

After the Babylonians conquered a land, they usually took the most valuable people back to Babylon and left the poor behind to take whatever they wanted and to live peacefully. When Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, conquered Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were among those brought back to Babylon. The latter three are more commonly known by their Babylonian names Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

These young men were trained in Babylon's academic programs so they could effectively serve the king. In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, he had a dream which greatly disturbed him. However, he did not understand the significance of the dream. Therefore, he commanded the magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and Chaldeans to provide him with the interpretation. So intense was his desire to know, that he threatened to kill all the wise men unless he received a satisfactory answer. Not one, or all working together, could give the interpretation because the dream came from God Who would not tell these ungodly men.

When Daniel found out about the king's command to kill all the wise men, which included Daniel and his three companions, he and his companions turned to God in prayer. The secret was revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. After praising God, Daniel was ushered into the king's presence. He told him his dream and the interpretation thereof. Ironically, this pagan king received a profound, prophetic message which spanned the time of Nebuchadnezzar until Jesus Christ's return to earth which is still future. For Nebuchadnezzar the prophesy about himself was the reality in his present, while everything else was future.

Today as we read Daniel, most of the prophetic message has already come to pass which ensures us the rest will also happen. This was Nebuchadnezzar's dream:

Daniel 2:31-35

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness *was* excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof *was* terrible. This image's head *was* of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,

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

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

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

The great image he saw was that of a man. The head was fine gold, the breast and arms silver, his belly and thighs were brass, legs iron, and the feet iron with part clay. Starting with the head, the value of the parts decreases from gold all the way to clay and iron.

Daniel tells him that "we," God and Daniel, will provide the interpretation.

Verse 36

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

The head of gold represents Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian kingdom. All the kingdoms of men after him were inferior. His was the most powerful. As we progress, it is significant to note that the rule of these kingdoms all include dominion over Israel.

Verses 37 and 38

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

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

Each body part represents a kingdom. The breast and arms of silver are the kingdom which immediately follows the Babylonian Empire. This world power was the Medo-Persian Empire which was inferior to Babylonian rule. Chapter 6 of Daniel reveals the beginning of this empire's rule over Babylon including

Israel.

Verse 39

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

The belly and thighs of brass represent Greece and Macedonia under Alexander the Great, who conquered the Medo-Persian Empire in 334-330 B.C. Alexander the Great is alluded to in Daniel 8:21, a century before he was born.

The fourth kingdom, the legs of iron, represented Rome which conquered the Greeks in 63 B.C.

Verse 40

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

The Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman Empires are all historic facts. Twenty-five centuries ago, God revealed all this information, and it has all come to pass. We have no reason to doubt the rest of the prophetic message is happening and will happen. Since the fall of the Roman Empire, there has not been a one world power, rather many nations, some strong, some weak. The feet and toes may represent the world since Rome including now.

Verses 41-43

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

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

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

Some biblical students believe the ten toes may represent the ten kings spoken of in Revelation 17:12. As we are studying the book of Daniel, my aim is to help you see the prophecy on which many people are focused because of the similarities related to our time,

the return of Christ, and the end of the world. The Scriptures which are clear, I will state as fact. For those which are unclear, I will present the most logical, biblical viewpoints of which I am aware. Each of us must ask God to help us understand that which He wants us to know regarding this important subject.

The prophesies in Daniel are definitely pointing to the end of the world. Current events in the heavens and earth are leading many people to believe that the prophesies of Daniel are close to being fulfilled. I am not sure. I am certain God wants all of us to understand that which we can and to be eagerly anticipating Christ's return.

As we progress in our study, you will marvel at the corresponding of the revelation in Daniel with our times. Whether we are close to the end times or not, no one knows for sure. We can all be certain we are in God's time chart, and the following is absolutely certain to come to pass. The rule of man on earth will come to an end because God is going to set up His Kingdom to rule there.

Verses 44 and 45

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

The world always has and still is moving according to God's purposes and toward His specified ends. Christ is coming back!