

## THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Daniel 2:29-45 | Session 6 | B.C. 603

Session 5 ended at a somewhat suspenseful point in the narrative (2:28). Daniel was about to reveal King Nebuchadnezzar's dream to him: ***Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these...***

In verse 28, we received new information about Nebuchadnezzar's forgotten dream: it would concern the ***latter days***. The phrase, ***latter days***, is used 12 times in the O.T. and refers to the period that begins after the rapture and after the dispensation of grace in which we live. The theological term used for a study of the ***latter days*** is eschatology. We often call this latter-day period the seven-year Tribulation. In session two of our Revelation study, we looked at examples in Scripture where the seven-year Tribulation is referred to by various names in both the Old and New Testaments.

Let's look at the latter-day dream of Nebuchadnezzar and its interpretation.

Verse 29, 30—

**Secrets...**, something that was hidden or concealed and is revealed. This secret contained in the dream was revealed to Daniel not necessarily because he had more wisdom than anyone else; God revealed it to Daniel because of his God-given spiritual discernment (1:17). The king was surrounded by wise men, magicians, and astrologers, and yet God would use a 17-year-old boy to make the **interpretation known to the king...** Something all the wise men could not do. The apostle Paul wrote, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Corinthians 1:25). This is not saying God is foolish; rather, those who possess worldly wisdom consider God's wisdom foolish. Don't ever underestimate how God might use you. Preach Christ crucified. It is that message which contains the *power of God and the wisdom of God*. (1 Corinthians 1:23,24).

### A TERRIBLE IMAGE.

Verse 31—

**A great image...stood before thee...the form thereof was terrible.** Whatever this image was, while not grotesque, it appeared to be something to fear. It was **great, bright, excellent, and terrible** simultaneously. Although Nebuchadnezzar could not remember the dream, it had troubled him greatly and caused him to lose sleep (2:1). It was an image of ungodliness. In one sense, this image, as we will see, was beautiful to look at, but as Satan the deceiver always does, he can transform himself into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). Satan will always make evil look good for a season. Later, we will see, in chapter seven, Daniel has a vision that will be interpreted in much the same way as this vision (both dreams regarding the Times of the Gentiles, see below), but Daniel's image in his vision will be about dreadful beasts. Whereas in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar (from his ungodly perspective), he

sees the vision as *fearful yet beautiful*, in Daniel's dream in chapter 7 (from Daniel's godly perspective), it is all *terrible with no beauty*.

#### THE IMAGE DESCRIBED.

Verses 32,33—

**Head was fine gold; breast and arms silver; belly and thighs brass; legs iron; feet part iron and part clay.** The image was made up of metals and clay that went from valuable in the head (gold) to worthless in the feet and toes (iron and clay mixed).

Verse 34—

As the king **sawest** (or beheld) the *frightening* image that had disturbed him, another image appeared; it was a **stone cut out** (presumably out of a mountain, vs. 45) and not by human **hands**. The stone struck the image **upon his feet of iron and clay** and broke **them to pieces**.

Verse 35, 36—

As the stone struck the feet, the entire image of **iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold** were pulverized into dust and blown away, never to be found again. **And the stone...became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.**

**This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.** Notice the pronoun **we**; Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are present. Perhaps each had a part in the interpretation.

#### THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES.

We will find as we look at the interpretation given by Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah that the image represents various kingdoms of the world that will rule over the Jews during the *Times of the Gentiles*; a phrase that Jesus used in Luke 21:24. The Times of the Gentiles is a period in which Jerusalem has no king reigning from David's throne (2 Samuel 7:13,16), and in which they would be *trodden down, trampled*, and controlled by Gentiles. During the Times of the Gentiles, God's glory cannot be found in Israel<sup>1</sup>, and *The Times of the Gentiles* continue even to this day.

### The Times of the Gentiles

*"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the **times of the Gentiles** be fulfilled."*

Luke 21:24

The period of time when Jerusalem will be controlled (literally trodden down; trample or crush with feet). The Times of the Gentiles began with the Babylonian Captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, when the *glory of the Lord* departed from Jerusalem. The Times of the Gentiles continues to this day. God's glory will not be seen again in Jerusalem until The Lord Jesus Christ returns in the *glory of His power*.

<sup>1</sup> (The Glory of the Lord descended on Jerusalem, 1004 B.C., 1 Kings 8:10,11; The Glory of the Lord departed Jerusalem, 594 B.C., Ezekiel 11:22,23)

The dream reveals that period *and, more importantly, what will finally bring the Times of the Gentiles to an end.*

#### THE DREAM IS INTERPRETED.

Verses 37-38—

First comes praise for the **king** from Haniah<sup>2</sup> in whom he says, you king **art a king of kings** (notice Nebuchadnezzar is described as **a king of kings**, *not* The King of kings; that title is reserved for Jesus Christ, the Son of God). The God of heaven has given thee a kingdom, power, **strength, and glory**. The interpretation goes on to explain to the king, **whersoever the children of men dwell...God hath made thee ruler over all**. But, although it covered major civilizations, his kingdom was not over all men. And yet, the interpretation goes on to say **Thou art this head of gold**. Could it be that Nebuchadnezzar was the representative head of all Satanic evil during the Times of the Gentiles?<sup>3</sup>

Verse 39—

Mishael continues the second and third parts of the interpretation. **After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee**, this is shown to have happened in Daniel 5:30-31. Belshazzar, king after his *grandfather* Nebuchadnezzar (who died in 562 B.C.), lost the kingdom to Darius the *Median* (of the Medes and Persian empire). After that, **another third kingdom of brass will rule over all the earth**. In 336 B.C. Alexander the Great became king of the ancient Greek kingdom of Macedon. By age thirty, Alexander the Great had created one of the largest empires in history, stretching from Greece to northwestern India.

Verses 40-43—

Azariah steps forward to describe the fourth part of the interpretation. The legs of **iron**. The Roman Empire is the most popular interpretation of the **fourth kingdom...strong as iron**. The Roman Empire was vast, held a firm iron grasp on the world, and **subdued all things**. Could it also be the Islamic Ottoman empire? Or all of the Islamic caliphates<sup>4</sup> from 632 to 1924? They dominated, destroyed, and controlled everything Jewish and much of Christianity during that time.

Those four empires, Head: Babylon, Breast and Arms: Persian, Belly and Thighs: Greek, and Legs of Iron: Roman or Islamic, are good candidates for the fulfillment of this prophecy.

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<sup>2</sup> I am speculating that all four youths are presenting a portion of the interpretation of the dream to Nebuchadnezzar. The order of the presentation and the portion each youth presents are completely hypothetical. Note the phrase **"we will tell"** in verse 36; because of the pronoun "we" and all four were praying for the secret to be revealed, it looks like they all have a part in presenting the dream before the king.

<sup>3</sup> Jumping ahead, Scripture is clear that Babylon will be revived in the latter days, will a *type* of the great king Nebuchadnezzar rule over all the world at that time?

<sup>4</sup> Historically, the caliphates were polities based on Islam that developed into multi-ethnic trans-national empires. Al-Rasheed, Madawi; Kersten, Carol; Shterin, Marat (2012). *Demystifying the Caliphate: Historical Memory and Contemporary Contexts*. Oxford University Press. p. 3. ISBN 978-0-19-932795-9.

**The feet and toes, part potters' clay and part of iron, a kingdom divided**, become more complex. It has the appearance of **strength** since it will be mixed (**mingled**) men from various backgrounds (**seed**), yet because it is made up of **iron mixed with miry clay**, this kingdom will not hold together; there will be no unity. This is an unknown *future* kingdom made up of many nations. More study will be needed.

Verses 44,45—

Perhaps it is now Daniel who gives the closing interpretation with this final description of the statue. **And in the days of these kings**, the kings making up the feet and (ten) toes of the figure, **shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed**: no kingdom on earth will follow it. The **kingdom** that God will set up **shall stand forever**.

God's Kingdom is visualized in the dream as **The stone cut out of the mountain without hands** (vs. 34) will break the iron, brass, clay, silver, and gold into pieces.

Notice that all of the empires which make up this statue, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome (or whoever), are all literal kingdoms. Why then would we not assume that the ten unknown kingdoms (the feet of iron mixed with clay) will also be literal kingdoms? And, an even greater assumption, why wouldn't the kingdom set up by the God of heaven, which shall never be destroyed, also be a literal kingdom? Yet, nearly all of Christendom says we are in God's spiritual kingdom today, or we are building God's kingdom. Beloved, the Bible never mentions a spiritual kingdom. The Church today is not the kingdom of God. The book of Daniel shows us clearly and plainly that God will set up His kingdom by himself, as evidenced by "the stone cut out...without hands." It is His work. We can't build the kingdom; that's not our role. Who do we think we are!? If we don't get this right our purpose for existing as the body of Christ gets confused.

We are to follow Paul (1 Corinthians 11:1), and he was an *ambassador* (2 Corinthians 5:20) *in order to win men to Christ* (1 Corinthians 9:20-22).

God's kingdom will **break in pieces and consume all these earthly kingdoms**.

That is the conclusion of the dream and the interpretation. It has been interpreted clearly for us. And, **God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter**.

#### SUMMARY AND A FEW ASSUMPTIONS AT THIS POINT IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

The interpretation of the statue in Daniel 2 is a prophetic statement about future kingdoms of the world, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon and continuing through the Times of the Gentiles until the promised Kingdom of the Messiah (the Stone cut without hands) is realized. For us, the dream reveals several fulfilled prophecies *and* prophecies yet to be fulfilled.

The Times of the Gentiles began with King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The Times of the Gentiles will end with the final destruction of what some say will be a revived Roman empire, but could it be a

revived Islamic (Babylonian) empire ruled not by Nebuchadnezzar but by one of whom Nebuchadnezzar is a *type*<sup>5</sup>, someone much more powerful; the Antichrist<sup>6</sup>? The dream then shows us the history of world domination with Nebuchadnezzar presented as the head and the *type* of what will follow (or “who” is to follow).

This may mean that beginning with Nebuchadnezzar, the *spirit of the antichrist* has been alive since that time, yet he will eventually reign physically, in bodily form, during the Tribulation. The ultimate fulfillment of the dream of Daniel 2 is that God wins in the end. His Kingdom will be established, and unlike all the others, His kingdom will never be destroyed. Not until then will Israel will be at rest in their promised Kingdom.

Several more passages in Daniel will address Antichrist, as does the book of The Revelation.

The kingdoms of Daniel chapter 2, represented by the feet and ten toes, will be led by the powerful Antichrist.

Developing...

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<sup>5</sup> By *type*, I mean a figure in the Old Testament who foreshadows or corresponds to another figure in the New Testament. In this case, I am making an assumption that Nebuchadnezzar is the type of Anti-Christ who will rule the world during part of the seven-year Tribulation. Proving that and showing how Nebuchadnezzar is a *type* is something that deserves complete study on its own.

<sup>6</sup> Is it possible that there could be a revived Babylonian empire? Most say it will be a revived Roman empire. We will have to continue pursuing both of those assumptions as we work our way through the book of Daniel.