

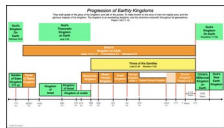
CONNECTING THE DOTS – EARTHLY KINGDOMS

³¹ *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.*

³² *This **image's head** was of fine gold, **his breast and his arms** of silver, **his belly** and **his thighs** of brass, ³³ **His legs** of iron, **his feet** part of iron and part of clay.*

³⁴ *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. Daniel 2:31-34*

Part II – PROOF THAT GOD IS IN CONTROL



In our last session we showed how God is using the Times of the Gentiles as a means of bringing the nation of Israel to repentance and to be reconciled to God.

As I ended the last session, I said that the sequence of four kingdoms/empires span the Times of the Gentiles as the Lord prophesied in Luke 21:24.

God uses prophecy to encourage us by showing us that He is in control of history and that His Word, the Bible, is a trustworthy, inerrant record given by Him.

Daniel, chapters 2, 7, and 8, perhaps are the best proof of this.

Daniel was taken to Babylon when Israel was taken into captivity by the Babylonians.

There King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of a statue of a gigantic man. Testing his wise men, he asked for an interpretation of this symbolic dream without telling them the dream. He threaten death, if they could not interpret it.

After prayer, God gave Daniel the interpretation. Daniel recorded the dream in Daniel 2:31-34.

Fifty years later, Daniel also had a dream from God of four animals, followed by a vision – recorded in Daniel 7 and 8. A comparison of Nebuchadnezzar's and Daniel's dream show they are about the same subject.

If we are to understand these dreams and visions, we need to first read and compare the two dreams, that by Nebuchadnezzar and that of Daniel.



Through two dreams and a vision, God revealed a sequence of nations that would be involved with Israel's history and the city of Jerusalem often as the focal point.

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These nations were necessary in setting the stage for the fifth and final kingdom of this earth, Jesus Christ's earthly millennial (1000-year) kingdom.

While there have been, and are, many other kingdoms throughout history, they are on the "sidelines" of history in the sense that their influence only indirectly involves Israel during the time of the Gentiles.

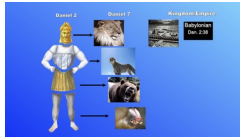
All peoples of the world are important to God, either directly or indirectly, for His salvation is available to all.



The best way to view the uniqueness of Daniel's prophecy is to place Nebuchadnezzar's dream alongside of Daniel's dream and vision.

³¹ *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.* ³² *This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,* ³³ *His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.* ³⁴ *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.* Daniel 2:31-34

Even a brief study of these texts expands and elaborates our understanding of these times and serves to prepare us before we move on to a study of the inter-testament times of Israel and then into the Gospels.



Daniel Identified Babylon as the First Kingdom – Babylon – Daniel 2:31-45, Daniel 7:4

In Nebuchadnezzar's dream Daniel says this first kingdom as having a "head of gold".

Daniel's vision of the same kingdom is given in Daniel 7:4:

The first [kingdom] was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

In Daniel's dream of chapter 2 verse 38 that king and kingdom is identified as Babylon:

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.

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Dreams and Vision in Daniel 2, 7, and 8				
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Kingdom	Scriptural Identification	Symbol	Material	Symbol
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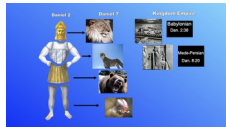
Since Daniel is speaking to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, this king and kingdom aptly represents the pre-eminent place of Babylon in Daniel’s day.

Gold was commonly used in Babylon not only as currency but also to adorn objects.

The lion with eagle’s wings described in Daniel’s dream (Dan. 7:4) also was an excellent representation for Babylon since the lion has always been regarded as the “king” of beasts and the eagle the most exalted of birds. The eagle wings indicated the swiftness with which Nebuchadnezzar gained his power.



At the time of this dream, Babylon was the only powerful nation in the world. The next two kingdoms of Daniel were not world powers and certainly, the fourth kingdom was not even a powerful city or providence in the world of Daniel’s day.



The Second Kingdom – Mede-Persian Empire – Daniel 2:32; 7:5

³²This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,



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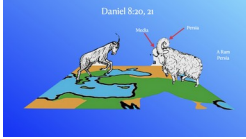
The image’s two arms and breast of silver aptly picture this second kingdom that conquered and followed Babylon, the Mede/Persian kingdom; for the arms, joined at the breast, represent their alliance and co-rule.

By uniting in 550 BC, these two nations were successful in overcoming and capturing Babylon in 539 BC and destroying King Belshazzar who had succeeded Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 5).

Historical records reveal that silver was the medium of exchange for these two nations and it was “collected through an extensive tax system (Ezra 4:13; Dan. 11:2).”³

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This was the next Gentile kingdom that maintained its control over the land of Israel, treading Jerusalem under its feet.



Daniel 7 verse 5 adds further details about this kingdom.

And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

The lopsided bear in Daniel's dream also represents this Mede/Persian alliance. Initially, the Medes were the power with Persia being subservient. With time, the Persians' power grew and they ultimately dominated the Medes.⁴

The three ribs in the bear's mouth most likely represent the three nations they conquered, Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt.⁵

God leaves no doubt as to this nation's identity. Daniel's vision confirms this identification, for the angel Gabriel told Daniel, "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia" (Daniel 8:20).

The use of the image of the ram is also quite appropriate because the guardian spirit of the Persian kingdom was believed by the Persians to appear in the form of a horned ram, and the Persian king led his army wearing the head of a ram.⁶

The observation that the ram's two horns were of unequal height foretold the dominance of the Persians over the Medes just as the lopsided bear had indicated.

Knowledge of a culture and its symbols is helpful to gaining an understanding of the Biblical revelation, but in this instance, God provided an indisputable confirmation of the symbols through the angel Gabriel.

Daniel's dream and vision occurred about fifty years after Nebuchadnezzar's dream, during King Belshazzar's reign.



With Belshazzar's death and the capture of Babylon, the Mede/Persian Empire became the dominant world power. The expansion of the empire encompassed Israel in addition to Asia Minor and Egypt. However, the strength of the Medes and Persians was no match for the leader of the next kingdom, Alexander the Great.

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The Third Kingdom – Greek Empire – Daniel 2:32; 7:6

³² *This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,*



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Young Alexander of Greece was the amazingly gifted general who swiftly conquered and replaced the Mede/Persian Empire with that of Greece.



Once again, God clearly identified this kingdom in Daniel 8:21, 22

²¹ *And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. ²² Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.*

In Nebuchadnezzar's dream this kingdom is symbolized as having a belly and thighs of bronze.

The Greeks used this metal alloy extensively to make their tools and weapons of war. Most likely, the image's belly represented Alexander himself while the two thighs signified Seleucus and Ptolemy, two of his four generals that succeeded him and who played significant roles in history as rulers of Syria and Egypt.

Daniel's dream of chapter 7 and verse 6 adds to Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. Daniel 7:6

Here, the Greek Empire was represented by a leopard having four wings and heads

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while in his vision, it was portrayed by a male goat with feet that did not touch the ground and one prominent horn that was later replaced by four.

The leopard's four wings and the goat's feet that did not touch earth both represented Alexander's swiftness in conquering the Mede/Persians.

And the rough goat is the king of Greece: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.
Daniel 8:21



Long before Alexander was born or Greece was a significant country, God not only indicated that Alexander's Grecian Empire would replace the Mede/Persian Empire on the world stage, but that four kings would share power following Alexander's death as the leopard's four heads and the goat's four horns indicate (Dan. 8:22).

Historical record confirms this prophecy, for Alexander came to power, thrusting Greece into dominance as a world empire by conquering the Mede/Persians.



When Alexander died at the age of 32 in Babylon, his four generals (Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy),⁷ divided the Greek Empire into four regions or nations (Dan. 8:22) that were individually ruled but united as one empire.

This prophecy truly reveals the attribute of God's trustworthiness in that what He showed in dreams and visions centuries ago is completely accurate from the historical perspective.



The Fourth Empire Identified – Rome – Daniel 2:33

Unlike the previous three kingdoms, God does not identify the fourth kingdom by name.

The world of Daniel's days knew of the nations of the Medes, the Persians, and the Greek even before they became empires, but Rome was not even a province in Daniel's day.

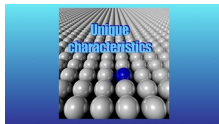
Its identification is derived from descriptions found in the two dreams. In Nebuchadnezzar's dream it is described as the image's two legs of iron with feet and toes of iron and clay.

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³³ **His legs** of iron, **his feet** part of iron and part of clay.



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Fourth Stage 1	Roman Empire Dan. 8:21	Legs v. 33	Iron	Dreadful and Terrible Beast v. 7
Fourth Stage 2				
Fifth Millennial				



In Daniel's dream, the fourth beast is not a common, identifiable earthly creature but is merely described as being "*diverse*" (different, unique) from all the beasts that were before it in Daniel 7:7.

*After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and **it was diverse from all the beasts** that were before it; and it had ten horns.*

It is "*dreadful, terrible, and exceedingly strong*" with teeth of iron and stamping, crushing feet well describe the rise of the roman empire to power.

Next, this beast is described as having ten horns, three of which are later replaced by a little horn having the eyes and mouth of a man -- a mouth speaking great or pompous words.

As previously shown, Daniel identified three of the four empire/kingdoms that precede Jesus Christ's earthly kingdom by name. Many believe that Daniel's fourth, unnamed empire is the Roman Empire.⁸

We base our conclusion on the historical pattern established by the three identified

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empires of Daniel that preceded the roman empire.

That pattern has the second empire, Mede-Persia conquering the first empire, Babylon, and that in a similar manner, the third empire, Greece, conquered the second empire, Mede-Persia. Extrapolation of this pattern requires that the fourth empire must be the conqueror of the third empire, Greece. This makes the Roman Empire the only viable historical candidate for the fourth kingdom.

This conclusion is strengthened by the identification of “*iron*” as the metal that composes the image’s legs (Dan. 2:33; 7:7).

The Roman legions used iron weapons of war and “were noted for their ability to crush all resistance with an iron heel.”⁹

Certainly, history records the Roman army’s ability to break conquered nations into pieces (literally: to “crush and demolish”).¹⁰



The image’s two legs indicate the two regional divisions of the Roman Empire; the Eastern, with its center in Constantinople and the Western, centered in Rome.

Nebuchadnezzar’s dream also suggests that there are two phases to the fourth empire while Daniel’s dream divides it even more finely into three.

The idea that there are two main phases to the Roman Empire is based upon the image’s anatomical and compositional distinctions regarding the fourth kingdom--the legs of iron are distinguished from the feet and toes of iron and clay. This would appear to suggest that there are two distinct phases to the fourth empire.

Bible teachers traditionally view the iron legs as the first phase, representing the ancient Roman Empire; while the feet and toes suggest a second phase--a latter day, revived Roman Empire.

In the first phase, the beast is called dreadful and terrible with teeth of iron and stamping feet.

In the second phase, it is portrayed as having ten horns.

In the third phase, a little horn with the eyes and mouth of a man comes up and replaces three of the ten horns and speaks “*great things*” (Dan. 7:8).

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You will want to see my video on the rise of the antichrist to better understand this last phase.

Renald Showers sums up this three-phased Roman Empire as:

- Phase 1--The Conquering or Beast phase, symbolized by the iron and its destructive power – this existed during the New Testament times.
- Phase 2--The Ten Horn/Ten Kingdom phase, symbolized by the ten toes and the ten horns – this phase is yet future, perhaps its embryo phase is in our day.
- Phase 3--The Little Horn/Antichrist phase, symbolized by the little horn of Daniel 7¹² – this is the final phase, that I believe is primarily during the last half of the Tribulation.

In its simplest form, we can divide this fourth kingdom into two parts--the revived Roman Empire *before* and the revived Roman Empire *after* the antichrist rises to power.

According to this interpretation, phase 1 of the ancient Roman Empire ended and a gap or interim period of time occurs before Phase 2. The concept of a gap is justified by the fact that Daniel “passes over the present [Church] age, the period between the first and second coming of Christ, or, more specifically, the period between Pentecost and the rapture of the church.”¹⁴

Such gaps or skips do occur in the Old Testament with respect to the first and second coming of Christ.¹⁵ The Old Testament prophets portray Christ as being both a suffering Savior as well as a conquering King.

At His first advent He came as a suffering Savior to redeem both humanity and creation; in the future He will return as a conquering King.

The gap in time was not recognized by many in Israel and contributed to the rejection of their Messiah.

Therefore, the gap concept is a possibility with regard to the Roman Empire. According to this scenario, the ancient Roman Empire will “revive” in the modern era as the ten-toe/ten-horn stage. This revived empire will include the former territories of the ancient Roman Empire and possibly those western hemisphere nations that trace their ancestry back to lands within the ancient Roman Empire.

Certainly, this explanation satisfies the demands of the dreams and vision found in the book of Daniel.

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The Fifth Kingdom Identified



The “stone...cut without hands” symbolizes the fifth and final kingdom that will crush the preceding four Gentile kingdoms, for Jesus Christ as the Son of God was not made with hands and is the “stone” that the builders (Israel) rejected (Dan. 2:34; Psalm 118: 22, Matt. 21: 42).



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Fourth Stage 2	Roman Empire Dan. 8:21	Feet & Toes v. 33, 41	Iron & Clay	Dreadful and Terrible Beast with Ten Horns then a Little Horn v. 7
Fifth Millennial	Stone Cut Without Hands Dan. 2:45	Stone	Stone	Son of Man with Clouds of Heaven Vv. 13, 14

His
earthly

kingdom will be established by the “God of heaven” beginning with Christ’s Millennial Kingdom, which will be centered in Jerusalem on Mount Zion and continue forever in a new heaven and earth (Dan 2:44; Is. 28:16; Zech. 14; Rev. 20:4, 21:1).

In this fleeting review of history, it is apparent that God’s word is certain and He truly does establish as well as bring down kings and kingdoms (Dan. 2:21). It is also important to understand that the ancient kingdoms of Babylon, Mede-Persia, and Greece are gone, yet not entirely. When viewed sequentially, it is apparent that each succeeding empire/kingdom assimilated historically, culturally, and religiously the preceding conquered empire.¹⁶

This means that when the first three empires ceased to rule, their cultures and religions did not also cease to exist; rather, they merged with the succeeding empire, “so that elements of each still exist in the final phase of the Roman Empire.”

¹⁸

God used Daniel in a mighty way to give “wisdom unto the wise and knowledge to them that know understanding.” It is available to those who genuinely desire to seek it out. Through these dreams and vision He has revealed his outline for human history

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regarding mankind's kingdoms and the coming kingdom of His own Son. As He promised, "*the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.*"