jerusalem. Everything will be built on this important and precious rock. Anyone who trusts in him will never be disappointed.” — Isaiah 28:16 This stone is worth much to you who believe. But to the people who do not believe, “the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.” — Psalm 118:22 Also, he is “a stone that causes people to stumble, a rock that makes them fall.” — Isaiah 8:14 They stumble because they do not obey what God says, which is what God planned to happen to them.”* (1 Peter 2:4-8 NCV)

- **COMMENTARY:** Either you are going to come to that Stone (for salvation and safety), or that Stone is coming to you (for judgment). 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. (McGee)
- *"...were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found..."* While Nebuchadnezzar watched the image in awe and wonder, the stone, coming from beyond the environment of the image and without human origin or motivation, struck the image on the feet of iron and clay with such force that all the metals were pulverized. Then a wind blew the dust of the image away, so that it entirely disappeared. This tells us that **ALL EARTHLY KINGDOMS WILL BE DESTROYED IN A MOMENT**. There will be no trace of the former human governments ever again. (*thank Him for that!*)
- *"And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."* The stone began to grow as a living stone, and it filled the whole world, taking the place of this image. God's forordained government has now replaced all of human government. His domain is the entire earth. His Kingdom will fill the world. His intended ruler, Yeshua HaMashiach (the Messiah) will reign. **This was not the case with His first coming, - THE STONE DID NOT FILL THE WHOLE EARTH THEN -** but it awaits fulfillment after His glorious Second Coming.

³⁶*"This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king.* ³⁷*"You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; ³⁸"and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold.*

- *"This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation ..."* Daniel has just finished relating the dream back to Nebuchadnezzar. Notice the word "we" here. Daniel is either referencing himself and his friends (who prayed with him for the answers), or he is referencing himself and God in the "we." Either way, he is not claiming the glory for this.
- Nebuchadnezzar is said to be a "king of kings" – that is, he is the first complete world ruler, a king above all other kings, but it is not by Nebuchadnezzar's hand or doing – **IT IS BECAUSE GOD HAS GIVEN THE ENTIRE WORLD TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR!** It is interesting he is given a title we believe is reserved for the Messiah when He reigns. God is bracketing history here. This nutshell rendition of Gentile history begins with a "king of kings," but is ultimately replaced by THE "King of Kings."
- Daniel immediately began to interpret the dream. The different metals represent world empires. Nebuchadnezzar is identified as the head of gold. He was the first great world leader, as God identified him. He exercised rulership over the then-known world. No one questioned his authority. His was an absolute monarchy, and as far as world powers, he is without equal. (Others have tried to attain this place, but none have.) However, he did not reach this position by his own prowess or power. God brought him here for His own purpose. We must keep that in our minds throughout the study of this book, and throughout our lives here.

--Through Jeremiah God said: *"...the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Tell this to your masters: With my great power and outstretched arm I made the earth and its people and the animals that are on it, and I give it to anyone I please. Now I will hand all your countries over to my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; I will make even the wild animals subject to him. All nations will serve him and his son and his grandson until the time for his land comes; then many nations and great kings will subjugate him. " ` "If, however, any nation or kingdom will not serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon or bow its neck under his yoke, I will punish that nation with the sword, famine and plague, declares the LORD, until I destroy it by his hand. So do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your interpreters of dreams, your mediums or your sorcerers who tell you, 'You will not serve the king of Babylon.' They prophesy lies to you that will only serve to remove you far from your lands; I will banish you and you will perish. But if any nation will bow its neck*

under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will let that nation remain in its own land to till it and to live there, declares the LORD.” (Jeremiah 27:4-11)

- **God** made Nebuchadnezzar the one at the top; He made him the first great world ruler, and there has been none like him since then.
- *“...you are this head of gold.”* Daniel identifies Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom Babylon, as the interpretation of the head of gold on the stature Nebuchadnezzar saw. The Babylonian empire represents the first empire on this image of human Gentile government.

³⁹“But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

- *“But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours ...”* 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.
- There are **three kingdoms** mentioned in this verse. “Yours” is a reference to Babylon. That is the first kingdom represented on the statue, and we already know that identity. The **arms of silver represent Media and Persia**. In Daniel 5:28 we are told the future of the Babylonian kingdom: *“Your kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”* (This was the great scene in the dining hall in chapter 5, the writing on the wall) We don’t need to speculate as to who the second kingdom is.
- Remember that Daniel lived in both the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar and the kingdom of Media-Persia. The inferior 2nd kingdom (silver) refers to the Medo-Persian Empire that captured Babylon in about 539 B.C. The Medes and the Persians were one combined nation at that time, though their infighting really didn’t stop. This kingdom eventually became known simply as the Persian Empire.
- **The third kingdom** would be a kingdom of **brass** and would “bear rule over all the earth.” Logically and historically, this is the **Graeco-Macedonian (Greek) Empire**. This was historically fulfilled in the conquests of Alexander the Great of Greece who conquered Asia Minor, defeating the Persians in the process, and then took control of Syria and Egypt before proceeding even as far as India by the year 323. B.C. We will hear much more about Alexander’s conquests later in this book. So much more that these prophecies have become the target of late-daters (*those who try to say that the book of Daniel was written about the 2nd century BC*). They cannot accept such precise and accurate historical prophecies, the most startling in all the Bible to secular historians.
- **Many people will raise the logical question of “what about other kingdoms, like the Chinese dynasties?”** We must always remember, and this is key when interpreting Biblical prophecy, the Bible states that Jerusalem and Israel are the center of God’s world – the world as He sees it. Ezekiel tells us what God says about this: *“This is what the Lord GOD says: This is Jerusalem. I have put her at the center of the nations with countries all around her.”* (Ezekiel 5:5) The Bible does not deal with nations that do not impact God’s plan for Israel, and eventually for the whole earth. Other powers, empires, and dynasties have come and gone. They will not be referenced in scripture unless they have some role in God’s overall plan for human government, AS IT REVOLVES AROUND HIS CENTER, JERUSALEM. This is a critical point, and one to remember as we interpret all of prophecy, and will come into play when we present some alternate views as to the interpretation of the legs (the 4th empire) of this statue. We must keep a “middle east centric” position when we look at Bible prophecy regarding nations and empires, and especially as we interpret prophecy. Jerusalem is at the center of the earth as far as God is concerned. Historical earthly kingdoms will only be referenced if they play roles in the execution of God’s plan for Israel, and the eventual establishment of His kingdom on earth. DON’T FORGET THIS!!!

⁴⁰“And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

- This is a remarkable passage of Scripture. **More attention is directed to this fourth kingdom** than to the other three kingdoms put together. **The fourth kingdom**, represented by the iron legs, would be extremely strong, yet of less value (inferior) than the other kingdoms. The most accepted and traditional interpretation of this 4th empire is that the legs of the statue were fulfilled by the Roman Empire, which eventually and gradually filled the vacuum in the period of the Greek decline before the birth of Christ. (Remember the declining value, and increasing strength. Rome was all of this.) We are going to proceed here with this traditional interpretation that Rome is the 4th empire. Keep in mind, however, that there may be another interpretation. We will present the information about Rome first, then offer you some interesting material to consider.



- The Roman Empire was by far the most brutal of all world empires. They killed with barbaric savagery. They did not leave cities intact when they conquered the world, they destroyed them, and the people. As the image decreased in value and splendor, it increased in strength - an **indication of military strength**. Rome was a vast world empire, and it followed the Greek Empire, so this seems to be a logical identity for the 4th empire represented in the awesome statue.
- **ONLY 4 KINGDOMS: This is important to note.** Many people get confused and think this prophecy deals with 5 kingdoms. But if you look carefully, you will see that only 4 are portrayed (this is important to keep in mind when we get to chapter 7). It is important to note that there are only four—there is no fifth kingdom, if we interpret the legs as one kingdom. The period of the fourth kingdom is where we are today. The feet, which are mixed iron and clay, are an extension of the 4th kingdom (the Roman Empire). This is why many eschatologists teach the revival of the Roman Empire, which is something that is happening today, right before our eyes. (European Union). The legs take of up more of the statue than any of the other “body parts” identified as empires. This may indicate that this last world empire will last longer than the others, which in fact it did.
- **The general consensus is that 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 Rome was conquered from its weakness within. No physical enemy destroyed Rome. It was broken up into smaller various dominions, ALL of which tried to be the king of the hill – they all tried for world domination – but no one ever attained it. Attila the Hun ransacked Rome, but so awestruck by what he saw that he realized he could not handle it - and left town. The Roman Empire fell apart from within—no enemy destroyed it.
- Rome is viewed as living in the great nations of Europe and North Africa today: Italy, France, Great Britain, Germany, and Spain are all part of the old Roman Empire. The Russian word “czar” is translated as “Caesar.” The German “Kaiser” is also “Caesar.”

- There are remnants of the old Roman Empire everywhere in our world today, including the democratic form of government. The actual boundaries of the Roman Empire are being rebuilt through the European Union. This is why the term “revived Roman Empire” is used so often today. The old Roman Empire didn’t die, but is found everywhere and will be revived. **Many commentators spend a great deal of time here discussing the workings and history of the EU**, but we won’t do that. Keep in mind, however, that it is happening. Just watch the headlines and news reports. The European Union is alive and well, and shaping itself into an empire again. At the same time, the United Nations is becoming more and more active and assertive.
- 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 and is considered the language of science (medical, biological, botanical and other terms are based on Latin). Her warlike spirit lives on also: Europe has been at war ever since the empire broke up into these kingdoms.
- **COMMENTARY: “...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...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.”** (McGee)
- **The Antichrist**, or the Man of Sin (he is called by about 35 different names in Scripture), is the one thought to bring back the Roman Empire. He will be a world dictator—he will rule the world just as Nebuchadnezzar did at the beginning (see Revelation 13). That is an ideal form of government (for strength and unity), but the wrong man is at the top!
- The **fourth kingdom is the kingdom of the latter days** – from the beginning of the original Roman Empire to today. 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 will be in the latter days.

⁴¹“Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay.
⁴²“And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. ⁴³“As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

- The ten toes of this statue correspond to ten kings ruling simultaneously in the end times. We know this from Revelation, which states: *“The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast.”* (Revelation 17:12). The ten toes of the statue correspond to the ten horns of the beast, and ten kings.
- In **Daniel dream of chapter 7**, by comparing verse 44 with chapter 7 we see there are four beasts that represent these same four kingdoms. The fourth beast (ch. 7:7) had ten horns, corresponding to the ten toes of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. These horns are clearly identified as ten kings.
- In the feet, clay is mixed with the iron (clay weakens iron!), which is the last form of the final world kingdom. The meaning of the combined clay and iron has been argued for centuries. It may be the combining of two disparate “kingdoms,” but clay always stands for mankind in scripture. So perhaps it stands for the brutal strength of authority mixed with the weakness of sinful human masses.

- People are different today – they believe they have all the answers. Instead of relying on the strength of God, they rely on their own strength, which is no strength at all. So the brute strength of any ruler is weakened by the great mass of human opinions, desires, and sinfulness during the latter days empire. It may also represent that these toes are not united. They probably represent different races, cultures and religious beliefs that will keep them divided, even though they are in one “empire.”
- There is another **very controversial opinion** about these verses. Notice the phrase “...*they will mingle with the seed of men...*” This should remind us of another such “mingling” that took place in Genesis 6 between the “daughters of men” and the “sons of God,” often interpreted as being fallen angels uniting with human females to produce a hybrid, evil race. Many believe God brought the flood because of this great evil. Jesus said the end times would be “as it was in the days of Noah” (Luke 17:26) The days of Noah were those days just prior to the flood, which Genesis 6 speaks of - days of incredible wickedness. For this reason, some people believe that the same conditions present then will also be present on earth during the end times, and may in fact be what verse 43 implies – the presence and intermingling of fallen angels (demons) with mankind, thus the iron and clay. There are many, many ideas about this verse. Most likely, at least on the first take, it will also mean a very disparate kingdom of various peoples.

ANOTHER APPROACH TO INTERPRETING THE LEGS OF IRON...

Okay, we’ve kept you in suspense long enough. It’s time to reveal a relatively new, yet biblically sound and currently relevant alternate idea to the identity of the legs of iron in the statue. This idea is predominantly advocated by a man named Joel Richardson, though many other respected Bible scholars agree with his thoughts. “Joel Richardson” is his “pen name” to protect his real identity, his life and his family. Because of what this man suggests, his life is in constant danger. We will try to present these ideas “in a nutshell” (a very small nutshell!), just to get the ideas across.

It is important to remember that the entire book of Daniel is “sealed.” God directed this, and has no doubt kept this book from being fully understood until the end times. That time appears to be now, and as our world changes, it may be time to revisit old interpretations as God reveals more and more understanding of the words of Daniel. Much of scripture prophecy is subject to that dangerous “speculation” of man. **We must always line up all interpretations with actual scripture before we come to any conclusions.** And even then, much can remain a mystery to us. We only have hindsight, but God has foresight. Some of the things prophesied in this book will only be understood after they have happened, or as they are happening. The Holy Spirit will show those who are looking and waiting on Him for their understanding.

Most of us approach the Bible as if it is a “western technical manual.” We are westerners through and through, and naturally have this view. However, it is critical that we acknowledge the Bible as an ancient NEAR EASTERN BOOK. As such, most prophecies there are written as ancient near-eastern prophecy. We also need to understand the layered meanings and dual fulfillments of many prophetic passages. Those from the Middle East today have a much different “take” on Biblical prophecy that we tend to have. We can learn a great deal from them. Also, as we mentioned before, God views Jerusalem as the center of His world. We are dealing therefore with prophecies about nations and empires that surround Israel, AND ARE DIRECTLY RELATED TO HER FUTURE AND PAST.

TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION

HEAD OF GOLD
BABYLON
B.C. 605-539

ARMS AND CHEST OF SILVER
PERSIA
B.C. 539-332

BELLY AND THIGHS OF BRASS
GREECE
B.C. 332-168

LEGS OF IRON
ROME
B.C. 168 - A.D. 476

FEET OF IRON AND MIRY CLAY
ROME II
In the near future



COMPARISON OF DANIEL CHAPTER 2 AND CHAPTER 7



1: Winged Lion = Babylon
AND, Great Britain???

2: Bear w/ribs = Persia
AND, Russia??

3: Winged Leopard = Greece
AND,??

4: Terrible Beast = Rome
AND, ...final world empire

- Little horn rises
- pompous (AntiChrist)
- Against Most High
- Persecute Saints
- For 3-1/2 years
- Loses dominion
- Killed, thrown in Lake of Fire



Daniel Chapter 2
Man's View of Human Government: Awesome

Divine "stone" crushes statue, fills whole earth, will stand forever (kingdom of Jesus)

Daniel 2

Daniel Chapter 7
God's View of Human Government: Bloodthirsty Beasts

10 Toes (ch 2) correspond to 10 horns (ch 7) **BOTH final world empire**

Daniel 7

There are essentially two major theories to explain the legs of iron, which will seriously affect your entire end time view of prophecies:

1 – The Roman Empire Theory: This simply states that the legs of iron in the statue are the Roman Empire, and therefore the antichrist and his final world empire will come from Europe/North Africa, or the vestiges of the old Roman Empire (revived Roman Empire theory).

And now the new one:

2 – The Islamic Empire Theory: This states that the Roman Empire was not the “world” empire that concerned Israel the most, or was “central” to her. The old Roman empire was predominantly the European nations today. There was another “biblical world” empire after Rome: what can be called the “Islamic Empire.” This view then states that the antichrist and his empire will come from the Middle East, and perhaps specifically from Islam.



WHAT IS THE REASONING FOR THIS THEORY?

From the very early beginnings of church history scholarly interpretations have been the same as what Cyril of Jerusalem stated in 307 AD: *“A king shall arise out of Syria, born from an evil spirit, the overthrower and destroyer of the human race, who shall destroy that which is left by the former evil, together with himself...But that king will not only be most disgraceful in himself, but he will also be a prophet of lies, and he will constitute and call himself God, and will order himself to be worshipped as the Son of God, and power will be given to him to do signs and wonders, by the sight of which he may entice men to adore him... Then he will attempt to destroy the temple of God and persecute the righteous people.”* This view is based solidly on Old Testament prophecy. An “Assyrian” is mentioned specifically in Micah 5.

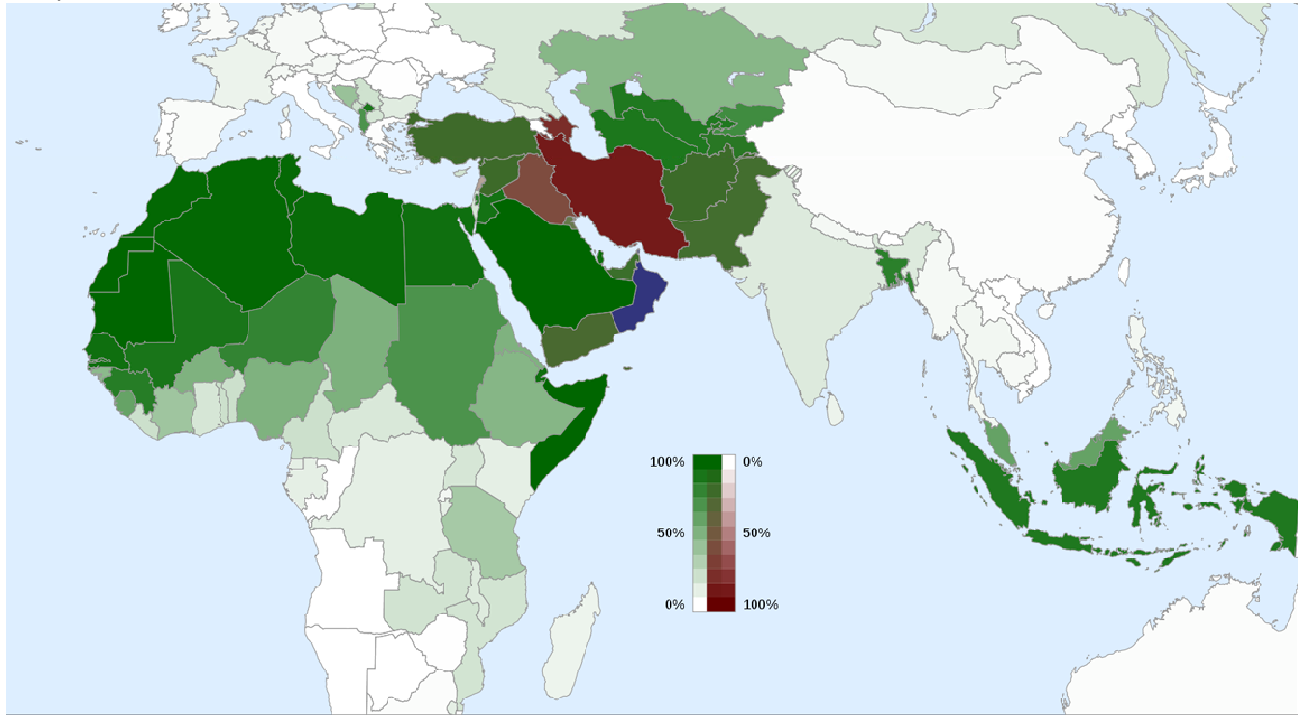
A very brief history lesson can help make a big point here. Since Babylon is the first world empire in this statue, which contains ALL of Gentile world empires from that time on, and because Babylon is used repeatedly in scripture to represent man’s city, the enemy’s city, the city that represents rebellion against God (the opponent), it may be assumed that Babylon should play a key role in the end time scenarios as well. We know this is true from the book of Revelation, and other books where she is mentioned by name as pivotal in end times. With this in mind, let’s look at the territory these empires covered.

Notice where Babylon is on all three maps. It is near the center of both the Persian and Greek empires, but not even included in the Roman Empire (we already know it is the center of the Babylonian empire).



We should take a few minutes to discuss what can constitute the “Islamic Empire.” This had its beginnings with Muhammad in 622 AD, then the Caliphates of the early Middle ages (632 AD) continuing through various other Caliphates, Sultanates, Dynasties and Empires (including the Ottoman

Empire from 1299 to 1923 AD) all the way through to the early 20th century. Today the “Islamic Empire” is not really an empire, but a loosely collected group of nations that are led by Islamic rule, or host the world’s majority of Muslims. The next map shows what we can call the Islamic Empire. These portray the world’s countries that are Islamic. The colors represent the two main sects (Sunni and Shia). The blue is a minor sect.



Notice again that Babylon is at the heart of this map. While the Roman Empire dominated Israel and Jerusalem, it did not include Babylon, and most of the old Roman Empire is today’s European/North African nations, and not central to Jerusalem.

We need to note also that no European nation is named in scripture relative and specific to God’s judgment. All nations marked for judgment are Middle Eastern or North African nations. Rome (ancient *Chittim*) and other European nations are mentioned, but not in reference to God’s judgment.

For this, and many other reasons, especially keeping mind the “Jerusalem-centric” approach to the Word of God, the theory that the Islamic Empire may be found in the legs of iron on Nebuchadnezzar’s statue is very possible, and plausible.

There are many other reasons to come to this conclusion, including a concurrent study of the book of Revelation. In particular, the interpretation of a difficult passage in chapter 17 that has stumped scholars (who come with all sorts of fanciful explanations for it) for centuries. The scripture reads: *“Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.”* (Revelation 17:9-11)

A very interesting interpretation of this includes the commonly understood position that “mountains” in scripture represent world powers. “Kings” also means “kingdoms.” John says *“five have fallen.”* This was written during the Roman Empire, so the *five previous kingdoms that had since fallen* would have been the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, and Greek empires. *“One is”* would have been the one present at that time, or the Roman Empire. This makes six empires. There is still one other before “the eighth.” *The one that “has not yet come” may be Islamic Empire.* This one is said to last or continue “a short time.” The beast then IS the 8th or final world kingdom, but it says he *“is of the seven.”*

If you hold that the so-called Islamic Empire is the 7th empire, then it seems obvious that the coming antichrist will emerge from Islam. This thought fully supports Mr. Richardson's theory, and seems to make a great deal of sense, especially considering today's world.

Considering this and other passages regarding the end times kingdoms or powers, it would seem to say that there will be seven world empires before the final eighth kingdom of the antichrist. Since there were two world empires before Babylon (Egypt and Assyria), if we didn't include the Roman Empire in all this, there would only be six before the final empire. If, however, **we INCLUDE Rome, we would indeed come up with 7 empires before the final 8th empire**. We know this is getting confusing. Now here is an interesting thought (ours, not Mr. Richardson's). Rome was a big player, the dominant world power at the time of Jesus, and the time of the writing of the book of Revelation. The Islamic Empire came only after the crumbling of the Roman Empire. What if the two legs of the statue actually represent two kingdoms? BOTH of which may "run into" the ten toes?

What if one leg represents the Roman Empire, and the other represents the Islamic Empire?? This would allow the proper number of world empires spoken of in Revelation 17. And, it brings up all sorts of interesting speculation (*and we need to understand that this IS indeed, speculation!*) that perhaps the feet of clay and iron may represent an uncomfortable, unlikely, and unstable mixture of these two kingdoms in the end times. And this indeed is what we have today. The current European Union (*a revived Roman Empire, if you will*) is mixing with Islam at an explosive rate. The two don't mix very well, however, as current events have revealed.

- It is also possible that when the seventh empire (Islamic Empire) experiences its resurgence, will dominate the entire world, including a so-called "revived Roman empire." We just don't know.
- Also, keep in mind the fact there are 4 kingdoms represented in the statue, in addition to the end time power, which correlates with Daniel chapter 7 and the 4 beasts. How do we justify the 4 kingdoms of the statue and the 4th beast of Daniel 7 with BOTH kingdoms of Rome and Islam? These are still questions that have not yet been revealed to us.
- How does the timing of Ezekiel 38 and 39 (Gog and Magog) affect these ideas?? Some believe that when God shows Himself as the Almighty God of Israel in this passage, that those who believed in the false "Allah" will turn and put their trust in God, possibly ending Islam. This may or may not be true.

There are many other pieces of the puzzle to fit together. Many are known now, but many are yet to be known. So much of this is beyond our understanding, at least at the present time. Remember also that the book of Daniel is a "sealed" book: *"But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end..."* (Daniel 12:4a) This means that no one can completely understand or accurately speculate all of these things until God unseals the book to our understanding. Since it indicates it is sealed "until the time of the end," that time might be now as we continue to gain new insights into prophecy regarding this time.

ISLAMIC END TIMES

We should also add that the Islamic religion also has very eerie parallels to Christian end time scenarios. We will not present them here, but we must remember that our enemy is the master counterfeiter. Their end time ideas are so close to Biblical views it is no accident, but a deliberate deception. All of this, and more, fit into what we already know will be present during these times. Joel Richardson provides a very in depth and scholarly approach to explain this theory that the Islamic Empire, not the Roman Empire, are the legs (or perhaps one leg!) of the statue in Daniel 2. It is long and detailed, and we cannot do it justice here. That is not the point. We just want to provide information that suggests there is another idea about the identity of the last empire in

Nebuchadnezzar's dream. It is based on solid Biblical interpretation, scripture, and aligns with the political and religious boundaries of today's world, and is supported by all middle eastern believers. We are not indicating that one or the other of these theories is correct. They both have potential, and in fact, may both play major roles in the end times. However, it **seems logical that God would address kings and kingdoms that directly affect, and are central to, Jerusalem and Babylon.** Remember, the Bible can be considered the "Tale of Two Cities" (Jerusalem and Babylon) and end times revolve around these two cities, and these two positions.

We encourage you to get a copy of Joel Richardson's book, "*Antichrist: Islam's Awaited Messiah,*" and to investigate these ideas for yourselves. In this book, Mr. Richardson states: "*I believe that the information presented in this book will establish the fact that Islam is indeed the primary vehicle that will be used by Satan to fulfill the prophecies of the Bible about the future political/religious/military system of the Antichrist that will overwhelm the entire world just prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.*" There is a 2nd title also by Mr. Richardson called "**The Islamic AntiChrist: The Shocking Truth about the Real Nature of the Beast.**" See for yourself if this might be true. Always consider carefully what scripture says, not man. Let the Holy Spirit be your guide.

Some other scriptures to consider regarding these events and kingdoms: Numbers 24:14, 17-19; Isaiah 25:8, 10; Isaiah 34:3-9; Isaiah 63:1-4; Ezekiel 25, Joel 3; Micah 5:2, 4-9; Zechariah 12, 13 and 14. There are many, many other people who support and have written about these end times empires and rulers, and many other scriptures that relate to them. We cannot possibly present all that here. Take the time to do the digging for yourself. You will be richly rewarded!

BACK TO DANIEL....

⁴⁴"And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

- ***"...in the days of these kings..."*** Points to future final world kingdom that will at first be made up of ten kings. If you believe the literal interpretation of scripture, these 10 kings will be during the Tribulation, most likely AFTER the rapture.
- ***"...the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed..."*** **The God of heaven** (as opposed to any of man's gods) would then set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. It will stand forever. There will be no more human government. God's kingdom is that referred to in Isaiah 9:6; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Micah 4:1-8, and predicted at the Messiah's birth in Luke 1:32-33.

--"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this." (Isaiah 9:6-7)

--"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land." (Jeremiah 23:5)

--"In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken. All the nations may walk in the name of their

gods; we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever. "In that day," declares the LORD, "I will gather the lame; I will assemble the exiles and those I have brought to grief. I will make the lame a remnant, those driven away a strong nation. The LORD will rule over them in Mount Zion from that day and forever. As for you, O watchtower of the flock, O stronghold of the Daughter of Zion, the former dominion will be restored to you; kingship will come to the Daughter of Jerusalem." (Micah 4:1-8)

--"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." (Luke 1:32-33)

- 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 Jesus to the earth. His coming is going to be climactic, catastrophic, and cataclysmic (Revelation and Daniel). **This kingdom was never established during Jesus' earthly ministry.**

--"Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matthew 19:28)

--"So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8)

- There are many other **OT prophecies about this second coming**. The Jews had and HAVE difficulty accepting Jesus as Messiah, because they were and are expecting the One who will deliver them from oppression and set up his kingdom on earth. They were not expecting the one who would die. The OT scriptures clearly detailed that there would be **one Messiah, but two comings**. **The first time he came as the suffering servant** (Isaiah 53), the **second time will be as King and as judge**. The Jews couldn't reconcile this. They instead came up with TWO Messiahs, *Messiah ben Joseph*, the suffering Messiah, and *Messiah ben David* – the King Messiah. We know they are one and the same. One person, two comings. Whether they know it or not, we and the Jews are expecting the same person, but He has already come once, and they missed it.

--"Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him." (Zechariah 14:3-5)

--"In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land." (Joel 3:1-2)

- There are many, many other scriptural references to the second coming of Jesus in triumph and in judgment at this end time. Others to study are Isaiah 34, Isaiah 63 and Psalm 2.
- **God will set up this kingdom on earth at his return from Glory at the conclusion of the Battle of Armageddon.** We see this battle in Revelation 19:19-21. Revelation 20:4-6 describes Jesus' ruling and reigning over the earthly kingdom predicted in Nebuchadnezzar's dream.



- **COMMENTARY: God's form of government is going to be one of the most strict forms of government that the world has ever seen. 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. 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.**

- **God's kingdom is the most important of all of those in Daniel's vision.** It is the culmination of his plan for his people. We MUST understand how it is portrayed in scripture, and have a certainty about its coming.

NOTE ABOUT AMILLENIALISM

In any study of the book of Revelation, it is important to look at various theological views of the world and end times. One of those is **amillennialism**. This basically says that the book of Revelation cannot be taken literally and there will be no coming literal 1,000 year reign of Jesus on earth. However, we have seen too much to know that indeed the entire word of God MUST be taken literally wherever it can be. This dream of Nebuchadnezzar's, God's message to the world about the rule of Gentile kingdoms eventually ending in a cataclysmic coming of a "large stone" directly refutes amillennialism.

Some believe that the 1000 year kingdom of Revelation 20 is occurring in a *spiritual* form today. This ignores the fact of a cataclysmic event to come that will completely obliterate all man-operated and originated kingdoms and divinely and literally fulfill the Old Testament prophecies about the kingdom, even as the Jews anticipated in Jesus' day.

⁴⁵*"Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."*

- *"...the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands..."* This is the Rock of our Salvation. God steps in here, finally, to end human government that has failed so miserably. He will reign now. All previous world kingdoms, all of man's empires, will be destroyed when this "Stone" comes. When the Lord Jesus comes, He is going to rule as supreme King of Kings, and He is going to squash all rebellion against Him:

--*"Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."* (Psalm 2:8-9)

--*"Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? 'Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed.'" (Matthew 21:42-44)*

- *"...the great God ..."* refers to Yahweh, Elohim, El Shaddai, the Creator of heaven and earth. Daniel is carefully distinguishing the one true God from the polytheistic pantheon of gods of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon.

- *"...what will come to pass after this."* The dream presented a preview of the entire panorama of gentile world history. God made this known to Nebuchadnezzar, to Daniel, AND TO US by recording it in His Word.

- *"...The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."* This statement speaks of the absolute authority of God's revelation of these matters. Daniel knew it, and Nebuchadnezzar must have realized this as well.

⁴⁶Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. ⁴⁷The king answered Daniel, and said, “Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.”

- *“Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel ...”* This act does not indicate that Nebuchadnezzar worshipped Daniel. Daniel would never have allowed that. It means that he, finally, for the first time, (but not the last!) acknowledged that Daniel’s God was bigger than any other. (*“Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets...”*)
- However, although Nebuchadnezzar realized the might of Daniel’s God, it obviously **was not a “salvation experience”** as we read immediately in the next chapter. It is one thing to know all about God, but quite another to actually KNOW God, in a saving way. God has a hold of Nebuchadnezzar, though, and we WILL read of that salvation experience in chapter 4, one of the most amazing books in all of the Bible, written by a Gentile king.
- *“...revealer of secrets...”* Notice that Nebuchadnezzar uses the same phrase as Daniel in describing God – the revealer of secrets (v. 29) Nebuchadnezzar is beginning to get the idea of who God really is. But he has much more to learn.



⁴⁸Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. ⁴⁹Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

- Daniel was given **two important positions** from Nebuchadnezzar. First, he was made ruler over the whole province of Babylon. But as well, he was elevated to be chief of the wise men. This gave him great authority and ability to help his people when they came as captives to Babylon—both from an administrative and an advisory perspective.
- As chief wise man, Daniel did not have to practice magic or sorcery, for he had a method far superior to any currently used in Babylon—he knew the Lord. And we will see later, his position there greatly influenced the “wise men” both of that day, and for many years to come.
- In verse 49 we see that **Daniel remembered his friends in his promotion** and had them assigned as aides to help administer the province of Babylon. Daniel himself **sat in the gate**, indicating a strategic position of honor as a chief counselor who was near the king at all times.
- *“...but Daniel sat in the gate of the king...”* “Sitting in the gate” meant this person had a place of civic honor and respect. The city gates actually had rooms and halls built just inside the city walls. The king, or governor, or local ruler would hold court in these places to greet visitors, hold meetings, entertain high level visiting dignitaries, etc. Daniel would have been here with the king whenever Nebuchadnezzar was here. 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.

