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3.2 - Daniel 2

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3.2.1 - Daniel 2:1



Daniel 2 is perhaps the most important chapter within the Bible for gaining an understanding what God has revealed concerning the kingdoms of man and their overthrow by the kingdom of God. As such, much of the material in this chapter is closely tied to other passages within Daniel (especially chapters 7, 8, 9, and 11). Each subsequent passage builds upon the foundation established within this chapter concerning [Nebuchadnezzar's](#) dream and its interpretation.

The prophecies of Daniel are all of them related to one another, as if they were but several parts of one general Prophecy, given at several times. The first is the easiest to be understood, and every following prophecy adds something new to the former.¹

Besides Daniel, the material we encounter here is closely related to additional revelation found in other books of the Bible such as Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21, Revelation 13, and Revelation 19-20. Therefore, we urge the reader to pay careful attention to the details revealed in this chapter to establish a solid foundation for understanding the eschatology framework within which many other passages are arranged.

This second chapter has well been called “The A, B, C of prophecy.” I suppose it contains the most complete, and yet the most simple, prophetic picture that we have in all the word of God.²

However you approach every other prophecy in Scripture depends basically on how you handle Daniel 2▶. This is the cornerstone of the whole thing. Come up with the wrong answer here and you're bound to misinterpret Matthew 24 and 25, the book of Revelation and other passages of prophecy in Scripture. This is a central point of prophecy.³

At this point, we arrive at a fork in the road among Daniel's interpreters in relation to understanding which prophecies were fulfilled at Christ's first advent versus those still awaiting fulfillment at His second advent.

Among those who regard this chapter as genuine Scripture, there is a further subdivision into two classes: (1) those who interpret the vision from the amillennial or postmillennial point of view; (2) those who interpret the vision from a premillennial perspective. The difference here resolves itself largely in differing views of how the image is destroyed, and how the revelation relates to the present age and the two advents of Christ. Few chapters of the Bible are more determinative in establishing both principle and content of prophecy than this chapter; and its study, accordingly, is crucial to any system of prophetic interpretation.⁴

How one understands Nebuchadnezzar's dream revealed in this chapter will flavor one's interpretation of prophetic passages elsewhere in Scripture. This is why it is so important to pay attention to details and take the text exactly as it is written. We discuss these issues in greater detail in the commentary on Daniel 2:44▶ and the section titled *When Does the Stone Strike?*

Before plunging into the first verse, it will be helpful to establish some guidelines for interpreting what follows:

1. **Stand in Daniel's Shoes** - In our initial reading of the revelation given in this chapter, we want to *forget everything we know from revelation given at a later date*. In other words, we want to initially try to read the passage like Daniel would have. For example, when interpreting Daniel 2▶, we don't want to influence our initial interpretation with additional revelation Daniel did not yet have, such as was later given in Daniel 7▶ (50 years later) or Daniel 9▶ (64 years later).
2. **Add Progressive Revelation** - Only *after* we have made an effort to understand things from Daniel's perspective is it safe to augment our understanding by referring to related passages given at a later date. Indeed, from our vantage point in history, we can use the entire corpus of Scripture to help clarify what Daniel is shown.
3. **Recognize That Progressive Revelation Has Limits** - We must not allow subsequent revelation, given after what Daniel is shown, to overthrow or redefine what Daniel would understand. In other words, we cannot let later revelation *change* the normative understanding of what God has already said. He can augment, enhance, or clarify what has already been revealed, but His very character, and the nature of communication, precludes reading newer revelation back into the original passages in a way which robs the original revelation of its plain-sense meaning as understood by the original recipients.⁵
4. **Don't Press Symbols Too Far** - When revelation is given using symbols, we want to pay attention to the details but not attach too much significance to details which are not germane to the information being communicated. For example, in relation to the image Nebuchadnezzar sees in his dream, we need to realize that many of the aspects of the image (e.g., arms, legs, feet) are mentioned simply because the image has a normal human anatomy. If we attempt to infer subtle aspects of what is being communicated by pressing the details too far, we will reach unreliable conclusions.⁶ Walvoord explains: "The dilemma of the interpreter is illustrated in the comment of Geoffrey R. King . . . *I have heard it said more than once or twice that the two legs of the image represent the Roman Empire, because in A.D. 364 the Roman Empire split into two. There was the Eastern Empire, with its capital at Constantinople and the Western Empire, with its capital at Rome. . . But wait a minute! To begin with, the division occurs before you get to the iron! The two legs begin under the copper, unless this image was a freak. . . And of course, if you want to make two parts of the Roman Empire to be represented by the two legs, you are in difficulty because the Western Empire only lasted for a few hundred years, but the Eastern Empire lasted until 1453. You have to make this image stand on one leg for most of the time!*"⁷ Even so, some of the details of the symbols *do* have significance: witness the (*assumed ten*) toes of the image positioned at the historic point when the image is destroyed—subsequently seen to correspond to the ten horns in the parallel vision seen by Daniel in chapter 7.⁸ When interpreting passages containing symbols, we face the same challenges found when

studying parables. On the one hand, failure to pay attention to details can lead to misunderstanding; on the other hand, pressing the details too far can lead to errors of a different sort.⁹

Armed with these principles, we are prepared to consider the passage before us.

As we saw from the previous chapter, Daniel and his companions were taken captive to **Babylon** as part of God's judgment upon the disobedient southern kingdom of Judah. They were relocated hundreds of miles from their homes, possibly made eunuchs, and systematically subjected to a pagan culture and system of training.

Given the situation, it is only natural the Jewish youths would have wondered what their future might hold, and what these events indicated concerning God's promises and His relationship to their nation.

Facing their predicament in Babylon, surely Daniel and his companions must have asked themselves, "Has God forgotten His promise? Has He forgotten His covenant? *Has He forgotten US?* Will the promises of God concerning the kingdom never be fulfilled? Has He put an end to the nation of Israel and the chosen people to whom He made such glorious promises? Was God mistaken—or did Israel misunderstand Him? Had He ever really intended to give them a literal kingdom?"¹⁰

God answers these concerns using a seemingly strange method: He gives a Gentile king a dream revealing the **sequence of Gentile kingdoms** occupying the stage of history until the kingdom of God is finally established. Although this revelation is given through a Gentile king, the king's understanding of the dream is dependent upon the intercession and interpretation of the faithful Jewish youths *among his captives!*

As we shall see, the dream is given in the form of an apparently colossal image of a *man* made of various lustrous metals. This image represents the pride of humanism—an echo of Neo-Babylonia's connection with Babel of old, where the government of man first asserted its imagined independence of God in the kingdom of Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-10).

In its essential posture of self-will, self-aggrandizement, and defiance of the one true God, the composite image represents a sustained revolt of organized human society and government against the Lord. In this sense, then, Babylon set the tone of hubris and oppressive cruelty that characterized all her successors to world power. This may shed some light on the prominence of Babylon as a symbol of human materialism, religious apostasy, and revolt in the last days, as described in the lament: "Fallen is Babylon the Great!"¹¹

Thus, it is no coincidence the dream in this chapter concerns the **Times of the Gentiles**, the period within history when dominion is given by God into Gentile hands while Israel remains under discipline without her king (Hos. 3:4).¹² Nebuchadnezzar's dream provides the first of **Two Perspectives** on this important period of history: the perspective of humanism as seen by men intent on forming a utopian empire without acknowledging God. This perspective will subsequently be augmented by God's perspective of the matter revealed in a vision of vicious beasts given to Daniel in **chapter 7**. See commentary on **Daniel 2:31**.

3.2.1.1 - Second Year

in the second year

This is one of several verses providing clear chronological indicators within the book of Daniel (Dan. 1:1▶, 21▶; 2:1▶; 5:31▶; 7:1▶; 8:1▶; 9:1▶; 10:1▶). This occurred in 603 B.C. See *Chronology of Daniel*.

Here again the critics propose an inaccuracy in the book of Daniel. Since **chapter 1** indicates Daniel underwent three years of training (Dan. 1:5▶, 18▶), how could it be said he interpreted **Nebuchadnezzar's** dream in the second year of the king's rule? If we were to adopt the critics' viewpoint, we would also have to embrace the unlikely idea Daniel (or the anonymous composers of the critics) wrote two chapters of the book back-to-back while overlooking this supposedly obvious contradiction. Moreover, many well-educated and intelligent Jews and Christians failed to notice this major error for thousands of years. The situation before us is actually evidence of the genuineness of the book because a forgery would likely have attempted to smooth over the tension between this verse and Daniel 1:5▶, 18▶.

A forger would not *introduce* difficulties; the author did not *then* see any difficulty in the case.¹³

Various explanations have been offered to what was evidently clear to the writer and the original readers from their knowledge of the circumstances, and therefore the author added no explanation (actually an incidental proof of genuineness of the book, for what forger would introduce difficulties?).¹⁴

There are several possible explanations for how Daniel underwent three years of training, yet interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream in the second year of the king's reign.

3.2.1.1.1 - Accession-Year Dating?

Many commentators understand Daniel to have interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream *after* graduation from his three years of training. This would preserve the natural order of the two chapters so the events described in chapter 2 immediately follow those at the end of chapter 1.

In Babylon the accession year of a king was not counted as the first year of his reign. So Nebuchadnezzar became king, year 1 of Daniel's training; his first year as king was Daniel's second year of training; his second year of kingship was Daniel's third year of training. Therefore, Daniel finished his three years of training in Nebuchadnezzar's second year, precisely the year that begins the episode of chapter 2.¹⁵

Numerous commentators understand accession-year dating as a possible explanation of this apparent discrepancy¹⁶ including: Archer,¹⁷ Benware,¹⁸ Clough,¹⁹ Dean,²⁰ Leupold,²¹ Miller,²² Steinmann,²³ and Walvoord.²⁴

For additional information on accession-year dating, see *When Does a Year Begin?*

3.2.1.1.2 - Before Daniel's Graduation?

It is also possible Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream before he graduated. This would place the events of Daniel 2 chronologically before the end of Daniel 1.

It is entirely possible that the vision of Daniel 2 and the interpretation of the dream occurred during the third year of Daniel's training, before the formal presentation of the four youths to the king. This would take away all objections concerning the statement of Daniel 1:20, as it would make Daniel's graduation after the events of Daniel 2. That the book of Daniel is not written in strict chronological order is evident from the placing of chapters 5 and 6 before chapters 7 and 8, out of chronological order.²⁵

Advocates of this view note Daniel and his companions were not included in those called before the king to interpret the dream (Dan. 2:2). They may not have completed their training and therefore, were not fully qualified as wise men.²⁶ On the other hand, critics of this view note that Daniel and his companions *were* included in the resulting order to kill all the wise men. This would imply they were considered qualified to serve in such positions.²⁷

Interpreters who suggest Daniel interpreted the dream prior to graduation include: Combs,²⁸ MacArthur,²⁹ McGee,³⁰ Mills,³¹ Pentecost,³² and Walvoord.³³

3.2.1.1.3 - Partial (Inclusive) Years?

Another possible solution is found in taking the years of training as *inclusive* years. In other words, the Hebrew youths did not train for a full three years, but merely one year and parts of two others.

Driver also points out that Daniel did not have to train three complete years, but according to Hebrew usage, a part of a year was reckoned as a whole. This would mean that the program could have lasted less than two years if it consisted of a full year and parts of two others. Any of these suggestions (or a combination of them) could explain how the three-year training program was completed in Nebuchadnezzar's second year.³⁴

Interpreters who see inclusive-year counting as a possible explanation³⁵ include: Miller,³⁶ Whitcomb,³⁷ and Young.³⁸

Against this view, Wood cites “evidence that a parallel training period of the later Persians did cover three full years.”³⁹

3.2.1.1.4 - Different Points of Reference?

Another group of commentators suggest the years of Daniel’s training are reckoned from an earlier period when [Nebuchadnezzar](#) co-reigned with his father, [Nabopolassar](#). Thus, the second year of Nebuchadnezzar’s sole reign could fall after the three years of training completed.

The solution of this difficulty is: [Nebuchadnezzar](#) first ruled as subordinate to his father [Nabopolassar](#), to which time the first chapter refers ([Dan. 1:1](#)); whereas “the second year” in the second chapter is dated from his sole sovereignty.⁴⁰

Among commentators with this view, we find [Anstey](#),⁴¹ [Barnes](#),⁴² [Calvin](#),⁴³ [Clarke](#),⁴⁴ [Fausset](#),⁴⁵ and [Zöckler](#).⁴⁶

Some commentators agree the three years of [Daniel 1](#) and the second year mentioned in [Daniel 2](#) have different points of reference, but they suggest solutions other than the difference between the beginning of [Nebuchadnezzar](#)’s co-reign and sole-reign. [Jerome](#) relates an early Jewish suggestion: the second year in this verse is counted from a point in time when [Nebuchadnezzar](#) achieved a wider dominion.⁴⁷ [Sedar Olam](#) adopts the view that the second year relates to the destruction of the temple.⁴⁸ [Gill](#) suggests the second year relates to the beginning of [Daniel](#)’s ministry standing before [Nebuchadnezzar](#) after graduation ([Dan. 1:19](#)).⁴⁹

3.2.1.1.5 - Daniel Taken Before the Year Nebuchadnezzar Ascended the Throne

Another possible solution, having the advantage of great simplicity, is that [Daniel](#) was taken in 606 B.C., prior to the Battle of [Carchemish](#) (605 B.C.)—so he completed his third year of training by the time of [Nebuchadnezzar](#)’s second year as king.

As [Nebuchadnezzar](#) did not become king until after the death of his father, [Nabopolassar](#), in B. C. 605, the second year of his reign would be B. C. 603, and as [Daniel](#) and his companions were carried captive in B. C. 606, and were in training for three years, the dream of [Nebuchadnezzar](#) did not occur until sometime after they had graduated from the “Palace School,” or “National University.” This accounts for why they were included among those who were to be slain ([Dan. 2:13](#), [18](#)), though for some reason they do not appear to have been informed as to the demand of the King ([Dan. 2:14-15](#)).⁵⁰

This interpretation has related benefits: (1) It explains how the events of [Daniel 1:1](#) could take place during [Jehoiakim](#)’s third year while the battle of [Carchemish](#) ([Jer. 25:19](#)) is associated by [Jeremiah](#) with [Jehoiakim](#)’s fourth year ([Jer. 25:1](#)); (2) It results in a 70-year period from the beginning of Israel’s captivity to the decree of [Cyrus](#) allowing the Jews to return to [Jerusalem](#) (606 - 536 B.C.). See commentary on [Daniel 1:1](#).

Interpreters who favor this explanation include [Anderson](#),⁵¹ [Jones](#),⁵² [Keil](#),⁵³ and [Larkin](#).⁵⁴

3.2.1.2 - Dreams

Nebuchadnezzar had dreams

Dreams (plural) may refer to a single dream with many details, a dream extending over a long period,⁵⁶ or a dream which occurred on repeated occasions so as to become a continued distraction—perhaps even an obsession—with the king.⁵⁷

This is not the first occasion where Scripture records God giving dreams to a pagan king. God warned [Abimelech](#) in a dream by night that the woman he had taken was [Abraham](#)’s wife ([Gen. 20:3](#)). Pharaoh of Egypt had a dream wherein God warned of a coming famine ([Gen. 41:1-7](#)). Similarly, God made Pharaoh’s understanding of the dream dependant upon the interpretation of a Jew who was captive in his realm ([Joseph](#), [Gen. 41:15-31](#)). With Pharaoh and [Nebuchadnezzar](#), God used the dreams for multiple purposes: to reveal the future to the pagan king and to promote the Jewish interpreter to a position of influence and power in order to benefit his countrymen ([Gen. 46:3-7](#); [50:20](#)).

In all three instances, the dream is given as a *warning*, evidence of God’s mercy and personal concern for the pagan king and those within his realm.

Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream

For God may speak in one way, or in another, Yet man does not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, When deep sleep falls upon men, While slumbering on their beds, Then He opens the ears of men, And seals their instruction. **In order to turn man from his deed, And conceal pride from man, He keeps back his soul from the Pit, And his life from perishing by the sword.** (Job 33:14-18) [emphasis added]

Abimelech is able to avoid judgment for taking Abraham’s wife, Pharaoh is able to plan ahead for the coming famine, and here, Nebuchadnezzar is given a dream concerning an image which “represents a prophetic view of ‘the times of the Gentiles,’ depicting the four Gentile world kingdoms which were to rule successively from Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire to the second advent and establishment of the millennial kingdom.”⁵⁸

At the time of the dream, Nebuchadnezzar had already established himself as an extremely powerful ruler. As history advances beyond this point, we find evidence God provided direct witness of Himself to leaders within each of the **Gentile kingdoms** to follow.⁵⁹



55

1. *Gold Kingdom* - Nebuchadnezzar of **Babylon** was given evidence of God by way of dreams and their supernatural interpretation by Daniel (chapters 1 and 4), witnessed the preservation of the Jewish youth within the fiery furnace (chapter 3), and was himself the recipient of God’s direct judgment by being turned into a beast (chapter 4).
2. *Silver Kingdom* - **Darius** of the Medo-Persian empire witnessed Daniel’s miraculous preservation in the lion’s den (chapter 6).
3. *Bronze Kingdom* - **Josephus** records that Alexander the Great of Greece, upon his arrival in Jerusalem, was shown the book of Daniel predicting the rise of his empire. “And when the book of Daniel was showed him, wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended; and as he was then glad, he dismissed the multitude for the present, but the next day he called them to him, and bade them ask what favors they pleased of him . . .”⁶⁰
4. *Iron Kingdom* - The New Testament records numerous Christian witnesses to representatives of Rome. John the baptist witnessed to Herod (Mat. 14:4; Mark 6:18-20) who had direct contact with Jesus (Luke 23:8-11) as did Pilate (Mat. 27:11-24; Mark 15:1-15; Luke 23:11-25; John 18:29-40; 19:1-16)—including a warning his wife received in a dream (Mat. 27:19). Paul stood before Festus (Acts 25:1-12), King Agrippa (Acts 15:12-27; 26:1-28) and Caesar (Acts 25:12, 21; 26:32; 27:24).

so troubled

So troubled is תַּתְּפַּעַם [tiṭpā'em], hithpa'el stem of פָּעַם [pā'am]. The hithpa'el stem denotes intensive reflexive action indicating Nebuchadnezzar “was in mental state of distress and worry relating to the situation”⁶¹ and was contributing to his own anxiety. His anxiety was caused by his desire to know the meaning of the dream. See commentary on [Daniel 2:3](#).

Nebuchadnezzar had risen to power relatively quickly and, although he was king of the known world, he was just a man. As a man, God had put eternity—and an attendant desire for significance—into Nebuchadnezzar’s heart (Ecc. 3:11).

This dream in Daniel 2 didn’t happen out of thin air, it happened to a real man faced with a real historical situation. He was a ruler of a people and he knew just as the Assyrians had exalted themselves to mighty power and been brought down by my power and he was asking himself and he was tormented in his soul, how long will my kingdom last. Will the Babylonians kingdom be like the Assyrians that I just clobbered; will our kingdom be like the Egyptians at Carchemish two years ago; will my kingdom face the same limitations that other kingdoms have faced in history? So one of the things was that he was struggling with his own political, physical and social limitations. . . . he is not really autonomous, even though he tries desperately to pretend he is.⁶²

Every single human being comes to God-consciousness at some point in their life. With some people its earlier, as early as maybe two or three years of age, with others it may be later, some of it is determined by various factors such as culture, background, family life, whatever it may be, but we all have this eternity set in our thinking so that at some point we begin to realize that there’s something greater than us. At that point we can either be positive or negative, we can either say God I want to know more about this, I know that there’s something greater, I know that I’m a creature, I’m finite, I’m limited, I can’t make life work on my own, I can’t be the source of happiness, the details of life can’t give me happiness. Here’s Nebuchadnezzar, he has everything, more than any of us can ever imagine and he doesn’t have happiness.⁶³

As the extent of the king’s power and influence had expanded, like Solomon, he had accumulated many good things the world could offer. But such treasures only distract from the eternal issues of greater significance.

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Mat. 6:19-21)

As king of a rapidly-expanding realm, it would be natural to worry about how his power could be consolidated and preserved, to wonder what subversive elements, both inside and outside his kingdom, might be at work to dethrone him.

Nebuchadnezzar was somewhat of an Alexander: he had made rapid and substantial conquests at the very beginning of his reign, in fact, already during the time of his father’s reign. With such a multitude of victories already behind him, the king might well wonder what the future had in store, for he was well-nigh at the top of the ladder already.⁶⁴

The question respecting his successor; the changes which might occur; the possibility of revolutions in other kingdoms, or in the provinces of his own vast empire, all were topics on which his mind would probably be employed.⁶⁵

He may well have felt insecure about his newly acquired kingdom, and he may have considered the destruction of the statue a divine omen to him that he and his empire were doomed. Perhaps this led him to believe that someone was planning to assassinate him and take away his kingdom. With intrigue in the courts of that day common, such was a real possibility (two out of the next three Babylonian kings were assassinated).⁶⁶

As we shall see, several elements of the dream were vivid and startling: “Its vividness was particularly intense, so that the king’s spirit was constantly smitten with terror.”⁶⁷ There was also the troubling aspect of a stone suddenly smashing the image to pieces. Perhaps the dream was repeated in the same sequence on several occasions to deepen the king’s anxiety and desire for its explanation.

3.2.2 - Daniel 2:2



call the magicians

Like Pharaoh of Egypt before him (Gen. 41:8), **Nebuchadnezzar** sought for an interpretation of the dream among the wise men of his realm. *Magicians* is **חַרְטֻמִּים** [*ḥartummîm*]. Although the English word *magician* is related to the term *magi*, the “wise men” of the New Testament are more closely associated with the Babylonian “astrologers” mentioned below. See commentary on *Daniel 1:20*.

astrologers

Astrologers is **אַשְׁפִּים** [*’aššāpîm*], “enchanter, conjurer, i.e., a class of persons in the profession of sorcery and magic arts, possibly necromancy and communication with the dead.”⁶⁹

The LXX renders the term as **μάγους** [*magous*], the Greek term behind the English phrase *wise men* (*magi*) of the New Testament (Mat. 2:1, 7, 16). This Greek word has a wide range of meaning. It can refer to wise men, priests, sorcerers, black-magicians, and those practicing witchcraft (Acts 13:6, 8).⁷⁰

The term “Magi” originally designated a particular tribe of the Medes (cf. Herodotus, *Histories* 1.101); yet later the Magi came to be identified as the priests of Media. R. N. Frye explains: “One may tentatively suggest that the Magi were a ‘tribe’ of the Medes who exercised sacerdotal functions. During the supremacy of the Medes they expanded over the Median empire as a priesthood since priestly trade was kept, so to speak, ‘in the family.’”⁷¹

Daniel’s use of the term “astrologers” includes what today would be described as “astronomers” today since the two areas of practice were not clearly distinguished in Daniel’s time. “Whitcomb points out that such accurate records were kept that ‘the Babylonian astronomer Naburimannu (ca. 500 B.C.) was able to calculate the length of the year at 365 days, 6 hours, 15 minutes, 41 seconds—only 26 minutes and 55 seconds too long!’”⁷²

sorcerers

And *sorcerers* is **וְלַמְכַשְׁפִּים** [*welamkaššēpîm*], “ones who practice black magic arts”,⁷³ “used of the seductive and corrupting influences of Jezebel (2K. 9:22).”⁷⁴ These men sought their “powers from spirits.”⁷⁵ “A loan word from Akkadian: in this case *kišpu* (‘sorcery’), which renders a Sumerian logogram composed of a sign for dead or death inside a mouth, strongly suggesting necromancy as the original idea.”⁷⁶ “Sorcerers . . . comes from an old Akkadian loan word, *kashaphim*, and these men were involved in various forms of necromancy, that’s when you’re trying to consult the dead about the future, heptomancy which is when you’re trying to read the liver, you’ll take an animal sacrifice and cut out the liver, and then the priest will . . . read the future from it. They were involved in oneiromancy which is predicting the future on the basis of dreams, and all sorts of other occult arts. So they were practicing sorcery and witchcraft . . .”⁷⁷ “‘Sorcerers’ is a rendering of the Hebrew *mēkaššēpîm* and ‘likely refers to the religious group known from Akkadian texts as *kashshapu*.’ The Hebrew term is an Akkadian loan word, and the Akkadian root *kasapu* means ‘to practice sorcery’ or ‘witchcraft,’ as does the Hebrew verb *kāšap*.”⁷⁸ When in the *piel* stem, it denotes, “to use enchantment . . . to use magical songs, to mutter”⁷⁹.

Early Astronomers



68

In his great desire to understand the dream, Nebuchadnezzar summons all available expertise within his realm. “All the groups are brought, a complete spectrum of the leaders of the society, the men who act as the advisors. . . you’ve got the cream of the crop as far as human viewpoint education goes. You have got the final authority, the experts in every field called in to prop up the kingdom of man when its leader, Nebuchadnezzar dreams by night and is terrified.”⁸⁰

Although not explicitly mentioned here, the wise men were included (see Dan. 2:27▶). The question then arises as to why Daniel and his companions were not among those wise men called to assist the king. Jerome suggests the king’s invitation of the wise men included a promise of rewards and gifts which may not have appealed to Daniel and his companions who chose not to respond.⁸¹ Calvin attributes their absence to an oversight on the part of the king coupled with the providence of God.⁸² In our commentary on Daniel 2:1▶ other commentators suggested Daniel and his companions were absent because they had not yet completed their three years of training to qualify as wise men. However, this is uncertain because the Jewish youths *are* included in the subsequent command to kill all the wise men (Dan. 2:13▶). The passage does not provide enough information to determine the exact reason why Daniel and his companions only enter into the situation after the king has pronounced the death penalty of the wise men.

Nebuchadnezzar’s [Babylon](#) operates according to the principles of the kingdom of man in its imagined independence from God. Those with questions are unwilling to seek the living God for answers. When faced with challenges exceeding the limits of natural revelation and understanding, they turn to the occult.

And when they say to you, “Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,” should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? (Isa. 8:19)

If we are honest with ourselves, we are more like Nebuchadnezzar than we like to admit. How frequently we look elsewhere for help, exhausting all avenues, before seeking God!

The occult arts were so widespread at Babylon that Isaiah taunts the regime for its dependence upon sorcery.⁸³

Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; Sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the [Chaldeans](#)! For you shall no more be called Tender and delicate. . . . Stand now with your enchantments And the multitude of your sorceries, In which you have labored from your youth-Perhaps you will be able to profit, Perhaps you will prevail. You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels; Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, And the monthly prognosticators Stand up and save you From what shall come upon you. (Isa. 47:1, 12-13)

For additional comments concerning the various categories of wise men within Nebuchadnezzar’s court, see commentary on [Daniel 1:20](#).

Chaldeans

Chaldeans is כַּשְׁדִּיִּים [kaśdîm]. The term “Chaldean” is used in different ways within the book of Daniel. In passages such as this it refers to an occupational class of soothsayer priests. In other passages, it is used in a racial sense devoid of any association with soothsayer priests (e.g., Dan. 3:8▶; 5:30▶).⁸⁴

In this context, “Chaldeans” seems to be a general word that covers all three classes of diviners previously mentioned. Thus in Dan. 2:4▶ the “Chaldeans” who reply to the king include the three other kinds of diviners (“the magicians, the soothsayers, the sorcerers”) named in Dan. 2:2▶.⁸⁵

Critical scholars commonly cite the employment of כַּשְׁדִּיִּים [kaśdîm] in the sense of wise men as an argument in support of the Maccabean date hypothesis, arguing that the term appears in a professional sense in the Hellenistic age but not in the sixth century ... However, this usage is found in the writings of the Greek historian Herodotus (ca. 450 B.C.), who traveled to Babylonia and spoke of “the Chaldaeans [*sic*], who are priests of this god [Bel]” (Herodotus, *Histories* 1.181-83).⁸⁶

See *Persian Words*. See commentary on *Daniel 1:4*.

3.2.3 - Daniel 2:3



a dream

[There are often] two ways in which the future is unveiled, viz., by dreams and visions, the latter with almost all the prophets together with communications flowing from divine illumination, while revelation by dreams as a rule is granted only to the heathen (Abimelech, Gen. 20:3; Pharaoh, Gen. 41; Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. 2) or to Jews who were not prophets (Jacob, Gen. 28:12; Solomon, 1K. 3:5), and the revelation in Dan. 7 is communicated to Daniel in a dream only on account of its particular relation, as to the matter of it, to the dream of Nebuchadnezzar.⁸⁷

It may be noted further that when God gave His revelations to Nebuchadnezzar, He used only the dream type of communication, never the vision, whereas He did use the vision with Daniel. In fact, the Scripture shows God regularly employing the dream when giving a revelation to pagans.⁸⁸

anxious to know

His anxiety was caused by his desire to know (לִדְעַת [lāddaʿt])—to understand—the dream. As mentioned in the commentary for Daniel 2:1, the dream “troubled” Nebuchadnezzar. Perhaps he sensed the dream’s content was related in some way to the complexities of ruling his growing empire. See commentary on *Daniel 2:1*.

Some commentators take Nebuchadnezzar’s anxiety as indicating He may have forgotten the dream, either in its entirety or in part.⁸⁹

In favor of the idea that the king had forgotten the dream would be the argument that he, anxious to know its interpretation, would certainly have divulged it to the wise men to see what they had to offer by way of interpretation. This would be in keeping with the translation “The thing is gone from me,” which is still a possibility.⁹⁰

The KJV translation of Daniel 2:5 implies this may be possible.

3.2.4 - Daniel 2:4



in Aramaic

This introduces the Aramaic section of the text extending from the next word through Daniel 7:28. See *Hebrew and Aramaic*.

At an earlier time, the average Jew was unfamiliar with Aramaic. Hezekiah’s servants asked the Rabshakeh to speak in Aramaic rather than Hebrew (2K. 18:26; Isa. 36:11) so the people would not understand what was being said. Later, in Ezra’s days, we find the opponents of the Jews writing to Artaxerxes in Aramaic in an attempt to halt progress rebuilding the city and walls (Ezra 4:7-12). Aramaic eventually became the *lingua franca* of the region,⁹¹ even among the Jews.

One of the major new influences [on the Jews as a result of the Babylonian captivity] was the Aramaic language, which was destined to replace Hebrew as the national tongue of the Jews. By the time the remnant of Jews returned to Palestine under Zerubbabel (537 B.C.) and Ezra (458 B.C.), they needed interpreters to understand their own Hebrew Bible (Ne. 8:8).⁹²

Many commentators understand the switch from Hebrew to Aramaic as indicating the material included in the Aramaic section of Daniel is of particular interest to non-Jews.⁹³

From 2:4 to 7:28 the book is written in Aramaic, a Semitic language spoken at the court of Nebuchadnezzar that later became the lingua franca of the Near Eastern world. That is appropriate inasmuch as this section of the book outlines the long era of Gentile domination over Israel inaugurated by Nebuchadnezzar, which will last until the second advent of Christ, at which time the national will be established not only as an independent nation, but as the chief nation of the earth, in the Messianic-Davidic Kingdom (Deu. 28:13).⁹⁴

Although the written text of Daniel switches from Hebrew to Aramaic here, we need not assume those who replied to the king switched from some other language to Aramaic at this point. It is more likely Daniel is simply conveying the language already being used in the conversation while indicating his written record will now follow suit.⁹⁵

O King live forever!

“The contemporary English equivalent of מְלָכָא [malkā] is not ‘O King,’ as in most versions, but ‘Your Majesty.’”⁹⁶ Their wish that the king might *live forever* should not be taken literally, but as the standard protocol for addressing royalty much like “long live the king” (1S. 10:24; 2S. 16:16; 1K. 1:25, 31; Dan. 3:9; 4:19; 5:10; 6:6, 21; Ne. 2:3)! Ironically, the subject of the dream and its interpretation reveals just the opposite. “The inclusion of [‘live forever!'] here by Daniel the author involves ironic satire since Nebuchadnezzar is a mere mortal, whose kingdom will end as prophesied in the dream.”⁹⁷

interpretation

Interpretation is from פִּשְׂרָא [pēšar].

The term *peshar* (pl. *pesharim*) is a noun from the root *pšr*, a root that is attested in several Semitic languages and has the basic meaning of “loosen.” The extended meaning of “interpret, interpretation” is found in Akkadian of the mid-second millennium b.c. The term only occurs in biblical Hebrew as a noun (Eccles 8:1; cf. Sir 38:14) but in biblical Aramaic both as a noun (e.g., Dan 4:3; 5:15, 26) and as a verb (Dan 5:12, 16). In the book of Daniel it is consistently used of the “interpretation” of dreams, a contextual meaning that has also been clearly recognized in Akkadian texts more than a thousand years earlier. . . . In the sectarian compositions from Qumran the term *peshar* is used almost exclusively in technical formulas that introduce the interpretation of biblical texts; the exception is 4Q180 frag. 1 1, 7 where the term introduces whole units of summarized interpretation. By extension the term has come to be used in modern scholarship of a literary genre of biblical commentary and the exegetical techniques used in it.⁹⁸

The LXX renders *Interpretation* by σύγκρισιν [synkrisin] conveying the sense of “comparison,” whereby each element of the dream would be set alongside its corresponding meaning. Such comparative interpretation could not be done without the king revealing the dream itself. Archaeology has uncovered Akkadian “dream manuals” indicating dream interpretation was practiced at Babylonian.⁹⁹

3.2.5 - Daniel 2:5



My decision is firm

The KJV renders this phrase as “the thing is gone from me”, implying Nebuchadnezzar was unable to remember his dream. *Firm* is אֲזַדָּא [‘azdā].

(‘zdā’, LXX, “gone”; passive part. of *azaiti*, “to go”), which translation supposes that the king forgot the dream. But that is unlikely, and most scholars construe the form as an adjective meaning “sure, assured” (Pers., *azda*; Sanskrit, *addhā*; “certain,” BDB, p. 1079). Hence the *Revised Standard Version* is correct: “The word from me is sure”; or “The command from me is firm” (NASB), . . .¹⁰⁰

The mistranslation of our versions encourages this opinion: “The thing is gone from me” (A. V.). Interpreters are quite commonly agreed that the rendering should be something like “the matter has been fully determined by me.” For the difficult word *'azda'* very likely means “assured, certain,” being a Persian loan word. The meaning is then: “The word is assured from me,” and that must mean, “The thing is fully resolved upon by me” (BDB).¹⁰¹

The LXX reading may have influenced the interpretation reflected by the KJV: Ὁ λόγος ἀπ' ἐμοῦ ἀπέστη [*Ho logos ap emou apestē*],¹⁰² “The word from me has removed/departed/deserted.”¹⁰³

The supposition that אַזַּד [‘āzad] is equivalent to אַזַּל [‘āzal], to go away, depart, is not tenable. The change of the ל into ד is extremely rare in the Semitic, and is not to be assumed in the word אַזַּל [z/], since Daniel himself uses אַזַּל [‘āzal], Dan. 2:17▶, 24▶; 6:19▶, 20▶, and also Ezra 4:23; 5:8, 15. Moreover אַזַּל [z/] has not the meaning of אַצַּף [yāṣā] to go out, to take one’s departure, but corresponds with the Hebr. הָלַךְ [hālak], to go. Therefore Winer, Hengst., Ibn Esr. [Aben Ezra], Saad., and other rabbis interpret the word as meaning firmus: “the word stands firm;”¹⁰⁴

Evidence the phrase pertains to the decree rather than the dream is also found in Daniel 2:15▶.

When Daniel asked Arioch about the drastic decree, “Arioch informed Daniel about the matter” (Dan. 2:15▶), “the matter” being the same Aramaic word as “the thing” (KJV) that Nebuchadnezzar had supposedly forgotten (Dan. 2:5▶). It obviously refers to his decree, not his dream.¹⁰⁵

make known the dream to me

Make known . . . to me is תְּהוֹדֵעַנִי [tēhōdē‘ūnnānī], hafal stem of יָדָע [yēdda], “to know.” Nebuchadnezzar is clearly expecting them to tell him the dream as well as its interpretation. Perhaps the king had forgotten aspects of the dream (see below). More likely, he has not forgotten the dream,¹⁰⁶ but suspects his advisors have previously misled him concerning their occult knowledge in order to deceive him. Thus, he accuses them of speaking “lying words” (Daniel 2:9▶).¹⁰⁷ The king reasons that if they can truly predict the *future* by interpreting dreams, then they should also be able to recall the *past* and reveal his dream.¹⁰⁸ In either case, God’s hand is clearly in all that transpires, exposing the limitations of the king’s advisors and their gods in comparison with Daniel and his God.

The king’s decision . . . is clearly another example of God’s sovereignty . . . [the king’s] method of handling the situation would not only expose the fraudulence of the occult advisors but also show Daniel’s genuineness and redound to the glory of Daniel’s God, in showing that the dream was really a revelation from Him (and not from Marduk or Babylon’s gods).¹⁰⁹

The [Chaldean] dream manuals, of which several examples have come to light, consist . . . of historical dreams and the events that followed them, arranged systematically for easy reference. Since these books had to try to cover every possible eventuality they became inordinately long; only the expert could find his way through them, and even he had to know the dream to begin with before he could search for the nearest possible parallel. The unreasonable demands of the king and the protests of the interpreters in verses 3-11 are in keeping with his character and the known facts concerning dream books. [Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, p. 87. See also A. L. Oppenheim, “The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 46 (1956):179-373.]¹¹⁰

you shall be cut in pieces

תִּתְּעַבְדוּן [haddāmīn tīt‘abqūn], *hitpeel* stem, “(into) pieces you yourselves will be turned into.” Some have wondered at the severity of the threat, but it seems completely consistent with what is known of Nebuchadnezzar’s practices and is not uncommon in countries lacking a system of justice.¹¹¹ Nebuchadnezzar’s

cruelty is evident in the way Scripture records he killed **Zedekiah's** sons prior to putting out his eyes—ensuring the last thing Zedekiah saw would bring him continued grief (2K. 25:7; Jer. 35:9-7; 52:10-11 cf. Jer. 32:4; 34:3; Eze. 12:13). At the capture of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar rounded up all the important men from the city and slew them (2K. 15:18-21). Nebuchadnezzar roasted two Jewish rebels named Ahab and Zedekiah (not King Zedekiah) in the fire (Jer. 29:22) and would soon attempt to kill Daniel's three companions in a similar manner (Dan. 3:20-21). “The drastic character of the Assyrian-Babylonian punishments is gruesomely represented in the Assyrian bas-reliefs, and detailed in the codes of Babylonia and Assyria.”¹¹²

Nor would theirs be routine executions, but their arms and legs would be tied to four powerful trees, temporarily roped together at the top. When these ropes were cut, the victim would suddenly be torn apart into four pieces. . . . no verb for “cutting” is used here, nor is there any mention of a cutting instrument.¹¹³

your houses shall be made an ash heap

Ash heap is נְזִילִי [nēwālī], “a garbage-heap or public latrine area (Ezra 6:11; Dan. 2:5; 3:29)”¹¹⁴, “probably an Akkadian loan word.”¹¹⁵ Translations vary in their interpretation of the way their houses would be destroyed: “dung hill” (KJV, ASV), “rubbish heap” (NASB), “ruins” (ESV), “garbage dump” (HCSB), “rubble” (NET).¹¹⁶

A similar judgment is issued by King **Darius** against anyone who interfered with **Cyrus'** edict granting permission for the Jews to rebuild their temple (Ezra 6:11).

3.2.6 - Daniel 2:6



gifts, rewards, and great honor

“ ‘Rewards’ literally is a singular Aramaic noun that may imply some specific reward, maybe a promotion or marriage to one of the king’s daughters.”¹¹⁷ *Honor* is יָקָר [yēqār], translated as “glory” in some other passages (Dan. 2:37; 4:36; 5:18, 20; 7:14). **Belshazzar** will subsequently make a similar offer to his wise men and also to Daniel (Dan. 5:7, 16, 29). The Moabites attempted to hire Balaam with a diviner’s fee and promise of honor (Num. 22:7, 17, 37; 24:11).

3.2.7 - Daniel 2:7



tell his servants the dream

See commentary concerning “**lying and corrupt words**” in verse 9. The king’s advisors continue to coax him to reveal the dream because they know they can’t produce the information. If they can get the king to reveal the dream, then they can concoct a subjective, fanciful, imprecise, untestable “interpretation.” In this, the advisors are like those who claim to be modern-day prophets.

The ancient fortune tellers and interpreters of dreams were adepts in the art of drawing out sufficient information to form a basis for some shrewd prognostication, and the framing of their answer in such an ambiguous manner that it would appear correct whichever way the event would go. The Chaldeans therefore figured that if the king would tell them the dream, they could agree on some interpretation that would seem plausible, and thus save their reputation.¹¹⁸

3.2.8 - Daniel 2:8



that you would gain time

The king means either that they wished to prolong the time that he might recollect it, or get indifferent about it; or that they might invent something in the place of it; or make their escape to save their lives, after having packed up their valuables.¹¹⁹

Either that he could remember his dream, and tell them it himself; or all the images and impressions of it were wore off his mind, so that they could tell him anything, and he not be able to disprove them; or he would grow indifferent to it, and his passionate desire after it cool, and he be careless whether he knew it or not; or he or they should die; or he might be engaged in other affairs, and be called abroad to war, as he had been; or some thing or other turn up, whereby they might escape the ruin threatened.¹²⁰

3.2.9 - Daniel 2:9



you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me

Here we see evidence of the king's distrust for his court advisors. See commentary on [Daniel 2:5](#).

Nebuchadnezzar's threat of excessive and capricious (but by no means unparalleled) punishment (Dan. 2:5▶) and his suspicion of a conspiracy among his advisers (Dan. 2:9▶) betray a deep sense of insecurity despite his accomplishments.¹²¹

tell me the dream and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation

He wants an evidence that the revelation they give is a supernatural revelation. And he makes that clear at the end of verse 9 and I think verse 9 would be the key that I would use to support this idea, "Tell me the dream that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation."¹²²

Although there are many records of dream interpretation from the ancient near east, there is no record of a courtier recounting the content of someone else's dream.¹²³

3.2.10 - Daniel 2:10



There is not a man on earth

These men understood their occult-empowered abilities had limits. This was also apparent in the time of Moses when Pharaoh's magicians were able to duplicate some of the miracles God worked through Moses: yet they were unable to perform others. Their failure to duplicate the works of Moses and Aaron led to a similar declaration.

So the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.'" And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on man and beast. Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "**This is the finger of God.**" But Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had said. (Ex. 8:16-19) [emphasis added]

There are times when it serves God's purpose to frustrate and pervert the knowledge of those who perform divination, whether among Israel or the Gentiles. He "frustrates the signs of the babblers, and drives diviners mad; [and] turns wise men backward, and makes their knowledge foolishness." (Isa. 44:25 cf. 1K. 22:22; Isa. 19:3). Daniel knew these men could not provide what the king sought (Dan. 2:27▶) because they lacked a relationship with God, and were engaged in practices explicitly banned by God.¹²⁴

This was a major confession on the part of these men—admitting that they could not do what they were supposed to do. Their business was to make contact with the divine realm and find out such information.¹²⁵

The attribute of God the occult practitioners could not benefit from is His *omniscience*. This attribute of God is not shared with any created being. Only the Creator has all knowledge, including the very thoughts within [Nebuchadnezzar's](#) mind on the night of his dream.¹²⁶ Indeed, it was God Himself who chose to communicate by a dream ([Dan. 2:28](#)).

magician, astrologer, or Chaldean

See commentary on [Daniel 1:20](#) and [Daniel 2:2](#). The [Tanakh](#) translates “astrologer” here and in [Daniel 2:27](#) by the word “exorcist.”¹²⁷

3.2.11 - Daniel 2:11



difficult thing

Difficult is יָקִיר [yaqqîr], “a difficulty verging on impossibility.”¹²⁸

no other . . . except the gods

It appears there were different levels and capabilities among the pantheon of gods at [Babylon](#). Less capable gods, perhaps like the demigods of the Greeks, would interact with mere men, but the supreme gods would render no such service.

*The supreme gods are referred to here, who alone, in the Chaldean view, could solve the difficulty, but who do not communicate with men. The inferior gods, intermediate between men and the supreme gods, are unable to solve it.*¹²⁹

These men knew it was impossible for them to provide what the king sought. How different was the attitude of Daniel, who knew his God *could* provide the answer, if He chose to do so. This explains why Daniel did not attempt to circumvent the king's challenge when he subsequently approached the king. See commentary on [Daniel 2:16](#). See commentary on [Daniel 2:10](#).

dwelling is not with flesh

*These men own there was a God, though, they held, more than one; and the omniscience of God, though they seem to have no notion of his omnipresence; and to suggest as if he had no concern with mortals; had no regard to men on earth, nor communicated the knowledge of things unto them.*¹³⁰

What a dramatic contrast is seen here between the false gods of the pagans and the God of Christianity! The God of both the [OT](#) and [NT](#) is not the god of Deism: aloof, distant, unaware, and uncaring. One of His names demonstrates His closeness to His creatures: *Immanuel*, meaning “God with us” ([Isa. 7:14](#); [8:8](#), [10](#); [Mat. 1:23](#)).

In the [OT](#), prior to the entrance of sin into the human race, God walked with Adam in the cool of the day ([Gen. 3:8](#)). When mankind fell in sin, God continued to manifest His presence among His people as He “dwelt between the Cherubim” within the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle and Temple.¹³¹ Because of sin, formal rituals mitigated between sinful man and a Holy God ([Isa. 33:14](#)). Yet, a relationship remained between God and His people down through history, and His manifest presence continued to dwell with them.

In the disobedience and sin of Israel leading to Daniel's captivity and Israel's eventual overthrow by Babylon, we find the manifest presence of God departing from Solomon's temple ([Eze. 8:6](#); [9:3](#); [10:4](#), [18-19](#); [11:22-23](#)). This resulted in the subsequent destruction of Solomon's temple at the final [deportation](#) of the southern kingdom to Babylon.

The manifest presence of God would remain absent from the midst of Israel until the virgin birth of Messiah.¹³² Motivated by His great love and desire to reveal Himself in a more intimate way, the One True God chose to

stoop down and enter history in human flesh at the incarnation of Jesus Christ (Php. 2:6-7).

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

There were numerous reasons why Jesus came as a man, but one of the most comforting for those who struggle in weakness is so He might demonstrate His familiarity with the experience of His creatures (Mark 1:13; Heb. 2:18; 4:15). Unlike the pagan Gods, the God of Christianity is intimately interested in His creatures and desires to establish and maintain an eternal relationship with them (John 5:24; 8:51; 10:28; 17:2). This unity and intimacy between God and His own is evident in Jesus' prayer on the night of His betrayal.

I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. (John 17:20-23)

Daniel's God was intimately concerned with Daniel and his companions. Knowledge of this fact gave them faith and boldness to walk in obedience and trust when faced with great risk (Dan. 3:17-18; 6:10).

3.2.12 - Daniel 2:12



for this reason

[this confirmed] his suspicion that these men could not do what they had been purporting to do, which meant that previous interpretations likely had been wrong and he could not expect anything better in the future; and the audacity of these men, incapable and deceiving as they were, in now daring to criticize him for testing them in this manner.¹³³

very furious

קִצְף שֹׂנְאָה [q^eṣāḇ śōnāʾ], abundantly “in a furious rage, implying anger to a very great degree.”¹³⁴ “As messengers of death is the king's wrath” (Pr. 16:14). “The king's wrath is like the roaring of a lion; whoever provokes him to anger sins against his own life” (Pr. 20:2).

to destroy

לְהוֹבִידָהּ [l^ehōbāḏā], h^afel stem, “execute, slay, kill.”¹³⁵ Daniel would later remind Belshazzar of the great power—including the power of life and death—God had placed in Nebuchadnezzar's hands.

And because of the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. **Whomever he wished, he executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive;** whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down. (Dan. 5:19) [emphasis added]

See commentary on *Daniel 5:19*.

all the wise men of Babylon

Wise men is חֲכִימֵי [ḥakkîmê], used here as a collective term for all the sages of the court, previously appearing under different classifications (Dan. 2:2), magicians, astrologers, soothsayers).

Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar was in a position similar to Rehoboam (1K. 12:6-11). The young king had become impatient with the older advisors he inherited from the court of his father, Nabopolassar.¹³⁶ In any case, this threat had serious implications for the court advisors, the city, and the empire.

Do you know what would happen in any state, any nation on earth, that destroys every single advisor. In other words, Nebuchadnezzar is so furious that the system doesn't have the basic answers that he is willing to take the whole bunch, the whole edifice of Babylonian arithmetic, Babylonian astronomy, Babylonian astrology, things all the other nations have come to, and he's willing to destroy it overnight because it cannot answer his basic question. Nebuchadnezzar is neurotic at this point; he's like a lot of the 20th century artists, he's absolutely neurotic, driven there by his dream and frantically asking someone to point out to him.¹³⁷

The Magicians, Astrologers, Sorcerers, and Chaldeans were numerous, wealthy, and influential bodies. They were composed of the learned and cultivated classes of Babylon, and to cause their destruction was to weaken the Empire. What the execution of the sentence would have resulted in we can only imagine, but happily it was averted.¹³⁸

Although it appears only those wise men who lived within Babylon were to be destroyed¹³⁹ (other wise men lived outside of the city of Babylon itself¹⁴⁰), this would still represent a huge loss to the empire. It seems likely that among those wise men residing at Babylon would be found some of the most capable and experienced among their class. Since some of the wise men had considerable knowledge in the sciences, their wholesale destruction would have resulted in serious problems for the empire going forward. Nevertheless, this was all part of God's plan to elevate Daniel preventing this dire possibility.

3.2.13 - Daniel 2:13



they began killing the wise *men*

It is not entirely clear from verse 13 whether the executioners killed the wise men right where they were when found or whether they were being collected for a public execution. The latter is probably the case as subsequent scripture reveals that Daniel has the time to ask questions.¹⁴¹

At least some of them, were slain; very probably those who were in the king's presence, and at court; and the officers were gone out to slay the rest¹⁴²

they sought Daniel and his companions

It seems clear Daniel and his companions were considered wise men.¹⁴³ This lends credence to the view the events recorded in chapter 2 occurred after the youths had completed their three years of training. See commentary on [Daniel 2:1](#).

Although Daniel and his companions were included in the command to kill the wise men, this does not mean they employed or endorsed their occult practices. This would hardly make sense given the risks the young Jews take to obey God, regardless of the cost (Dan. 1:8▶; 3:16-18▶; 6:10▶).

The wise men [are in] the same class of people as the magicians. [But] Daniel and his friends were [not] considered magicians. [Wise men is] a general term for a court adviser and some would give advice on the basis of conjuring, others on the basis of soothsaying, so that it doesn't refer to the process but the product. Daniel would not use sorcery or magic. Daniel would give advice by calling on his God, but the fact that he gave advice puts him in the classification of wise man.¹⁴⁴

3.2.14 - Daniel 2:14



with counsel

Counsel is נִדְבָר [‘ēṭā], made “inquiry in a careful, guarded way . . . [with] wisdom . . . discretion . . . prudence . . . shrewdness . . . discreetness.”¹⁴⁶

wisdom

Wisdom is **טַעַם** [*ṭe'ēm*], “good sense, tact.”¹⁴⁷

Daniel Intercedes with Arioch

Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom in this particular situation, but it seems Arioch would hardly have been motivated to listen to him at all unless Daniel had already established a reputation as being someone worth listening to. Perhaps he established a relationship of trust with Arioch prior to this event.

Let it be considered that Arioch . . . as “chief of the executioners,” or “slaughterers,” . . . would be intent upon little else than to please the king by a speedy execution. A lengthy question or an attempt to lecture him would have met with little favor. Daniel must have displayed unusual tact also in the way he approached the man.¹⁴⁸



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captain of the king's guard

רַב־טַבָּחַיָּא [*rab—ṭabbāḥayyā*], “executioner, one whose sole function is to put enemies of the kingdom to death.”¹⁴⁹

who had gone out to kill

Either the wise men were to be rounded up from throughout the city and brought to a central place of execution with Arioch making his rounds and arresting them. Or it may be executions had already begun and the wise men were being killed at their residences. See commentary on [Daniel 2:13](#).

Daniel displays great poise in responding to the imminent danger to him and his companions. Such stability and perspective is evidence of the fruit of the Spirit produced in the life of this relatively young man. Clearly, Daniel had already spent years walking with God and studying the Scriptures.

Daniel 2 also gives us the contrast between the misery, the unhappiness, the turmoil in the unbeliever's soul in the midst of a crisis and how a believer, . . . a believer who understands the promises of God and who applies them regularly, . . . a believer is completely dominated in his soul by divine viewpoint thinking, and we're going to see that even when the executioners come and pound on his door to arrest him and haul him off to the execution block, he has stability, he has strength, he has poise under pressure and he responds to the crisis with a very cool head and applies doctrine. And so there's a contrast between the most powerful man and one of his servants; the most powerful man who has no doctrine and is in turmoil and his servant Daniel, one of the administrators of the kingdom, who is about to lose his life but has tremendous cool and calm under pressure.¹⁵⁰

3.2.15 - Daniel 2:15



so urgent

מְהֵרָפָה [*mehaḥṣepā*], “extreme . . . severe . . . strict.”¹⁵¹ “preemptory.”¹⁵² Even Daniel was surprised by the reaction of [Nebuchadnezzar](#) in ordering [all the wise men to be killed](#). See commentary on [Daniel 2:12](#).

Arioch made the decision known to Daniel

That Arioch would take time to explain this to one already condemned to death speaks well both of Daniel's approach and of Arioch's regard for him.¹⁵³

Whatever the reason, Arioch now took time to inform them. For this he must be commended, for many rough men would have cared little whether their intended victims knew the reasons for their being killed or not.¹⁵⁴

3.2.16 - Daniel 2:16



Daniel went in

Daniel probably gained entrance to the king through the introduction of an intermediary or official, possibly Arioch himself.¹⁵⁵ Daniel's reception by the king provides evidence he must have already been esteemed.¹⁵⁶

Being familiar with the Scriptural example of Joseph in Egypt and his God-given gift of interpreting dreams before Pharaoh (Gen. 40:8; 41:15-16), Daniel may have been prompted by the Spirit to recognize this was a similar opportunity if he would but walk in confidence.¹⁵⁷

asked the king

Daniel's wisdom is evident: despite the immense danger he was facing, he evidently neither criticized the king's request nor asked the King for details concerning the original dream. In this, he stood out from the other wise men who attempted to subvert the king's desire.

Now this reveals a lot about Daniel's confidence, his knowledge of God, that God would hear the petition, that God can deliver those who trust Him from these awesome circumstances, that the knowledge of the future belongs to God, that God does reveal Himself and His plans and His purposes to men. See all those things are inherent in Daniel's approach to God.¹⁵⁸

that he might tell the king the interpretation

Daniel exhibits great faith here because if he is unable to provide the answer, it is doubly certain he and his companions will perish. They may even merit a cruel torture for delaying enforcement of the king's decree already in progress.¹⁵⁹

There are a number of reasons why the king acceded to Daniel's petition. *First*, Daniel did not challenge the king's request as being impossible. He knew, by faith, his God *could* provide the information if it were according to His inscrutable will to save Daniel and his companions.¹⁶⁰ *Second*, Daniel did not engage in stalling tactics like the other wise men. Instead, he seems to have requested only a single day (and perhaps only one night) in order to provide the dream and its interpretation.¹⁶¹ *Third*, the king may have recalled Daniel's superiority over the other wise men at his earlier interview at the end of his three years of training (Dan. 1:18-20).¹⁶² *Fourth*, if Daniel, his companions, and all the wise men were destroyed, then the king would lose all hope of obtaining an interpretation of his dream.¹⁶³ Whatever the case may be, we can assume the king was subject to God's providence.¹⁶⁴

3.2.17 - Daniel 2:17



Daniel returned to his house

Perhaps "he felt that God did not vainly harass the mind of King Nebuchadnezzar, but was preparing some signal and remarkable judgment for him."¹⁶⁵

As Daniel made his way back there, mixed thoughts must have whirled through his head. He had just been in the very presence of Nebuchadnezzar, high and mighty as he was, and he had told him that he, Daniel, young as he was, would reveal to him what mature wise men had not been able to tell. Further more, at that moment, he had no idea of what this information was. He did not know what the king had dreamed. Would God really honor him so much as to tell him? He had never experienced this kind of miraculous contact with God before. Would it really happen now?¹⁶⁶

made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah

If this refers to the king's original decision to kill the wise men, it would seem Daniel's companions probably lived close by. If they lived with Daniel, they probably would have already been aware of the king's threat when Arioch previously sought to arrest Daniel. Most likely, they lived nearby. If the decision refers to granting Daniel's petition, they may have lived with Daniel. In any case, Daniel lets them know he has obtained a limited time period to produce the king's dream and its interpretation or they will all be killed. See commentary on [Daniel 2:18](#).



3.2.18 - Daniel 2:18

that they might seek mercies from . . . God

One of the reasons why Daniel met with his friends was to gather them together to petition for God's favorable intervention through prayer. Well in advance of Jesus' teaching in the NT (Mat. 18:19-20), Daniel was aware of the advantages of praying as a group. No doubt Daniel and his companions were familiar with OT promises concerning prayer found in the Psalms (e.g., Ps. 50:15). Unlike other wise men's gods (Dan. 2:11), the God of the Psalms is *near to those who dwell in flesh*.

The LORD is righteous in all His ways, Gracious in all His works. **The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them.** The LORD preserves all who love Him, But all the wicked He will destroy. (Ps. 145:17-20) [emphasis added]

Daniel and his companions placed confidence in such a passage because they had demonstrated their faith by avoiding defilement during their training. They had shown themselves to be among those "who fear Him."

It seems likely that praise and worship was also offered during the night, another spiritual discipline with an emphasis upon group participation.

O magnify the LORD **with me**, And **let us exalt His name together**. I sought the LORD, and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears. (Ps. 34:3-4) [emphasis added]

Daniel understood their combined appeal would underscore the need of God's mercy for all of them to be spared. Later, when the dream and its interpretation are revealed, Daniel informs the king, "this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but *for our sakes* . . ." (Dan. 2:30). Hundreds of years later, a similar prayer vigil will lead to the angelic rescue of Peter from prison (Acts 12:5-12).

This is one of several passages in the book of Daniel highlighting the biblical balance between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Who can doubt if Daniel and his companions had not fervently sought the Lord things would not have turned out as well? God is sovereign, yet allows (even expects) His creatures to move His hand through the power of prayer.

Now [the book of] Daniel is very, very heavy on sovereignty of God. The book of Daniel would be the Calvinist delight because of its absoluteness on the sovereignty of God. God is the final authority over every event of history. But I want you to notice that along with the sovereignty of God in Daniel is an element that amateur Calvinists always miss and it is the fact that the God of history is dynamic, He interacts with prayer; He is not a fatalistic God because the implication of verse 18 is that if they don't pray they're going to die, if they do pray they won't. In other words, their future destiny does depend upon their response to the situation. If Daniel believed like some amateur Calvinists he would have sat around and said whatever is going to happen is going to happen and done absolutely nothing. But he does do something and he has this big long concerted prayer in response. . . . [Daniel] wants God to personally respond to him. And whatever your belief about sovereignty is, if you've gotten to the point in your thinking where now you can't pray because you keep getting hit with this idea of what's the use of praying because God knows what I'm going to pray before

I pray it so therefore I won't pray it, if you get stuck in that you're way off on your Biblical understanding of sovereignty. It's incorrect and its unbiblical, somewhere along the way you've gotten off the track.¹⁶⁷

If Daniel had been interpreted down through the years in fundamentalist circles as a wisdom book, the way it should be interpreted, then we would not have prophecy freaks misusing the contents of God's prophecies as an excuse to sit around and do nothing, to mope and say the world is getting worse and worse, we can't do anything so we'll be spiritual dropouts, we won't evangelize, we're not interested in missions, we won't bother with taking our citizenship responsibilities seriously, etc. Prophecy freaks are basically spiritually dropouts and they are dropouts because they fail to interpret Daniel in its framework. Daniel is a wisdom book. Each chapter in this book deals with a crisis in Daniel's career and how he meets those particular crises.¹⁶⁸

We will see this demonstrated again in [chapter 9](#) when, in response to one of the most amazing prayers recorded in all of Scripture (Dan. 9:3-21), the angel Gabriel is dispatched to Daniel (Dan. 9:23) to reveal the famous revelation of the *Seventy Sevens* (Dan. 9:24-27). Even though Daniel *knew* from Jeremiah the desolations of Jerusalem would be limited to seventy years, he was still motivated to intercede fervently to bring this about. See commentary on [Daniel 9:2](#). In [chapter 10](#), a heavenly messenger will be sent to Daniel announcing, "I have come in response to your words" (Dan. 10:12). The prayers of the saints are not lost—they do not "fall to the ground" unheard. No, they come to God's remembrance as incense offerings moving Him to action (Rev. 5:8; 8:3).

The prayers in the book of Daniel bring more than deliverance for Daniel, his companions, and the nation. In heaven's response, important revelation from God will be recorded for the benefit of all mankind.

Something more than their lives was at stake. If Daniel had failed God, the world would have missed that great "REVELATION" that was locked up in that Dream and its interpretation, the prophetic and historical outline of the "TIMES OF THE GENTILES."¹⁶⁹

Within a few years of this night, the entire Jewish race will come under threat in Persia. In response, Mordecai, Esther, and the Jews of Persia fast and pray to obtain deliverance (Est. 4:15-16).

Effective biblical prayer is to be consistent (Dan. 6:6), persistent (Luke 18:2-8), fervent (Jas. 5:16), and offered by those who practice righteousness (Jas. 5:16).¹⁷⁰ In the midst of stressful situations, those who avail themselves of this powerful tool are promised to find peace in the midst of the storm (Php. 4:6-7).

God of heaven

This phrase appears in Gen. 24:3, 7; 2Chr. 36:23; Ezra 1:2; 5:11-12; 6:9-10; 7:12, 21, 23; Ne. 1:4-5; 2:4, 20; Ps. 136:26; Dan. 2:18-19, 37, 44; Jonah 1:9; Rev. 11:13; 16:11.¹⁷¹

Some commentators believe this phrase appears more frequently in Daniel (Dan. 2:18-19, 28, 37, 44; 5:23) as a reminder. Prior to Israel's captivity, the abiding presence of God departed from the temple (Eze. 8:4-6; 9:3; 10:4, 18-19; 11:22-23) leading to its eventual destruction at the hands of **Babylon**. Thus, when God's manifest presence is no longer dwelling on earth, this title emphasizes His rule from heaven rather than from earth.¹⁷² However, this seems unlikely given the appearance of the phrase in Jonah 1:9 during a time when the abiding presence of God was still present in Solomon's temple in Jerusalem.

More likely, its use in Daniel is intended to emphasize Israel's God as the One in command of the heavens rather than the astral bodies worshiped by the Babylonians. The information the king seeks cannot be obtained from *any pagan wise man on earth* because its source requires a relationship with the God of heaven.¹⁷³

The reference to "the God of heaven" or literally "of the heavens" is an obvious contrast to the religious superstitions of the Babylonians who worshiped the starry heaven. Daniel's God was the God of the heavens, not heaven itself. Abraham first used this term in Genesis 24:7, and it is found frequently later in the Bible (Ezra 1:2; 6:10; 7:12, 21; Ne. 1:5; 2:4; Ps. 136:26).¹⁷⁴

Yahweh was addressed as “the God of heaven” because the information they needed could only come from heaven, as even the pagan wise men of Babylon acknowledged (cf. Dan 2:10-11). . . . Daniel also was emphasizing the fact that Yahweh “is the God who is over the heavens, i.e., over the sun, moon and stars which the Babylonians worshiped.” [Young, 65-66]¹⁷⁵

secret

רָז [rāz], “information or omens so enigmatic or baffling that only revelation from God can make it understandable.”¹⁷⁶ However, in the case of the dream itself, the information is not merely enigmatic or baffling, it was *completely inaccessible* requiring divine disclosure. In this sense, **Nebuchadnezzar’s** dream is akin to a NT *mystery*.

The second view as to the origin of Paul’s concept [of mystery] is that it came from a Jewish context and a Jewish source. In the Septuagint (a Greek translation of the Old Testament from about 250 B.C.), the word *musterion* (mystery) is used eight times and all in chapter two of the Book of Daniel (vv. 18, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30, and twice in v. 47). It is a Greek translation of the Aramaic word *raza*. In the English Bibles, the word is translated as “secret.” But the emphasis in the Daniel passage is that it is God Who reveals the mysteries.¹⁷⁷

Although God knew the thoughts of Nebuchadnezzar’s mind during the previous night, He didn’t need to read Nebuchadnezzar’s mind because God Himself was the source of the dream!

3.2.19 - Daniel 2:19



the secret was revealed to Daniel

It is interesting to consider the context within which the dream and its interpretation were given to Daniel. False prophets, who had not been sent by God, opposed both Jeremiah and Ezekiel in predicting Jerusalem’s fall to **Babylon**. “For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the LORD” (Jeremiah 29:8-9). Now here were a young man and his companions, none of them with the mantle of a prophet, asking God to identify both a dream and its interpretation. Significantly, God chose an unlikely avenue for disclosure of prophetic truth and its interpretation. “Whereas God had warned Israel not to listen to the false prophets who claim that they had received dreams from God, God would use the dream of Nebuchadnezzar to lay out the history of His people and show them that He is still in control.”¹⁷⁸

in a night vision

בְּחִזְוֹן דִּי-לֵילִיָּא [b^ehezwā dī-lē^eyā]. Vision is חֲזוֹן [hēzū], “appearance of something in the mind as a supernatural revelation to communicate a truth, not seen as a sensory perception.”¹⁷⁹ It seems most likely that Daniel’s vision was a superset of **Nebuchadnezzar’s** dream. The first part probably duplicated Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and the second part would provide the divine interpretation.¹⁸⁰

It is evident Daniel had established a consistent prayer life from early in his life (Dan. 6:10, 13), yet this was a unique situation. It seems likely Daniel and his companions remained awake praising and beseeching God until the answer came by way of a vision. The seriousness of the threat, the limited amount of time, and the manner in which God answered all argue for an all-night vigil. See commentary on *Daniel 2:19*.

so Daniel blessed

Blessed is בָּרַךְ [bārik], conveying the idea of offering worship and praise on one’s knees.¹⁸¹ We are certain Daniel and his companions were *immensely relieved* when the night vision came! We can only imagine the eruption of praise and worship in response to Daniel relating the vision to his companions! This, again,

demonstrates one of the reasons why God allows trials: they strengthen our faith while developing a deeper reservoir of worshipful praise out of the depths from which He rescues us.

You will notice Daniel's initial response is theological. Because you might have expected Daniel to say, God, thank you for saving my neck, I'm not going to be torn limb from limb. That was not his response. He exalts and magnifies God because of who God is and the kind of God He is.¹⁸²

Daniel's view of God differs from much modern worship one hears in Christian media and churches. The common fare today is *man-centered* worship. It is "all about *me*" and "what God did for *me*." As we'll see in the [next verse](#), Daniel's worship is *God-centered*. He extols the greatness of *God's* attributes and qualities. Of course we are blessed and thankful when we receive benefits from His *hand*, but mature worship seeks His *face*, not His hand!

3.2.20 - Daniel 2:20



forever and ever

מִן-עֲלְמָא וְעַד-עֲלְמָא [min-‘ālmā wə‘ad--‘ālmā], literally, "from forever and to forever", eternally.

3.2.21 - Daniel 2:21



He changes the times and the seasons

Times is עֲדָנָא [‘iddānāyā], "occasion in a general sense, without reference to other points in time."¹⁸³ We will subsequently encounter the same word in the important phrase, "time, times and a half time" (Dan. 7:25; 12:7). See commentary on [Daniel 7:25](#). *Seasons* is from זְמַן [zēman], "a period of time."¹⁸⁴ These two concepts are frequently found together (Num. 13:20; Ecc. 3:1; Dan. 2:21; 7:12; Hos. 2:9; Acts 1:7; 1Th. 5:1).

The "times" are the phases and periods of duration of empires (compare Dan. 7:25; 1Chr. 12:32; 29:30); the "seasons" the fitting times for their culmination, decline, and fall (Ecc. 3:1; Acts 1:7; 1Th. 5:1).¹⁸⁵

God determines when in history events are to take place and how long each process or phase in history is to endure. Thus Yahweh not only decreed the fall and destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.—an event future for Daniel in 602 B.C.—but also the exact number of years the captivity would last (cf. Dan. 9:2).¹⁸⁶

Daniel extols God's control of history which overthrows the fatalistic viewpoint of the Babylonians who believed astral bodies influenced destiny.¹⁸⁷

What was the central element of Babylonian education? The human viewpoint education of the day corresponded to what that you read in the newspaper every day? The horoscope. What's the essence of the horoscope? That the times and the seasons are fixed by astronomical regularity. In other words, there's a fatalistic determinism that's involved in astrology, that the universe just sort of runs in a very fatalistic way and the times and the seasons are all preprogrammed. And Daniel says no, times and seasons are not preprogrammed, God changes the times and God changes the seasons. Said in astrological terms, God will change the constellation, God alters their time and their periods; He introduces an element of catastrophism into the geophysical universe. God tampers with His own creation, He changes the times and the seasons. He's not bound by his own natural laws, if He wants to change them he does.¹⁸⁸

"The saint praises the Name of God, i.e., God in his self-revelation, for his omniscience and omnipotence, attributes revealed in human history, Dan. 5:21. His power is exhibited in his providence over 'times and seasons,' Moff. [Moffatt], 'epochs and eras,' and in his sovereign determination of all political changes. In this expression lies a challenge to the fatalism of the Bab. astral religion, a feature which in its influence long survived in the Graeco-Roman world." [Montgomery, p. 157]¹⁸⁹

Jesus used the same phrase to describe the point in history when the kingdom would be restored to Israel (Acts 1:7). Paul used the phrase to describe the coming of the day of the Lord as a thief on an unsuspecting world (1Th. 5:1-2). In his brief period as a “little-god,” the little horn will intend to change “times and law” (Dan. 7:25). See commentary on [Daniel 7:25](#).

He removes kings and raises up kings

This is a direct reference to the *Sequence of Kingdoms* revealed as the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.¹⁹⁰ Nebuchadnezzar was raised up by God (Dan. 1:2; 2:37), but was slow to learn he would also be removed by God (Dan. 4:25, 31; 5:21). The last ruler of Babylon, Belshazzar, failed to learn this lesson (Dan. 5:21, 28).

In his dream, Nebuchadnezzar will begin to learn that it is God who is sovereign as He sets up and removes empires. Later, in his second God-given dream (chapter 4), the king will learn in a most personal way that God, not Nebuchadnezzar, is sovereign.¹⁹¹

It is in the course of his providence that one king is put down, and another raised up; and therefore he can distinctly tell what he has purposed to do in the great empires of the earth.¹⁹²

Some are raised on high, and others fall to the ground. Experience teaches us these events do not proceed from human skill, or through the equable course of nature, while the loftiest kings are cast down and others elevated to the highest posts of honor.¹⁹³

God turns a king’s heart wherever He wishes (Pr. 21:1). He will soon make use of Cyrus to release the Jews after the Medo-Persian empire overthrows Babylon. Yet Cyrus did not know Him (Isa. 44:28; 45:1-4).

Thus says the LORD to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held—To subdue nations before him
And loose the armor of kings, To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut: 'I will
go before you And make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze And cut the
bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places, That you may know
that I, the LORD, Who call you by your name, Am the God of Israel. For Jacob My servant’s sake, And
Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me.
(Isa. 45:1-4)

At the time of the last Gentile kingdom, God will turn the hearts of the ten toes (ten horns) to give the authority of their kingdoms to the beast (Rev. 17:17).

This truth should give all powerful rulers pause to consider the source of their authority and to rule accordingly (Deu. 17:18).

Do not lift up your horn on high; Do not speak with a stiff neck. For exaltation comes neither from the east
Nor from the west nor from the south. But God is the Judge: He puts down one, And exalts another. (Ps.
75:5-7)

This same point is repeated in the New Testament—Rom. 13:1. Obviously, if God appoints kings and rulers, then kings and rulers are beholden to him for their position, therefore their position is a trust from God; consequently, they should exercise this trust recognizing God as their head. This is, indeed, how all rulers should perform, for they have in their hands the power to direct the course of the lives of God’s special and beloved work—man. Clearly, this principle calls on every government to recognize God very specifically, and God is defined as the God revealed through Israel (v.23). A ruler’s office is properly understood to be a divine trust and is to be exercised accordingly. Should he abuse this trust, then the inference is that God will intervene and depose His dynasty. The course of Babylonia’s history during Daniel’s life was to illustrate this principle.¹⁹⁴

knowledge to those who have understanding

Knowledge is מַנְדָּע [manda], “comprehension; with the focus on what is understood . . . discernment; with the focus on capacity for understanding, which may be esoteric.”¹⁹⁵ The same word describes the return of *sanity* to Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:31). *Understanding* is יָדַע [yeda], “to know.”¹⁹⁶

He originally formed each human intellect, and made it what it is; he opens before it the paths of knowledge; he gives to it clearness of perception; he preserves its powers so that they do not become deranged; he has power to make suggestions, to direct the laws of association, to fix the mind on important thoughts, and to open before it new and interesting views of truth.¹⁹⁷

3.2.22 - Daniel 2:22



deep and secret things

Deep is עֲמִיק [ammiq], “mysterious information not normally attainable and implied to be profound or valuable.”¹⁹⁸ *Secret* is סֵתֶר [setar], “secret things, something not normally able to be known.”¹⁹⁹ “He uncovers deep things out of darkness, and brings the shadow of death to light” (Job 12:22).

A species of knowledge which lies beyond any natural compass of the human powers, and in which a supernatural influence is needed - such things as the Chaldeans and astrologers claimed the power of disclosing. The assertion here is, that when the highest human wisdom showed itself insufficient for the exigency, God was able to disclose those deep truths which it was desirable for man to understand. Applied generally, this refers to the truths made known by revelation - truths which man could never have discovered by his unaided powers.²⁰⁰

He knows what is in the darkness

But Scripture, when it wishes to assert what is peculiar to God, joins these two things inseparably; first, God foresees all things, since nothing is hidden from his eyes; and next, he appoints future events, and governs the world by his will, allowing nothing to happen by chance or without his direction. Daniel here assumes this principle, or rather unites the two.²⁰¹

light dwells with him

In the immediate context, Daniel refers to God’s ability to see the unknown and to expose it—as in the hidden dream of *Nebuchadnezzar*. This light illumines what would otherwise be hidden or unknown. There is nothing remaining in darkness before God’s omniscience gaze.

Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You. (Ps. 139:12)

Sheol is naked before Him, And Destruction has no covering. (Job 26:6)

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. (Heb. 4:13)

In other passages, we find God is the *source* of light (Gen. 1:3; John 1:3-5). Indeed, it is part of His very nature (1Jn. 1:5-7). This light—provided by Daniel’s interpretation—provides the sought-after answer Nebuchadnezzar’s soul desired. Only God can answer the issues of the heart and eternity.

So the great existential questions of life and death continue to be insoluble to the worldly wise. Without divine revelation, there is only conjecture and subjective opinion.²⁰²

3.2.23 - Daniel 2:23**God of my fathers**

As we have seen, Daniel is a descendant of Judah (Dan. 1:3▶, 6▶), the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham. This is one of the titles God has taken to Himself.

Moreover God said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.’ ” (Ex. 3:15)

The name emphasizes God’s covenant faithfulness and is rooted in the covenant He established with Abraham, who was called from the very region where Daniel now found himself captive. Abraham left “Ur of the Chaldeans” (Gen. 11:28; 15:7; Ne. 9:7) bound for the Promised Land of Israel and now Daniel finds himself back to the land of the Chaldeans! Yet despite all outward appearance, Daniel understood God was still bound by His promise to the fathers (Gen. 12:1-3; Gen. 15:7; 17:19-21; 21:12; 22:18; 25:5, 11, 23; 26:3-5; 26:24; 27:27; 28:3-4, 13-15; 32:9; 35:11; 48:4; 49:10). It was God’s covenant faithfulness standing as a guarantee behind Daniel and his companions who found themselves back in the region of Ur under foreign domination.

On the whole, he so opposes the God of Israel to all the idols of the Gentiles, that the mark of separation is in the covenant itself, and in the celestial doctrine by which he revealed himself to the sacred fathers. For while the Gentiles have no certain vision, and follow only their own dreams, Daniel here deservedly sets forth the God of their fathers.²⁰⁴

Having familiarity with the Scriptures, Daniel was well versed in the history of God working faithfully among His people—if only at times through a believing remnant.²⁰⁵

wisdom and might

Might is בְּזִרָה [g^ebûrâ], “power, might, strength.”²⁰⁶ This probably refers to the power given Daniel to discern the dream and its interpretation or may refer to overcoming the threat of death.

You have made known unto us

While to Daniel alone the revelation was made, he did not take all the credit to himself, but associated his companions with himself in his thanksgiving.²⁰⁷

3.2.24 - Daniel 2:24**Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon**

One wonders how many Christians in our day would have shown similar compassion for those involved in ungodly practices?

It is significant that the first matter of which Daniel spoke was for Arioch not to kill more wise men. This shows his concern for their lives, though he may have had little previous contact with them. He was not so

Abraham Counts the Stars

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occupied with his won importance . . . that he did not think of others.²⁰⁸

Daniel interceded with Arioch in behalf of *all* Babylon's wise men. How easy it would have been for Daniel to manipulate events to elevate himself and his companions at the expense of the other wise men who failed to provide an answer to the king! After all, many of them were practitioners of the occult arts—so why not let them die? It seems Daniel had concern and compassion for the unsaved.²⁰⁹ Daniel knew that their death would mean an eternity without God. Better to spare them and allow the witness of Daniel and his companions to point the way to salvation found only in the God of Israel.²¹⁰ Daniel's compassion was similar to the apostle Paul who interceded for the men on the ship where he was held captive (Acts 27:23-24).

This phrase may infer the wise men had been arrested, but their execution had not commenced.²¹¹

I will tell the king the interpretation

At the root of it all must have been the prompting of God's Spirit, with whose gifts Daniel was so richly endowed. God's Spirit it was that emboldened Daniel to think and to know that he had been ordained of God for an emergency such as this.²¹²

3.2.25 - Daniel 2:25



quickly brought Daniel before the king

Arioch's hurried presentation of Daniel before the king may reflect his desire to avoid any more executions, especially of Daniel and his companions.

I have found a man

Many commentators see Arioch's claim as boastful and designed to manipulate the situation to gain advantage at the court—as if *he alone* had found the man to provide the needed solution. But there are many ways his statement could be understood. Perhaps it was an excited exclamation, expressing his relief over avoiding the unsavory task of killing the wise men. Or he may have been relieved that Daniel's interpretation would help alleviate the king's dangerous anxiety!²¹³

of the captives of Judah

Judah is **יְהוּדָה** [*yehûdâ*]. “Judea, a district or territory.”²¹⁴ Daniel was both a descendant of the man Judah (Dan. 1:3, 6) and a previous resident of the southern kingdom of Judah. Here is intentional irony: the answer to the God-given dream sought by the king can only be obtained from his *captive*. Here we see the sovereignty of God: elevating the position of Daniel and his companions. God has placed a road block before the king, giving him both a dream and allowing his anxiety to build in intensity until he is driven to seek an answer. Then, God answers the need, but only through one of the king's lowly captives. How often God works in mysterious ways, often through those who are overlooked by the “movers and shakers” in this world (Isa. 55:8-9)!

3.2.26 - Daniel 2:26



whose name was Belteshazzar

See commentary on [Daniel 1:7](#).

3.2.27 - Daniel 2:27



the wise men . . . astrologers . . . magicians . . . soothsayers

Daniel Interprets the Dream

“This phrase is restrictive: ‘[those] wise men [who specifically were] soothsayers, magicians, diviners.’”²¹⁶

Daniel and his companions are included among the more general class called “wise men” (Aramaic: חַכְמַיִן [*ḥakkîmîn*]), all of whom would have been killed if God had not revealed Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and its interpretation to Daniel (Dan. 2:12-14, 18). That this is a more general classification is confirmed by Dan. 5:15,

where the phrase חַכְמַיִן אֲשֶׁפִּיא [*ḥakkîmayyā ’āšēpāyyā*], literally, “the wise men, the soothsayers,” has the restrictive meaning “those wise men who specifically were the soothsayers.” Similar is the restrictive meaning of this phrase in Dan.

2:27: חַכְמַיִן אֲשֶׁפִּין חַרְטֻמַּיִן גְּזָרִין

[*ḥakkîmîn ’āšēpîn ḥarṭummîn gāzērîn*], “those

wise men who specifically were soothsayers, magicians, diviners.” Therefore, Daniel and his friends were classified as wise men. That is why they would have been executed, since the king’s order did not distinguish among the various classes of his wise men and courtiers (Dan. 2:12-14, 18). However, Daniel and the Judeans were never among those wise men who practiced pagan divination or the occult.²¹⁷



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Concerning astrologers and magicians, see commentary on *Daniel 1:20*.

Soothsayers is גְּזָר [gēzar], “diviner, one who practices instrumental divination, i.e., one who determines future events through omens, such as the movement of the stars (astrologer), or through interpreting a liver’s fissures and orifices.”²¹⁸

Verse 27 contains the first use of the term “diviner” (“soothsayer,” KJV; Aram. *gāzērîn* [always plural]; Dan. 2:27; 4:7; 5:7, 11) that comes from a root *gēzar*, meaning “to cut” or “determine.” A “diviner,” therefore, is a person who is able to “determine” one’s fate. “Fortune teller” may capture the idea.²¹⁹

Jarchi takes them to be a sort of men that had confederacy with devils: the word signifies such that “cut” into parts, as the soothsayers, who cut up creatures, and looked into their entrails, and by them made their judgment of events; or as the astrologers, who cut and divide the heavens into parts, and by them divide future things; or determine, as Jacchiades says, what shall befall men.²²⁰

For **the king of Babylon** stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, **he looks at the liver**. (Eze. 21:21) [emphasis added]

cannot declare

Here we find the biblical truth, “it’s not *what* you know, but *Who* you know.” There is a category of information, including spiritual truth, that cannot be obtained by mere natural means because its source is outside the material realm. This information resides only with God and those to whom He chooses to make it known by His Spirit. The wise men of **Babylon** sought deep knowledge independently of God—even through the occult. In their rejection of God, not only were they precluded from the supernatural revelation needed regarding the dream, but also wisdom in relation to other things (Isa. 29:14; 44:25; Jer. 8:9; Rom. 1:21-22; 1Cor. 1:25-27). By way of contrast, Daniel and his companions were among those who conducted themselves in “simplicity and godly sincerity” (2Cor. 1:12 cf. Ps. 8:2; Mat. 11:25).

This is the crippling error of today's secular science: its denial of an immaterial realm.²²¹

There is, after all, nothing inherently reasonable in the conviction that all of reality is simply an accidental confluence of physical causes, without any transcendent source or end. Materialism is not a fact of experience or a deduction of logic; it is a metaphysical prejudice, nothing more, and one that is arguably more irrational than almost any other. . . . materialism is a grossly incoherent superstition; that the strict materialist is something of a benighted and pitiable savage, blinded by an irrational commitment to a logically impossible position; and that every "primitive" who looks at the world about him and wonders what god made it is a profounder thinker than the convinced atheist who would dismiss such a question as infantile.²²²

3.2.28 - Daniel 2:28



there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets

What a bold testimony this young Jewish captive makes before the royal court (Ps. 119:46; Mat. 10:32-33; Luke 12:8-9)!

Daniel was there, Arioch was there, the counsels were there, everyone is staring at this 17 year old kid who has the audacity to walk in to the greatest man on earth and say I've got the answer to your problem. And Daniel, right there in the presence of the royal court, says I want one thing clear before I give you this dream and the interpretation; one thing, and that is it doesn't come from me.²²³

Evident throughout this passage is the reality that true knowledge concerning spiritual matters and the future come only from God. Fortune tellers and psychics claim to have the ability to forecast events in advance, yet their predictions seldom are accurate. As Daniel declared, only God knows for certain what tomorrow holds.²²⁴

God claims *exclusive* knowledge of the future. He alone is Creator, existing outside of time. All else is creature, bound within the dimensions of time and space and unable to see the end from the beginning. This is why turning to the occult for knowledge of the future is doomed to futility and subject to great deception. The unique ability of God to foretell the future is strongly emphasized by Isaiah:

"Present your case," says the LORD. "Bring forth your strong reasons," says the King of Jacob. "Let them bring forth and show us what will happen; Let them show the former things, what they were, That we may consider them, And know the latter end of them; Or declare to us things to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, That we may know that you are gods; Yes, do good or do evil, That we may be dismayed and see it together. Indeed you are nothing, And your work is nothing; He who chooses you is an abomination. I have raised up one from the north, And he shall come; From the rising of the sun he shall call on My name; And he shall come against princes as though mortar, As the potter treads clay. Who has declared from the beginning, that we may know? And former times, that we may say, 'He is righteous'? Surely there is no one who shows, Surely there is no one who declares, Surely there is no one who hears your words." (Isa. 41:21-26)

I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images. Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them. (Isa. 42:8-9)

And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, Since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come, Let them show these to them. (Isa. 44:7)

Assemble yourselves and come; Draw near together, You who have escaped from the nations. They have no knowledge, Who carry the wood of their carved image, And pray to a god that cannot save. Tell and bring forth your case; Yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior;

There is none besides Me. Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. (Isa. 45:20-22)

I have declared the former things from the beginning; They went forth from My mouth, and I caused them to hear it. Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass. Because I knew that you were obstinate, And your neck was an iron sinew, And your brow bronze, Even from the beginning I have declared it to you; Before it came to pass I proclaimed it to you, Lest you should say, 'My idol has done them, And my carved image and my molded image Have commanded them.' (Isa. 48:3-5)

in the latter days

בְּאַחֲרֵיט יוֹמַיָא [*bē'ahārīt yōmayyā*], “in the days [which] follow”, “in the afterward days.” The scope of the future included by this phrase is determined by the context where it appears.

[The phrase] first appears in Gen. 49:1, where Jacob foretold the lot of the Twelve Tribes after their conquest of Canaan some four centuries later. In Deu. 4:30 it refers to the period of Israel’s return to God after adversity, in Deu. 31:29 of the period of Israel’s future rebellion. In Isa. 2:2 it points forward to the establishment of the millennial kingdom, in Eze. 38:16 to the eschatological war of Gog against restored Israel. Here (Dan. 2:28▶) it seems to refer to all the coming events subsequent to the lifetime of Nebuchadnezzar and including the final establishment of the fifth kingdom (the Millennial Age). The other occurrence in Dan. 10:14▶ seems to include both the “Proto-Tribulation” under Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century B.C. and the antitypical Great Tribulation under the Beast in the last days.²²⁵

But with reference to the consummation in Messianic times, Jeremiah uses the expression a number of times to refer to the climax of the age relating to the second coming of Jesus Christ (Jer. 23:20; 30:24; 48:47; 49:39). Ezekiel identifies the times of the invasion of Gog and Magog as “in the latter days” (Eze. 38:16). The expression is also found in the minor prophets (Hos. 3:5; Mic. 4:1) in reference to the Messianic age. . . . In the New Testament there is allusion to the Old Testament concept in Acts 2:17-21 (cf. Joel 2:28-32), but elsewhere reference to “the last days” (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 7:37; 11:24; 12:48; Acts 2:17; 2Ti. 3:1; Heb. 1:2; Jas. 5:3; 2Pe. 3:3) and “last time” (1Pe. 1:5, 20; 1Jn. 2:18; Jude 1:18) must be interpreted contextually and is not always the same concept as “the latter days” (cf. John 7:37). The latter days for Israel are not precisely the same as the last days for the church, as the Old Testament characteristically spans the present age without including it in consideration.²²⁶

- Jacob’s prophecy over his sons concerned the last days and includes details alluding to NT times and beyond (Gen. 49:1 cf. Gen. 49:10-11).
- Balaam’s oracle concerned the eventual overthrow of Edom and Moab by the Messiah of Israel during the latter days (Num. 24:14-19).
- Moses said evil would befall Israel in the latter days (Deu. 31:29).
- The judgment and restoration of Israel in the time of Jacob’s trouble (Jer. 30:7) will be in the latter days (Deu. 4:30; 31:29; Jer. 30:24).
- Gog is said to come against Israel in the latter days (Eze. 38:8, 16).
- Israel will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king in the latter days (Hos. 3:5).
- The mountain of the Lord’s house is established in the latter days (Isa. 2:2; Mic. 4:1)—an event associated with the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom.

The use of the phrase here probably refers to the immediate future concerning Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:45▶), addressing the personal anxiety of the king (Dan. 2:1▶, 3▶), but also extends to the time when God’s kingdom supersedes all Gentile dominion in the Millennial Kingdom, represented by the latter portion of the dream.²²⁷ Later in the book, an angelic messenger will be sent to Daniel to relate events stretching to the very end of the age (Dan. 12:13▶), “Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the *latter days*, for the vision refers to many days yet to come” (Dan. 10:14▶).²²⁸

The related phrases, *last day*, *last days*, *last time*, and *last hour* have various meanings in the NT according to their context.²²⁹ Some NT writers use these phrases to refer to their own times (Acts 2:17; Heb. 1:2; Jas. 5:3; 1Pe. 1:20; 1Jn. 2:18). Other NT writers use the phrases to describe future times such as the predicted increase of apostasy and peril (1Ti. 4:1; 2Ti. 3:1; 2Pe. 1:5; 3:3; Jude 1:18), the resurrection (John 6:39-44, 54; 11:24), and the day of judgment (John 12:48).

As we will see, there is a particularly close correlation between the “latter days” mentioned here and a prophecy given by Hosea more than 200 years earlier.

For the children of Israel shall abide many days **without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim**. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness **in the latter days**. (Hos. 3:4-5) [emphasis added]

In the last **deportation** of Israel and the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar, the period envisioned by Hosea would begin. Nebuchadnezzar’s dream concerns the entire period when Israel will be without a Davidic king or priesthood.²³⁰ Also: if this prophecy by Hosea and Nebuchadnezzar’s dream are speaking of the same period in history, then the end of the **Times of the Gentiles** is associated with the restoration of Israel, “Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God . . . in the latter days.” This also explains why Jesus referred to the times as being *Gentile* in nature (Luke 21:24): their ending will bring times of a *Jewish* nature. This is precisely what Hosea relates.

visions of your head

Head is ראש [rēš], “the mind, the facility of thought, contemplation, and perception.”²³¹

Usually in the OT, the organ connected with thought is לב [lēb], the “heart” (Aramaic לבב [ʿbab] in 2:30), not ראש [rōš] (Aramaic ראש [rēš] here), the “head.” However, throughout the Aramaic portion of Daniel, thought is associated with the head (ראש [rēš] Dan. 2:38; 4:5, 10, 13; 7:1, 15).²³²

3.2.29 - Daniel 2:29



thoughts came to your *mind*

This probably refers to **Nebuchadnezzar’s** worries concerning the future prior to drifting off into the dream.

This is not likely a reference to the dream itself, but to thoughts which passed through the king’s mind before he fell asleep on the night of the dream. He had been wondering how matters would work out for his vast empire. What did the future hold?²³³

what would come to pass after this

After is אַחֲרָי [ʾahărē], the same root found in “latter days” in the previous verse. As king, Nebuchadnezzar would probably have concerns regarding his ability to retain control of his empire. “This phrase does not carry the same meaning as ‘latter days’ of the preceding verse. It refers only to days which Nebuchadnezzar could expect to occur within his own lifetime.”²³⁴ These were the thoughts **so troubling** to the king (Dan. 2:1).

He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be.

Daniel begins to reveal the *purpose* of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. This immediately confirms the king’s suspicion: the dream *was significant after all!* He had sensed it wasn’t like other dreams in the past that were often curious, but insignificant. This dream revealed something of importance concerning the future and was related to his

anxiety. Upon hearing the words of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar may have leaned forward on his throne, his curiosity piqued. The revelation concerned the [thoughts on his heart](#) regarding the future.

See commentary on [Daniel 2:28](#) and [Daniel 2:30](#).

3.2.30 - Daniel 2:30



not . . . because I have more wisdom

Daniel demonstrates his humility. He alone, among all the wise men of [Babylon](#), had identified the king's dream. Not even Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had been given the vision. Yet Daniel declines all credit and points to His God by Whom he obtained the information and from Whom he and his companions obtained mercy during the long night of intercession and praise ([Daniel 2:19](#)). Daniel was following in the footsteps of Joseph who remarked to Pharaoh's baker and cup bearer, "Do not interpretations belong to God?" ([Gen. 40:8](#)). Joseph also gave God credit when interpreting Pharaoh's dream, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace." ([Gen. 41:16](#))

that you may know the thoughts of your heart

Regarding the Hebrew meaning of the word *heart*, see commentary on [Daniel 1:8](#).

Once more, we see evidence of God's concern for the individual. Although God used [Nebuchadnezzar](#) and his dream as a vehicle for revelation recorded within the book of Daniel for the benefit of all mankind, He also responded to Nebuchadnezzar's anxiety concerning his kingdom and his destiny. These "thoughts of the heart" were shared by other powerful potentates such as Solomon, who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes: an extended treatment concerning matters of destiny. Through a series of dreams and a judgment, God was responding to the cries of Nebuchadnezzar's heart. In response, Nebuchadnezzar will make a proclamation many believe testifies of his eventual salvation ([Dan. 4:34-37](#) cf. [Dan. 5:21](#)).

We are reminded of the words of Amos, "Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless he reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" ([Amos 3:7](#)). In this case, God chose a most unlikely vessel through which to reveal His secrets!

[The dream] was not given to some pious preacher, but to the vilest world ruler at that time. It was like God revealing to Hitler what was going to happen with the Berlin Wall, the demise of the USSR, and the Second Coming.²³⁵

3.2.31 - Daniel 2:31



a great image

צֶלֶם חַד שְׂגִיָּא [*ṣ̄lēm ḥad śaggî*], "a certain sculptured image of great spacial size."²³⁷ The indefinite article, *a*, is from **צֶלֶם** [*ṣ̄lēm*] which can also denote "one and only one"—emphasizing the unity of the image. And so it is rendered in both **LXX** and **OG**: **εἰκὼν μία** [*eikōn mia*], *an image one*.²³⁸

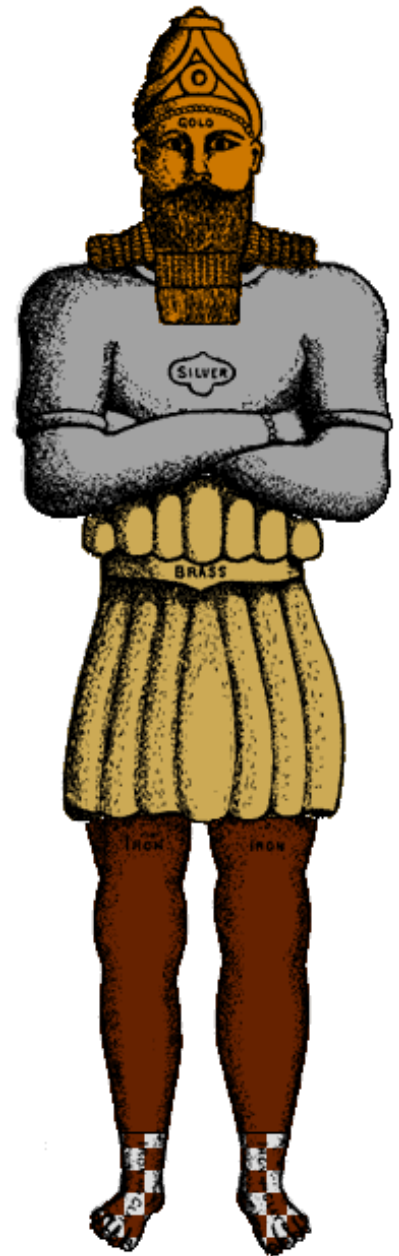
In the time of Nebuchadnezzar gigantic statues were common. We find them today among the ruins of Egypt. Now Nebuchadnezzar had just returned from Egypt, having conquered it. What more natural than having seen the gigantic statues of Egypt, erected by the Kings of Egypt to commemorate their memory. Nebuchadnezzar, before he fell asleep had been thinking of such a method of preserving his own memory. But the difference was that the "Image" that Nebuchadnezzar saw was of metal, while the images of Egypt were of stone.²³⁹

In the following verses, we find the image is of a *man*. This is not an accidental detail for the image represents the pride and extended period of rule of the kingdom of man. It stands in opposition to the kingdom of God which will subsequently destroy it. Evidently God gave **Nebuchadnezzar's** vision using a human form because it ultimately represents *humanism* in all its proud rebellion and imagined independence from God.

This is the day of the “DEIFICATION OF MAN.” From the day when Nebuchadnezzar set up in the Plain of Dura that “Golden Image,” typical of himself, and commanded all the people of his realm to worship it (Dan. 3:1-7), until the False Prophet shall command that the people shall make an “Image to the Beast” (The Antichrist) and worship the same (Rev. 13:13-17), the only suitable symbol to describe the character of the “Times of the Gentiles” is the “Image of a Man.” How suitable then was the “Golden Headed Image” of Nebuchadnezzar’s “Dream” to describe the character of the “Times of the Gentiles.”²⁴⁰

A theme which runs throughout the Bible can be seen in the continued interplay between *images* and *beasts*. Although man was created in the *image* of God, in his present depravity he behaves as a *beast*.²⁴¹

The Great Image



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Image of God or Beast?

Theme	Meaning	Passages
Beast	God creates the <i>beasts</i> which populate the earth.	Gen. 1:24-25
Image	Unlike the beasts, man was created in the <i>image</i> of God and given dominion, as God's representative, over the beasts. The elevation and role of man in the created order is to differ dramatically from that of the beasts. ²⁴²	Gen. 1:26-28; Gen. 2:19-20; Gen. 9:6; Ps. 8:4-8; Ps. 115:16
Image	Upon escaping Egypt, Israel rebelled against God by molding and worshipping an <i>image</i> .	Ps. 106:19
Beast	The golden image which Israel molded and worshiped was a <i>beast</i> , <i>And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, "This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!" they changed their glory into the image of an ox that eats grass.</i> ²⁴³ In her idolatry, Israel worshipped images of beasts, such as the golden calves worshipped in the northern kingdom.	Ex. 32:4; 1K. 12:28-30; Ps. 106:19-20;
Image	Nebuchadnezzar is given a dream of an <i>image</i> comprised of various metals denoting a sequence of kingdoms . His reign is represented by the golden head of the image. The existence of other metals within the image communicates the temporal nature of the king and his empire.	Dan. 2; Dan. 2:38
Image	Nebuchadnezzar rejects the divine revelation and asserts his own eternal significance by setting up an <i>image</i> made entirely of gold and requiring its worship under the penalty of death. Daniel's companions refuse to worship the image and are saved by God.	Dan. 3:1-6
Beast	Nebuchadnezzar's pride is judged: he is given the heart of a <i>beast</i> . Nebuchadnezzar, representing the pride of the kingdom of man, is shown his true nature: that of a beast. The beast-like malady with which Nebuchadnezzar is afflicted by God is highly significant in the divine interplay between what man was intended to be vs. his behavior after The Fall. See commentary on Daniel 4:16 .	Dan. 4:16, 33
Beast	Daniel receives divine revelation concerning the same sequence of kingdoms as Nebuchadnezzar's vision, but from God's perspective: revealing their true nature as voracious <i>beasts</i> (Dan. 7). The final beast is said to be exceedingly dreadful.	Dan. 7; 7:19; Dan. 8
Beast	God mandated that man, made in His image, would offer <i>beasts</i> in sacrificial worship of God. ²⁴⁴ In judgment, God sacrifices <i>men</i> for the <i>beasts</i> . ²⁴⁵	Num. 29; 2Chr. 5:6; 7:5; Eze. 39:17-20; Zep. 1:7-8; Rev. 19:17-18
Beast	John receives divine revelation concerning the final <i>beast</i> , the Antichrist (Rev. 13:1).	Rev. 13:1
Image	As God incarnate, Jesus is the image of God.	John 1:18; 2Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3

Image	Following regeneration, believers are called to be conformed into the image of Jesus.	Rom. 8:29; 1Cor. 15:49; Col. 3:10
Beast	The basest of men, although made in God's image, behave like beasts.	Tit. 1:12; 2Pe. 2:12; Jude 1:10
Image	An <i>image</i> is erected to the beast which all men are required to worship on penalty of death. God saves those who refuse to worship the image. See <i>The Deification of Man</i> .	Rev. 13:14-15; 6:9-11; 7:4, 9-10; 12:6, 14-16.

Since the anatomy of the image which Nebuchadnezzar sees is that of a man, care is needed when interpreting details of the image to discern whether they convey information bearing upon its subject (e.g., the toes) or whether they merely denote normative human anatomical features (e.g., arms, legs). See the related discussion in the commentary at Daniel 2:1.

Daniel himself, indeed, indicates nothing whatever, either in his recapitulation of the dream or in the interpretation, that can show that the form, size, and natural dignity of the several parts (head, breast, belly, legs), contained any special symbolical reference to the character of the four world-kingdoms; and any attempt to construct such relations between the image and the objects symbolized is exposed to the danger of being involved in useless interpretations and idle pastimes . . .²⁴⁶

Consider, for example, the parallel vision of the beasts in Daniel 7. How do these symbolic representations compare? One notices immediately the beasts have *unusual characteristics* (Dan. 7:2-7), for example: the lion has *eagle's wings*; the bear is *raised up on one side*; the leopard has *four wings* and *four heads*; and the fourth beast has *ten horns*. The unusual characteristics are intentional and should be carefully considered since they must convey important information. However, the interpretation of the image of a man in this chapter is different. For what normal man lacks a head, two arms, two legs, feet and toes? In the absence of other indicators it is safest not to read too much into these aspects of the image.

For additional background on the kingdom of man, see the commentary on the phrase [land of Shinar](#) in the commentary on Daniel 1:2.

splendor was excellent

Splendor is from זִיָּו [zīw], “dazzlingness, brightness, reflective shining appearance of a physical object.”²⁴⁷

Excellent is יָתִיר [yattîr], “exceptional, outstanding, extraordinary, pre-eminent.”²⁴⁸

form was awesome

Form is from רָו [rēw], “appearance, manifestation, i.e., what something looks like as a sensory perception or memory.”²⁴⁹ *Awesome* is from דְּהָל [dēhal], “dazzlingly beautiful.”²⁵⁰

The colossus symbolizes Gentile world power as it is affecting Israel during the times of the Gentiles, from 605 B.C. till the second advent of the Messiah and the establishment of the Kingdom over Israel. It's dazzling appearance portrays the outward glory of the nations in their worldly pomp and splendor (Luke 4:5-6). Its terrible (awesome) aspect speaks of its underlying ruthless power and beastlike ferocity, as in Daniel 7, where the same nations are pictured as wild animals.²⁵¹

One of the things that fascinated the onlooker was the size of the thing. This feature is therefore alluded to a second time: it “was immense.” The second thing was its “extraordinary splendor.”²⁵²

3.2.32 - Daniel 2:32



The metals of the image represent **kingdoms**. See commentary on [Daniel 2:38](#).

head was of fine gold

Fine is תָּבַב [tāb], “pure, unalloyed, unmixed” or perhaps “genuine, true, the real thing.”²⁵³

belly and thighs of bronze

יֶרְכָה [yarkā], “thigh” or “loin, lower back, the soft areas between the lower ribs and hip joints.”²⁵⁴

3.2.33 - Daniel 2:33



The different metals of the image represent **different kingdoms**. See commentary on [Daniel 2:38](#).

legs of iron

Iron is פָּרְזֵל [pārzēl], “iron, a metal substance, with the focus on strength or perceived invincibility.”²⁵⁵

Some commentators take the two legs as an indication of the division of Rome into eastern and western empires.

The Roman Empire (the two legs of iron) . . . divided into the Eastern Roman Empire and the Western Roman Empire in the time of Diocletian and after the death of Theodosius the Great in A.D. 395. This bipartite division accords with the two legs of the image, and the end-time phase of the ten toes is perfectly paralleled by the ten horns of the beast in [Daniel 7:7](#).²⁵⁶

The two legs of the image of [Daniel 2](#), likewise, portray the eastern and western divisions of the Roman Empire. The unequal duration of the eastern empire, which continued long after the western empire had fallen apart, is not seen in Daniel’s prophecy because it occurs in the period of the present church age which does not seem to be in Daniel’s fore view.²⁵⁷

We disagree. See commentary on [Daniel 2:31](#) for our reasons.

Sceptics claim [Nebuchadnezzar’s](#) dream borrow from the sequence of metals found in the writing of the Greek poet Hesiod (750-650 B.C.), replicated in part, below.

I will sum you up another tale well and skilfully . . . how the gods and mortal men sprang from one source. First of all the deathless gods who dwell on Olympus made a **golden** race of mortal men . . . But after earth had covered this generation . . . then they who dwell on Olympus made a second generation which was of **silver** and less noble . . . But when earth had covered this generation also . . . Zeus the Father made a third generation of mortal men, a **brazen** race . . . sprung from ash-trees . . . and it was in no way equal to the silver age, but was terrible and strong. . . . Their armour was of bronze, and their houses of bronze, and of bronze were their implements: there was no black iron. . . . But when earth had covered this generation also, Zeus the son of Cronos made yet another, the fourth . . . which was nobler and more righteous, a god-like race of hero-men who are called demi-gods . . . the race before our own . . . And again far-seeing Zeus made yet another generation, the fifth, of men who are upon the bounteous earth. . . . For now truly is a race of **iron**, and men never rest from labour and sorrow by day, and from perishing by night . . . [emphasis added]²⁵⁸

Although Hesiod's passage contains a sequence including similar metals (gold, silver, bronze, and iron), there are significant differences: (1) Hesiod associates the different metals with races of beings, not kingdoms; (2) Hesiod's sequence contains five stages, not four (there is no metal associated with the fourth race) so in Hesiod's sequence the bronze and iron are separated by an intervening race; (3) in Hesiod's sequence the fourth race is considered to be of greater nobility and righteousness than its predecessor. Just because Hesiod and Daniel list the same metals is insufficient evidence to conclude Daniel depended upon Hesiod. It should not be considered unusual for an unrelated and uninspired writer to use commonly-known metals of descending value to relate a different sequence.

feet

As one might expect, the feet have [toes](#). This anatomical detail has significance. See commentary on [Daniel 2:41](#).

partly of iron and partly of clay

Partly of iron and partly of clay is מִנְהוֹן דִּי פְרִזֵּל וּמִנְהוֹן דִּי תַסָּפָּ [minn^ehôn dî p̄arzel wûminn^ehôn dî ḥāsap̄], “part of them was iron and part of them was clay.”²⁵⁹ Clay is תַסָּפָּ [ḥāsap̄] and can denote clay formed into an image which, having been kilned or baked, is prone to shatter.²⁶⁰ “Part of iron and part of earthenware.”²⁶¹ See [What Does the Clay Represent?](#)

3.2.34 - Daniel 2:34



You watched

The imposing size of the image and its lustrous appearance captivated [Nebuchadnezzar's](#) attention such that the sudden intervention and destruction by the stone left an unnerving impression on the king. This would have contributed to his anxiety.

Stone Cut Without Hands (Kingdom of God)

stone cut without hands

One would infer the image was made by hands since the normal process of producing such a statue would involve the mining and purification of metals followed by molding by skilled artisans. Thus, the image is the work of man's hands whereas, the stone is made without hands. The stone and its origin are a work of God alone, undefiled by the will of man and works of man. This theme of man's will and works spoiling God's original creation is widespread.



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- An altar of stone is said to be profaned if a tool is used upon it (Ex. [20:25](#); Deu. [27:5](#); Jos. [8:30-31](#)).
- The red heifer must have never been yoked (Num. [19:2](#); Deu. [21:3-4](#)).
- The firstborn of the flock offered to God must never have been shorn nor done any work (Deu. [15:19](#)).
- Jesus rode into Jerusalem as king on an *unbroken colt* (Mark [11:2](#); Luke [19:30](#)).
- Jesus referred to His resurrection as building another temple *without hands* (Mark [14:58](#)).
- Paul referred to our resurrections bodies as “a house *not made with hands*” (2Cor. [5:1](#)).
- Paul refers to aspects of coming to faith as being “circumcised with the circumcision made *without hands*” (Col. [2:11](#)).
- The heavenly tabernacle is referred to as a “more perfect tabernacle *not made with hands*” (Heb. [9:11](#)).

The stone is produced without the effort or agency of *man*. Thus, it stands in stark contrast to the image *of a man*.

Several commentators see the phrase “cut without hands” as a reference to the virgin birth of Jesus.²⁶³ Such an interpretation is certainly possible, but we notice *mankind* was involved in the virgin birth by way of Mary. It seems better to see “without hands” as speaking of the eternal origin of Christ (Isa. 9:6; Mic. 5:2; John 1:1; 8:58; 17:5; Rev. 22:13▶) as the final King²⁶⁴ and as denoting the origin of the final kingdom.²⁶⁵

Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now **My kingdom is not from here.**” (John 18:36) [emphasis added]

This has implications for the way the final kingdom, represented by the stone, smashes the image, becoming a great mountain filling the whole earth. See commentary on [Daniel 2:35](#).

Steinmann suggests the *cutting* of the stone points to the crucifixion.²⁶⁶ But it seems very uncertain Daniel or any other reader of the OT would have made such a connection. The cutting more naturally would be understood to refer to the origin or fashioning of the stone (“out of the mountain,” Dan. 2:45▶) rather than any damage the stone would incur. See commentary on [Daniel 2:45](#).

Whatever the case, the stone in the dream seems related to the theme found throughout both OT and NT concerning the “Stone of Israel” (Gen. 49:14). This is the “stone which the builders rejected [which] has become the chief cornerstone” (Ps. 118:22; Mat. 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20) serving both as a sanctuary and a source of stumbling and offense (Isa. 8:14). To those who believe, He is precious (1Pe. 2:7-8)—they will not be put to shame (Isa. 28:16; Rom. 9:32-33). Those who do not believe will be among those who stumble to be eventually crushed (Rom. 9:32; Luke 20:17-18). Some will fall on the stone. Others will be crushed by it.²⁶⁷

Then He looked at them and said, “What then is this that is written: ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone’? Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.” (Luke 20:17-18 cf. Mat. 21:44)

struck the image

Suddenly, without warning, the stone strikes the image and destroys it. How similar this is to the encounter of David and Goliath! There stood Goliath, seemingly invincible—like the image in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream—a giant of a man.²⁶⁸ Like Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, Daniel killed a giant man who defied the living God (1S. 17:45) by striking him with a stone.²⁶⁹

See the discussion concerning the phrase [break in pieces](#) in the commentary for Daniel 2:44▶.

on its feet of iron and clay

This phrase contributes an important detail from the dream: the *location* on the image where the stone strikes. Notice the stone strikes *on its feet of iron and clay*. Why is this important? Since the image represents a **sequence of kingdoms** following one another in historical progression, the stone cannot strike until the historic period represented by the feet of iron and clay exists. The mixture of iron and clay was not present at the time of Jesus’ First Coming and therefore the stone did not strike then. See [When Does the Stone Strike?](#) and [What Does the Clay Represent?](#)

broke them in pieces

Broke is פָּרַץ [d^eqaq], *hafel* stem, “crush, smash, pulverize.”²⁷⁰

See the discussion concerning the phrase [break in pieces](#) in the commentary for Daniel 2:44▶.

3.2.35 - Daniel 2:35**iron . . . clay . . . bronze . . . silver . . . gold**

Note the presence of *clay* when the stone strikes, indicating a time in the **sequence of kingdoms** when the clay has already mixed with the iron. See *When Does the Stone Strike?*

crushed together

Together is כְּחֶדְדָּא [kaḥăḏā], “at the same time.”²⁷¹ See the discussion concerning the phrase *break in pieces* in the commentary for Daniel 2:44▶.

like chaff from the summer threshing floors

A threshing floor was the place where the harvested wheat was separated from the chaff. The separation of wheat (valuable) from chaff (worthless) often pictures the place of God’s judgment (2S. 24:16; 1Chr. 13:9 1Chr. 21:15; Pr. 20:26; Isa. 21:9-10; 27:12; 41:15; Jer. 51:33; Mic. 4:12; Mat. 3:12; Luke 3:17).

The ungodly . . . are like the chaff which the wind drives away (Ps. 1:4).

Now also many nations have gathered against you, Who say, “Let her be defiled, And let our eye look upon Zion.” But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD, Nor do they understand His counsel; For He will gather them **like sheaves to the threshing floor**. “**Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion**; For I will make your horn iron, And I will make your hooves bronze; You shall beat in pieces many peoples; I will consecrate their gain to the LORD, And their substance to the Lord of the whole earth. (Mic. 4:11-13) [emphasis added]

In Hezekiah’s day, **Babylon** had been threshed by Assyria.

‘And look, here comes a chariot of men with a pair of horsemen!’ Then he answered and said, ‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen! And all the carved images of her gods He has broken to the ground.’ Oh, **my threshing and the grain of my floor!** That which I have heard from the LORD of hosts, The God of Israel, I have declared to you. (Isa. 21:9-10) [emphasis added]

Jeremiah predicted the subsequent threshing of Neo-Babylonia by the Medes and Persians.²⁷²

For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘**The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor** When it is time to thresh her; Yet a little while And the time of her harvest will come.’ (Jer. 51:33) [emphasis added]

The wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found

The threshing having been completed, the useless husks—the fragments from the previous kingdoms—are blown away by the wind. The destruction is so complete “*no trace* of them [the previous kingdoms] was found.” This is an important detail of the dream: it indicates the destruction of the image by the stone is 100% effective—as soon as the stone strikes. The pieces left over from the previous kingdoms do not gradually give way to the stone. No, they are immediately crushed and carried away and no trace of them remains. The philosophies, cultures, and kingdoms of man are considered as leaven and are not allowed to infect God’s ultimate kingdom.²⁷³

Traces of the previous kingdoms become as difficult to find as traces of the golden calf Aaron crushed into fine dust (Deu. 9:21). How could it be, in our day, some commentators believe the stone has already struck the image when we remain immersed in the influences of these very kingdoms and humanism remains as strong as ever (Ps. 1:4)? No, this passage has in view the future period when the meek literally inherit the earth and the wicked are no more.

For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while and **the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, But it shall be no more.** But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. (Ps 37:9-11) [emphasis added]

See *When Does the Stone Strike?*.

the stone . . . became a great mountain

The stone began as a smaller piece of rock cut from a mountain (Dan. 2:45) and smashes the image. *After the image has been smashed and no trace of the previous kingdoms can be found*, the stone becomes a great mountain. There is an correspondence between the stone and the mountain. Both are made of rock. The stone finds its origin in the mountain, but then becomes a mountain of its own. Elsewhere we find mountains used as symbols for kingdoms (Ps. 30:7; Ps. 68:15-16; Isa. 41:15; Jer. 51:25; 17:9-10; Zec. 4:7). It seems the stone represents a small piece cut out of God's eternal kingdom—represented by the first Mountain. This would be Christ, having received the kingdom before returning at His second advent when He crushes the kingdoms of man. After crushing the kingdoms, He establishes the **Millennial Kingdom** and the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth (Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14). Thus, God's eternal kingdom *comes to earth* fulfilling the Lord's Prayer, "Your kingdom come Your will be done *on earth as it is in heaven*" (Mat. 9:10). This is the time when the Son literally inherits the nations and the ends of the earth (Ps. 2:8-12; 82:8; Dan. 7:14; Rev. 11:15).

"Becoming a great mountain" may also allude to "the mountain of the Lord's house" established during the Millennial Kingdom (Isa. 2:2-3; Eze. 20:40; Mic. 4:1-2). Other interpreters believe the mountain to be a reference to God,²⁷⁴ Mount Zion,²⁷⁵ Israel,²⁷⁶ or an allusion to the Babylonian view of the earth as a mountain.²⁷⁷

filled the whole earth

As we mentioned previously, there is a major fork in the road among commentators as to how the stone fills the whole earth. Barnes is representative of those who understand the stone to be the exclusively spiritual kingdom of God established at the first advent. According to this view, the stone has already struck the image and is now busy filling the whole earth through the preaching of the gospel and converting society to embrace God's principles.

Christianity, or the kingdom of Christ, is "aggressive." It makes a steady war on the evil customs, habits, and laws of the world. It is in accordance with its nature to diffuse itself. Nothing can prevent its propagation; and, according to the laws of society, nothing is so certain philosophically in regard to the future, as the final prevalence of the religion of the Redeemer. It may meet with temporary and formidable obstructions. It may be retarded, or extinguished, in certain places. But its general course is onward - like the current of the mighty river toward the ocean. The only thing certain in the future is, that the Christian religion will yet spread all over the world; and there is enough in this to gratify the highest wishes of philanthropy, and enough to stimulate to the highest effort to secure so desirable an end.²⁷⁸

Walvoord explains this popular but misguided view.

Postmillenarian and some amillenarian interpreters regard the stone as representing Jesus Christ in His first coming who, by introducing the Christian gospel, assured the ultimate victory of the saints over the evil powers of Gentile political rule. In amillenarianism this is fulfilled in the second coming of Christ and the eternal state. In postmillenarianism it is consummated in the thousand-year glorious period of spiritual triumph, which they view as culminating in the second coming of Christ. Both the amillennial and postmillennial interpretations, of course, require considerable spiritualization.²⁷⁹

Because the work of smashing the image is lengthy and ongoing, the Church must be identified with the work of the stone. In some interpretations, the stone is taken to be the Church.²⁸⁰ Now it is true Jesus said, "on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Mat. 16:18), but the question arises whether His Church is one and the same as the kingdom represented within **Nebuchadnezzar's** dream. We contend they are not. The Church, the body of Christ, is a **NT** mystery (Eph. 3:3-6; Col. 1:26-27), formed on the

Day of Pentecost (John 7:39; Acts 1:5; 11:15; 1Cor. 12:13), and therefore was not revealed in the OT. Moreover, the preconditions associated with the stone's time of striking the image were not met at the first advent. For example, the stone fills the earth only *after* the destruction of the Antichrist and dominion is given to the Son of Man and His saints (Dan. 7:13-14, 27). As we discuss in the section titled *When Does the Stone Strike?*, the dream indicates the stone destroys all the previous kingdoms: including the last Gentile kingdom, the iron kingdom of Rome (see *Which Kingdoms?*). Yet Rome was not destroyed by Christianity.

Nothing is more clear from history than that the Roman Empire fell apart from internal decay and from invasion of Barbarian hosts from the north rather than from Christian influences. There is little evidence that the church as such constituted any decisive factor in the downfall of the Roman Empire, and it is certainly not true that the church grew and filled the whole earth as the imagery of the interpretation requires.²⁸¹

3.2.36 - Daniel 2:36



And we will tell

נִאֲמַר [*nēmar*], first person, common, plural verb form. Who does Daniel intend by his use of “we”? Some suggest it is merely an editorial plural.²⁸² Another view is Daniel considers himself to be among a group of believers who receive divine revelation.²⁸³ It seems plain Daniel could not possibly mean himself and God—for no saint would dare put himself on a par with God Almighty! The most natural explanation is this: although Daniel's companions are not present before the king, Daniel desires his listeners to understand the information resulted from the intercession and spiritual discipline of both him *and his companions*. This paves the way for Nebuchadnezzar's acceding to his subsequent request for favor on behalf of his companions (Dan. 2:49).

This is the dream, Now we will tell the interpretation

Daniel has now met the most difficult part of the test: divulging the king's unknown dream itself. This was the part of the king's test the wise men could not fake. Daniel will now give the accurate interpretation which is no less dependent upon divine revelation than the contents of the dream itself.

3.2.37 - Daniel 2:37



king of kings

מֶלֶךְ מְלָכִים [*melek malkayyā*], the king from (among other) kings.²⁸⁴ This phrase designates the highest ruling authority on earth: not just any king, but the king among all kings. If we know the Scriptures, we immediately sense an historical tension because God previously promised this honor for a ruler seated upon the throne of David.

I have found My servant David; With My holy oil I have anointed him . . . I will make him My firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth. (Ps 89:20, 27)

If the Davidic rulers had been obedient to exercise righteous rule (1K. 10:9; 2Chr. 9:8), this right would never have been transferred into Gentile hands. But, due to the ongoing sin of the rulers in the line of David, God had taken away their position—invested with divine authority—and transferred it to Nebuchadnezzar. This is the condition prevailing during the *Times of the Gentiles*. At the end of the Times of the Gentiles, when the stone strikes the image, dominion will return to a man seated upon the throne of David. The man's name is Jesus the Christ, who is the only true Potentate, “the King of kings and Lord of lords” (1Ti. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16).

Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation reveals that Gentile kings from this point forward will be no better than their sinful Jewish predecessors who were ultimately removed from the throne of David. The only lasting solution for righteous rule on the earth is found in the “king of righteousness” (Isa. 32:1; Jer. 23:5), who

is also a priest forever according to the order of *Melchizedek*, translated: *king of righteousness* (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:2, 17, 21).

God, speaking through Ezekiel, confirms Nebuchadnezzar's divinely-invested status as the first ruler in the dream's sequence.

For thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, **king of kings**, with horses, with chariots, and with horsemen, and an army with many people. (Eze. 26:7) [emphasis added]

the God of heaven has given you a kingdom

This is confirmed in Nebuchadnezzar's subsequent vision of the great tree providing food and cover for all (Dan. 4:10-12, 20-22). See commentary on [Daniel 2:38](#).

power, strength, and glory

Power is **הִסָּן** [*hēsēn*], "royal power, i.e., might or force to rule or control."²⁸⁵ Strength is **תִּקְוָה** [*tēqōḇ*], "force related to governmental dominion or power."²⁸⁶

3.2.38 - Daniel 2:38



He has given *them* into your hand

He has given is **וְהַשְׁלִיךְ** [*wəḥašfāk*], *hafil* stem—God *caused* them to be given to **Nebuchadnezzar**. God gave Nebuchadnezzar global authority over both man and beast, as confirmed by Jeremiah.

And command them to say to their masters, "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel—thus you shall say to your masters: 'I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are on the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and have given it to whom it seemed proper to Me. And now **I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him. So all nations shall serve him and his son and his son's son, until the time of his land comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them. And it shall be, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and which will not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation I will punish,**' says the LORD, 'with the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.' " (Jer. 27:4-8) [emphasis added]

Head of Gold (Babylon)



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Thus, Nebuchadnezzar temporarily²⁸⁸ occupied the role of **king of kings** originally promised to the line of David. The locus of God's rule had moved from Jewish to Gentile hands.

The emphasis found in this verse concerning authority over the animal realm recalls the dominion originally given to Adam over the entire creation on earth (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:19-20; 9:2; Ps. 8:4-8; 115:16).

The reference to Nebuchadnezzar's dominion over mankind and the animal and bird creation envisions the dominion originally assigned unfallen man (Gen. 1:28; 2:19-20) and lost through the Fall. It was temporarily delegated to Nebuchadnezzar and the Gentile world powers; but, because of their abuse, it will be taken from them by the Son of Man, who at His second advent will restore the lost inheritance to mankind (Psalm 8:4-6).²⁸⁹

God rules through government, through kings. Paul affirms that in Romans 13 where he calls the kings, the governors, God's ministers, not ministers of the gospel but God's administrators, and it is their function to

curb lawlessness, to reward those who do good, punish evil doers, provide an atmosphere in which righteous men may live in peace without fear. That is the primary function of government.²⁹⁰

As we know, Nebuchadnezzar's rule never extended over the entire earth. Still, we know from these inspired pronouncements from God that Nebuchadnezzar was given the right of authority over the whole earth, even if his empire never achieved a global extent. In this, Nebuchadnezzar prefigures the final Gentile ruler, **Antichrist**, who truly achieves global dominion (Dan. 7:23-25; Rev. 13:8, 13). See commentary on *Daniel 7:23*.

On the basis of a comparison of maps representing the empires of the ancient world as offered by atlases the Babylonian or Chaldean empire seems far too small to be matched with the vast Persian, Greek, or Roman empires that followed. But what it lacked in magnitude it more than made up by its spirit, tenacity of purpose, and long endurance. In a sense the empire founded by Nebuchadnezzar was small and endured about a century. In another sense it was the empire that dated back to the great Sargon I and had continued uninterruptedly for well-nigh two thousand years.²⁹¹

In general, it is not necessary to explain away the extravagance of Daniel's attribution of universal dominion to Nebuchadnezzar. . . . d'Enviu makes a correct archaeological point that the [Assyrian] kings claimed such imperium; he cites the title 'king of the four quarters,' and passages like that in the Taylor Prism . . .²⁹²

Dominion over the world had been given to Nebuchadnezzar, but for whatever reason, Nebuchadnezzar did not actually exercise this dominion.²⁹³

It is perfectly true that Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom did not hold sway over the entire earth, but in the sense that it did include much of civilized Asia, and laid pretension to universality, it might properly be designated as Daniel has done.²⁹⁴

Some have regarded this as hyperbole in that Nebuchadnezzar actually did not control the entire earth's surface and the men, beasts, and fowls of the entire earth. What is obviously meant, however, is that he is in supreme authority insofar as any man could be.²⁹⁵

you are this head of gold

Here we meet the inspired identification of the first kingdom represented by the series of metals in the image: *Babylon*. See *Which Kingdoms?*

Why did God represent Babylon with gold in the dream? It was an appropriate representation for two reasons. First, Marduk, the chief god of Babylon, was called the god of gold. Second, Babylon used gold extensively in its buildings, images and shrines. Herodotus, who was at Babylon ninety years after the era of Nebuchadnezzar, was astonished at the amount of gold there. Even walls and buildings were overlaid with gold. [Boutflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel*, p. 34]²⁹⁶

Scripture emphasizes the opulence and splendor characterizing Nebuchadnezzar's capital city.

Take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: "How the oppressor has ceased, The **golden city** ceased"! (Isa. 14:4b) [emphasis added]

And Babylon, the **glory of kingdoms**, The beauty of the **Chaldeans'** pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. (Isa. 13:19) [emphasis added]

'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with **gold** and precious stones and pearls!' (Rev. 18:16b) [emphasis added]

3.2.39 - Daniel 2:39



But after you

וּבְתָרָךְ [wūbāṯērāk], “and in your place.”²⁹⁷

One wonders what **Nebuchadnezzar’s** reaction might have been as he listened to Daniel? Yes, you are the head of gold, but you are *only the head*—other metals are to follow *after you and your kingdom are gone!* Even if this unpleasant revelation had not yet dawned upon the king, we know he came to understand the implication of the dream concerning the end of him and his kingdom. In **Daniel 3** Nebuchadnezzar will respond by duplicating the image with his own statuary, but a statuary made *entirely of gold*. Instead of *the stone cut without hands* becoming a mountain filling the earth, he imagines **Babylon** as the mountain which will continue to dominate the earth. Ironically, Jeremiah predicts Babylonian’s ultimate destruction using similar terms:

“And I will repay Babylon And all the inhabitants of Chaldea For all the evil they have done In Zion in your sight,” says the LORD. “Behold, I [am] against you, **O destroying mountain, Who destroys all the earth,**” says the LORD. “And I will stretch out My hand against you, **Roll you down from the rocks, And make you a burnt mountain.** They shall not take from you **a stone** for a corner Nor **a stone** for a foundation, But you shall be desolate forever,” says the LORD. (Jer. 51:24-26) [emphasis added]

Consider the risk Daniel faced in relating this aspect of the dream. Here he was, captive and insignificant, telling the king and his royal court their days would ultimately come to a close and the mighty and glorious kingdom of Babylon was destined to fall!²⁹⁸

It took courage for Daniel to give the interpretation of the dream to Nebuchadnezzar. From the natural standpoint, an announcement such as Daniel made to the king could have caused him to fly into a rage and order this upstart Hebrew killed!²⁹⁹

Initially, Nebuchadnezzar refused to acknowledge his kingdom’s downfall, but asserted its continuance. Yet the book of Daniel records that one of Nebuchadnezzar’s *captives*, Daniel, outlasted the *king* (Dan. 1:21▶). As Jeremiah had prophesied, Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylon was destined to be overthrown: Babylon would fall to Medo-Persia in **539 B.C.** as recorded in Daniel 5:31▶.

So all nations shall serve him and his son and his son’s son, **until the time of his land comes;** and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them. (Jer. 27:7) [emphasis added]

Here is evidence Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream was inspired (from God) because at the time of this interpretation, no one could have predicted the rise and dominance of Persia, Greece, or Rome.

At this time that Nebuchadnezzar dreamed his dream the Persian kingdom did not exist. Persia was but a Babylonian satrapy. A Grecian empire might have seemed an utter impossibility. The Hellenic states were a lot of warring tribes and kingdoms, giving little promise of their future greatness. The city of Rome was just being founded—an insignificant little village on the banks of the Tiber. How did Daniel portray with such accuracy the future history of all these powers if unaided by the Holy Spirit of God?³⁰⁰

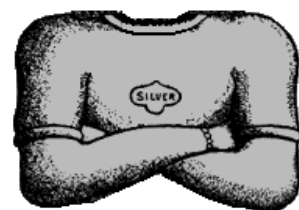
a kingdom inferior to yours

Inferior to yours is אֶרְעָא מִנְךָ [’āra‘ minnāk], “earth(ward) from you”³⁰² denoting “lower in power or stature.”³⁰³ We believe this kingdom to be *Medo-Persia*. See *Which Kingdoms?*³⁰⁴

The value and luster of the metals decrease from this point forward—in exact **opposite** to the assumed progress of humanism and its imagined “ascent of man.”

According to the modern day conception of the times of the Gentiles, this image should have been constructed in this wise: First a head, composed of the meanest good for nothing stuff, earth mixed with particles of iron. Gradually the clay gives way and becomes iron, the inferior parts are expelled. Then the refining process continues and iron is changed to brass and brass to silver, then coming to the

Chest and Arms of Silver (Medo-Persia)



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enlightened days of the Nineteenth Century and the great Twentieth Century with its civilization, we reach the fine gold. Well, this is a dream too, but it is not a dream given of God, but the dream which the Father of lies has inspired.³⁰⁵

All this phrase explicitly says is the very next kingdom following Nebuchadnezzar's will be inferior or "earthward" in comparison to Babylon.

But "inferior" or "lower" must include more than mere size. *Meinhold* says correctly that the sense is more ethical than local. *Keil* sees the inferiority in the fact that the Medo-Persian Empire lacked inner unity "since the Medes and Persians did not form a united people." *Zöeckler* finds it in the inferior moral worth. *Kliefoth* feels that the inferiority lay in this, that the new empire was not universal in character, it lacked ecumenicity. For by this time the Greeks had stepped into the forefront among the historical nations, but the Medo-Persian power never proved strong enough to assimilate the Greeks. Each of these points contains an element of truth, for, surely, we need not insist that inferiority must be reckoned on some one score alone. But taken all in all, the two thousand years of Babylonian culture and its dominance in western Asia certainly outweighed the two hundred years of Persian dominion in its effect upon contemporary and later developments so overwhelmingly that all one can say about the Persian Empire is that it was "inferior."³⁰⁶

It could simply indicate that the next kingdom to follow Babylon is represented by the metal farther down toward the feet of the image from the golden head—and so on.

This probably means "lower" (lit. "earthward") on the image of a man as Daniel guides Nebuchadnezzar's thoughts downward on the body from his own empire (the head) to the one that would succeed it.³⁰⁷

As Driver observes, the two Aramaic words rendered "inferior to thee" mean literally "lower than thou." This literal meaning is here to be preferred, and it must be understood in a strictly topical sense, "below thee," i.e. *lower down in the image*; for Daniel imagines Nebuchadnezzar to be mentally contemplating the composite image which he saw in his dream, and which had just been recalled to his mind. . . . In favour of this rendering let it be noted that the parts of the image which belong respectively to the first, third, and fourth kingdoms are expressly mentioned in each case. Thus, the first kingdom is the head of gold, the third is represented by the brazen portion of the image, the fourth by the iron portion. If, therefore, we stick to the rendering "inferior to thee," it follows that the second kingdom alone remains identified with any portion of the image. The translation proposed removes this anomaly, for the second kingdom is thus pointed out to the monarch as the one "*below thee*" on the image, i.e. *below the golden head*, so that it answers to the breast and arms of silver.³⁰⁸

Or it could mean only the first kingdom received direct divine authority.

The peculiar excellency of the head of gold appears to me to consist in its having received authority immediately from God Himself. In fact the absolute authority of the first power was founded on the gift of the God of heaven; the others succeeded by providential principles.³⁰⁹

Although it is possible only a relative comparison between the first two kingdoms is meant, many commentators understand the different metals of the image as indicating gradual changes in the relative qualities of each kingdom throughout the entire **sequence of kingdoms**.³¹⁰ Most commentators notice the metals in the sequence *decrease* in value while *increasing* in strength. (The final kingdom is an exception: the metal becomes mixed with clay rendering the combination weaker than the previous kingdoms.)³¹¹

The preciousness of the metal deteriorates from the top of gold to the clay of the feet, and there is a corresponding lower specific gravity; that is, the gold is much heavier than the silver, the silver than the brass, the brass than the iron, and the clay in the feet is the lightest material of all. The approximate specific gravity of gold is 19, silver 11, brass 8.5, and iron 7.8. . . . While the materials decrease in weight, they increase in hardness with the notable exception of the clay in the feet. The image is obviously top heavy and weak in its feet.³¹²

This has led to numerous suggestions concerning the qualities of the kingdoms represented by the metals and what this might indicate regarding the history of the **four Gentile kingdoms** represented within the dream. The decrease in the relative value of the metals is often understood as indicating a relative downward trend among

the kingdoms. This idea may find support from the related vision Daniel sees in [chapter 7](#) concerning a sequence of beasts wherein the last beast is said to be “dreadful and terrible” and “exceedingly dreadful” (Dan. 7:7, 19). But this need not imply a gradual increase in dreadfulness throughout the sequence. Concerning the first three kingdoms: who is to say the bear is more dreadful than the lion or the leopard more dreadful than the bear? The text simply emphasizes the uniqueness of the last beast/kingdom: it is **different** from all the others (Dan. 7:7, 19). Regardless of whether a continuous trend is in view or not,³¹³ Scripture highlights the ruthlessness of the last Gentile kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and Daniel’s vision ([chapter 7](#)) reveal much more concerning the last Gentile kingdom than the preceding three. This is probably because the last kingdom fully flowers in the climax of Gentile dominion at the time when God directly intervenes to establish His kingdom. We believe it is out of this final kingdom the global [Antichrist](#) power arises, corresponding to the feet of the image where the stone strikes. See commentary on [Daniel 2:34](#) and [When Does the Stone Strike?](#)

First, the downward movement on the image not only represented the passage of time, but also revealed a descending decrease in value of the substances of the image. The intended lesson seemed to be this: the longer man would attempt to rule the earth apart from God, the more degenerated that rule would become. Second, the downward movement on the image also revealed an ascending growth in strength of the substances. The longer man would attempt to rule the earth apart from God, the more that rule would be characterized by militarism.³¹⁴

Other commentators identify the inferior downward trend as denoting a relative decrease in governmental authority (Archer,³¹⁵ Howe,³¹⁶ Larkin,³¹⁷ Unger³¹⁸), decrease in social or political unity (Greene,³¹⁹ Keil,³²⁰ Larkin³²¹), decrease in the quality of government (Unger,³²² Wood³²³), or increase in sin.³²⁴

a third kingdom of bronze

The first kingdom is gold and the third is bronze implying the second is silver.³²⁶ We believe this third kingdom to be the kingdom of *Greece*.³²⁷ See [Which Kingdoms?](#)

The Greeks were distinguished for their “brazen armor,” and the appellation, the “brazen-coated Greeks” - *χαλκοχιτωνες Αχαιοι* [*chalkochitōnes Achaioi*] - is that by which they were designated most commonly by the ancients. - *Iliad* i. 371; ii. 47; *Odyssey* i. 286.³²⁸

Why did God represent Greece with bronze? The Greeks developed this metal highly and used it extensively in their implements of war. [Boutflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel*, pp. 29-30.]³²⁹

Belly and Thighs of Bronze (Greece)



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shall rule over all the earth

Global dominion is not explicitly stated concerning the second (silver) kingdom, but in combination with what was said regarding the gold kingdom, we can infer each kingdom in the [Sequence of Kingdoms](#), in turn, will inherit the right of global dominion. This is also inferred by our understanding of the entire historical period as [Times of the Gentiles](#). Each kingdom will be given the right of global dominion, although the geographical area each subdues will differ.³³⁰ True global dominion will only be achieved in the final Antichrist kingdom. See commentary regarding the phrase [king of kings](#) in the commentary on [Daniel 2:37](#).

The dominion of the Greek empire under Alexander the Great is mentioned in the 1st book of [Maccabees](#).

And it happened, after that Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian, who came out of the land of Chetitim, had smitten Darius king of the Persians and Medes, that he reigned in his stead, the first over Greece, And made many wars, and won many strong holds, and slew the kings of the earth, And went through to the ends of the earth, and took spoils of many nations, insomuch that the earth was quiet before him; whereupon he was exalted and his heart was lifted up.³³¹

3.2.40 - Daniel 2:40



the fourth kingdom

We believe this fourth iron kingdom to be *Rome*.³³³ See *Which Kingdoms?*

strong as iron

Strong is from חֲקִיפָה [ḥāqīpā], “having socio-political or military power.”³³⁴ The fourth terrible beast of chapter seven is “exceedingly strong” with “huge *iron* teeth” (Dan. 7:7▶).

Iron was an excellent designation of Rome for at least two reasons. First, ancient Rome was noted for its use of iron in its military weaponry. [Boutflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel*, pp. 31-32.] Second, as Daniel indicated in 2:40, just as iron is able to crush gold, silver and bronze because it is stronger, so Rome would crush and shatter the ancient world. Ancient Rome did just that through its great military strength.³³⁵

Legs of Iron (Rome Unified)



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breaks in pieces and shatters

Shatters is from חָשַׁל [ḥāšal], “pulverize, crush, smash.”³³⁶ Scripture emphasizes the destructive power of the fourth kingdom in comparison with all other kingdoms.³³⁷

Scripture reveals far more details concerning this kingdom, both here and in the parallel treatment of Daniel’s vision of beasts in [chapter 7](#) and in the book of Revelation, than all the other kingdoms combined. Additional revelation is provided concerning the fourth kingdom because of its unique nature and role in God’s plan.

- **Unique** - In Daniel’s vision in [chapter 7](#), the first three kingdoms are represented by known animals: a lion, bear, and leopard. The fourth kingdom is unlike anything Daniel has ever seen. It is so unique it cannot be represented by a familiar animal. The fourth kingdom is said to be: “different from all the beasts [kingdoms] that were before it” (Dan. 7:7▶); “different from all the others” (Dan. 7:19▶); “different from all other kingdoms” (Dan. 7:23▶).
- **Dreadful** - The dreadful nature and brutal character of the fourth kingdom is emphasized: “that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others” (Dan. 2:40▶); “dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong . . . huge iron teeth . . . Devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling” (Dan. 7:7▶); “exceedingly dreadful” (Dan. 7:19▶); “shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces” (Dan. 7:23▶).
- **Spawns Antichrist** - Although not revealed in this chapter, the related passages in *Daniel 7* and the book of Revelation indicate the fourth kingdom as the seed-bed out of which the final global ruler of humanism comes forth, namely, the Antichrist: the “little horn” (Dan. 7:7-8▶); with “eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words” (Dan. 7:20▶); “speaking great things and blasphemies” (Rev. 13:5▶); who shall be “different from” other leaders who precede him (Dan. 7:24▶); who shall be given authority for “time times and half a time” (Dan. 7:25▶), “to continue for forty-two months” (Rev. 13:5▶).
- **Anti-God** - Although all four Gentile kingdoms represent the rule of man (i.e., humanism), the fourth kingdom is revealed as the source of a virulently God-opposing regime: blaspheming Gods name, tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven (Rev. 13:6▶); making war against the saints (Dan. 7:21▶); and into whose hands the saints shall be given (Dan. 7:25▶; Rev. 13:7▶). It is no accident Scripture refers to the ruler of this particularly anti-God regime as “the *Antichrist*” (1Jn. 2:18).
- **Smashed** - The stone does not strike the image until the time of the fourth kingdom represented by the feet of iron and clay (Dan. 2:34▶). It seems the unique and dreadful nature of this kingdom is so offensive and

dangerous in comparison to the preceding kingdoms that God's hand is finally moved to bring judgment. [When the stone strikes](#), destroying the fourth kingdom (and the cultural, political, and religious aspects of the previous kingdoms continuing within it), it also smashes the Antichrist with his anti-God agenda. This occurs when "a judgment [is] made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time [comes] for the saints to possess the kingdom" (Dan. 7:22).

- **Three Phases** - Related passages in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 reveal the fourth kingdom comprises three phases. Each of these phases corresponds to one of the [heads](#) seen by the Apostle John in the book of Revelation. The first phase is the sixth head, represented by the iron: Rome at the time of John (Rev. 17:10). The second phase is the seventh head, represented by iron mixed with clay: Rome divided and dispersed, future to John's day (Rev. 17:10). The third and last phase is the eighth head, represented by the ten toes (and ten horns overthrown by the little horn, Dan. 7:8, 24; Rev. 17:17): the final global rule of the individual known as Antichrist. See [Kingdoms of History](#).

See commentary on [Daniel 7](#) and Revelation 13.

3.2.41 - Daniel 2:41



feet and toes

In another [fifty years](#), Daniel will have a night vision revealing a terrible fourth beast trampling "the residue with its feet" (Dan. 7:7, 19) having ten horns corresponding to the ten implied toes on the feet mentioned here.³³⁹ From that point forward, Daniel will undoubtedly understand the ten toes on the image (Dan. 2:41) correspond to the ten horns on the fourth terrible beast (Dan. 7:7-8, 20). Hundreds of years later, John will see these same horns upon the seventh head of the beast revealed in the book of Revelation (Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12, 16). See commentary on [Daniel 7:7](#). Most modern commentators, having considered the full revelation provided by both OT and NT, understand the toes in Daniel 2 to prefigure the ten horns in Daniel 7.³⁴⁰ However, we must not forget *at the time of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel knows nothing of the ten horns*. This is significant because it has implications for how the passage would have been originally understood by Daniel. See commentary on [Daniel 2:1](#).

Feet and Toes of Iron Mixed with Clay (Rome Divided)



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Some suggest the ten toes/horns find their fulfillment in early Rome. For example, John Gill:

These toes, which are ten, as the toes of men are, design the ten kings or kingdoms, into which the western Roman empire was divided, by the coming in of the Goths, and Hunns, and Vandals, into it; and are the same with the ten horns of the beast, and the ten kings which gave their kingdoms to it . . . some of which were strong like iron, and continued long; others were like clay, and of a less duration . . .³⁴¹

But the passage reveals not only toes, but *both the feet and toes* are a mixture of iron and clay (Dan. 2:33, 41-42). Therefore, the iron/clay mixture can't be understood as referring exclusively to differences among the toes. Another problem with Gill's interpretation is the contemporaneous rule of the ten toes/horns (Rev. 17:12, 16-17).

An important point in the interpretation is that the ten horns, apparently corresponding to the ten toes of the image of Daniel 2, are pictured as reigning simultaneously and as subdued by the little horn of Daniel 7:8. This is a frontal refutation of the postmillennial and amillennial concept that the ten kingdoms were successive kingdoms in the latter phase of the Roman Empire or, as some would have it, fulfilled in the empire of Seleucids.³⁴²

It seems the prediction of ten toes/horns cannot find fulfillment in early Rome.³⁴³ See [When Does the Stone Strike?](#) We agree with the view held by numerous commentators regarding the ten toes: they correspond to the

ten horns Daniel will be shown later and refer to ten simultaneous kings associated with the final stage of the fourth kingdom in the future (Dan. 7:7, 20, 24 cf. Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12, 16).³⁴⁴

partly of potter's clay and partly of iron

The portion of the iron kingdom represented by the lower portion of the image—the feet and toes—will contain two different materials. The original pure iron of the legs will continue into the feet and toes, but a new element, clay, will be mixed in. See [What Does the Clay Represent?](#)

the kingdom shall be divided

Divided is פְּלִיגָה [p̄līgā], “not be united in a socio-political oneness.”³⁴⁵ A related term appears in Daniel 5:28 where the handwriting on the wall reveals Belshazzar's kingdom has been “divided” and given to the Medes and Persians.

Daniel's interpretation reveals the mixture of iron and clay represents division within the kingdom. The iron represents one aspect of the kingdom and the clay another: the simultaneous presence of both conveys a separation developing out of what was originally the unified all-iron kingdom.

yet the strength of iron shall be in it

The presence of the iron amidst the clay indicates the original strength of the all-iron kingdom is still present in the latter stage of the fourth kingdom, although in a way which is fragmented and no longer unified. In the next verse, the mixture is said to be “partly strong and partly fragile.”

mixed with ceramic clay

Ceramic is from טִיִּין [tīn], “wet clay”³⁴⁶ (NET), “ceramic clay” (NKJV), “miry clay” (KJV, ASV, WEB), “soft clay” (ESV), “common clay” (NASB, TNK), “clay” (HCSB), “baked clay” (NIV84). There is considerable divergence among translators as to whether the clay described here is weak because it hasn't yet been fired in a kiln (wet, miry, soft) or because it is brittle, like fired clay (ceramic, baked). Perhaps the distinction is not of particular importance since in either case we know the clay represents *weakness* in comparison with the strength of iron.

Concerning the mixing of the clay into what was previously pure iron, Dean notes an essential difference between the previous three kingdoms and this fourth kingdom. The first three kingdoms were overthrown by a successor kingdom of similar or greater geographical extent. By contrast, the fourth empire simply fragmented and dwindled.

Gold is the Babylonian Empire, silver is the Medo-Persian Empire, brass is the Greece Empire and iron represents the Roman Empire, which lasted from 146 BC until the final collapse of the eastern half of the empire in 1453. [The fall of Rome] began with the defeat of Carthage in 146 BC, it was divided into an eastern and western empire in 395 AD, the west ended in 476 but the eastern empire continued until 1453. So Rome gradually and slowly dies out. It doesn't end by a military defeat, you can almost point to the day when Babylon was defeated, you know when Cyrus invaded Babylon. You know when the Greeks, under Alexander, defeated the Persians. We know when Rome defeated the Greeks, but Rome, unlike these other empires is not defeated militarily by another empire overnight. Now there were many defeats, there were the invasions of the Huns and various other barbarians from the north but it's a gradual dying out, and it's not till 1453 when the Moslems conquer Constantinople that the eastern empire goes out, but by then it is decadent, it is rotted on the inside, morals are gone, it's given over completely to the mysticism of the Eastern Orthodox Church. By that time Rome just internally collapsed.³⁴⁷

See commentary on [Daniel 2:42](#).

3.2.42 - Daniel 2:42



the toes of the feet

The weakness represented by the clay is present in both the feet (Dan. 2:33▶) and toes (Dan. 2:41-42▶). This implies the feet and toes represent a single stage of the fourth kingdom since both contain the same mix of iron and clay. The toes, being the extremities of the feet (and in light of progressive revelation to be given to Daniel in chapter 7 and John in Revelation) would then represent the final days of the clay/iron phase.³⁴⁸ See *Kingdoms of History*. See commentary on *Daniel 2:41*.

partly of iron and partly of clay

Partly of iron is מְנִהִין פְּרוֹל [minn^ehên parzel] and partly of clay is מְנִהִין חֲסָפָה [minn^ehên ḥāsāpā], but following these phrases, the Aramaic reads, מִן-קֶצֶת [min-q̄ṣāṭ], “a portion of a whole composition.”³⁴⁹ This would seem to be a redundant construction: “partly of iron and partly of clay in part.” The term קֶצֶת [q̄ṣāṭ] can appear in the construction לְ-קֶצֶת [l-q̄ṣāṭ] meaning “the end, of a portion of time marking the end of a duration”³⁵⁰. Although the construction differs, the NET appears to interpret the additional phrase as denoting “the latter stages of this kingdom.”³⁵¹ As in “partly of iron and partly of clay from the end part.”

Both the feet and the toes consist partly of iron and partly of clay.

3.2.42.1 - What Does the Clay Represent?

It is clear the *metals* of the image represent successive kingdoms. But what does the *clay* represent? And why is clay only mixed within the latter stage of the final kingdom of iron?

Benware offers sound advice regarding consistency of interpretation when seeking to understand the symbolism of the component materials of the dream:

In interpreting this it must be noted that these two element of iron and clay must carry with them the same basic content as the other metals on the statue. In other words, the gold, silver and bronze represented the cultures and peoples of the first three empires. So, it is entirely consistent to think that the iron and clay stands for people and cultures. The apparent problem with the feet and toes is that the various nationalities, cultures, philosophies, forms of government and races are not going to mix well together in the final phase of man’s rule. . . . they are kept in union by external forces only. They simply do not blend into a cohesive unit.³⁵²

One thing is certain: the clay is said to introduce weakness into the fourth kingdom. It “divides” the fourth kingdom (Dan. 2:41▶) and renders the fourth kingdom partly fragile (Dan. 2:42▶). Thus, the strength of the fourth kingdom decreases over time through division and the introduction of a material compromising its original iron-like strength. Thus, the clay primarily represents a weakening element introduced within the fourth kingdom³⁵³ Commentators vary in their interpretation of what the clay signifies:

- **Incursion into Rome** - Newton is representative of those who view the weak clay as the incursion into Rome of various northern nations which brought about her downfall. “Then by incursion [into Rome] of many northern nations, they brake into many smaller kingdoms, which are represented by the feet and toes of the image, composed part of iron, and part of clay.”³⁵⁴ “His feet part of iron and part of clay - [Rome] . . . mixed with the barbaric nations, and divided into ten kingdoms.”³⁵⁵ “No reader of the Roman history can be ignorant of the invasions of the Goths, the Huns, and the Vandals, or of the effects of these invasions on the empire. No one can be ignorant of the manner in which they became intermingled with the ancient Roman people, or of the attempts to form alliances with them, by intermarriages and otherwise, which were always like attempts to unite iron and clay.”³⁵⁶ One weakness with this view is that its proponents

generally try to find fulfillment entirely in the western Roman empire—generally ignoring the historical situation of the eastern Roman empire.³⁵⁷ Although the introduction of clay into the iron may correspond to the initial fragmentation of Rome,³⁵⁸ attempts to find the ten toes/horns in the same time period have been unconvincing. “The ten have been sought for in the invading hosts of the fifth and sixth century. But though many provinces were then severed from Rome as independent kingdoms, the dignity of emperor still continued, and the imperial power was exercised over Rome itself for two centuries. So the tenfold divisions cannot be looked for before A.D. 731. But the East is not to be excluded, five toes being on each foot.”³⁵⁹

- **Weak Religion** - At least one source we consulted suggests the clay to be Christianity, comparatively weak in relation to Islam.³⁶⁰
- **Israel/Jews** - Pink notes the numerous passages where the symbol of clay in the hands of a potter is used in relation to Israel in the hands of her God. “Who, then, is symbolized by ‘the clay’ [Dan. 2:33-34]?” Here we are obliged to part company with the commentators, who unanimously take the clay to be the figure of democracy. So far as we are aware none of them has offered a single proof text in support of their interpretation, and as the Word is the only authority, to it we must look. Assured that Scripture is its own interpreter, we turn to the concordance to find out what the ‘clay’ signifies elsewhere, when used symbolically. In Isa. 64, which records the Cry of the Remnant at the End-time, we find them saying, ‘But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou our Potter; and we are all the work of Thy hand.’ Again, in Jer. 18 the same figure is employed. There the prophet is commanded to go down to the potter’s house, where he beheld him manufacturing a vessel. The vessel was marred in the hands of the potter, so he ‘made it again another vessel.’ Clearly, this is a picture of Israel in the past and in the future. The interpretation is expressly fixed in Jer 18:6: ‘O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in Mine hand, O house of Israel.’ How clear it is then that ‘clay’ is God’s symbol for Israel.”³⁶¹ Pink may be making the mistake of confusing a particular target audience (Israel) with the broader meaning of the symbol (mankind in general). It seems better to understand the passages where clay is associated with Israel as merely an indication that Jews were the immediate audience (from among all mankind) to whom the metaphor happened to be applied, rather than an iron-clad indication of the strict identity between clay and Israel. We *do* think Pink was on to something important: the lion’s share of passages within Scripture associate dust/clay with humanity. Whatever else the clay represents, it includes the related ideas of populace/people, mortality, and moldability. See below.
- **Democratic Influence** - The Scriptures use the symbolism of clay (made of dust from the ground) to represent the earthy origin and fragile nature of man (Gen. 2:7, 19; 3:19; Job 10:9; 33:6; Ps. 103:14; Ecc. 3:20; 12:7; Luke 3:8; 1Cor. 15:47) and his moldability in the hands of God (Isa. 29:16; 45:9; 64:8; Jer. 18:4-6). That this symbolism is not just applied to Israel can be seen from Jeremiah 48:38 where Moab is compared to pottery, from Paul’s use of potter/clay symbolism to illustrate God’s sovereignty over all men (Rom. 9:21), and passages describing the nations as pottery to be smashed by the Messiah (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:27; cf. Rev. 12:5; 19:15). Thus, we are on firm Scriptural ground in understanding the clay to denote mankind or people—especially when we notice the reference to “the seed of men” in the next verse. This, along with the theme of the image being governmental in nature, has led many commentators to associate the clay with the idea of popular influence or control over government. Constable summarizes this view, “The clay may refer to some form of government that gives more rule to the people, perhaps democracy and or socialism. . . . While democratic government has many obvious advantages over other forms of government, all stemming from the freedoms that its citizens enjoy, it is essentially weak. Its rulers must operate under many checks and balances imposed by the people they serve. The political weakness of democracy is becoming increasingly obvious in America, which has led the world in exemplifying and promoting this form of government. Self-interest gets in the way of political efficiency. People can block political action with demonstrations and lawsuits. In one sense this is good because it checks the government’s powers. However in another it makes the jobs of political leaders much more difficult than if they could just do what they want. Imperial power caters to the leaders whereas democracy caters to those led. It is impossible to have both at the same time. Therefore this may be what is in view with the unmixable iron and clay combination, not that America is in view. Another indication that democracy or socialism may be what is in view in the clay figure is that people are essentially clay physically (Gen. 2:7).

Rule by the people (i.e., democracy) is rule by clay.”³⁶² Other commentators who view the clay as some form of weakening social influence include Gaebelein,³⁶³ Hippolytus,³⁶⁴ Ironside,³⁶⁵ Jeremiah,³⁶⁶ Larkin,³⁶⁷ Pentecost,³⁶⁸ Scofield,³⁶⁹ Unger³⁷⁰, and West.³⁷¹

partly strong and partly fragile

Fragile is from תִּבַּר [t^ebar], “be brittle, not have flexibility as in fired earthen pottery, so implying fragility.”³⁷² The introduction of clay into the iron results in a composition that is strong in some parts, but lacks cohesiveness and could easily fall apart when subjected to an impact.

3.2.43 - Daniel 2:43



ceramic clay

See commentary on [Daniel 2:41](#).

they will mingle with the seed of men

מִתְעַרְבִין [mit^ʿā^rbîn], hitpaal participle, reflexive, “they will mingle themselves” (KJV), “combine with one another” (NASB), “be mixed with one another” (NET).

As can be seen from the above translations, there is some difficulty in understanding the precise meaning of the reflexive participle—identifying *who* “they” are and *how* the mixing takes place.³⁷³

The latter part of the verse records, “they will not adhere to one another, *just as iron does not mix with clay.*” This implies the components being mixed are the ones symbolized by the iron and clay which do not mix uniformly, but remain in isolated pieces. In other words, the iron (the remaining strong components of the fourth kingdom) and clay (weak democratic or social components) mix by way of the seed of men, but the mixture fails to achieve a harmonious blend and the iron and clay remain separated. The attempt to produce a homogeneous mix within the fourth kingdom fails because the iron and clay will never blend.

Seed is זֶרַע [z^era], “descendant, offspring, progeny.”³⁷⁴ A similar phrase is used in Jeremiah to refer to human offspring (Jer. 31:27). “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” [emphasis added] (Dan. 2:43▶, ESV).

Many commentators see the mixing as an attempt to unify diverse cultural elements by intermarriage.

Ezra used the same word [mixing] for intermarriage, and in the Bible this intermarriage looks at first glance like it’s racial intermarriage but we know that can’t be the interpretation because of the book of Ruth. In the book of Ruth you have a Gentile woman who marries a Hebrew man, Boaz. And she is exalted and lauded for it, so if the Bible teaches against interracial marriage, ala Ezra 9, then we’ve got a contradiction in the Bible, because Ruth is clearly an interracial marriage that has a blessing of God upon it. Well how would you reconcile Ezra 9 and Ruth? We reconcile it by the fact that it’s an interracial marriage only in the sense of intermarriage of culture, that’s the issue that the Bible is looking at. It’s not looking at the physical, racial characteristic; it’s looking at the cultural baggage that is brought into the marriage relationship. . . . So, the mixing of the seed in verse 43 is not interracial marriage, it is intercultural marriages. These are marriages between people of fantastically diverse cultures.³⁷⁵

It would seem, however, that the reference is to some “foreign” admixture - like the intermingling of nations of other languages, laws, and customs, which were never truly amalgamated with the original materials, and which constantly tended to weaken and divide the kingdom.³⁷⁶

This may indicate that what Daniel is alluding to is the mixing of contrary peoples, perhaps non-citizens, or those who are not dedicated to the Empire or its ideals, or even rulers, like kings or governments, that generate instability in the government.³⁷⁷

The reference to mixing the seed of men denotes all the efforts to combine diverse elements and nationalities, including intermarriage.³⁷⁸

Some commentators suggest the passage is referring to politically arranged marriages, similar to those mentioned in the eleventh chapter of Daniel (Dan. 11:6▶, 17▶).

Antiochus Theos, king of Syria, married both Laodice and Berenice, daughters of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt. Antiochus Magnus, king of Syria, gave his daughter Cleopatra to Ptolemy Epiphanes, king of Egypt; but these marriages, instead of being the means of consolidating the union between those kingdoms, contributed more than any thing else to divide them, and excite the most bloody and destructive wars.³⁷⁹

they will not adhere

וְלֹא-לְהִיָּוֵן דְּבָקִין [w^ela--lehēōn dāb^eqîn], “and not they will become united”. *Adhere* is from דְּבַק [d^ebaq], to “mix and combine as one element.”³⁸⁰

There will be an attempt to produce a homogeneous mixture which bonds and holds together, but ultimately it will fail.

If the clay represents the Jews (as per Pink above), then the “mixing with the seed of men” could refer to the amalgamation by the Jews among the Gentile nations threatening their loss of identity as a separate nation. The failure to adhere to one another would then reflect God’s intervention to preserve the nation as a separate people (Ex. 33:16; Num. 23:9; Deu. 7:3-6; 28:64-66; 32:8-9; Jos. 23:6-7, 12; Ezra 9:2; Eze. 20:32-35; Ne. 13:23-24; Amos 9:9; Luke 21:32).³⁸¹ While it is true Israel will be preserved as a distinct nation, the topic of [Nebuchadnezzar’s dream being Gentile dominion](#) argues against interpreting the clay as an exclusively Jewish component suddenly appearing within the fourth kingdom. After all, Jews were living within the earlier kingdoms yet no mention is made of clay within those kingdoms. Besides, as discussed above, we believe the symbol of clay is not used exclusively for the Jews.

The most common view of the failure to mix and adhere is an indication of political disunity within the latter stages of the fourth kingdom. Even though various cultural and national elements intermarry, the desired unification will not come about. If this view is correct, then the mingling with the seed of men may be motivated by the desire of humanism to achieve a global society—essentially reversing the dispersal of the nations by God at the time of [Babel](#) where God introduced languages leading to separation, multiculturalism, and nationalism. Some commentators see this as explaining the rise of the ten toes (horns in Daniel 7▶)—a further division of the fourth kingdom.³⁸² Dean mentions recent trends within the United States to illustrate:

We’ve seen that in the history of the United States; we’re a melting pot but up until the early 20th century, as immigrants came to America, first of all the immigrants that came to America were usually from an educated skilled artisan class, for the most part, and so when they came they came to establish themselves in business and to make a life for themselves and to assimilate into the culture of America. But what happened by the middle part of the 20th century is that began to break down and you began to see people emphasizing their ethnic heritage, so you have Asian Americans and African Americans and Native Americans. I’m always amused by that because I’m a native American, but there are those who are Indians and they want to make themselves different. And we’re no longer a melting pot, the whole image of a melting pot is when all the different things get in there and it’s melted down, it becomes homogeneous; you don’t maintain the separate identities. But by maintaining the separate identities what’s happening is everybody fragments more and more and everybody has a different agenda and so the internal strength is not what it was 50, 100 or 150 years ago.³⁸³

Among commentators of this persuasion, we find Archer,³⁸⁴ Clough,³⁸⁵ Dean,³⁸⁶ Gill,³⁸⁷ Pentecost,³⁸⁸ Showers,³⁸⁹ Walvoord,³⁹⁰ and Whitcomb.³⁹¹

The failure to mix and adhere contributes to the rise of the **Antichrist**. His kingdom arises out of the disunity ultimately achieving global unification through the most brutal dictatorship the world will ever know. This is the time of the “eighth head” (Rev. 17:11▶). See *Kingdoms of History*.

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

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

You see, the Roman Empire fell apart like Humpty-Dumpty. There have been a lot of men who tried to put it together again, but they have not succeeded. That was one of the missions of the Roman Catholic church at the beginning. Also, Charlemagne attempted to put it back together. Napoleon tried to do so, and also several emperors of Germany. Hitler and Mussolini attempted it, but so far the man has not yet appeared who will accomplish it. God is not quite ready for him to appear.³⁹²

to one another

דָּנָה עִם־דָּנָה [d^enâ im-d^enâ], “this with this.”

as iron does not mix with clay

In the same way iron does not mix with clay, the mingling “With the seed of men” (Dan. 2:43▶) will not form a lasting bond.

3.2.44 - Daniel 2:44



In the days of these kings

An important question arises: to what does the phrase “these kings” refer to? The answer is of particular interest because it establishes **the time when the stone strikes**. For “in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.” Since the establishment of God’s kingdom corresponds to the stone smashing the image, the stone strikes in the days of whichever kings are meant by this phrase.

What is the antecedent of the phrase *these kings*?

- **Four Sequential Kingdoms** - Commentators of an **amillennial** or **postmillennial** persuasion are prone to identify “these kings” as corresponding to the **four sequential kingdoms**. After all, there are no other *kingdoms* mentioned in the chapter associated with individual kings except the four represented by the metals within the dream. This interpretation views the stone as having struck the image at the first advent initiating a relatively long period of time during which the kingdoms are gradually destroyed.³⁹³ A major weakness with this view is that, when Christ came at the first advent, three of the four kingdoms had already passed from the stage of history—only Rome remained. Champions of this view point out that elements of the former three kingdoms are said to continue into the time of the fourth when “the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold” are broken together (Dan. 2:45▶).³⁹⁴ Although influences of the first three are found in the fourth, the previous four kingdoms themselves can hardly be said to be present or the sequence of metals—representing distinct kingdoms—would be indistinct. Thus, it seems unlikely *four individual kings* could be said to exist at the time of the fourth kingdom when the stone strikes. Another weakness of this interpretation is found in the numerous other factors indicating the stone **could**

not have struck at the first advent. The main advantage this interpretation has in its favor is this: other than references to [Nebuchadnezzar](#), the passage makes no other mention of *kings* or *kingdoms* except within the verses describing the sequence of metals (Dan. [2:37](#), [39](#), [40](#), [41](#), [42](#)). Thus, someone casually listening to the interpretation given by Daniel might easily associate “these kings” with the “kingdoms” represented by the four metals.

- **Ten Toes** - Other commentators identify “these kings” as a reference to the ten toes (Dan. [2:41-42](#)). Fausset suggests “ ‘in the days of these kings,’ answers to ‘upon his feet’ (Dan. [2:34](#)); that is, the ten *toes* (Dan. [2:42](#)), or ten kings, the final state of the Roman empire. For ‘these kings’ cannot mean the four successional monarchies, as they do not *coexist* as the holders of power; if the fourth had been meant, the *singular*, not the *plural*, would be used.”³⁹⁵ Gill,³⁹⁶ Ironside,³⁹⁷ Pentecost³⁹⁸ and West³⁹⁹ also adopt this view. The main obstacle to this interpretation is the toes have nowhere been identified as kings. Additional revelation concerning the ten horns which *are* said to be ten kings (Dan. [7:24](#)), which correlate with the toes, *won’t be given for another fifty years*. “Are the kings the ten toes? No, the kings are not the ten toes because the toes have not been mentioned as far as their numbers are concerned. Nowhere yet [have] the legs and the toes been used as anatomical pieces. The only thing Daniel has spoken about as far as the legs and the toes are concerned is the metal involved, the composition. He hasn’t said that those ten toes are ten kings.”⁴⁰⁰ Thus, it seems unlikely Daniel or his listeners would have associated “these kings” with the previously mentioned toes. Once Daniel is given the vision of the four beasts in Daniel [7](#), wherein the ten horns are revealed, such a connection could be made. But this implies God allowed the phrase “these kings” to remain unclear during the intervening fifty years.
- **Iron and Clay Fragments** - Other commentators have noticed the closest antecedent to “these kings” (Dan. [2:44](#)) is the “iron mixed with clay” (Dan. [2:43](#)) of the “toes of the feet” (Dan. [2:42](#)). If the various materials of the image are to be understood consistently and the metals represent kingdoms, then perhaps the clay also represents kingdoms of a different quality? “If the gold, silver, bronze, and iron indicate separate kingdoms, why does not the clay also indicate separate kingdoms? The fact that the clay is mixed with the iron is no basis for rejecting the clay as representative of a kingdom of separate kingdoms.”⁴⁰¹ It also seems possible the individual pieces of iron, separated as they are from one another by clay, could represent kings and kingdoms devolving from their all-iron predecessor, unified Rome. In either case, the reference to “these kings” would then be meant to be associated in the listener’s mind with the iron/clay mix during the toe phase of the fourth kingdom. “The fact of a subdivision is seen in [Dan. [2:43](#)]. It is then announced that, in the days of these last kings, He who rules from heaven will set up a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and that shall never pass into other hands.”⁴⁰² While this identification may sound like a subtle distinction from that of the ten toes, it rests on much stronger exegetical ground because the *iron/clay mixture* of the toes is what would be the most recent subject in the listener’s mind when Daniel mentions the phrase “these kings.” There is no dependence upon a yet unstated identification of the toes as kings or upon future revelation concerning the corresponding horns as kings. This interpretation also answers to the location where the stone had previously been said to strike the image: “on its feet of iron and clay” (Dan. [2:34](#)).

When various factors are considered, especially in light of the subsequent revelation God will give in Daniel [7](#) and Revelation [17](#), we believe the last interpretive option above—taking “these kings” as meaning kingdoms within the iron/clay mixture of toes—is the best because it is exegetically feasible and fits well with other Scriptural evidence concerning the time in history when the stone strikes. See [When Does the Stone Strike?](#)

It is our view the “toes of the feet . . . partly of iron and partly of clay” (Dan. [2:42](#)) have not yet appeared on the stage of world history (Rev. [17:12-18](#)). This implies, in some sense, the fourth iron kingdom—possibly mixed with clay in the feet, but not yet having ten toes—continues down to our day.⁴⁰³ See [Where is the Roman Kingdom Today?](#)

the God of heaven will set up a kingdom

Unlike the previous four [Gentile kingdoms](#) edifices of man, the final kingdom will have a completely different origin—untainted by the sinful will and contribution of men. This is represented by its unique origin: cut without

hands from a mountain (Dan. 2:34▶, 45▶). See commentary on [Daniel 2:34](#).

A related phrase appears repeatedly in Matthew's gospel.

The phrase [kingdom of heaven in Matthew] is derived from Daniel, where it is defined (Dan. 2:34-36▶, 44▶; 7:23-27▶) as the kingdom which 'the God of heaven' will set up after the destruction by the 'stone cut out without hands' of the Gentile world-system.⁴⁰⁴

The potential arrival of the fifth kingdom is found in the presence of its king, Jesus, at His first advent. John the Baptist, the precursor to Jesus, told the people to "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Mat. 3:2). Jesus told the Pharisees "the kingdom of God is in your midst" (Luke 17:21, NASB) because they were standing in the presence of the King Himself (Mat. 27:11; Mark 15:2; John 18:37)! But, in the inscrutable combination of God's sovereignty and human responsibility, the kingdom was not to be. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. . . . now My Kingdom is *not from here*" (John 18:36).

We have here a key to one of the most puzzling problems of New Testament eschatology in relation to the Kingdom: How could the Kingdom be 'at hand,' and yet not near at hand? (Mark 1:15 with Luke 19:11). The true answer is to be found in the word 'contingency.' The very first announcement of the Kingdom as 'at hand' had called upon the nation of Israel to make a decision (Mark 1:15), a genuine decision, a moral and spiritual decision; and they made it, tragically, the wrong way. . . . Those who fail to see this can make nothing out of certain portions of our Lord's prophetic teaching. There still remains the philosophical problem of course, but this is nothing new; it being only an aspect of the wider problem of Divine Sovereignty and Moral Responsibility. And for this there is no completely rational solution which does not end by affirming one and denying the other. But the Word of God teaches the reality of both.⁴⁰⁵

The potential for the stone to strike at the first advent ushering in the fifth kingdom was lost when the religious leaders of Israel rejected their own Messiah.⁴⁰⁶

The fork in the road came when Jesus of Nazareth presented himself to Israel as their messiah. If they had repented, believed and embraced Him as Messiah then there would have been no gap at all between the iron and iron/clay. The iron phase would have quickly and seamlessly flowed into the iron and clay phase. But if they rejected Him then some length of time would have existed between the iron and the iron/clay.⁴⁰⁷

Postmillennial and amillennial commentators deny the presentation of a literal kingdom to Israel at the first advent and interpret the gospels as indicating only a spiritual kingdom was ever intended by God. By interpreting the kingdom of God as having a purely spiritual dominion, they believe the kingdom arrived spiritually at the first advent. Since then, the stone continues to strike secular governmental structures through the spread and influence of the gospel.

Many postmillenarians and some amillenarians . . . find fulfillment of the entire prophecy of the fourth empire of both chapters 2 and 7 of Daniel in history. Under this concept the smiting stone which destroys the image of Daniel 2▶ is the conquest of the church destroying the Roman Empire, and the ten-nation confederacy of Daniel 7▶ are ten successive kings of the historic Roman Empire now already fulfilled.⁴⁰⁸

Anderson summarizes some of the problems with the view the stone struck and the fifth kingdom was set up at the first advent.

It is equally clear that the catastrophe was to occur when the fourth empire should have become divided, and be "partly strong and partly brittle." Therefore its fulfilment could not belong to the time of the first advent. No less clear is it that its fulfilment was to be a sudden crisis, to be followed by the establishment of "a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." Therefore it relates to events still to come. We are dealing here, not with prophetic theories, but with the meaning of plain words; and what the prophecy foretells is not the rise and spread of a "spiritual kingdom" in the midst of earthly kingdoms, but the establishment of a kingdom which "shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms."⁴⁰⁹

See [When Does the Stone Strike?](#)

never be destroyed

לְעֶלְמִין לֹא תִחַבֵּל [l'ēl'mîn lā tithabbal], “unto forever not perish, cease to exist.” Unlike the previous kingdoms, all destined to pass away, the final kingdom of God will last into eternity.⁴¹⁰ Numerous passages confirm the everlasting character of the fifth kingdom (Ps. 145:13; Isa. 9:7; Dan. 4:3▶; 6:26▶; 7:14▶, 18▶, 27▶; Mic. 4:7; Luke 1:33; 2Pe. 1:11; Rev. 11:15▶). See commentary on *Daniel 7:14*.

This eternal kingdom begins in the form of the thousand-year **Millennial Kingdom** (Rev. 20:2-10▶)⁴¹¹, culminating with the abolition of death itself (Rev. 20:14▶), and the transference of the kingdom to the Father:

Then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. **The last enemy that will be abolished is death.** For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all. (1Cor. 15:24-28) [emphasis added]

not be left to other people

Be left is תִּשְׁתַּבֵּק [tiš'ṭbiq], hitpeel stem of שָׁבַק [š'baq], “have control passed on to”⁴¹² others. Unlike the previous kingdoms, which were subsumed by each kingdom to follow, the kingdom of heaven is given to a people having obtained eternal life (John 5:21-24) who remain permanent residents within the kingdom (Rev. 20:4▶).

As the Babylonian monarchy to the Medes and Persians; the Persian monarchy to the Greeks; and the Grecian monarchy to the Romans; but this shall not be left to a strange people, but shall be given to the saints of the most High; see Dan. 7:27▶.⁴¹³

The geopolitical kingdoms of the world will be given to His people, not transformed from physical to spiritual:

I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed. (Dan. 7:13-14▶)

Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him. (Dan. 7:27▶)

This is the time promised by Jesus when the meek and the righteous shall inherit the earth (Ps. 37:9-11, 22, 28, 34; Mat. 5:5; Rev. 5:10▶).

break in pieces and consume

And consume is וְתִסְרֵף [w'ṭāsēp], afel stem of סָרַף [sūp], “bring to an end, cause destruction, destroy, annihilate.”⁴¹⁴ “The work of the stone is not smooth, gentle, evangelical and peaceful rubbing, but perpendicular fracture, pulverization, judicial grinding, atomization, an attending wind of judgment blowing the chaff, dust and powder of all Gentile politics so far out of sight as never to be seen any more.”⁴¹⁵ What courage Daniel exhibits while giving the interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar’s court! Daniel boldly predicts the demise of the Gentile king and empire presently holding power over his own life. “The wise men and flatterers of the Chaldean court would never have dared to announce the end of Gentile supremacy.”⁴¹⁶

Here we encounter another contested truth concerning the manner in which the kingdom of God comes to the earth. When taken at face value, this verse indicates the kingdoms of the world will *not* ultimately submit to God. Therefore, introduction of God's kingdom requires they be "utterly ruined" (Isa. 60:12).

Amillennial and postmillennial commentators confuse the issue by maintaining the kingdoms of the world are not violently broken and consumed as described here, but are gradually converted or redeemed from their God-rejecting nature to become God-honoring regimes. By taking the first four kingdoms as *literal* kingdoms and the fifth kingdom as exclusively *spiritual*, they promote the idea of a long period of overlap between these kingdoms during which the preaching of the gospel by the spiritual kingdom redeems the literal kingdoms.

The kingdom of Christ breaks in pieces and consumes all other kingdoms; that is, it destroys every thing in every earthly government where it is received, that is opposed to the glory of God and the peace and happiness of men, and yet **in such a way as to leave all political governments unchanged. No law or principle in Christianity is directed against the political code of any country. . . . All . . . empires, kingdoms, and states on the face of the earth, may become Christian and preserve their characteristic forms of political government.** If there be in them any thing hostile to Christianity, and the peace and happiness of the subject, the Wind of God - the Divine Spirit, will fan or winnow it away, so that no more place shall be found for it. But this he will do in the way of his ordinary providence; and by his influence on their hearts, dispose truly Christianized rulers to alter or abrogate whatever their laws contain inimical to the **mild sway of the scepter of Christ.** [emphasis added]⁴¹⁷

To allow for such a view, the single dramatic and sudden strike of the stone described in this passage must be interpreted as a lengthy period during which the spiritual kingdom progressively "chips away" the Gentile kingdoms.

First, The stone began to strike the image, when the apostles went out into every part of the Roman empire, pulling down idolatry, and founding Christian Churches. . . . Secondly, But the great blow was given to the heathen Roman empire by the conversion of Constantine . . . a.d. 312 . . . The stroke which thus destroyed idolatry in the Roman empire is continual in its effects; and must be so till idolatry be destroyed over the face of the earth, and the universe filled with the knowledge of Christ. . . . This smiting has been continued by all the means which God in his providence and mercy has used for the dissemination of Christianity, from the time of Constantine to the present: and particularly now, by means of the British and Foreign Bible society, and its countless ramifications, and by the numerous missionaries sent by Christian societies to almost every part of the globe.⁴¹⁸

Such a view is at odds with numerous passages indicating the overthrow of Gentile empires takes place by judgment, not through grace (Ps. 2:9; Ps. 110:2-6; Isa. 63:1-3; Joel 3:11-14; Rev. 2:27; 14:19-20; 19:15). The only way the "gradual conversion of the world to Christ" view can be upheld is to spiritualize such passages and interpret them as describing the present Church Age.⁴¹⁹ See *When Does the Stone Strike?*

all of these kingdoms

When the stone strikes the image, it is said to destroy *all* of the kingdoms. The word "kingdoms" here probably refers to the **four sequential kingdoms** because all of the materials of the image (iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold) are broken by the stone (Dan. 2:45). See commentary on *Daniel 2:45*.

it shall stand forever

This is the eternal reign of Jesus upon the **throne of David** (Isa. 9:6-7; Mat. 19:28; 25:31; Luke 1:32; Acts 2:30-31).⁴²⁰

I have found David My servant; With My holy oil I have anointed him . . . I also shall make him My firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth. My lovingkindness I will keep for him forever, And My covenant shall be confirmed to him. So I will establish his descendants forever And his throne as the days of heaven. . . . His descendants shall endure forever And his throne as the sun before Me. It shall be established forever like the moon, And the witness in the sky is faithful. Selah. (Ps. 89:20, 27-29, 36-37)

After nearly two millennia of preaching the gospel, the world is mainly comprised of godless kingdoms. Even those kingdoms which once promoted the principles of God (e.g, England, the United States) now enshrine godless principles as law.⁴²¹ This eternal kingdom will not arrive through the preaching of the gospel during the Church age.

This vision predicts the complete victory of the Messiah's Kingdom over the kingdoms of the world, whereas the church has not conquered the world politically and has not been promised that it will do so (Mat. 13:24-30, 36-43; 2Ti. 3:1-12). Instead, the present age is to end in great apostasy and rebellion rather than in victory for the church (2Th. 2:1-12).⁴²²

When the stone strikes and the final kingdom of God is established it will be unmistakable and wonderful. The question for you, dear reader, is: *Are you reconciled with God, guaranteed entry to the coming eternal and blessed kingdom?*

God's form of government is going to be just exactly like that head of gold, only the ruler will be that Rock that is "cut out without hands"—none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He is going to reign over this earth, and He is not going to ask anybody for advice about it. He will not have a Congress, and He will not have a Cabinet, and He will not be calling upon you to vote for Him. In fact, if you don't make a decision for Him in this life, my friend, you just won't be there at all.⁴²³

3.2.45 - Daniel 2:45



cut out of the mountain without hands

See [commentary](#) at Daniel 2:35▶.

it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold

The destruction of the last kingdom triggers a domino effect whereby all vestiges of the kingdoms preceding it are eliminated. In Daniel 7▶, the fourth terrible beast is said to have "nails of *bronze*" (Dan. 7:19▶), perhaps alluding to the continuation of elements of the previous bronze kingdom in the iron kingdom. The beast John sees in Revelation 13▶, representing the fourth kingdom, includes elements identified with the previous three kingdoms:

And the beast which I saw was like a **leopard** [Greece], and his feet were like those of a **bear** [Medo-Persia], and his mouth like the mouth of a **lion** [Babylon]. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. (Rev. 13:2▶) [emphasis added]

Both the Scriptures and world history reveal a continuance of cultural and social influences as one kingdom passes to the next, as the seat of power and individual rulers change with time. This explains how Babylon comes to exert a corrupting influence upon the entire world prior to the Second Coming (Rev. 17:4-5▶, 15▶; 18:3▶, 9▶, 24▶).

Just as the silver kingdom absorbed Neo-Babylonian religion and culture into itself (Cyrus even claimed that the gods of Babylon invited him to liberate their kingdom from Nabonidus and Belshazzar), so also Alexander the Great adapted Greek culture to Persian culture, which resulted in a new Hellenistic amalgam. And finally, Rome did not annihilate the religious, philosophic, and cultural aspects of the various Greek and Hellenistic kingdoms but incorporated them into the multifaceted empire called Rome. [Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire from the First Century A.D. to the Third*]⁴²⁴

The fact that, though the feet are smitten, the other parts of the body are broken as well indicates that, though the sovereignty passes from one empire to another, the preceding empires have not entirely ceased to be. They simply are no longer dominant empires, but their material, their civilization, religion, and culture are left, having been successively absorbed, both in their good and their bad elements. Consequently, when the last monarchy is crushed, they are all crushed.⁴²⁵

the great God has made known to the king

Although the dream and its interpretation are recorded in the book of Daniel for the benefit of the entire world, God also provided this information for the spiritual benefit of [Nebuchadnezzar](#) himself. See commentary on [Daniel 2:1](#).

what will come to pass after this

After this is אַחֲרָיֶיךָ דְּנָה [ʾaḥārê ḏnâ], also translated as “in the future.”⁴²⁶ See commentary on [Daniel 2:28](#) and [Daniel 2:29](#).

the dream is certain and its interpretation is sure

Sure is from אָמֵן [ʾāman], “trustworthy, reliable, dependable”⁴²⁷. Our English word *amen* is derived from the related Hebrew word. The dream is certain because Daniel’s revelation of the king’s dream was from God and because the historical events related by the dream are certain, being under the control of God’s providence. The interpretation is sure because the One who gave the dream is the One who gave the interpretation. Daniel’s words are a significant contrast to the uncertainty and lying words of the other wise men (Dan. 2:9).⁴²⁸

As sure as the dream and its interpretation may be, the Church at large has a problem: many interpreters are unwilling to take this chapter at face value. Interpreters inject uncertainty into the dream and its interpretation by promoting views contrary to the facts Daniel has stated—such as the idea the stone and the image coexist for a lengthy period while the stone gradually wears down the image. See [When Does the Stone Strike?](#)

3.2.46 - Daniel 2:46



prostrate before Daniel

Prostrate is שָׁגַד [s̱gīd], “worship, show reverence to deity or perceived deity . . . Daniel may have been the mere representative of God as he received the acts of worship.”⁴²⁹ “The Lord made a similar announcement to Moses, saying, ‘See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh’ (Ex. 7:1).”⁴³⁰

Being struck with amazement at the relation of the dream, and the interpretation of it, he forgot what both he and Daniel were; the one a mighty king, the other a mere man, a servant, yea, a captive: this shows that he was not exasperated at the account of the fall of his monarchy, as might have been expected, but was filled with wonder at the revelation made.⁴³¹

What a remarkable scene! The despot who but an hour before had ordered the execution of all his wise men was prostrating himself before this foreign captive from a third-rate subject nation! Even though he opposed the wisdom of the Chaldeans, this absurd monotheist (Daniel) had somehow found the right answer.⁴³²

[Nebuchadnezzar](#) falling prostrate before Daniel prefigures Gentiles bowing the knee before Jesus and the eventual submission of Gentile governments to Israel in the Millennial Kingdom (Jer. 3:17; Zec. 14:16). Here we find the head of gold—the beginning of the Gentile dominion—prostrate before a descendant of Judah. “Symbolical of the future prostration of the world power before Messiah and His kingdom (Php. 2:10).”⁴³³

present an offering and incense

Present is from נִסַּח [ṉsak], “present a sacrificial offering.”⁴³⁴ Scripture records several instances where attempts were made to venerate men of God rather than God Himself. Cornelius fell down at Peter’s feet and worshiped (Acts 10:25). When Paul healed a cripple who had never walked, the people of Lycaonia attempted to sacrifice to Barnabas and Paul (Acts 14:18).

Some are troubled by no mention being made of Daniel objecting to this offering of the king—as if Daniel knowingly accepted the king’s worship. However, the words of the king make clear it is Daniel’s *God* Whom he is venerating (Dan. 2:47▶).

Josephus mentions a similar occurrence involving Alexander the Great, the leader of the third Gentile kingdom. Prior to Alexander’s arrival in Jerusalem, an entourage of Jews led by the high priest went out to meet Alexander.

For Alexander, when he saw the multitude at a distance, in white garments, while the priests stood clothed with fine linen, and the high priest in purple and scarlet clothing, with his mitre on his head having the golden plate on which the name of God was engraved, he approached by himself, and adored that name, and first saluted the high priest. . . . whereupon the kings of Syria and the rest were surprised at what Alexander had done, and supposed him disordered in his mind. However, Parmenio alone went up to him, and asked him how it came to pass, that when all others adored him, he should adore the high priest of the Jews? To whom he replied, **“I did not adore him, but that God who hath honored him with that high priesthood.”** [emphasis added]⁴³⁵

3.2.47 - Daniel 2:47



God of gods

אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהִים [‘ēlāh ‘ēlāhîm], “God from [among all] gods”. This phrase may be a legitimate monotheistic affirmation declaring the One True God as the only true God—that all other “gods” are non-gods (Deu. 10:17; Ps. 136:2; Dan. 11:36▶). However, when found in the mouth of **Nebuchadnezzar**, the meaning of the phrase may be different. Immersed and raised within a polytheistic culture, Nebuchadnezzar may simply be stating that Daniel’s God is the greatest among the pantheon of Babylonian deities. If Nebuchadnezzar’s actions in the next chapter are admitted as evidence, it does not appear he had come to a true understanding of the uniqueness of the God of Israel.

Though the messianic overtones of Daniel’s interpretation are clear, they are lost on Nebuchadnezzar, who has no interest in the theological nuances of what he considers to be the faith of a third-rate people whom he has subjugated.⁴³⁶

The instance is instructive, as showing to what extent a mind clearly not under the influence of any genuine piety - for subsequent events showed that no “permanent” effects were produced on him, and that he was still an idolater Dan. 3▶, and a most proud and haughty man Dan. 4▶ - may be brought to acknowledge God.⁴³⁷

The final Gentile ruler, the **Antichrist**, will speak blasphemies against the God of gods (Dan. 11:37▶).

Lord of kings

לַרְאָה [mārē’], “one who has authority to rule over others . . . implying the right to govern.”⁴³⁸ In falling down before Daniel (and his God) in deference, *king* Nebuchadnezzar demonstrated the truth of this statement. “Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him” (Ps. 72:11). “By *me* kings reign, and rulers decree justice. By *me* princes rule, and nobles, all the judges of the earth” (Pr. 8:15-16). Jesus is “ruler over the kings of the earth” (Rev. 1:5▶). In the final war against the Lamb, he will overcome them because “He is Lord of lords and King of kings” (Rev. 17:14▶). This is written even on his thigh (Rev. 19:16▶).

since you could reveal this secret

Joseph was given the Egyptian name **צְפַנְתַּיִן פְּעֻנַח** [ṣāp̄naṭ pa’niaḥ] (Gen. 41:45). “The Hebrews interpreted the Hebrew form of the word, *revealer of a secret*, see Targ., Syr., Kimchi.”⁴³⁹

We should not miss the evangelistic influence of Daniel’s faithful walk in the events of this chapter. Although Nebuchadnezzar has not yet come to full faith in Daniel’s God, Daniel’s trust and faith led to an unprecedented opportunity for Daniel to provide evidence of the power and authority of God.

3.2.48 - Daniel 2:48

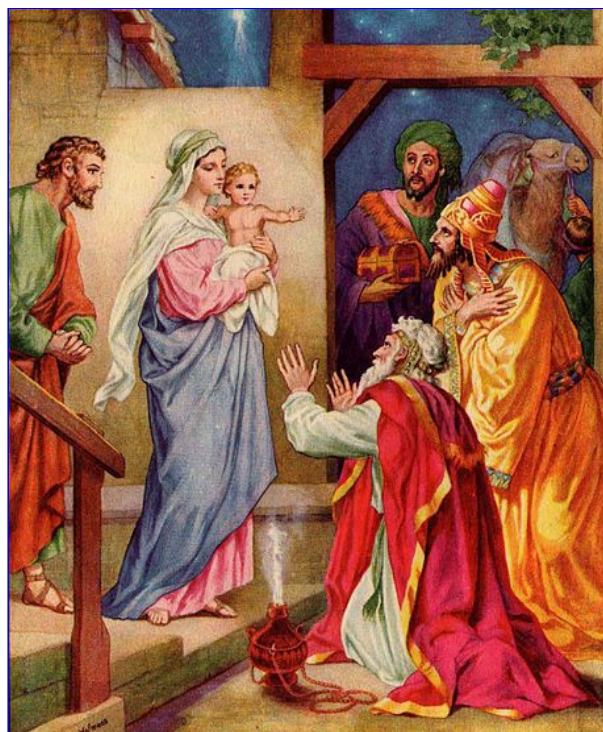


over the whole province of Babylon

Province is מְדִינָתָא [mēdīnatā], “a governmental administrative district (Dan. 3:1▶, 2▶, 3▶, 12▶, 30▶).”⁴⁴¹ Some take the events of this chapter as occurring prior to the end of Daniel’s training (Dan. 1:18▶), suggesting his promotion by Nebuchadnezzar was not immediately in response to the interpretation of the dream, but occurred some time later.⁴⁴² Others take this promotion as preceding his graduation.⁴⁴³ Both of these views seem unlikely. We view the events of chapter 2 following after those of chapter 1—including Daniel’s graduation. See commentary on [Daniel 2:1](#).

In God’s providence, Daniel is promoted to a position of great authority with the ability to ensure the Jews arriving in [Babylon](#) in subsequent [deportations](#) will be treated fairly. We see another parallel between *Joseph and Daniel*—both were promoted to positions of power while remaining faithful in their service to God.⁴⁴⁴

In times of adversity, believers usually have their greatest spiritual growth spurts and greatest spiritual moments. but most do not do nearly as well when they are enjoying times of prosperity (cf. Deu. 8:10-11). Daniel, however, will live consistently well for the Lord during the years ahead of him even though he is prospering as few ever do.⁴⁴⁵



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administrator

Administrator is from סָגָן [sēgān], “prefect, governor or senior officer.”⁴⁴⁶

Daniel is not placed among these specific classes of diviners, but is “chief prefect” (רַב־סִנְיָיִן [rab—sīgīnīn]) over them (Dan. 2:48▶). He is their supervisor, but he is never one of them. Later too, Daniel is not among them, but separate from them. He is not included among them in Daniel 4▶ and is brought to the king only when they cannot interpret Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Dan. 4:7-8▶). Nor is Daniel among them in chapter 5▶.⁴⁴⁷

over all the wise men

Wise men is a general term for the different classes of priests and learned advisors mentioned previously.⁴⁴⁸ Although Daniel has authority over these men, we know from his obedience to God’s principles, recorded throughout the book, that it is inconceivable he would have endorsed or engaged in the occult practices of some of them.

He was made chief, or master, of the king’s wise men (Dan. 2:48▶), and of his *hartums* (Dan. 5:11▶), and of all the classes mentioned, except apparently the wizards, —as to whom it is not said, at least, that he ever had anything to do with them. It will be noted that nowhere in the Bible is connection with *’ashephs*, *’ashshaphs*,

hartums, gazers, kaldus, or hakkims, expressly forbidden. Only the *hakkims, hartums*, and *mekashshephs* are ever mentioned outside of Daniel. The first of these are always spoken of with praise; the second without praise or blame; and the last only with condemnation. “A pious Jew,” therefore, “and one true to the law,” may certainly have studied, at least, the sciences and arts practiced by these uncondemned classes, without laying himself open to the charge of breaking the letter of the law. We see no reason, either, why he may not have studied all about the practices of the wizards without himself being a sorcerer.⁴⁴⁹

Finally, we come to consider the question as to whether Daniel is said to have been a member of any of these classes of dream–interpreters which are mentioned in his book. It will be noted that he is never called a *hartum* nor an *'ashshaph*, but is said to have been ten times better than all of them in knowledge and wisdom. It is not said either that he was an *'asheph* nor a *mekashsheph* nor a *gazer*, nor a *kaldu*. That he was a *hakim* is rightly inferred from the fact that he was sought to be killed, when the decree went forth that all the wise men should be killed; but elsewhere he is always called chief (rab) of the wise men, or of the *hartums*, or of three or four classes together. He is, in fact, called chief of all classes, except of the *mekashshephs*, the only class which is directly condemned by law. . . . He may have known all the mysteries of the Babylonian seers, priests, and enchanters; but there is no evidence in the book of Daniel, nor anywhere else, to show that Daniel practiced the black art, nor the heathen methods of divination in any form, nor to show that he became a member of any of these orders.⁴⁵⁰

The appointment of Daniel over the wise men is undoubtedly connected with the arrival, hundreds of years later, of wise men seeking the king of the Jews.

There is no means of determining whether the *μάγοι ἀπ' ἀνατολῶν* [*magoi ap anatonōn*] of Mat. 2:1, 7, 16 are specifically Babylonian astrologers or astrologers in general. The former is more likely, since it is only in Babylon, by contact with the [Jewish] exiles, that the *μάγοι* [*magoi*] would acquire an interest in the Jewish king (Messiah).⁴⁵¹

Subsequent revelation given to Daniel concerning the *Seventy Sevens* (Dan. 9:24-27▶) would have allowed prediction of the time of the arrival of Messiah. This knowledge may have been passed down among the Babylonian wise men until the arrival of the predicted time.⁴⁵²

3.2.49 - Daniel 2:49



Daniel petitioned the king

Daniel exhibits continued concern for the wellbeing of his companions. He recognizes the important part they played during the night of intercession and praise (Dan. 2:17-18▶), when God responded with the divine revelation leading to their preservation and Daniel's promotion. His request must also be seen in light of God's providence in providing for the Jews who will soon follow.

When therefore Daniel, through the feeling of pity, seeks some consolation from the people of God, there is no reason for accusing him of any fault, because he was not drawn aside by private advantage, and did not desire honors for either himself or his companions; but he was intent on that object to enable his companions to succor the Jews in their troubles. Hence the authority which he obtains for them has no other object than to cause the Jews to be treated a little more humanely, as their condition would not be so harsh and bitter while they have prefects of their own people who should study to treat them as brethren.⁴⁵³

over the affairs of the province

Affairs is עֲבֹדָה [‘*ābîdâ*ttā], “administration.”⁴⁵⁴ Daniel had authority over the province while his companions did much of the actual administrative work.

Having these positions prior to the captivity of his fellow Judeans, Daniel was situated so that he might work to their best welfare when they arrived.⁴⁵⁵

Daniel sat in the gate of the king

“Ancient gates were considered appropriate places for judges and other key officers to conduct their business (cf. Deu 16:18; Est. 3:2; Ru. 4:1-12).”⁴⁵⁶ This is analogous to the position Joseph held in Egypt (Gen. 41:39-40) and Mordecai would soon hold in Persia (Est. 10:3). Daniel probably controlled access to the king and was essentially second in command.

The normal entrance to the ancient cities of the Near East was through the city gate. While there are many city gate types, collectively they were constructed to provide defensive capabilities against enemies of the city. However, these gates were also used to reflect individual cities’ civic pride and thus were constructed with the best possible techniques and design . . . While city gates are of importance militarily, the gate was also the visitor’s initial view of the city proper, and thus a visitor’s first impression would come from the city gate. . . . The gates also played an important role in daily life of the city; as a market (2K. 7:1), a place of judgment by the elders (Deu. 21:19; 22:15; Amos 5:12; Ruth 4:1-11), and a general assembly area where rulers made appearances and prophets spoke (1K. 22:10; Isa. 29:21; Amos 5:10; Jer. 38:7; 2Chr. 32:6). . . . The city gate complex was also used as a modern-day courtroom. . . . Elders are frequently seen in the Old Testament Scriptures sitting at the gates to the city, where they could keep a close eye on who was coming into the community and who was leaving. The elders would act as a kind of informal court there. . . . This aspect of gate judgment is seen in Deuteronomy 21:18-21; 22:13-21; and 25:7-9. In these cases, the elders sitting in the gate acted as judges and handed out judgments. . . . Another function of the city gate complex was to provide a meeting place where the king could meet dignitaries and emissaries.⁴⁵⁷

3.2.50 - Lessons from Chapter 2

The second chapter of Daniel contains numerous lessons we can apply in our own lives.

Lessons for Living



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- **Turning to God in a Dilemma** - Daniel and his companions turned to God when their lives were endangered. Rather than attempting to deal with the situation using their own resources, they sought God’s favor through prayer and worship—and then left the results in His hands.
- **Promotion by God** - In chapter 1, Daniel and his companions were chosen to serve in the court of the king (Dan. 1:19▶). In chapter 2▶, Daniel and his companions are elevated to positions of great authority within **Babylon**. In neither case did the young men manipulate the situation to bring about their promotion. Instead, they focused on their relationship with God, learning His Word, and obeying His precepts. They understood that those who know and obey God need not worry about worldly issues of advancement. Instead, they can rest in God knowing He is responsible for their future and the way He intends to use them.
- **Overcoming Fear of Death** - “Temporal suffering did not challenge [Daniel]. And that brings up a point, and that is I’m amazed at how few Christians have ever seriously faced the reality of their own death. I’m amazed how many Christians have never faced the reality of the death of their children, and until you are so occupied with the reality of an eternal relationship with God and its implications, and that physical death is simply walking through a door from time into eternity, until you come to grips with that you will never be able to live for God because if you’re not willing to die for the eternal truths of Scripture, then you will not be able to live for the eternal truths of Scripture because you’ll be too consumed and constricted by your fears about a loss of life.”⁴⁵⁹
- **Meaning of Life** - Mankind has an innate concern for the future (Ecc. 3:11).⁴⁶⁰ We know life is fleeting and suspect there must be something more—something greater than our experience in this life. We can sense a need for lasting significance. But how do we respond to this need? Does it motivate us to seek after God and to deal with the issues of eternity? Or do we attempt to suppress our mortality through the pursuit of distractions? “All the human viewpoint systems, all the professors at Harvard, all the professors at Yale, can’t give you the answer to life’s problems because as long as its based on human viewpoint and not on

the Scripture, it's invalid, it's going to fall apart, it's never going to meet the challenge of the crises of life. Only the Word of God can do that . . . human viewpoint can never solve the problems of life, they can't tell you anything about eternal life, they can't tell you anything about God, I don't care what the philosophy is, I don't care if it's Hegelianism, existentialism, whether it's an ancient philosophy, whether it's Platonism or Aristotelianism, it can't answer the ultimate questions of life. Only the Bible can give us truth and only the Bible is the guideline to handle the problems of life."⁴⁶¹

- **Only One Kingdom Will Last** - "Each new combination of forces or nations that [tries] to achieve the result of a lasting kingdom invariably meets with the same overthrow. So history is a succession of defeats. But for the one who knows the Almighty God there is hope. History cannot be a mere futility to him, for the Omnipotent One will in due season make it apparent, as His own already now know it to be, that He has a kingdom that will never be overthrown, and that will finally stand out as eternal and entirely successful. This kingdom is the hope of mankind and God's vindication in the course of history that He has not labored in vain. The labors of His Christ shall be crowned with ultimate and perfect success."⁴⁶² Lasting significance will only be found through labors related to that eternal kingdom.
- **Power of Group Prayer** - "It is a privilege to have praying friends - friends on whom we can call to unite with us in prayer in the time of trouble. So Daniel found it when he called on his friends to pray; so Esther found it when her whole people were in danger, and when all depended on her successful application to the sovereign Est. 4:16, and so the friends of God have found it in all ages. If prayer is heard at all, there are special reasons why it should prevail when many are united in the request. Compare Mat. 18:19. Hence, the propriety of worship in the family; hence, the fitness of prayer meetings; and hence, the appropriateness of prayer offered in the great congregation."⁴⁶³
- **God is in Control** - No matter how the situation may appear, the kings and nations dominating history are under the control and appointment of God and subject to His inscrutable purposes. There may be times when the politics or government within a land are mindful of God. At other times, not so. Our ministry and world view must not be subject to the trends of politics and society because, regardless of what transpires during our lifetime, we know God is in control.
- **Deflecting Praise** - There may be seasons in our lives where God sees fit to elevate us to a position where others notice us and perhaps praise us. "Nebuchadnezzar paid 'homage' to Daniel. How can we courteously receive people's praise or admiration and yet deflect glory to Christ?"⁴⁶⁴
- **The Sinful Power of Self-Will** - [Nebuchadnezzar](#) seemed very impressed with God's ability to reveal his dream and interpretation to Daniel. He even bowed in obeisance before Daniel and presented an offering and incense in response (Dan. 2:46▶). But [within just a few years](#), Nebuchadnezzar will demonstrate his rejection of God's revealed will, concerning the brevity of the Babylonian kingdom, in favor of asserting his own self-will by erecting a similar image made entirely of gold (Dan. 3:1▶).

For a list of New Testament passages containing references, allusions, and themes found in this chapter, see [Daniel 2 in the New Testament](#).





Notes

¹ Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of John* (Cave Junction, OR: Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine, 1831, 1991), 24.

² H. A. Ironside, *Lectures on Daniel the Prophet*, 2nd ed (New York, NY: Loizeaux Brothers, 1953), 25.

³ Charles Clough, *Lessons on Daniel* (Spokane, WA: Ellen Kelso, [transcriber], 2006), 6.67.

⁴ John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 1971), Dan. 2:1.

⁵ Regarding the frequently heard jingle, "The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed and the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed," we'll want to be especially wary of the latter phrase and avoid the trap of allowing the New Testament to *change* the fundamental meaning of Old Testament passages.

⁶ The tendency to read too much significance into details of symbols is apparent in the arbitrary way in which details are handled. For example: "The *second world empire* in succession was depicted as two silver arms merging into a chest,

indicating an empire composed of two nations (a dual monarchy). . . . this was the *Medo-Persian empire* . . . The *third world empire*, symbolized by the statue's midsection and thighs of bronze, was . . . [t]he *Greek empire*, . . . The *fourth empire* in the dream . . . was depicted as two iron legs . . . **The division of the empire was depicted in the statue's two legs.**" [emphasis added]—J. Randall Price, "Daniel," in Tim F. LaHaye and Edward E. Hindson, eds., *Exploring Bible Prophecy* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2006), 225-226. The two arms and two legs are said to provide additional revelation concerning the dual character of the second and fourth empires, respectively, but the "[two] thighs of bronze" associated with the third empire are passed by. Where common aspects of a symbol are involved, inconsistency in attaching significance to these aspects appears to involve a reading of historical fulfillment into the symbol after-the-fact. How could the interpreter of Daniel's day justify interpreting the two arms and two legs as denoting dualism while ignoring a similar significance for the two thighs?

⁷ Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, s.v. "Uneven Legs."

⁸ As we've mentioned above, Daniel has no notion of the ten horns until decades later and therefore he most likely would not have understood the full significance of the toes when initially interpreting the dream.

⁹ "Determine the one central truth the parable is attempting to teach. This might be called the golden rule of parabolic interpretation for practically all writers on the subject [of parables] mention it with stress. 'The typical parable presents one single point of comparison,' writes Dodd. 'The details are not intended to have independent significance.' Others have put the rule this way: *Don't make a parable walk on all fours.*"—Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1970), 283.

¹⁰ Oliver B. Greene, *Daniel* (Greenville, SC: The Gospel Hour, 1964, 1974), 53.

¹¹ Gleason Leonard Archer, "Daniel," vol. 7 in Frank E. Gaebelin, ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985), 49.

¹² "The Book of Daniel was written to prefigure, in outline, the course of history from the Babylonian exile to the second coming of Christ, and to reveal the age of millennial glory 'underneath all heavens,' following that event. It, therefore, exhibits the character of our own times, as part of the 'Times of the Gentiles,' which is really the title of the whole book. As in the prophet's day so in ours the kingdom of God is in conflict with the kingdoms of the world; and, as in our Lord's day, is assaulted by all the forces of evil, the assailants seeking to snatch it away by violence."—Nathaniel West, *Daniel's Great Prophecy, The Eastern Question, The Kingdom* (New York, NY: The Hope of Israel, 1898), 5.

¹³ A. R. Fausset, "The Book of Daniel," in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Dan. 2:1.

¹⁴ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), 1611.

¹⁵ Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 5.54.

¹⁶ Some of these commentators believe the explanation lies in a combination of accession-year and **partial (inclusive) years**.

¹⁷ "It should be noted that the Babylonian method of accession-year dating made 602 B.C. (the spring of 602) the end of Nebuchadnezzar's second regnal year, even though he may have captured Daniel and his three companions in the Palestinian campaign of 605 and had them enrolled in the royal academy before that year was out. Thus 602 would have been their third year of schooling, even though it was his second full year of reign."—Archer, *Daniel*, 41-42.

¹⁸ "It is not a significant matter when we remember the concept of the 'accession year' . . ."—Paul Benware, *Daniel's Prophecy of Things to Come* (Clifton, TX: Scofield Ministries, 2007), Dan. 2:1. "The three years would include part of the King's 'accession year,' his first full year and then part of his second year."—Ibid., Dan. 1:5.

¹⁹ Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 5.54.

²⁰ "6:68"—Robert Dean, *Lessons on Daniel* (Spokane, WA: Ellen Kelso [transcriber], 2006), s.v. "Accession Year."

²¹ "The Babylonian manner of reckoning a king's reign did not regard the unexpired portion of the last year of the deceased monarch as the first year of the new king but reserved that designation for the first full year of the new monarch's rule. Since kings did not, as a rule, die at the close of the last year of their reign, there were usually months intervening between reigns, which would allow just enough latitude to make the initial phrase of our chapter entirely proper."—H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1949, 1969), Dan. 2:1.

²² "How could Daniel have finished a three-year training program by Nebuchadnezzar's second year if he was captured in the year in which Nebuchadnezzar became king (605 B.C.)? Driver explains the three years on the basis of the accession year reckoning employed in Babylon and Judah. By this method the time until the first Nisan (Mar.-Apr.) is considered the accession year of the king, not his first year (see chart). Nebuchadnezzar's second year did not end until April 9, 602 B.C., and Daniel was taken into captivity almost three full years earlier in the summer of 605 B.C."—Stephen R. Miller, "Daniel," in E. Ray Clendenen, Kenneth A. Mathews, and David S. Dockery, eds., *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 76-77.

- ²³“Nebuchadnezzar’s second regnal year is actually the third year in the Daniel narratives. The Babylonian system of reckoning the years of a king’s reign did not count his first partial (accession) year. Nebuchadnezzar’s accession year lasted from 1 Elul 605 BC to the end of Adar 604 (September 7, 605–April 1, 604). His first (full) regnal year was from 1 Nisan 604 to the end of Adar 603 (April 2, 604–March 21, 603). His second regnal year lasted from 1 Nisan 603 to the end of Adar 602 (March 22, 603–April 9, 602). Since it was normal for people in the ancient Near East to count partial years when reckoning time spans, the Judeans would have been in training during the last part of Nebuchadnezzar’s accession year, his entire first year, and part of his second year, making three years according to Hebrew count, fulfilling the ‘three years’ in Dan. 1:5.”—Andrew E Steinmann, *Daniel* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2008), 111.
- ²⁴“The first year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign was not counted, and this gives a plausible explanation of why the dream could occur in the second year and yet conceivably follow the three school years of Daniel’s training.”—Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 2:1.
- ²⁵Ibid., Dan. 1:20.
- ²⁶“The probability [is] that the four were classified as trainees for this specific type of work, which automatically included them in the blanket order. . . . As positive evidence that they were only trainees at the time, the fact may be noted that Daniel was not summoned by Nebuchadnezzar when the regular wise men were (Dan. 2:2), and also that Daniel clearly dissociated himself from the wise men, as indicated in Dan. 2:27.”—Leon J. Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998), Dan. 2:1.
- ²⁷“Daniel and his friends must have already received appointments as ordinary wise men prior to Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, because they were included in the resulting order that all wise men be killed (Dan. 2:13).”—Ibid. “Student: If they were still in training why were they considered part of the court? It would seem they had not sufficiently tested themselves in order to be considered part of the court. Pentecost: I can’t answer that. All I know is that when the judgment was passed it was passed on Daniel and his friends because they were considered even though they were in training.”—J. Dwight Pentecost, *Class Notes on Daniel, Dallas Theological Seminary* (Spokane, WA: Ellen Kelso [transcriber], 2006), 3.15.
- ²⁸“Evidently Daniel had yet to be a student in the ‘Palace University,’ which is why he was not immediately informed of details of the decree. . . . His three years in the educational program were still in progress . . .”—James O. Combs, *Mysteries of the Book of Daniel* (Springfield, IL: Tribune Publishers, 1994), 31.
- ²⁹“Promotion of the 4 Hebrews after 3 years (Dan. 1:5, 18) agrees with the year of promotion after the dream in the ‘second year.’”—John MacArthur, ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1997), Dan. 2:1.
- ³⁰“Although they are just being trained, they are being taught by the same crowd in which the king has now lost confidence.”—J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1981), Dan. 2:13.
- ³¹“Chronologically, [Dan. 1:18-21] is to be placed after the event described in chapter 2 as that took place in Nebuchadnezzar’s second year, while [Dan. 1:18-21] occurred in his fourth year, as it happened three years after he took Jerusalem (Dan. 1:5) which is dated in his first year.”—Monty S. Mills, *Daniel: A Study Guide to the Book of Daniel* (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1988, 1999), Dan. 1:18. “Nebuchadnezzar dreamed this dream in the second year of his reign (v.1), so this was well before Daniel’s three year educational program was complete (Dan. 1:1 with 1:5).”—Ibid., Dan. 2:1.
- ³²“Daniel was to undergo training for three years we learned from chapter 1. So this incident would take place while Daniel is still pursuing his [study].”—Pentecost, *Class Notes on Daniel, Dallas Theological Seminary*, 3.13.
- ³³Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 1:20.
- ³⁴Miller, *Daniel*, 76-77.
- ³⁵Some of these commentators believe the explanation lies in a combination of [accession-year dating](#) and partial (inclusive) years.
- ³⁶Ibid.
- ³⁷“How could Daniel and his friends have had three years of training if they were taken to Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar became king and completed their training during the second year of his reign (compare Dan. 1:18 and 2:1)? The answer is that they were taken captive in August 605 B.C., but Nebuchadnezzar did not begin his first official year as king of Babylon until the first of Nisan in the following spring (April 4, 604). Thus, if the three years of training were academic years (inclusive reckoning), their first ‘year’ of training could have ended just before Nisan, 604; their second year just before Nisan, 603; and their final year just before Nisan, 602, which would still have been the second official year of Nebuchadnezzar (ending April 9, 602).”—John C. Whitcomb, *Daniel* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1985), Dan. 1:5.
- ³⁸“The correct solution has probably been indicated by Driver, namely, the three years of training need not have been three full years but merely fractions of years.”—Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1949, 1998), Dan. 2:1.

³⁹ Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, Dan. 2:1.

⁴⁰ Fausset, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:1.

⁴¹ “B.C. 603, was the 5th of Jehoiakim and the 2nd of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel had been three years, in training (Dan. 1:5▶), viz. from the accession year of Nebuchadnezzar when he was Co-Rex with his father (B.C. 605) to the 2nd year of his reign as sole King (B.C. 603).” — Martin Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology: The Treatise (Vol 1)* (London, England: Marshall Brothers Ltd., 1913), 223.

⁴² “Various solutions of this difficulty have been proposed, but the true one probably is, that Nebuchadnezzar reigned some time conjointly with his father, Nabopolassar, and, though the title ‘king’ was given to him, yet the reckoning here is dated from the time when he began to reign alone, and that this was the year of his sole occupancy of the throne.” — Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1884-85), Dan. 2:1.

⁴³ “Nebuchadnezzar reigned before the death of his father, because he had already been united with him in the supreme power; then he reigned alone, and the present narrative happened in the second year of his reign.” — John Calvin, *Commentary on The Prophet Daniel* (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998, 1561), Dan. 2:1.

⁴⁴ “The second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar - That is, the second year of his reigning alone, for he was king two years before his father’s death.” — Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible - Daniel* (Broken Arrow, OK: StudyLamp Software, 1832), Dan. 2:1.

⁴⁵ Fausset, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:1.

⁴⁶ “In the second year of his sole reign, which . . . must have commenced some time after the fourth—perhaps in the sixth—year of the reign of Jehoiakim. The time, therefore, is about four years later than that mentioned in Dan. 1:1▶, and soon after that designated in Dan. 1:18▶.” — Otto Zöckler, “The Book of the Prophet Daniel,” in John Peter Lange, ed., *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Critical, Doctrinal, and Homiletical* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1880), 67.

⁴⁷ “The Hebrews solve the difficulty in this way, that the second year refers here to his reign over all (627) the barbarian nations, not only Judah and the Chaldeans, but also the Assyrians and Egyptians, and the Moabites and the rest of the nations which by the permission of God he had conquered. For this reason Josephus also writes in the tenth book of the *Antiquities*: ‘After the second year from the devastation of Egypt Nebuchadnezzar beheld a marvelous dream . . .’” — Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus, *Jerome’s Commentary on Daniel (Translated by Gleason L. Archer Jr.)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 407, 1958), Dan. 2:1.

⁴⁸ “It means the second year after Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple (*Sedar Olam*).” — Scherman, ed., *Tanach* (New York, NY: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 2001), Dan. 2:1.

⁴⁹ “That is, in the second year of Daniel’s ministry in or under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.” — John Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* (Broken Arrow, OK: StudyLamp Software, 1746-1763), Dan. 2:1.

⁵⁰ Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Daniel* (Glenside, PA: Clarence Larkin Estate, 1929), Dan. 2:1.

⁵¹ “Clinton . . . fixes the summer of B.C. 606 as the date of Nebuchadnezzar’s first expedition. And it is strikingly confirmed also by a statement in Daniel which is the basis of one of the quibbles of the critics: Daniel was kept *three* years in training before he was admitted to the king’s presence, and yet he interpreted the king’s dream in his *second* year (Dan. 1:5▶, 18▶; 2:1▶). The explanation is simple. . . as the prophet was exiled in B.C. 606, his three years’ probation ended in B.C. 603, whereas the second year of Nebuchadnezzar, reckoned from his actual accession, extended to the early months of B.C. 602.” — Robert Anderson, *Daniel in the Critic’s Den* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1909, 1990), 156.

⁵² Floyd Nolen Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament: A Return to Basics, 4th ed* (The Woodlands, TX: KingsWord Press, 1993, 1999), 198-199.

⁵³ “The time of Nebuchadnezzar’s ascending the throne and commencing his reign was a year or a year and a half after the first siege of Jerusalem; thus in the second year of his reign, that is about the end of it, the three years of the education of the Hebrew youths in the wisdom of the Chaldees would have come to an end. Thus the apparent contradiction between Dan. 2:1▶ and 1:1▶ is cleared up.” — Carl Friedrich Keil, “Daniel,” in Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 9:509.

⁵⁴ Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:1.

⁵⁵ *Songe de Nabuchodonosor: la statue composite. Ars moriendi. Marseille - BM - ms. 0089 (f. 012)*. Image courtesy of culture.gouv.fr, 15th century. Image is in the public domain.

⁵⁶ “‘Nebuchadnezzar dreamt dreams.’ The plural noun probably refers to a single dream that had many detailed parts and extended for a long time.” — Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:1.

⁵⁷ Walvoord suggests the phrase provides evidence the dream may have taken place prior to its being related in chapter 2. “The Hebrew for ‘dreamed dreams’ can be understood to be the pluperfect, i.e., ‘had dreamed dreams.’ This would imply

that the dream took place somewhere in the sequence of events of chapter 1 but is only now being detailed. Hence, it allows for the conclusion that the dream was interpreted before Daniel's graduation at the end of his three years of training."—Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 2:1.

⁵⁸ Hobart E. Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1968), 274.

⁵⁹ "The great king is headed for a theological education that few ever receive with the result that he . . . [eventually] comes to faith in the true God."—Benware, *Daniel's Prophecy of Things to Come*, Dan. 2:46-49.

⁶⁰ Flavius Josephus, "The Antiquities of the Jews," in Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus : Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996, c1987), 11.337.

⁶¹ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), #7192.

⁶² Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 5.57-58, 60.

⁶³ Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, 11.130.

⁶⁴ Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 2:29.

⁶⁵ Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 2:29.

⁶⁶ Miller, *Daniel*, 82.

⁶⁷ Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, Dan. 2:1.

⁶⁸ *Study of the moon and stars. Ottoman miniature from 17th century.* Copyright © 2010 by Istanbul University Library. Use of this image is subject to a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 license.

⁶⁹ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*, #879.

⁷⁰ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), #3407.

⁷¹ Miller, *Daniel*, 78n13.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 79.

⁷³ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*, #4175.

⁷⁴ F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000).

⁷⁵ Robert Laird Harris, Gleason Leonard Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999, c1980), #4176.

⁷⁶ Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:2.

⁷⁷ Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, 6.71.

⁷⁸ Miller, *Daniel*, 78.

⁷⁹ Wilhelm Gesenius and Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1846, 2003), 418.

⁸⁰ Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 5.59.

⁸¹ "The Hebrews raise the question of why Daniel and the three lads did not enter before the king along with the other wise men, and why they were ordered to be slain with the rest when the decree was issued. They have explained the difficulty in this way, by saying that at that time, when the king was promising rewards and gifts and great honor, they did not care to go before him, lest they should appear to be shamelessly grasping after the wealth and honor of the Chaldeans. Or else it was undoubtedly true that the Chaldeans themselves, being envious of the Jews' reputation and learning, entered alone before the king, as if to obtain the rewards by themselves. Afterwards they were perfectly willing to have those whom they had denied any hope of glory to share in a common peril."—Hieronymus, *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel (Translated by Gleason L. Archer Jr.)*, Dan. 2:12-13.

⁸² "Although the king anxiously inquires concerning the dream, yet we observe he does not act seriously; since it would doubtless have come into his mind, 'Behold, thou hadst formerly beheld in the captives of Judah the incredible gift of celestial wisdom — -then, in the first place, send for them!' Here the king's sloth is detected because he did not send for Daniel among the rest. We have stated this to be governed by the secret providence of God, who was unwilling that his servant should mix with those ministers of Satan, whose whole knowledge consisted in juggling and errors."—Calvin, *Commentary on The Prophet Daniel*, Dan. 2:14.

⁸³ "Over a hundred years earlier the God of Israel had challenged the wise men of Babylon to deliver their nation from his power by their sorceries, spells, and counsel from the stars (cf. Isa. 47:12-13)." — Miller, *Daniel*, 83.

⁸⁴“The words *kašdīm* and *kašdāy* are used in at least two ways in the Book of Daniel. (1) Sometimes the term is employed in an ethnic sense as a general designation for the Babylonian people (cf. Dan. 1:4; 5:30; 9:1; and possibly 3:8), the name being derived from the Semitic tribes who migrated to Babylonia from the Syrian desert and who under Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar’s father, came to rule the country. (2) In Daniel the word is also used in a restricted sense to delineate a class of priests, astrologers, magicians, soothsayers, or wise men. This is the meaning here and in a number of other passages in the book. . . .”—Ibid., 78-79.

⁸⁵Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:2.

⁸⁶Miller, *Daniel*, 79n16.

⁸⁷Keil, *Daniel*, 9:502.

⁸⁸Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, 44.

⁸⁹“King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream in the second year of his reign, and, having forgotten it upon waking, he challenged his Babylonian wise men to demonstrate their skills by narrating the dream and interpreting its significance to him.”—Roland K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 1969, 1999), 1105. “There remained in the king’s heart only a shadow, so to speak, or a mere echo or trace of the dream, with the result that if others should retell it to him, he would be able to recall what he had seen.”—Hieronymus, *Jerome’s Commentary on Daniel* (Translated by Gleason L. Archer Jr.), Dan. 2:3. “King Nebuchadnezzar saw a wonderful dream, the accomplishment of which God showed him in his sleep; but when he arose out of his bed, he forgot the accomplishment . . .”—Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 10.195. “As is frequently the case with intricate dreams, many of its particulars had escaped his memory.”—Zöckler, *The Book of the Prophet Daniel*, 69.

⁹⁰Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 2:4.

⁹¹“Aramaic . . . was increasingly the *lingua franca* of Babylonia during this Chaldean period, as it has been for much of Assyria in the early seventh century, and would continue to be in Babylonia under the Persian administration.”—Donald J. Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1985, 2004), 1.

⁹²Whitcomb, *Daniel*, 38.

⁹³Although this leaves unanswered why the Aramaic reverts back to Hebrew at the end of chapter 7 since chapter 8 provides greater details concerning historical events mentioned in chapters 2 and 7.

⁹⁴Unger, *Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1612-1613.

⁹⁵Miller believes Daniel’s writing switched to Aramaic but the conversation itself did not. “In the NIV the impression is given that the astrologers spoke to the king in the Aramaic language, but the phrase ‘in Aramaic’ is best taken as parenthetical notation placed in the text to mark the change in the written language, for at this point in the book until the end of chap. 7 the language is not Hebrew but Aramaic. Although the diplomatic language of the empire was Aramaic, it seems reasonable to suppose that the wise men who lived in Babylon, regardless of their original nationality, would have addressed the king in the normal language of the city that presumably was Akkadian.”—Miller, *Daniel*, 80.

⁹⁶Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:4.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸G. J. Brooke, “Pesharim,” in Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans, *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), s.v. “Pesharim.”

⁹⁹“The wise men . . . confidently asserted, ‘We will interpret it.’ This was a well-meant promise because the ‘astrologers’ were skilled in interpreting dreams and had manuals that explained the various dream symbols. Samples of these Akkadian dream manuals have been discovered.”—Miller, *Daniel*, 80.

¹⁰⁰Unger, *Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1613.

¹⁰¹Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 2:5.

¹⁰²Theodotion, “Daniel (Theodotion’s Translation),” in Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Septuaginta: With Morphology* (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1996, c1979.), Dan. 2:5.

¹⁰³“In the Greek translation of the Old Testament (LXX), this word with slight alterations is considered to be a verb form meaning ‘is gone from me.’ that is, the dream had been forgotten. The verb could, however, also mean ‘gone forth’ in the sense of ‘I have decreed.’ ”—Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 2:1.

¹⁰⁴Keil, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:5.

¹⁰⁵Whitcomb, *Daniel*, 40.

¹⁰⁶“Nor is it psychologically probable that so impressive a dream, which on awaking he had forgotten, should have yet sorely disquieted his spirit during his waking hours.”—Keil, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:1-13.

- ¹⁰⁷ “He’s saying you people are con artists; you ripped us off ever since you set up your system. You’re putting us on and I’m tired of being put on with phony answers. I’m tired of spending my life as the emperor of this kingdom with my children in the court’s house listening to you people and when it comes to a real crisis you can’t handle it, your system can’t handle it. You’re phonies.”—Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 5.63.
- ¹⁰⁸ “If they could predict the future by interpreting dreams, they should be able to reconstruct the past and recall the king’s dream.”—J. Dwight Pentecost, “Daniel,” in John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: SP Publications, 1983), Dan. 2:5. “If his wise men could predict the future by interpreting dreams, they ought to be able to perform the lesser task of reconstructing the past (reproducing the king’s dream).”—Unger, *Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1613.
- ¹⁰⁹ Ibid.
- ¹¹⁰ Thomas Constable, *Notes on Daniel* (Garland, TX: Sonic Light, 2009), 21.
- ¹¹¹ “This was the custom of the country. No law, no judge, no jury. The will or caprice of the king governed all things. Happy England! Know and value thy excellent privileges!”—Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible - Daniel*, Dan. 2:5.
- ¹¹² James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark, 1927, 1959), 146.
- ¹¹³ Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:5.
- ¹¹⁴ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), #10470.
- ¹¹⁵ Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, #2856.
- ¹¹⁶ “The Babylonian houses were built of sun-dried bricks; when demolished, the rain dissolves the whole into a mass of mire, in the wet land, near the river [STUART].”—Fausset, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:5. “Enough instances are on record to show how, after a place had been utterly destroyed, further disgrace was heaped upon it by making it a public outhouse (cf. 2K. 10:27).”—Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 2:5.
- ¹¹⁷ Miller, *Daniel*, 82.
- ¹¹⁸ Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:9.
- ¹¹⁹ Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible - Daniel*, Dan. 2:8.
- ¹²⁰ Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, Dan. 2:9.
- ¹²¹ Sinclair B. Ferguson, “Daniel,” in D. A. Carson, ed., *New Bible Commentary (4th ed.)* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1994, 1970), Dan. 2:1-13.
- ¹²² Pentecost, *Class Notes on Daniel*, Dallas Theological Seminary, 3.14.
- ¹²³ Marc Berlin and Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1985, 2004), 1644.
- ¹²⁴ Concerning God’s prohibition of occult practices: Ex. 22:18; Lev. 19:26, 31; 20:6, 27; Deu. 18:10; 1S. 15:23; 28:3, 9; 2K. 17:17; 21:6; 23:24; 1Chr. 10:13; 2Chr. 33:6; Isa. 8:19; 19:3; 44:25; Eze. 12:24; 13:7, 9, 18-23; Zec. 10:2; Mal. 3:2-5; Acts 16:16; Gal. 5:20; Rev. 18:23; Rev. 21:8; Rev. 22:15. In contrast to occult practitioners, God reveals truth to the simple who remain pure in spirit and practice (Luke 10:21).
- ¹²⁵ Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, Dan. 2:10.
- ¹²⁶ Concerning God’s omniscience: Gen. 18:12-13; 1Chr. 28:9; Job 24:1; 28:24; 31:4; 34:21; Ps. 69:5; 90:8; 94:9; 139:2-4; 147:5; Pr. 24:12; Isa. 29:15-16; 40:27; 41:21-26; 42:9; 43:9; 44:7; 45:21; 46:10; 48:3-5; Jer. 29:23; Amos 4:13; Mat. 6:8; Luke 12:6; Rev. 2:23.
- ¹²⁷ “None has ever asked such a thing of any magician, exorcist, or Chaldean.”—*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1997, c1985), Dan. 2:10. “The mystery about which the king has inquired—wise men, exorcists, magicians, and diviners cannot tell to the king.”—Ibid., Dan. 2:27.
- ¹²⁸ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10330.
- ¹²⁹ Fausset, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:11.
- ¹³⁰ Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, Dan. 2:11.
- ¹³¹ Concerning God dwelling between the Cherubim: Ex. 25:22; Lev. 16:2; Num. 7:89; 1S. 4:4; 2S. 6:2; 2K. 19:15; 1Chr. 13:6; Ps. 26:8; 80:1; 99:1; Isa. 37:16. The position of the angels at the head and feet of Jesus in John 20:12 may be an allusion to the position of God’s presence between the cherubim.
- ¹³² See also 1Ti. 3:16; 1Jn. 4:2; 2Jn. 1:7.
- ¹³³ Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, Dan. 2:12.

¹³⁴ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10633.

¹³⁵ Ibid., #10005.

¹³⁶ “Also Nebuchadnezzar may have become impatient with the wise men who were presumably older than he as he had inherited them from his father.”—Pentecost, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:5.

¹³⁷ Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 5.65.

¹³⁸ Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:13.

¹³⁹ “Since in Dan. 2:49▶ and 3:1▶ the full phrase ‘province of Babylon’ is used for designating the entire country, Nebuchadnezzar may have had in mind here only the city of Babylon. If so, the number to be killed would not have been quite as many, though likely most did live in the city.”—Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, Dan. 2:12.

¹⁴⁰ “Those remaining magicians, or wise men, who were not inhabitants of Babylon itself, formed, according to Strabo 16:1; Pliny, *H. N.* 6:26, separate colleges, e.g., in Borsippa, Urchoe, Hipparenum.”—Zöckler, *The Book of the Prophet Daniel*, 72.

¹⁴¹ Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 2:13.

¹⁴² Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, Dan. 2:13.

¹⁴³ “That Daniel and his friends were sought as a result of the decree makes the fact clear that they were classified as wise men.”—Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, Dan. 2:13.

¹⁴⁴ Pentecost, *Class Notes on Daniel, Dallas Theological Seminary*, 3.15.

¹⁴⁵ *A scene from a medallion (1243-1248) originally from the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris. King Louis IX of France built the chapel to house the Crown of Thorns, which he had acquired in 1239. The prophet Daniel, with halo, is shown interceding with Arioch, the captain of King Nebuchadnezzar’s guard. Arioch had been charged with killing all the wise men of Babylon (Daniel 2:14-15▶, 24▶). To the left, behind Daniel, an executioner raises his sword to kill two of the wise men. Image courtesy of David Jackson, 2010. Use of this image is subject to a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 UK: England & Wales license.*

¹⁴⁶ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10539.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., #10302.

¹⁴⁸ Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 2:15.

¹⁴⁹ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10295.

¹⁵⁰ Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, 6.66.

¹⁵¹ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10280.

¹⁵² Lancelot C. L. Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publications, 1851, 1992), Dan. 2:15.

¹⁵³ Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 2:14.

¹⁵⁴ Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, Dan. 2:15.

¹⁵⁵ “Naturally not until announced by Arioch (cf. verse 25), for none were admitted to the kings of the East without such announcement, see Esther 4:11; Herodotus, I., 99; III., 110, 118.”—Zöckler, *The Book of the Prophet Daniel*, 99. “It has been questioned whether it was feasible for foreigners to have ready access to the king in person as reflected in the book of Daniel. The picture given by the Assyrian texts of the previous century is one of court-officials of every level, and even private citizens, asking that ‘the king may give attention to his servant’ . . . To call the king’s notice to a case or to request an audience of him was ‘to speak the word of the king’ . . . It was also possible to write letters of appeal to the king . . . The *kidinnu*-right allowed citizens of Babylonian to have their cases tried by the king himself. Daniel and his companions could have been well known to the king from his personal choice and investigation of them before they were granted official and permanent posts in the palace (Dan. 1:19-21▶).”—Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, 97-98.

¹⁵⁶ “Daniel was evidently held in high esteem by the king because he was permitted access to the king’s presence and was able to petition the king directly.”—Pentecost, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:16.

¹⁵⁷ “At the root of it all must have been the prompting of God’s Spirit, with whose gifts Daniel was so richly endowed. God’s Spirit it was that emboldened Daniel to think and to know that he had been ordained of God for an emergency such as this.”—Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 2:16.

¹⁵⁸ Pentecost, *Class Notes on Daniel, Dallas Theological Seminary*, 3.15.

¹⁵⁹ “Confidence was also added, since he perceived a double punishment awaiting him, if he disappointed the king; if he had returned the next day without reply, the king would not have been content with an easy death, but would have raged with cruelty against Daniel, in consequence of his deception.”—Calvin, *Commentary on The Prophet Daniel*, Dan. 2:17.

- ¹⁶⁰ “Daniel is able to obtain a grace period from the king precisely for the reason that the Chaldeans were not: he does not challenge the king’s insistence that his wise men must recount to him his dream itself before explaining its meaning.”—Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:16.
- ¹⁶¹ “Although the king would not give his advisors more time, he granted Daniel’s request. The reason for this is that the king was already convinced of the Chaldeans’ duplicity, because they had sought the substance of the dream before they would interpret it. Daniel made no such stipulation in his petition . . .”—Charles Lee Feinberg, *A Commentary on Daniel: The Kingdom of the Lord* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1981), 32. “It is possible that Daniel’s calm assurance that his God was able to help him somehow impressed the king that here was honesty and integrity quite in contrast to his fawning, older counselors.”—Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 2:16.
- ¹⁶² “Upon the sight of Daniel, he remembered him again, and how superior in wisdom he was to all his magicians and wise men; and besides, Daniel gave him hope, yea, assurance, of showing his dream, and the interpretation of it, which his mind was very eager after.”—Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, Dan. 2:26.
- ¹⁶³ “the king was so much troubled with the dream, that he was so anxious to know its signification, and that he saw so clearly that if the decree was executed, involving Daniel and his friends, ‘all’ hope of recalling and understanding it would be lost, that he was ready to grasp at ‘any’ hope, however slender, of being made acquainted with the meaning of the vision.”—Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 2:1. “Nebuchadnezzar knew that killing all the wise men would not bring him any closer to the one thing he really wanted, and that was to have his dream interpreted.”—Benware, *Daniel’s Prophecy of Things to Come*, Dan. 2:16.
- ¹⁶⁴ “But chiefly this subsiding of his wrath, and his indulging Daniel in his request, were owing to the overruling providence of God.”—Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, Dan. 2:26.
- ¹⁶⁵ Calvin, *Commentary on The Prophet Daniel*, Dan. 2:19.
- ¹⁶⁶ Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, Dan. 2:17.
- ¹⁶⁷ Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 8.101.
- ¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.53.
- ¹⁶⁹ Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:18.
- ¹⁷⁰ Concerning ineffective prayer due to sin: Deu. 1:45; 31:18; 1S. 8:18; 28:6, 15; 2S. 12:16; 2Chr. 7:13; Job 30:20; Ps. 18:41; 66:18; 80:4; Pr. 1:28; 15:29; 21:13; Isa. 1:15; 58:3-9; 59:2; Jer. 7:16; 11:11, 14; 14:11-13; Lam. 3:8, 44; Eze. 8:18; 14:3-5, 14-20; 20:3, 31; Hos. 5:6-7; 11:7; Zec. 7:13; Mal. 2:14; John 9:31; 1Pe. 3:7, 12.
- ¹⁷¹ The equivalent Greek in Revelation is ὁ θεὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ [*ho theos tou ouranou*].
- ¹⁷² “When God’s people are enslaved on earth, His glory is not revealed on earth as it should be. He is disowned on earth and referred to as the ‘God of heaven.’ ”—Feinberg, *A Commentary on Daniel: The Kingdom of the Lord*, 33. “Observe, nevertheless, that God does not here present Himself as God of earth, but of heaven. In Israel He was God of the earth. He will be so again at the restitution of all things. Here He acts in sovereignty as God of heaven, setting up man, in a certain sense, in His place on the earth.”—John Nelson Darby, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible: Ezra to Malachi* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 461. “Now as to this expression, ‘The God of heaven,’ there are three books in the Old Testament where it is used, and one in the New Testament—the Revelation. The three Old Testament books are Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel. All refer, practically, to the same period, when God had scattered His people among the nations, because of their sins. He had forsaken His throne at Jerusalem. The glory had gone up to heaven, and He was no longer called the Lord of the whole earth. He was now the God of heaven, and, so far as the world is concerned, that is still His title.”—Ironside, *Lectures on Daniel the Prophet*, 30. Ironside is in error here. The phrase “God of heaven” also occurs in Genesis (Gen. 24:3, 7), 2 Chronicles (2Chr. 36:23), Psalms (Ps. 136:26) and Jonah (Jonah 1:9).
- ¹⁷³ Concerning the condemnation of astral worship: Gen. 11:4; Deu. 4:19; 17:3; 2K. 17:16; 23:5, 11; 2Chr. 33:3; Job 31:26-28; Isa. 47:13; Jer. 8:2; 10:2; 19:13; Eze. 8:16; Amos 5:26; Acts 7:42; Rom. 1:25; Rev. 8:12.
- ¹⁷⁴ Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 2:18.
- ¹⁷⁵ Miller, *Daniel*, 85.
- ¹⁷⁶ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10661.
- ¹⁷⁷ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev. ed (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1982, 2003), 656.
- ¹⁷⁸ Thomas A Howe, *Daniel in the Preterist’s Den* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008), 49.
- ¹⁷⁹ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10256.
- ¹⁸⁰ “We would think that Daniel received the same exact dream but one with the divine commentary attached.”—Benware, *Daniel’s Prophecy of Things to Come*, Dan. 2:19-23.
- ¹⁸¹ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10121, #10122, #10123.

¹⁸² Pentecost, *Class Notes on Daniel*, Dallas Theological Seminary, 3.16.

¹⁸³ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10530.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, #10232.

¹⁸⁵ Fausset, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:21.

¹⁸⁶ Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:21.

¹⁸⁷ “Cicero also remarks (*De Divin.*, p. 3), that ‘the Chaldeans, so named, not from their art, but their nation, are supposed, by a prolonged observation of the stars, to have wrought out a science by which could be predicted what was to happen to every individual, and to what fate he was born.’ ”—Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 2:2.

¹⁸⁸ Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 8.103.

¹⁸⁹ Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 2:21.

¹⁹⁰ “By indirect suggestion and general discussion he prepares the reader for the fact that the dream Nebuchadnezzar saw was concerned with the change and succession of empires.”—Hieronymus, *Jerome’s Commentary on Daniel (Translated by Gleason L. Archer Jr.)*, Dan. 2:21.

¹⁹¹ Benware, *Daniel’s Prophecy of Things to Come*, Dan. 2:19-23.

¹⁹² Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible - Daniel*, Dan. 2:21.

¹⁹³ Calvin, *Commentary on The Prophet Daniel*, Dan. 2:21.

¹⁹⁴ Mills, *Daniel: A Study Guide to the Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:14.

¹⁹⁵ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10430.

¹⁹⁶ “It may be said that this word is used quite like its common Hebrew cognate. But as it is used in the more restricted compass of [biblical Aramaic], all of the Hebrew usages (e.g. carnal knowledge) are not represented.”—Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, #2765.

¹⁹⁷ Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 2:12.

¹⁹⁸ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10555.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, #10519.

²⁰⁰ Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 2:22.

²⁰¹ Calvin, *Commentary on The Prophet Daniel*, Dan. 2:20.

²⁰² Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:22.

²⁰³ *Biblical illustrations by Jim Padgett, courtesy of Sweet Publishing, Ft. Worth, TX, and Gospel Light, Ventura, CA. Copyright 1984. Image courtesy of Distant Shores Media/Sweet Publishing, 1984. Use of this image is subject to a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.*

²⁰⁴ Calvin, *Commentary on The Prophet Daniel*, Dan. 2:23.

²⁰⁵ “As in times past He has proven faithful, so also now.”—Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, Dan. 2:23.

²⁰⁶ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10130.

²⁰⁷ Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:23.

²⁰⁸ Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, Dan. 2:24.

²⁰⁹ “Some of them might have been his preceptors in the language and literature of the Chaldeans, and so he might have a natural affection for them.”—Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, Dan. 2:24.

²¹⁰ Calvin seems to be unable to see a merciful aspect in Daniel’s motivation. “He seems, indeed, to have done this with little judgment, because we ought to desire the utter abolition of magical arts, for we saw before that they were diabolical sorceries. . . . I . . . think that Daniel spared the Magi, but not through any personal regard; he wished them to be safe, but for another purpose, namely, to await their punishment from God. Their iniquity was not yet ripe for destruction through the indignation of the king.”—Calvin, *Commentary on The Prophet Daniel*, Dan. 2:24. We agree Daniel should “desire the utter abolition of magical arts,” but not necessarily the men caught up in them. Besides this, Daniel was not then living under the theocracy of Israel where such activities were subject to the death penalty. This was a much different situation.

²¹¹ “Because Arioch likely had not been killing wise men since Daniel’s agreement with Nebuchadnezzar the previous day, the thrust of Daniel’s words was that he not begin to do so again.”—Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, Dan. 2:24.

²¹² Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 2:25.

²¹³ The unpredictable actions brought about by the bad mood of the all-powerful king were likely to increase anxiety for everyone in his court.

²¹⁴ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10315.

- ²¹⁵ *Daniel interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream, as described in the Second Chapter of Daniel*. Image courtesy of W. A. Spicer, 1917. Image is in the public domain.
- ²¹⁶ Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:26.
- ²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 110-111.
- ²¹⁸ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10140.
- ²¹⁹ Miller, *Daniel*, 89.
- ²²⁰ Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, Dan. 2:27.
- ²²¹ Secularists attempt to restrict science solely to that which is material. By this, they hope to preclude competing views which recognize evidence pointing to a reality beyond the material realm (e.g., information pointing to the existence of intelligence). It is interesting to consider that many aspects of reality (infrared, x-rays, radio waves, and the like) were completely undetectable not that many years ago. Using today's restricted definition of science, consideration of such phenomena would have been deemed "unscientific." Thankfully, our scientific forbears did not wear such blinders.
- ²²² David Bentley Hart, *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 103-304.
- ²²³ Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 8.107.
- ²²⁴ Miller, *Daniel*, 90.
- ²²⁵ Archer, *Daniel*, 45.
- ²²⁶ Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 2:28.
- ²²⁷ "While it is true that the entire contents of the dream do not fall within the Messianic age, nevertheless, the principal point, the establishment of the Messiah's Kingdom, does fall therein." — Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, Dan. 2:28.
- ²²⁸ "Culver, however, properly concludes that 'the time of the end' as found in Daniel 11:35 is not identical to 'the latter days.'" — Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 2:28.
- ²²⁹ "This Old Testament phrase is paralleled in the New Testament ('in the last days'; cf. Acts 2:17; 2Ti. 3:1; Heb. 1:2; Jas. 5:3; 2Pe. 3:3)." — Miller, *Daniel*, 90.
- ²³⁰ Concerning a future priesthood in Israel: Num. 25:12-13; Ps. 106:30-31; Isa. 56:6-7; 60:7; 66:20-23; Jer. 33:18-21; Eze. 20:40-42; 37:26-28; 40:38-46; 43:18, 20, 26; 44:11, 30; 45:15-20, 24. See also [Anthony C. Garland, *A Testimony of Jesus Christ : A Commentary on the Book of Revelation, Vol. 2 (Rev. 15-22)* (Camano Island, WA: SpiritAndTruth.org, 2004), 4.16.5.10], <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/revc.htm#4.16.5.10>.
- ²³¹ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10646.
- ²³² Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:28.
- ²³³ Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, Dan. 2:29.
- ²³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²³⁵ David Jeremiah, *The Handwriting on the Wall: Secrets from the Prophecies of Daniel* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1992), 47.
- ²³⁶ A color-enhanced version of the original work of Clarence Larkin, now in the public domain. Enhanced image is hereby placed in the public domain. See *Kingdoms of History*.
- ²³⁷ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10614,#10248,#10678.
- ²³⁸ "𐤇𐤍 [ḥaḡ] is not the indefinite article (Ges., Win., Maur.), but the numeral. 'The world-power is in all its phases one, therefore all these phases are united in the vision in one image' (Klief.)" — Keil, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:31-45.
- ²³⁹ Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:1.
- ²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Dan. 2:45.
- ²⁴¹ Solomon makes mention of a similarity between man and beast: both are made from the dust and return there at death. One wonders if Solomon may have also had in mind how similarly men behave to animals when tested by God: "I said in my heart, "Concerning the condition of the sons of men, **God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are like animals.**" For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all is vanity. All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust" [emphasis added] (Ecc. 3:18-20).
- ²⁴² "No one doubts that human beings now alive are connected to human beings who lived thousands of years ago. To look at Paleolithic cave drawings is to understand that the graphic arts have not in twelve thousand years changed radically. And no one doubts that human beings are connected to the rest of the animal kingdom. It is rather more difficult to take what no

one doubts and fashion it into an effective defense of the thesis that human beings are nothing but the living record of an extended evolutionary process. That requires a disciplined commitment to a point of view that owes nothing to the sciences, however loosely construed, and astonishingly little to the evidence. . . . beyond what we have in common with the apes, we have nothing in common, and while the similarities are interesting, the differences are profound. . . . [The] idea that human beings have been endowed with powers and properties not found elsewhere in the animal kingdom—or the universe, so far as we can tell—arises from a simple imperative: Just look around. It is an imperative that survives the invitation fraternally to consider the great apes. The apes are, after all, behind the bars of their cages and we are not. Eager for the experiments to begin, they are impatient for their food to be served. They seem impatient for little else. After years of punishing trials, a few of them have been taught the rudiments of various primitive symbol systems. Having been given the gift of language, they have nothing to say. When two simian prodigies meet, they fling their signs at one another. More is expected, but more is rarely forthcoming.”—David Berlinski, *The Devil's Delusion: Atheism and its Scientific Pretensions* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2008, 2009), paras. 1386, 1877, 1886, 1926.

²⁴³ In this passage, *their glory* refers to the glory of God, in Whose image man was made.

²⁴⁴ Concerning men sacrificing numerous animals to God: Num. 29; 2S. 6:13; 1K. 8:5, 63; 1Chr. 29:21; 2Chr. 1:6; 5:6; 7:5; 15:11; 29:32; 30:24; 35:7-9; Ezra 6:17.

²⁴⁵ Concerning God offering men as a sacrifice or food for animals: Deu. 28:26; 1K. 14:11; 16:4; 1S. 17:46; Isa. 34:6-8; Jer. 7:33; 15:3; 19:7; 34:20; 46:10; Eze. 29:5; 32:4; 39:4, 17-20; Zep. 1:7-8; Mat. 24:28 cf. Job. 39:30; Luke 17:37; Rev. 19:17-18▶.

²⁴⁶ Zöckler, *The Book of the Prophet Daniel*, 83.

²⁴⁷ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10228.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, #10339.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, #10657.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, #10167.

²⁵¹ Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, s.v. “Represents Gentile Dominion.”

²⁵² Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 2:31.

²⁵³ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10294.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, #10334.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, #10591.

²⁵⁶ Gleason Leonard Archer, “Modern Rationalism and the Book of Daniel,” in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 136 no. 542 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, April-June 1979), 140.

²⁵⁷ John F. Walvoord, “Revival of Rome,” in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 126 no. 320 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, October 1969), 320.

²⁵⁸ Hesiod, *Works and Days (Translated by Hugh G. Evelyn-White in 1914)*, ll. 109-201.

²⁵⁹ Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:33.

²⁶⁰ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10279.

²⁶¹ Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English*, Dan. 2:33.

²⁶² Image obtained from OpenClipArt.org. Image is in the public domain.

²⁶³ “EUSEBIUS: Christ is called a stone on account of His earthly body, cut out without hands, (Dan. 2:34▶.) as in the vision of Daniel, because of His birth of the Virgin.”—Thomas Aquinas and John Henry Newman, *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels, Collected Out of the Works of the Fathers, Volume 3: Luke* (Oxford, England: John Henry Parker, 1843), Luke 20:9-18. “Cut off without hands, that is, without copulation or human seed and by birth from a virgin’s womb.”—Hieronymus, *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel (Translated by Gleason L. Archer Jr.)*, Dan. 2:40. “For more specific ecclesiastical interpretations we may note the view, apparently not held by modern exegetes, that the Stone cut without hands represents the Virgin Birth, so Theodoret, Gregory of Nyssa, Aphrem; . . .” —Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 192. “On this account also, Daniel, foreseeing His advent, said that a stone, cut out without hands, came into this world. For this is what ‘without hands’ means, that His coming into this world was not by the operation of human hands, that is, of those men who are accustomed to stone-cutting; that is, Joseph taking no part with regard to it, but Mary alone co-operating with the pre-arranged plan.”—Irenaeus, “Against Heresies,” in Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume I: The Apostolic Fathers With Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 453. “This may point at the wondrous incarnation of Christ, who was made of a woman, of a virgin, without the help of a man, by the power of God.”—Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, Dan. 2:34.

²⁶⁴ “PSEUDO-CHRYSOSTOM. This city is the Church of which it is said, Glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of God. (Ps. 87:3.) Its citizens are all the faithful, of whom the Apostle speaks, Ye are fellow-citizens of the saints. (Eph. 2:19.) It is built upon Christ the hill, of whom Daniel thus, A stone hewed without hands (Dan. 2:34) became a great mountain.”—Thomas Aquinas and John Henry Newman, *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels, Collected Out of the Works of the Fathers, Volume 1: St. Matthew* (Oxford, England: John Henry Parker, 1841), Mat. 5:14. “The ‘Stone’ is not Christianity but CHRIST.”—Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:45.

²⁶⁵ See also Luke 19:12, 15.

²⁶⁶ “The stone was ‘cut, hewn’: **חֲתַךְ אֶת־הַבֶּן־הַזֶּה** [*hitg^ezeref*] is the Hithpeel (HtG) of **חָצַר** [*g^ezar*], whose Hebrew cognate, **חָצַר** [*gāzar*], can have a similar meaning, ‘cut (off, in two),’ resulting in death for a person: the baby in 1K. 3:25-26 or the Suffering Servant in Isa. 53:8, who was ‘cut off from the land of the living.’ This verb can be interpreted in harmony with passages such as ‘they have pierced my hands and feet’ (Ps. 22:16) and ‘they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced’ (**רָאָה אֶת־רַגְלֵי** [*rāqārū*], Zec. 12:10) as pointing to the crucifixion of Christ.”—Steinmann, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:34.

²⁶⁷ There are several different interpretations concerning what it means to fall on the stone. Some believe, the reference to falling on the stone has in view those who bow in humility and brokenness to accept Jesus whereas those on whom it falls are the rest of humanity who are eventually judged for having rejected the stone. “BEDE. Or else, He who is a sinner, yet believes on Christ, falls indeed upon the stone and is shaken, for he is preserved by penitence unto salvation. But upon whomsoever it shall fall, that is, upon whom the stone itself has come down because he denied it, it shall grind him to powder, so that not even a broken piece of a vessel shall be left, in which may be drunk a little water.”—Aquinas, *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels, Collected Out of the Works of the Fathers, Volume 3: Luke*, Luke 20:9-18. Others believe falling on the stone refers to the response of those who rejected Jesus at his first advent and the stone then falls upon the remainder who reject Him at His second advent. “The message of grace has gone out to them; and what has been the result? God has been taking out from among them a people for His name, but the mass have deliberately rejected the Christ of God; and that rejected Lord Jesus is soon going to fall upon them in judgment. Then will the rest of His word be fulfilled, ‘On whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.’ Israel stumbled over Him, and they were broken. He is going to fall upon the Gentiles in His wrath and indignation, and they will be ground to powder, and driven away from before His face like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor.”—Ironside, *Lectures on Daniel the Prophet*, 41-42. Yet another view takes stumbling upon the stone as referring to Jews who rejected Jesus whereas the stone subsequently crushes the Gentile kingdoms. “ ‘Whosoever shall fall on this stone (that is, stumble, and be offended, at Him, as the Jews were, from whom, therefore, He says, “The kingdom shall be taken”) shall be broken; but (referring to Dan. 2:34-35) on whomsoever it shall fall (referring to the world power which had been the instrument of breaking the Jews), it will (not merely break, but) grind him to powder’ (1Cor. 15:24).” —Fausset, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:34.

²⁶⁸ Some see Goliath as bearing a typological relationship with the kingdom of man: he was a Gentile; he opposed God (1S. 17:45); his height was *six* cubits and a span (1S. 17:4); his iron spearhead weighed *six* hundred shekels. Although scripture doesn’t say how many fingers or toes he had, other giants like Goliath had *six* fingers and toes (2S. 21:20; 1Chr. 20:6). Although probably coincidental, David relates he had previously killed both a *lion* and a *bear* (1S. 17:36), symbols of the first two beasts appearing in the vision of Daniel 7.

²⁶⁹ The similarity is only approximate. Daniel struck Goliath in the forehead (1S. 17:49) whereas this stone strikes the image on its feet.

²⁷⁰ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10182.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, #10248.

²⁷² The passage also contains references to the final overthrow of *Babylon of the Future* since many details do not pertain to the overthrow of Babylon by Medo-Persia as recorded in Daniel 5. See commentary on *Daniel 5*.

²⁷³ Concerning leaven representing that which is sinful: Ex. 12:15, 19; 13:7; 23:18; 34:25; Hos. 7:4; Amos 4:5; Mat. 13:33; 16:6-12; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1; 13:20; 1Cor. 5:6-8; Gal. 5:9.

²⁷⁴ “The mountain out of which the rock comes is evidently God (cf. Deu. 32:18; Ps. 18:2; 31:2-3), though a mountain is also a common figure for a kingdom or government in the Bible (cf. Isa. 2:2; 27:13; Jer. 51:25; Mic. 4:1; et al.).” —Constable, *Notes on Daniel*, 33.

²⁷⁵ “the express mention of the mountain there can be only a reference to Mount Zion, where the God of heaven has founded His kingdom, which shall from thence spread out over the earth and shall destroy all the world-kingdoms. Cf. Ps. 50:2, Isa. 2:3, Mic. 4:2.” —Keil, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:45. “The mountain here may in fact be symbolic of the Holy Mountain of God out of which comes Messiah.” —Howe, *Daniel in the Preterist’s Den*, 98.

²⁷⁶ “The Mountain out of which the ‘Stone’ is cut by invisible hands represents Israel, for of Israel Christ came. This is confirmed by the words of Jacob in blessing his sons, where he speaks of— ‘The Shepherd, the STONE OF ISRAEL’

(Gen. 49:24), which can refer to no other than Christ.”—Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:45.

²⁷⁷ “The mountain imagery is part of the divine polemic designed to destroy Nebuchadnezzar’s religious world-view. In the Babylonian religious system the earth itself was a mountain, the ‘Mountain-house,’ and the gods came from the sacred mountain of the earth called the ‘Mountain of the Lands.’ Marduk was the chief god and was known as the ‘Great Mountain,’ and temples dedicated to him were symbolically constructed in the shape of mountains. . . . This is further emphasized by the stone reducing the statue . . . to dust and ‘the wind’ blowing away every trace that remained . . . Another title for Marduk was ‘Lord of the Wind,’ based on the belief that the winds were governed by the gods.”—Price, *Daniel*, 228. “Morris Jastrow (*The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria* [Boston: Athenaeum, 1898], p. 614) states, ‘According to Babylonian notions . . . the earth is pictured as a huge mountain.’ Morris Forbridge (*Studies in Biblical and Semitic Symbolism* [New York: Ktav, 1970], pp. 180-81) points out that “Jensen has shown that the Babylonians regarded the earth as a huge mountain. In fact, the earth was actually called E-kur, ‘Mountain House.’” —Archer, *Daniel*, 49.

²⁷⁸ Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 2:45.

²⁷⁹ John F. Walvoord, “The Prophecy of the Ten-Nation Confederacy,” in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 124 no. 494 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, April-June 1967), 101.

²⁸⁰ “For the application of the Stone to the Church the earliest instance (over-looked, except in a remark of Ewald’s) is in Hermas, Sim., ix. Here, c. 2, we read how the Shepherd ‘showed me in middle of the plain a great white stone that had come up out of the plain. And the stone was loftier than the mountains, four-square, so that it could fill the whole earth [the Gr. differs from our Grr., s. at v. 41- That rock was ancient, having a gate cut out in it,’ etc. Later, c. 12, we learn that the gate is the Son of Man, who builds the Church upon the rock; i.e., the Church is rather identified with the rock.”—Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 192.

²⁸¹ Walvoord, *The Prophecy of the Ten-Nation Confederacy*, 101.

²⁸² “His reference to ‘we’ telling the interpretation is probably an editorial plural. This form of speech allowed Daniel to present himself humbly to the king and at the same time remind him that God had given the dream and its interpretation (cf. 1Cor. 2:6).” —Constable, *Notes on Daniel*, 28.

²⁸³ “The plural . . . is used because Daniel classes himself among the worshippers of Jehovah, all of whom, as such, have access to the mysteries of Divine revelation. It is therefore an expression of modesty, similar to that contained in verse 30.” —Zöckler, *The Book of the Prophet Daniel*, 76.

²⁸⁴ “It is not unlikely that Nebuchadnezzar considered himself ‘king of kings’ . . . a title used by his successors.” —Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, 41.

²⁸⁵ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10278.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, #10773.

²⁸⁷ A color-enhanced version of the original work of Clarence Larkin, now in the public domain. Enhanced image is hereby placed in the public domain. See *Kingdoms of History*.

²⁸⁸ “For sixty-six years (605-539 B.C.) the Neo-Babylonian Empire ruled the Near East.” —Miller, *Daniel*, 93.

²⁸⁹ Unger, *Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1616.

²⁹⁰ Pentecost, *Class Notes on Daniel*, Dallas Theological Seminary, 3.19.

²⁹¹ Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 2:38.

²⁹² Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 173.

²⁹³ Howe, *Daniel in the Preterist’s Den*, 98.

²⁹⁴ Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, Dan. 2:38.

²⁹⁵ Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 2:38.

²⁹⁶ Renald E. Showers, *The Most High God: Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1982), Dan. 2:38.

²⁹⁷ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10087.

²⁹⁸ “Nebuchadnezzar ruled about 45 years (605-560 B.C.), and his empire only lasted another 21 years. Nebuchadnezzar’s father, Nabopolassar, founded the Neo-Babylon Empire in 627 B.C., and it fell to the Persians in 539 B.C. So it existed for only 88 years.” —Constable, *Notes on Daniel*, 29.

²⁹⁹ Greene, *Daniel*, 106.

³⁰⁰ Ironside, *Lectures on Daniel the Prophet*, 36.

³⁰¹ A color-enhanced version of the original work of Clarence Larkin, now in the public domain. Enhanced image is hereby placed in the public domain. See *Kingdoms of History*.

³⁰² Steinmann, *Daniel*, 2:39.

³⁰³ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10075.

³⁰⁴ “Medo-Persian dominance continued for approximately 208 years (539-331 B.C.).” — Miller, *Daniel*, 93.

³⁰⁵ Arno Clemens Gaebelein, *The Prophet Daniel: A Key to the Visions and Prophecies of the Book of Daniel*, 2nd (New York, NY: Our Hope, 1911), 29-30.

³⁰⁶ Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 2:39.

³⁰⁷ MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, Dan. 2:39.

³⁰⁸ Charles Boutflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel* (London, England: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1923), 19-20.

³⁰⁹ Darby, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible: Ezra to Malachi*, 460.

³¹⁰ “The epithet [of inferiority] is not to be confined to the Second Kingdom, for each one of the Kingdoms is equally lower than its predecessor.” — Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 174.

³¹¹ “There is deterioration in fineness, but increase of strength (Dan. 2:40▶). Then comes the deterioration of the ‘fourth kingdom’ in that very quality, strength.” — Cyrus Ingerson Scofield, *The Scofield Study Bible* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996), Dan. 2:41.

³¹² Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Rev. 2:39.

³¹³ Careful readers will notice the absence of any direct indication in the description of the dream or the interpretation necessitating taking the different metals as signifying a trend. If the passage is only stating Medo-Persia was inferior to Babylon, then the use of gold, silver, bronze, and iron to represent each kingdom may simply reflect four common metals. Even if the sequence of metals *is* intended to convey a relative degradation throughout the entire sequence, attempts to derive subtle insights from the association of a given metal with a particular kingdom may be ill-advised. As when interpretation details within a parable, caution is warranted. See comments on Daniel 2:1▶.

³¹⁴ Showers, *The Most High God: Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:35.

³¹⁵ “From Nebuchadnezzar’s standpoint the restriction on the monarch’s authority to annul a law once he had made it (Dan. 6:12▶) was less desirable than his own unfettered power. . . . [Greece’s] political tradition was more republican than its predecessor.” — Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:39.

³¹⁶ “The inferiority seems primarily to be the instability of the respective empires from pure absolute monarchy to virtual anarchy.” — Howe, *Daniel in the Preterist’s Den*, 106. “Although our modern view holds that a republic is the best form of government, this is predicated on the assumption that men are inherently evil, and therefore there must be checks and balances in order to protect the helpless. However, the best form of government would be an all-powerful, all-loving, all-knowing King.” — *Ibid.*, 22.

³¹⁷ “The power of Nebuchadnezzar was absolute (Dan. 5:19▶) . . . The second kingdom was inferior to the first. It was dependent upon the support of an hereditary aristocracy. The king could by no means do as he willed. This is seen in the case of Darius, who desired to save Daniel from the “Lion’s Den,” and could not, Dan. 6:12-16▶; and in the case of Ahasuerus who could only save the Jews from slaughter by a counter decree, Esther 8:3-12. . . . The . . . third kingdom . . . the government of Alexander the Great was a monarchy supported by a military aristocracy that was as weak as the ambitions of its leaders. The . . . fourth kingdom . . . The Caesars were nominally elected by the people . . . They also had a Senate which was supposed to counsel and control them. . . . the “Colossus” grows weaker and weaker until the feet and toes become a mixture of iron and clay. In other words the government degenerates from an Absolute Monarchy to an Autocratic Democracy, a form of government in which the people largely have the say. In short the ‘Colossus’ shows that Gentile dominion passes gradually from the Head, the organ which ought to direct the members, to the Feet, which are only made to carry the body whither the head directs.” — Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational Truth* (Glenside, PA: Clarence Larkin Estate, 1918, 1920), 67-68.

³¹⁸ “The third kingdom of bronze showed further deterioration politically. God-derived autocracy in Nebuchadnezzar’s absolute rule (vv. 37-38) in Persian kings was a rule springing from nobility at birth, the nobles being equal in rank but not in office. In Greece, individual influence acquired by personal achievement appeared in the conquests of Alexander the Great. In Rome, lowest of all, the emperor was appointed by popular military election, and so the ruling power centered in popular choice. . . . Accordingly, ‘inferior’ here means in the quality of government, but not necessarily inferior in every respect, such as worldly power, geographical extent, and military strength.” — Unger, *Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1617.

³¹⁹ “The first world empire was singular—*one unit*. The second empire was divided—*dual Media-Persia*. The third empire was quadruple—*four generals* ruled in four sections. The fourth empire in its final form will be a ‘*ten toed*’ kingdom.” — Greene, *Daniel*, 94.

- ³²⁰ “The Medo-Persian world-kingdom is spoken of as ‘inferior’ to the Babylonian perhaps only in this respect, that from its commencement it wanted inner unity, since the Medians and Persians did not form a united people, but contended with each other for the supremacy, which is intimated in the expression, Dan. 7:5▶, that the bear ‘raised itself up on one side.’ see under that passage. In the want of inward unity lay the weakness or the inferiority in strength of this kingdom, its inferiority as compared with the Babylonian.”—Keil, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:39.
- ³²¹ “We see then that the first of these Kingdoms was a unit, the second dual, the third became quadruple (Dan. 7:6▶; 8:8▶), and the fourth, in its final form, becomes ten-toed.”—Larkin, *Dispensational Truth*, 68.
- ³²² “Accordingly, ‘inferior’ here means in the quality of government, but not necessarily inferior in every respect, such as worldly military power, geographical extent, and military strength.”—Unger, *Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1617.
- ³²³ “The aspect in which these kingdoms were inferior did not concern size, because the last three were all larger than the first. It can have referred only to quality of government.”—Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, Dan. 2:39.
- ³²⁴ “Through the portrayal of each subsequent empire as inferior to its predecessor, Daniel seems to have been suggesting that the sinfulness of the world would continue to increase until the culmination of history. Certainly the last phase of the fourth empire, described in detail later in Daniel, reaches the height of blasphemy, cruelty, and evil. According to Daniel, the world’s kingdoms are not moving toward utopia but in the opposite direction.”—Miller, *Daniel*, 94.
- ³²⁵ A color-enhanced version of the original work of Clarence Larkin, now in the public domain. Enhanced image is hereby placed in the public domain. See *Kingdoms of History*.
- ³²⁶ “Why was silver a fitting representation of the Medo-Persian kingdom? In ancient times silver signified money, for silver was the standard of value and the medium of exchange. Medo-Persia became noted for basing its power on money which was collected through an extensive tax system (Ezra 4:13; Dan. 11:2▶). [Boutflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel*, pp. 26-28.]”—Showers, *The Most High God: Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:39.
- ³²⁷ “Alexander the Great conquered the Medo-Persians between 334 and 330 B.C. and assumed authority over its peoples and territory.”—Pentecost, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:39.
- ³²⁸ Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 2:39.
- ³²⁹ Showers, *The Most High God: Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:39.
- ³³⁰ “Persia actually had more territory than ancient Babylon, and the Greek Empire was greater than the Persian. The Roman Empire was greatest of all in extent. To infer, however, from the larger geographic area of succeeding kingdoms that they were not ‘inferior’ is to misread both the meaning of the dream and Daniel’s comment upon it.”—Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 2:39.
- ³³¹ *The Apocrypha : King James Version* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1995), 1Mac. 1:1-3.
- ³³² A color-enhanced version of the original work of Clarence Larkin, now in the public domain. Enhanced image is hereby placed in the public domain. See *Kingdoms of History*.
- ³³³ “The Roman Empire . . . conquered the Greek Empire in 63 B.C.”—Pentecost, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:40.
- ³³⁴ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10768.
- ³³⁵ Showers, *The Most High God: Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:40.
- ³³⁶ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10290.
- ³³⁷ The fourth kingdom is said to be different from *all* kingdoms—not only the previous three (Dan. 7:23▶).
- ³³⁸ A color-enhanced version of the original work of Clarence Larkin, now in the public domain. Enhanced image is hereby placed in the public domain. See *Kingdoms of History*.
- ³³⁹ Some commentators who are aware of the difficulty in finding fulfillment for the ten toes at the First Coming of Christ attempt to minimize their importance. “Young argues that there were not necessarily ten toes on the statue, but most scholars concede this obvious fact.”—Miller, *Daniel*, 98. “The toes of the statue are never numbered. While it is fairly reasonable to assume that the statue probably would have ten toes, it goes well beyond the text to read some significance into the number of toes or assign them any representational value.”—Steinmann, *Daniel*, 56. “Since ten is the number of completeness or totality this would have the toes represent the sum total of these kingdoms. All attempts to name the resultant kingdoms of an earlier or a later date prove abortive and unreliable. For the number ten is definitely a symbolical number as are numbers generally in visions or dreams of this type. There might in reality be nine or eleven or nineteen or twenty.”—Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, 122. Young’s view fails to account for the specificity of the revelation concerning the horns wherein the little horn overcomes three of the previous ten (Dan. 7:8▶, 24▶). One wonders how God would have to describe the literal number ten before commentators of Young’s ilk would consent to take the number at face value? A Midrash on Psalm 18:5 suggests the image has twelve toes, like the godless giants of old. “Likewise, when the

Messiah comes—may it be soon and in our own days—the children of Israel will not sing this song until the Messiah will have been reviled, of whom it is said *Thine enemies ... O Lord ... have reviled the footsteps of Thine anointed* (Ps. 89:52); will not sing it until by his hand there will have fallen that kingdom whose men have six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, these being men of wicked Rome, of which it is said *The toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay* (Dan. 2:42). . .” —Tom Huckel, *The Rabbinic Messiah* (Philadelphia, PA: Hananeel House, 1998), Dan. 2:42.

³⁴⁰ “The ten toes of the image in the second chapter have their correlatives in the ten horns of the fourth beast in the seventh chapter.” —Robert Anderson, *The Coming Prince*, 10th ed (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1894, 1957), 36.

“Daniel 7:24 specifically states that the ten horns that protrude from the fourth beast represent ‘ten kings’ (i.e., kingdoms or nations), and the ten toes of the statue may be assumed to signify the same.” —Miller, *Daniel*, 98. “At least four major Scripture passages make a contribution to this subject (Dan 2:31-35, 40-45; 7:7-8, 19-24; Rev 13:1-2; 17:3, 7, 12-16). These passages either directly or by implication prophesy a ten-kingdom confederation which will be an important aspect of the end-time political situation.” —Walvoord, *The Prophecy of the Ten-Nation Confederacy*, 99. “The ten horns answer to the ten toes . . .” —Nathaniel West, *The Thousand Years in both Testaments* (Fincastle, VA: Scripture Truth Book Co., n.d.), 210.

³⁴¹ Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, Dan. 2:41.

³⁴² Walvoord, *The Prophecy of the Ten-Nation Confederacy*, 102-103.

³⁴³ Clough maintains there is a problem in identifying the ten toes with the ten horns. “Now the problem with making the ten toes the ten kings is that compels you to say five of those final kings are going to come out of the eastern side and five are going to come out of the western side; you may be saying too much, the ten kings may come off of just the western side, we don’t know.” —Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 10.127. But this assumes that the two legs of the image represent the eastern and western parts of the Roman empire—something which neither the dream nor its interpretation affirm. See commentary on Daniel 2:33 and Daniel 2:1.

³⁴⁴ “Interestingly enough, ten great empires of the last 500 years have been the outgrowth of the Greco-Roman heritage and from nations once controlled or dominated by the Romans and their Germanic and Slavic successors. The *Spanish Empire* . . . the *Portuguese Empire* . . . the *Dutch Empire* . . . the *Belgian Empire* . . . the *French Empire* . . . the *German Empire* . . . the *Russian Empire* . . . the *Italian Empire* . . . the *British Empire* . . . In the 20th century, *America* acquired an *empire* in the form of foreign colonies, like the Philippines, and economically has built an empire on money and trade. But in the end times, 10 powerful nations, once part of the Roman Empire in Europe, are to arise, the 10 toes. . . this is the future.” —Combs, *Mysteries of the Book of Daniel*, 37. “By the toes of the feet he meant, mystically, the ten kings that rise out of that kingdom. . . the toes of the image turn out to be democracies . . .” —Hippolytus, “*Scholia on Daniel*,” in Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume V: Fathers of the Third Century: Hippolytus, Cyprian, Novatian, Appendix* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1886), 178. “While the Roman Empire, as a visible Empire, does not exist today, yet its laws, etc., are a controlling power among the nations, and the Empire in a visible form is to be revived, and in its revived and last form it will consist of ‘Ten Federated Kingdoms,’ represented by the ‘Ten Toes’ of the Image . . .” —Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:45. “The ten toes represent ten yet future kings. They cannot represent ten barbarous tribes which overthrew the Roman empire, because Dan. 7:24 specifies they must come from inside the empire, whereas the barbarous tribes came from outside the old Roman empire.” —Jerome Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), Dan. 2:43. “It would seem best to view this Roman empire as a continuous development from its form at the time of the first coming of Christ until its final form at the second coming of Christ. . . the problem is not so much the revival of the empire, as the recasting of the continuing sphere of power into its final ten-toed form.” —J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 320-321.

³⁴⁵ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10583.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, #10298.

³⁴⁷ Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, 13.158.

³⁴⁸ Since both the feet and the toes are said to be a mixture, it may be pressing the interpretation too far to conclude individual toes were either of clay or iron. “Or some of them of iron, and so were strong and powerful, as some of these kingdoms were; and some of clay, and so were weak and easily crushed, and did not stand long.” —Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, Dan. 2:41. It is probably best to see the iron/clay mixture as indicating that the feet and toes both are mixed—without trying to differentiate between individual strong and weak toes.

³⁴⁹ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10636.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁵¹ The NET translation is the only word-for-word translation I checked interpreting the phrase in this way. Curiously, there is no note in the NET translation commenting on this matter.

³⁵² Benware, *Daniel's Prophecy of Things to Come*, Dan. 2:41-43.

³⁵³ “Clay, earth, dust, are emblems of weakness, instability, etc.”—Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible - Daniel*, Dan. 2:45. with the result being, “that the statue was top-heavy, and its feet were too weak (with the intermixture of baked clay or tile) to support its ponderous weight.”—Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, s.v. “Weak Foundation.” “The last kingdom is a mix of metal with pottery and that is the base and provides an unstable foundation for the kingdom of man.”—Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, 11.136.

³⁵⁴ Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of John*, 26.

³⁵⁵ Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible - Daniel*, Dan. 2:33.

³⁵⁶ Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 2:43.

³⁵⁷ Newton gives additional historical background to his view concerning the ten toes in chapter V, *Of the Kingdoms represented by the feet of the Image composed of iron and clay*. [Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of John*, 33-46] He goes on to identify them as follows, “The Western Empire of the Romans, about the time that Rome was besieged and taken by the *Goths*, became broken into the following ten kingdoms: 1. The kingdom of the *Vandals* and *Alans* in *Spain* and *Africa*. 2. The kingdom of the *Suevians* in *Spain*. 3. The kingdom of the *Visigoths*. 4. The kingdom of the *Alans* in *Gallia*. 5. The kingdom of the *Burgundians*. 6. The kingdom of the *Franks*. 7. The kingdom of the *Britains*. 8. The kingdom of the *Hunns*. 9. The kingdom of the *Lombards*. 10. The kingdom of *Ravenna*.”—*Ibid.*, 47. Predictably, Newton proceeds to identify the eleventh horn uprooting three of the former ten horns (Dan. 7:8) as the Church of Rome. “With his mouth he gives laws to kings and nations as an Oracle; and pretends to Infallibility, and that his dictates are binding to the whole world . . .”—*Ibid.*, 75.

³⁵⁸ “The Roman Empire was marked by continuous weakness and ultimate division, so that when the hordes from central and northern Europe poured into the Roman Empire, at the end of the fourth, beginning of the fifth centuries, A.D., they destroyed Rome. . . . look at a map and [you will] see that nations like Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, and Holland, Belgium, Switzerland and Great Britain had their national origin in the disruption or division of the old Roman Empire.”—Pentecost, *Class Notes on Daniel*, *Dallas Theological Seminary*, 3.21.

³⁵⁹ Fausset, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:43.

³⁶⁰ “The lands of the Roman empire came to be dominated by Edom and Ishmael, represented by Christianity and Islam. Both—one as strong as iron, the other as weak as pottery—comprise the latter day ‘fourth kingdom.’ (*Abarbanel*).”—Scherman, *Tanach*, Dan. 2:41.

³⁶¹ Arthur Walkington Pink, *The Antichrist* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1999, 1923), s.v. “Israel and the Antichrist.”

³⁶² Constable, *Notes on Daniel*, 31.

³⁶³ “The metals represent monarchies, but the clay stands for democratic rule by the people. This is exactly what we behold in our day. There is a strong current towards democratic rule, the rule by the people, the exaltation of the people. Socialism and its kin, Anarchism, are looming up on all sides.”—Gaebelein, *The Prophet Daniel: A Key to the Visions and Prophecies of the Book of Daniel*, 31.

³⁶⁴ “Then (we have) the toes of clay and iron, to signify the democracies that were subsequently to rise, partitioned among the ten toes of the image, in which shall be iron mixed with clay.”—Hippolytus, *Scholia on Daniel*, Dan. 2:31.

³⁶⁵ “The rulers of the succeeding empires had their power more and more circumscribed; until in the last state of the Roman empire we find iron mixed with miry clay, or brittle pottery—speaking of an attempted union between imperialism and democracy.”—Ironsides, *Lectures on Daniel the Prophet*, 36-37.

³⁶⁶ “When the thirteen colonies were still a part of England, Professor Alexander Tyler wrote about the fall of the Athenian republic over a thousand years ago. He said: ‘A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves money from the public treasure. From that moment on the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most money from the public treasury, with the result that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy followed by a dictatorship. The average age of the world’s great civilizations has been two hundred years. These nations have progressed through the following sequence: from bondage to spiritual faith, from spiritual faith to great courage, from courage to liberty, from liberty to abundance, from abundance to selfishness, from selfishness to complacency, from complacency to apathy, from apathy to dependency, from dependency back to bondage.’ ”—Jeremiah, *The Handwriting on the Wall: Secrets from the Prophecies of Daniel*, 62.

³⁶⁷ “The nations of the earth should degenerate in political power until the clay of democracy, socialism, and anarchy should so weaken the nations that there would be no cohesion among them, and that the only salvation for a chaotic world would be the return of Christ, and the setting up of His Millennial Kingdom.”—Larkin, *The Book of Daniel*, s.v. “Introduction.”

³⁶⁸ “So instead of having a strong united empire as Rome was, you have a very weak political entity because here are all these separate nations exercising authority that came to them from Rome, competing with one another, warring against one another and so on.”—Pentecost, *Class Notes on Daniel, Dallas Theological Seminary*, 3.26. “The final form of the Gentile power is marked by a federation of that which is weak and that which is strong, autocracy and democracy, the iron and the clay.”—Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 319.

³⁶⁹ “Deterioration by admixture; the iron of the Roman *imperium* mixed with the clay of the popular will, fickle and easily moulded. This is precisely what has come to pass in the constitutional monarchies which, with the Republic of France and the despotism of Turkey, cover the sphere of ancient Roman rule.”—Scofield, *The Scofield Study Bible*, Dan. 2:41.

³⁷⁰ “The iron is commonly interpreted as imperialism and the clay or tile as democratic rule by the people.”—Unger, *Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1617.

³⁷¹ “By the iron he means the hard and strong imperial, and by the clay the weaker, more plastic, and popular, element in human governments, seeking vainly to combine and cohere in political unity; absolutism repelling popular freedom, and constitutionalism, and reversely the latter the former; mixed monarchies, where the popular will wars against the imperialism of crowns and defies the will of the crown; a state of political insecurity and instability.”—West, *Daniel’s Great Prophecy, The Eastern Question, The Kingdom*, 38-39.

³⁷² Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10752.

³⁷³ Clough takes the implied subject, *they*, to be non-specific. “In the Aramaic when you want to express a passive voice you use a plural verb in the active plus a ‘they.’ We do this in our English, ‘they said,’ or ‘I wonder what they’re going to do.’ Now do you really have somebody in mind when you use the word ‘they’re going to do something?’ Who’s ‘they’? What you really mean is it’s going to be done, normally in English usage. It’s the same in the Aramaic; ‘they are going to mingle themselves’ isn’t [with reference to] a particular people involved. . . . it’s just saying it’s going to be done.”—Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 9.121. Dean takes the *they* to be the people within the fourth kingdom. “Now what does it mean that ‘they will combine with one another in the seed of men?’ This is the key to understanding what it meant earlier by inferior. What does it mean by combine with one another and the seed of men? The ‘they’ doesn’t refer to the toes, it refers to the people in the kingdom.”—Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, 13.159.

³⁷⁴ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10240.

³⁷⁵ Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 10.125.

³⁷⁶ Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 2:41.

³⁷⁷ Howe, *Daniel in the Preterist’s Den*, 116.

³⁷⁸ Unger, *Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1617.

³⁷⁹ Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible - Daniel*, Dan. 2:45.

³⁸⁰ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10158.

³⁸¹ “If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one quarter of one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of star dust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly, the Jew ought hardly to be heard of; but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk. His contributions to the world’s list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine and abstruse learning are also way out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. . . . The Egyptian, the Babylonians, and the Persians rose, filled the planet with sound and splendour, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they were gone; . . . The Jew saw them all, survived them all, and is now what he always was. . . . All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality? [Mark Twain]”—Elwood McQuaid, ed., *Israel My Glory* (Westville, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, July/June 2000), 25. “I remember how the materialist interpretation of history, when I attempted in my youth to verify it by applying it to the destinies of the people, broke down in the case of the Jews, where destiny seemed absolutely inexplicable from the materialistic standpoint. . . . According to the materialistic . . . criterion, this people ought long ago to have perished. Its survival is a mysterious and wonderful phenomenon demonstrating that the life of this people is governed by a special predetermination, transcending the processes of adaptation expounded by the materialistic interpretation of history. The survival of the Jews . . . their endurance under absolutely peculiar conditions and the fateful role played by them in history; all these point to the peculiar and mysterious foundations of their destiny.”—Nicholas Berdyaev, *The Meaning of History* (London, England: Centenary Press, 1936), 86-87, cited in—Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1989), 839-840. “Though Israel has been ‘scattered,’ Israel has not been destroyed. For eighteen hundred years the Jews have continued a separate people, without a king, without a land, without a territory, but never lost, never absorbed among other nations. They have been often trampled under foot, but never shaken from the faith of their fathers. They have been often persecuted but never destroyed. At this very moment they are as distinct and peculiar a people as any people upon earth, an unanswerable

argument in the way of the infidel, a puzzling difficulty in the way of politicians, a standing lesson to all the world. Romans, Danes, Saxons, Normans, Belgians, French and Germans have all in turn settled on English soil. All have in turn lost their national distinctiveness. All have in turn become part and parcel of the English nation, after the lapse of a few hundred years. But it has never been so with the Jews. Dispersed as they are, there is a principle of cohesion among them which no circumstances have been able to melt. Scattered as they are, there is a national vitality among them which is stronger than that of any nation on earth. Go where you will, you will always find them. Settle where you please, in hot countries or in cold, you will find the Jews. But go where you will, and settle where you please, this wonderful people is always the same. Jews are always the Jews. Three thousand years ago Balaam said, 'The people shall dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations.' Eighteen hundred years ago our Lord said, 'This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.' We see these words made good before our eyes (Num. 23:9; Luke 21:32). [J. C. Ryle, *Coming Events and Present Duties, and Prophecy* (1867)]" —Richard L. Mayhue, "Editorial," in Richard L. Mayhue, ed., *The Master's Seminary Journal*, vol. 19 no. 1 (Sun Valley, CA: The Master's Seminary, Spring 2008), 4-5. "Since Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, the 'great image' of Gentile power, and 'a night vision revealed the secret to Daniel' 2429 years have winged their flight, and Israel still abides, alone, and uncommingled, subject still to the foreign yoke, their land still trodden down by the Gentiles." —West, *The Thousand Years in both Testaments*, 123.

³⁸² However, as we noted previously, the iron and clay mix spans both the feet and toes.

³⁸³ Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, 11.163.

³⁸⁴ "The iron may possibly represent the influence of the old Roman culture and tradition, and the pottery may represent the inherent weakness in a socialist society based on relativism in morality and philosophy. Out of this mixture of iron and clay come weakness and confusion, pointing to the approaching day of doom. Within the scope of v.43 are disunity, class struggle, and even civil war, resulting from the failure of a hopelessly divided society to achieve an integrated world-order. The iron and pottery may coexist, but they cannot combine into a strong and durable world-order." —Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:43.

³⁸⁵ "The composition of the kingdom has reference to the culture of the kingdom, and it's going to be characteristic that in the fourth kingdom, when men try to engineer their kingly unity, remember the kingdom of man, unity in God's world for protection, for security, we are going to try to engineer unity by force because each one of these metals increases in force, by force but the problem is that the culture itself cannot cohere, we've got too many diverse elements in the culture and it just won't adhere, it won't stick together." —Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 9.121-122.

³⁸⁶ Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, 11.163.

³⁸⁷ "The Romans shall mix with people of other and many nations that shall come in among them, and unite in setting up kingdoms; or these kingdoms set up shall intermarry with each other, in order to strengthen their alliances, and support their interests: thus France, Spain, Portugal, and other nations; those of the royal families marry with each other, with such views . . . and yet these ties of marriage and of blood shall not cause them to cleave to and abide by one another; but ambition and worldly interests will engage them to take part with each other's enemies, or to go to war with one another, to the weakening and hurting each other; and thus the potsherds of the earth will dash one another to pieces; and those who are more powerful, like the iron, will trample the weaker like miry clay under their feet." —Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, Dan. 2:43.

³⁸⁸ "These ten who divided out or originated through the division of the old Roman Empire will attempt to reunite themselves according to the plans of men. . . . How could you summarize European history? The attempt by one conqueror after another to reunite the old Roman Empire, to bring under his control what had originally been controlled by Rome. Go back to Charlemagne, the year 800; he traveled to Rome to have himself crowned by the Pope as emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. What was his goal? To gain political power over all the nations that some 300 years before had emerged out of the old Roman Empire. He didn't succeed. Go on down through history. What was Napoleon's goal? To reunite all those nations under his authority. He had his Waterloo. Bismarck tried it. Kaiser tried it in World War I, Hitler in World War II. So the history of Europe has been the history of attempt after attempt to reunite what had divided itself out of the old Roman Empire. . . . what is the common market, or what's now known as the EEC, European Economic Community, trying to do? Unite the nations that originally merged out of the old Roman Empire in common cause, economically, politically, judicially, militarily, but that's not a new thing, it's been going on since Charlemagne's time and that's led me to the interpretation in verse 43 that these emerging nations will not go out of existence, they will continue to exist but because of division they are essentially weak and to cope with the inherent weakness there will be attempt after attempt to reunite what had been fractured through the fall of Rome, but they will not adhere together. . . . there will be repeated attempts at reunion, and if I can just anticipate, that attempt at reunion will not be realized until antichrist comes." —Pentecost, *Class Notes on Daniel*, Dallas Theological Seminary, 3.21-22.

³⁸⁹ "Different groups of people would combine with one another to form the final stage of the empire, but they would not adhere completely to one another, just as iron and clay do not combine completely with each other. It would appear, then,

that the final stage of the Roman Empire would consist of a confederation of several nations. These nations would combine forces for the sake of military strength, but they would not combine to the extent of losing their national identities and distinctives. Inasmuch as the image of the dream was human in form, it would have had ten toes. This indicated that the final stage of the Roman Empire would consist of a ten nation confederation.”—Showers, *The Most High God: Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 2:43.

³⁹⁰ “The final form of the kingdom will include diverse elements whether this refers to race, political idealism, or sectional interests; and this will prevent the final form of the kingdom from having a real unity. This is, of course, borne out by the fact that the world empire at the end of the age breaks up into a gigantic civil war in which forces from the south, east, and north contend with the ruler of the Mediterranean for supremacy, as Daniel himself portrays in Daniel 11:36-45.”—Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 2:43.

³⁹¹ “The frequent mention of the clay mixed with the later stages of the iron kingdom . . . points to political disintegration and decay.”—Whitcomb, *Daniel*, 49.

³⁹² McGee, *Thru The Bible Commentary*, Dan. 2:43.

³⁹³ “Daniel interprets; v. 44: ‘In the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.’ Fulfillment . . . the beginnings of Christ’s kingdom, during the Roman era; cf. Mark 1:15, ‘the kingdom of God, lit., has come near.’ . . . Fairbairn appropriately cautions, ‘The moment of the bruising [*sic*] is not necessarily, or even probably, the moment of the **formation of the stone**; and a period seems to lie there of indefinite lengths—the period of the rise and progress of Christianity.’ But **eventually**, as Daniel explains in v. 44, ‘It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms.’ ” [emphasis added]—J. Barton Payne, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1973, 1996), 375.

³⁹⁴ “The correct interpretation has been set for by Allis, ‘. . . the words “in the days of those kings” would refer most naturally to the four kingdoms or kings represented by the image. This interpretation is clearly involved in the symbolism of the image (Dan. 2:45) and is permissible because, while distinct, these four kingdoms were also in a sense one. Medo-Persia conquered and incorporated Babylon. Greece did the same with Medo-Persia. And while Rome never conquered all of Alexander’s empire, she did conquer much of it and the extent of the Roman Empire was far greater and more world-wide than any of the others. . . . So we may say that it was in the period of those four empires as together representing Gentile world dominion but in the days of the last of the four that the kingdom of Messiah was set up.’ ”—Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, Dan. 2:44.

³⁹⁵ Fausset, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:44.

³⁹⁶ “Not of the Babylonian, Persian, and Grecian kings; nor, indeed, of the old Roman kings, or emperors; but in the days of these ten kings, or kingdoms, into which the Roman empire is divided, signified by the ten toes, of different power and strength.”—Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, Dan. 2:44.

³⁹⁷ “Daniel says, ‘In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom’; that is, in the days of the ten kings, that kingdom is to be established.”—Ironside, *Lectures on Daniel the Prophet*, 38.

³⁹⁸ “The time of those kings may refer to the four empires or, more likely, it refers to the time of the 10 toes (Dan. 2:42) since the first four kingdoms were not in existence at the same time as apparently the toes will be.”—Pentecost, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:44.

³⁹⁹ “the time of this world crisis is ‘hereafter,’ even ‘in the days of those kings,’ the toes, therefore, in the last days of the ‘kings’ who are the heads of the separate and contemporaneous ‘kingdoms’ into which the fourth, or Roman, empire will be divided.”—West, *Daniel’s Great Prophecy, The Eastern Question, The Kingdom*, 38.

⁴⁰⁰ Clough, *Lessons on Daniel*, 10.126.

⁴⁰¹ Howe, *Daniel in the Preterist’s Den*, 105.

⁴⁰² Darby, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible: Ezra to Malachi*, 462.

⁴⁰³ “From information in the text, a confederation of kings (kingdoms) will be ruling at the time Christ sets up his kingdom. No such coalition of kings was ruling the Roman Empire at Christ’s first coming.”—Miller, *Daniel*, 101. “Since the ten kings come from the fourth kingdom (i.e., Rome; Dan 7:24), some interpreters have sought the fulfillment of the ten toes (and ten horns) in the historic Roman Empire. This is an exercise in futility, because the details of Daniel’s prophecy do not match what actually occurred in history.”—Kenneth L. Barker, “Premillennialism in the Book of Daniel,” in Richard L. Mayhue, ed., *The Master’s Seminary Journal*, vol. 4 no. 1 (Sun Valley, CA: The Master’s Seminary, Spring 1993), 29.

⁴⁰⁴ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *The Kingdom in History and Prophecy* (Chicago, IL: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1936), 53-54.

⁴⁰⁵ Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1974), 320.

- ⁴⁰⁶ The many prophecies in the OT indicating Jesus was destined for rejection and the cross reflect God's foreknowledge that Israel *would* reject their King. Similarly, the contents of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2▶) and Daniel's vision (Daniel 7▶) reflect God's knowledge that the kingdom would not come at the first advent. Nevertheless, God's foreordained purpose in the crucifixion (Acts 4:27-28) did not relieve the Jews of their responsibility of responding positively to the *bona fide* offer of the kingdom (Acts 2:22-23).
- ⁴⁰⁷ Benware, *Daniel's Prophecy of Things to Come*, Dan. 2:40.
- ⁴⁰⁸ Walvoord, *Revival of Rome*, 321-322.
- ⁴⁰⁹ Anderson, *The Coming Prince*, 33.
- ⁴¹⁰ Political movements since Daniel's time have occasionally misinterpreted themselves as bringing in this eternal kingdom, "The Fifth Monarchists, led by Major-Generals Overton and Harrison but mainly drawn from London labourers, servants and journeymen, wanted the adoption of the Law of Moses in preparation for the Fifth Universal Monarchy. This, foretold by the prophet Daniel, they expected to begin in 1656, inaugurating the thousand-year rule of the Saints (themselves)." — Robert Tombs, *The English and Their History* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 242.
- ⁴¹¹ Young is typical of those who reject the possibility the eternal kingdom begins with a period of 1,000 years. "The kingdom of God is of Divine *origin* and *eternal duration*. For this reason, it cannot be the millennium, which is but 1000 years in length." — Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, Dan. 2:44. These interpreters overlook Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 which indicates a sequence which matches Revelation 20▶: (1) rule is initially under Jesus when all competing rule, authority, and power are abolished; (2) death is the last enemy which is abolished; (3) ultimate authority is handed over to the Father.
- ⁴¹² Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10697.
- ⁴¹³ Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, Dan. 2:44.
- ⁴¹⁴ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10508.
- ⁴¹⁵ West, *Daniel's Great Prophecy, The Eastern Question, The Kingdom*, 40-41.
- ⁴¹⁶ Larkin, *Dispensational Truth*, 67.
- ⁴¹⁷ Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible - Daniel*, Dan. 2:45.
- ⁴¹⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴¹⁹ Passages such as Ps. 110 must be spiritualized in order to deny what is plainly taught, "He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill *the places* with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries" (Ps. 110:6).
- ⁴²⁰ Barnes is typical of those who spiritualize the throne of David in an attempt to find fulfillment in the modern period of the Church. "Eighteen hundred years have now passed away - a period sufficiently long to test the question whether it can be destroyed by force and violence; by argument and ridicule. The experiment has been fairly made, and if it were possible that it should be destroyed by external force, it would have been done." — Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 2:45.
- ⁴²¹ Ready examples of godless laws include: the normalization and legal protection of adulterous and homosexual behavior and extending legal protection and governmental funding for the murder of the unborn.
- ⁴²² Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1620.
- ⁴²³ McGee, *Thru The Bible Commentary*, Dan. 2:43.
- ⁴²⁴ Whitcomb, *Daniel*, 47.
- ⁴²⁵ Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 2:44.
- ⁴²⁶ NASU, NET, NIV84, TNK.
- ⁴²⁷ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10041.
- ⁴²⁸ "Dan. has delivered God's interpretation, not his own; therefore the dream and its explication are true and reliable, in contrast to 'the lying word' the king feared from the mouth of the adepts, v.9." — Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 180.
- ⁴²⁹ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10504.
- ⁴³⁰ Hippolytus, *Scholia on Daniel*, Dan. 2:47.
- ⁴³¹ Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, Dan. 2:46.
- ⁴³² Archer, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:46.
- ⁴³³ Fausset, *The Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:46.
- ⁴³⁴ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10482.
- ⁴³⁵ Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 11.331-333.

- ⁴³⁶ Steinmann, *Daniel*, 109.
- ⁴³⁷ Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 2:47.
- ⁴³⁸ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10437.
- ⁴³⁹ Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, 717.
- ⁴⁴⁰ *Birth of Jesus with visiting Magi*. Image courtesy of Heinrich Hofmann, 1824-1911. This image is in the public domain.
- ⁴⁴¹ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #1406.
- ⁴⁴² “It may well be that Daniel’s promotion (Dan. 2:46-47) came after he had finished his schooling, for Dan. 1:18 suggests this was the case.”—Mills, *Daniel: A Study Guide to the Book of Daniel*, Dan. 2:46.
- ⁴⁴³ “Now here he’s just about to graduate from his training school, he is just on the verge and we studied when we looked at the chronology at the beginning of the chapter, he hasn’t graduated yet, this is in the spring, he doesn’t graduate for a couple of months but he’s already being promoted and he is made the “ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon.”—Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, 11.170.
- ⁴⁴⁴ “The Rabbis were often quite critical of Daniel, however, for enjoying such a positive relationship with the tyrant who destroyed the first Temple.”—Berlin, *The Jewish Study Bible*, 1646.
- ⁴⁴⁵ Benware, *Daniel’s Prophecy of Things to Come*, Dan. 2:46-49.
- ⁴⁴⁶ Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Aramaic (Old Testament)*, #10505.
- ⁴⁴⁷ Steinmann, *Daniel*, 110.
- ⁴⁴⁸ “These different classes of the priests and the learned are comprehended, Dan. 2:12ff., under the general designation of חֲכִימֵי [ḥakkîmîn] (cf. also Isa. 44:25, Jer. 50:35), and they formed a σύστημα [systēma], i.e., collegium (Diod. Sic. ii. 31), under a president (רַב סֻגְנִין [rab siḡnîn], Dan. 2:48), who occupied a high place in the state; see at Dan 2:48.”—Keil, *Daniel*, Dan. 2:2.
- ⁴⁴⁹ Robert Dick Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel* (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam’s & Sons, The Knickerbocker Press, 1971), 382-383.
- ⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 385-386, 388.
- ⁴⁵¹ Gerhard Dellling, “Magos,” in Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromily, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-c1976), 4:358.
- ⁴⁵² This does not deny the importance of the supernatural star appearing at the appropriate time and guiding them to the child (Num. 24:17; Mat. 2:2-10).
- ⁴⁵³ Calvin, *Commentary on The Prophet Daniel*, Dan. 2:49.
- ⁴⁵⁴ Brown, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*.
- ⁴⁵⁵ Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, Dan. 2:48.
- ⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Dan. 2:49.
- ⁴⁵⁷ Donald McNeeley, “City Gates: Not Just a Defensive Measure,” in *Bible and Spade*, vol. 25 no. 2 (Landisville, PA: Associates for Biblical Research, Spring 2012), 39, 41, 43.
- ⁴⁵⁸ This image was produced by www.spiritandtruth.org and is hereby placed in the public domain.
- ⁴⁵⁹ Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, 7.80.
- ⁴⁶⁰ “The future is not yet fixed. Man, so anxious to know what this is to be, finds himself in respect to it peculiarly unendowed. In relation to the past, he is endowed with the faculty of ‘memory,’ but with nothing corresponding to this pertaining to ‘the future.’ He can treasure up what has occurred, but he cannot in like manner make the future pass before his mind, that he may become wise by knowing what will take place in far distant times. There can be no doubt that God could have endowed the mind with one faculty as well as the other - for he has it himself - but there were obvious reasons why it should not be done. . . . God has bounded the limits of human investigation in this respect. Among those methods of attempting to penetrate the future, and of laying open its deep mysteries, may be noticed the following: Astrology . . . Necromancy . . . Divination . . . Pagan Oracles . . . Such were some of the ways by which it was supposed that the future might be penetrated by man, and its secrets disclosed. By allowing man to make trial of these methods, and to pursue them through a period of several thousand years, until he himself saw that they were fruitless, God was preparing the race to feel the necessity of direct communications from himself, and to welcome the true revelations which he would make respecting things to come.”—Barnes, *Notes on the Bible*, Dan. 2:49.
- ⁴⁶¹ Dean, *Lessons on Daniel*, s.v. “Meaning of Life.”
- ⁴⁶² Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, Dan. 2:49.

⁴⁶³ [Barnes](#), *Notes on the Bible*, [Dan. 2:49](#).

⁴⁶⁴ [Benware](#), *Daniel's Prophecy of Things to Come*, [74](#).



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