

PROPHECY UNCUT

On the Brink of Eternity

INTRODUCTION

In 605 B.C. the Babylonian armies under king Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem. Daniel and his three friends were among numerous captives that were taken back to Babylon to be trained in the Babylonian schools for service in the king's court.

While in the service of King Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel had opportunity to explain the meaning of a mysterious dream, which the king dreamt. The dream outlined the rise and fall of various nations that would somehow play a part in the unfolding of God's plan of salvation for the human race.

WHAT WAS SEEN IN KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM?

Daniel 2:31-36

In Daniel 2 King Nebuchadnezzar is given a dream of a great statue that stands upon the Earth. This statue was a composite of different types of metals.

The head was made of gold, the chest and arms were made of silver, the belly and thighs were made of bronze, the two legs were made of iron, while the feet were made partly of iron and partly of clay.

The next thing the king saw was a rock hurtling through space from some unknown direction (not of human origin). The rock struck the image on the feet and pulverized the entire image. The dust, from what used to be a mighty image, was blown away while the rock filled the entire Earth (Dan 2:31-36).

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM?

The statue is a vertical timeline. It depicts the rise and fall of various empires starting in the time of Daniel & King Nebuchadnezzar, progressing all the way through to the establishment of God's kingdom upon Earth.

Daniel 2:37-38

Babylon – Head of Gold

The head of gold represented the civilization of Babylon. That is to say, the prophetic timeline for this prophecy begins in the time of Daniel the prophet and king Nebuchadnezzar. Babylon was the dominant power in the then known world from 605 BC until 539 BC (Dan 2:37-38).

Daniel 2:39

Medo-Persia – Chest & Arms of Silver

Just as it was foretold in the prophecy, Babylon would not last forever. It would be succeeded by a new and distinct kingdom. The history books are unmistakable in their identification of which power eventually supplanted Babylon. Medo-Persia is the power represented by the chest and arms of silver. They reigned from 539 BC until 331 BC



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when they were defeated by the Greeks at the battle of Arbela (Dan 2:39).

Daniel 2:39

Greece – Belly & Thighs of Bronze

The third kingdom that is mentioned in Daniel 2:39, represented by the belly and thighs of bronze, is also clearly identified through a study of history. The mighty Grecian kingdom established by the military genius of its young king, Alexander the Great, dominated from 331 BC until 168 BC when it too was overpowered by yet a fourth kingdom (Dan 2:39).

Daniel 2:40

Rome – Legs of Iron

The fourth kingdom, represented by the legs of iron, would historically end up being the geographically largest and chronologically longest lasting kingdom out of the four world empires foretold in Daniel 2. Historical records tell us that Rome dominated the world of politics and military conquest from 168 BC until 476 AD. It was during Rome's reign that Jesus was born as a baby in Bethlehem. More importantly it was through Roman rulership and instrumentality that Jesus was finally crucified (Dan 2:40).

Daniel 2:41-43; Isaiah 64:8; Jeremiah 18:6

Divided Europe – Feet & Toes Partly of Iron and Partly of Clay

The imagery of the feet partly of iron and partly of clay has at least three complimentary, symbolic significances. The first two are clearly stated in Daniel's explanation of the dream to King Nebuchadnezzar. Firstly, just as iron is strong and clay is weak so too whatever succeeds the Roman Empire would have a strong and a weak element (Dan 2:42). Secondly, in the same way that iron and clay do not mix together, so too whatever would succeed the Roman Empire would be a fragmented power without any hope of future reunion (Dan 2:43).

In other words, at this point in the vision the astute reader will recognize that the symbolism indicates that a fundamental change would take place with regard to the succession of empires. In short, the 'age of the empires' would cease!

Notice that up until this point in the vision there has been a clean break between the various metal types in the statue - indicating clear and definite changes in world rulers (one empire destroys and replaces the one before it), from this point going forward there would be no further world empires. Instead of world empires, there would be a dividing of the final empire, Rome, into fragmented parts. The ten toes of the image (as suggested by the fact that the image is clearly



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stated to be in the form of a man) would suggest ten smaller kingdom divisions flowing out of the fall of the Roman empire. In addition to this, the fact that in the vision the iron does not completely cease but continues down into the feet of clay would seem to indicate that some element of Rome would continue.

The third symbolic significance pertaining to the feet partly of iron and partly of clay is not overtly stated. Rather, it is hinted at by the prophetic symbol of potter's clay. When one consults the writings of Isaiah and Jeremiah it becomes evident that the motif of the Potter and his clay is used to illustrate the relationship between God and his people (Is 64:8; Jer 18:6). In other words, coming back to Daniel 2's vision, the potter's clay brings in a spiritual or religious dimension to that which succeeds the Roman Empire.

Therefore the imagery of the iron mixing with the clay may very well tie together the concept of some sort of union forming between political rulership and spiritual rulership.

In the light of this threefold meaning pertaining to the symbolism of the iron-clay mixture, the feet in the vision of Daniel 2 represent a conquered and divided Roman Empire that would never be reunited and which would be characterised by an imbalance of power resulting in certain of those divisions being stronger than others. In addition to this there would develop a strong spiritual component that would be blended with the system of political governance.

Historically, our present-day divisions of Europe were birthed out of the collapse of the Roman Empire. Many attempts have been made over the years to reunite Europe to its former Roman glory. Some of these attempts have been by way of military conquest. Others have been by intermarriage of royal families, producing political unions. More recently the attempt to unify Europe seems to be along the lines of financial unity in the form of the euro currency and the Eurozone. However, no matter the approach, nothing has succeeded and nothing will succeed according to the prophecy of Daniel 2.

We are today living toward the end of the period symbolized by the feet partly of iron and partly of clay. Everything in this vision of Daniel 2 has been fulfilled as predicted except for one final phase of the vision.

Daniel 2:44-45

Universal Kingdom of God - Stone cut out without hands

According to the final symbol in the prophetic outline, God would bring to an end all earthly political systems and powers by the establishment of his own kingdom (Dan 2:44-45). Indeed, God will



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have the final say in human history.

Although this phase of the vision has not yet been fulfilled, the fact that every other aspect of the vision has been fulfilled on time and in a precise way should give the student of Daniel 2 confidence in the fact that God's kingdom will be established in the not too distant future. This is why verse 44 says, "in the days of these kings", referring to the time period of a divided Europe, "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed..."

Elsewhere in the Bible this great event is referred to as the second coming of Jesus. Having already come to Earth once as humanity's Servant and Saviour to establish the Kingdom of grace, Jesus will again return to establish His kingdom of glory and to eradicate all injustice, sin and human failure. This is very good news!

In summary, it seems that Nebuchadnezzar's image represents a timeline of Earth's political and military history as it relates to God's people and salvation history. The nations that are symbolically portrayed in the vision are those nations that had a direct bearing upon the people of God and upon the unfolding of the plan of salvation for humanity. The culmination of the vision is the good news of the return of Jesus and His replacement of all human civilizations and governments with His own Kingdom.

SUMMARY & APPEAL

Humanity stands upon the brink of a tremendous Divine intervention in human history. According to the prophecy of Daniel 2 the only unfulfilled event in the divine calendar is the establishment of the kingdom of God.

Have you transferred your citizenship from Earth to heaven? It's as simple as asking Jesus to be your personal Saviour. His forgiveness and grace is sufficient to ensure your place in His eternal kingdom.



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Works Cited

There are no sources in the current document.

