

## Daniel Chapter II

### The King Dreams of World Empires

*Verse 1 And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.*

Daniel was carried into captivity in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar. For three years he was placed under instructors, during which time he would not of course be reckoned among the wise men of the kingdom, nor take part in public affairs. Yet in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar, the transactions recorded in this chapter took place. How, then, could Daniel be brought in to interpret the king's dream in his second year? The explanation lies in the fact that Nebuchadnezzar reigned for two years conjointly with his father, Nabopolassar. From this point the Jews reckoned, while the Chaldeans reckoned from the time he began to reign alone on the death of his father. Hence, the year here mentioned was the second year of his reign according to the Chaldean reckoning, but the fourth according to the Jewish. [1] It thus appears that the next year after Daniel had completed his preparation to participate in the affairs of the Chaldean empire, the providence of God brought him into sudden and remarkable prominence throughout the kingdom.

*Verse 2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to show the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.*

**The King's Wise Men Fail Him.**--The magicians practiced magic, using the term in its bad sense; that is, they employed all the superstitious rites and ceremonies of fortunetellers, and casters of nativities, and the like. Astrologers were men who pretended to foretell events by the study of the stars. The science, or the superstition, of astrology was extensively cultivated by the Eastern nations of antiquity. Sorcerers were such as pretended to hold communication with the dead. In this sense, we believe, the word "sorcerer" is always used in the Scriptures. The Chaldeans here mentioned were a sect of philosophers similar to the magicians and astrologers, who made natural science and divinations their study. All these sects or professions abounded in Babylon. The result desired by each was the same--the explaining of mysteries and foretelling of events--the principal difference between them being the means by which they sought to accomplish their object. The king's difficulty lay equally within the province of each to explain; hence he summoned them all. With the king it was an important matter. He was greatly troubled, and therefore concentrated upon the solution of his perplexity the wisdom of his realm.

*Verse 3 And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. 4 Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriac, O king, live forever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.*

In whatever else the ancient magicians and astrologers may have been efficient, they seem to have been thoroughly schooled in the art of drawing out sufficient information to form a basis for some shrewd calculation, or of framing their answers in such an ambiguous manner that they would be applicable whichever way the events turned. In the present case, true to their cunning instincts, they called upon the king to make known to them his dream. If they could get full information respecting this, they could easily agree on some interpretation which would not endanger their reputation. They addressed themselves to the king in Syriac, a dialect of the Chaldean language which was used by the educated and cultured classes. From this point to the end of Daniel 7, the record continues in Chaldaic, the language spoken by the king.

*Verse 5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. 6 But if ye show the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honor: therefore show me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. 7 They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation of it. 8 The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. 9 But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can show me the interpretation thereof. 10 The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. 11 And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. 12 For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13 And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.*

These verses contain the record of the desperate struggle between the wise men and the king. The former sought some avenue of escape, since they were caught on their own ground. The king was determined that they should make known his dream, which was no more than should be expected from their profession.

Some have severely censured Nebuchadnezzar in this matter, as acting the part of a heartless, unreasonable tyrant. But what did these magicians profess to be able to do?-- To reveal hidden things, to foretell events, to make known mysteries entirely beyond human foresight and penetration, and to do this by the aid of supernatural agencies. There was therefore nothing unjust in Nebuchadnezzar's demand that they should make known his dream. When they declared that none but the gods whose dwelling was not with flesh could make known the king's matter, it was a tacit acknowledgment that they had no communication with these gods, and knew nothing beyond what human wisdom and discernment could reveal. "For this cause the king was angry and very furious."

He saw that he and all his people were being made the victims of deception. While we cannot justify the extreme measures to which he resorted, dooming them to death, and their houses to destruction, we cannot but feel a hearty sympathy with him in his condemnation of a class of miserable imposters. The king would be no party to dishonesty or deception.

*Verse 14 Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon: 15 he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. 16 Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would show the king the interpretation. 17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: 18 that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.*

**Daniel to the Rescue.**--In this narrative we see the providence of God working in several remarkable particulars. It was providential that the dream of the king should leave such a powerful impression upon his mind as to raise him to the greatest height of anxiety, and yet the thing itself be held from his recollection. This led to the complete exposure of the false system of the magicians and other pagan teachers. When put to the test to make known the dream, they were unable to do what they professed was entirely within their power.

It was remarkable that Daniel and his companions, so lately pronounced by the king ten times better than all his magicians and astrologers, should not have been consulted in this matter. But there was a providence in this. Just as the dream was held from the king, so he was unaccountably restrained from appealing to Daniel for a solution of the mystery. Had he called Daniel at the first to make known the matter, the magicians would not have been brought to the test. But God would give the heathen systems of the Chaldeans the first chance. He would let them try and ignominiously fail, and then confess their utter incompetency, ever under the penalty of death, that they might be the better prepared to acknowledge His intervention when He should finally manifest His power in behalf of His captive servants, and for the honor of His name.

It appears that the first intimation Daniel had of the matter was the presence of the executioners, come for his arrest. His own life being thus at stake, he was led to seek the Lord with all his heart until He should work for the deliverance of His servants. Daniel gained his request of the king for time to consider the matter--a privilege which probably none of the magicians could have obtained, as the king had already accused them of preparing false and corrupt words, and of seeking to gain time for this very purpose. Daniel at once went to his three companions, and asked them to unite with him in desiring mercy of the God of heaven concerning this secret. He could have prayed alone, and doubtless would have been heard. But then, as now, in the union of God's people there is prevailing power. The promise of the accomplishment of that

which is asked, is to the two or three who shall agree concerning it. (Matthew 18: 19, 20.)

*Verse 19 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. 20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God forever and ever: for wisdom and might are His: 21 And He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings: He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: 22 He revealeth the deep and secret things: He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him. 23 I thank Thee, and praise Thee, O Thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of Thee: for Thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.*

Whether or not the answer came while Daniel and his companions were yet offering up their petitions, we are not informed. It was in a night vision that God revealed Himself in their behalf. The words "night vision" mean anything that is seen, whether through dreams or visions.

Daniel immediately offered up praise to God for His gracious dealing with them, and while his prayer is not preserved, his responsive thanksgiving is fully recorded. God is honored by our praise to Him for the things He has done for us, as well as by our petitions to Him for help. Let Daniel's course be our example in this respect. Let no mercy from the hand of God fail of its due return of thanksgiving and praise. In the days of Christ's ministry on earth, did He not cleanse ten lepers, and only one returned to give Him thanks? "But where," asks Christ sorrowfully, "are the nine?" Luke 17: 17.

Daniel had the utmost confidence in what had been shown him. He did not first go to the king to see if what had been revealed to him was indeed the king's dream, but he immediately praised God for having answered his prayer.

Although the matter was revealed to Daniel, he did not take honor to himself as though it were by his prayers alone that the answer had been obtained; but he immediately associated his companions with him, and acknowledged it to be as much an answer to their prayers as it was to his own. It was, said he, "what we desired of Thee," and Thou hast made it "known unto us."

*Verse 24 Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation.*

Daniel's first plea was for the wise men of Babylon. Destroy them not, for the king's secret is revealed, he implored. True, it was through no merit of theirs or their heathen systems of divination that this revelation was made. They were worthy of as much condemnation as before. But their own confession of utter impotence in the matter was humiliation enough for them, and Daniel was anxious that they should so far partake of the benefits shown him as to have their lives spared. They were saved because there

was a man of God among them. Thus it ever is. For the sake of Paul and Silas, all the prisoners with them were loosed. (Acts 16: 26.) For the sake of Paul, the lives of all that sailed with him were saved. (Acts 27: 24.) How often the wicked are benefited by the presence of the righteous! Well would be if they would remember the obligations under which they are thus placed.

What saves the world today? For whose sake is it still spared?--For the sake of the few righteous persons who are yet left. Remove these, and how long would the wicked be suffered to run their guilty career?--No longer than the antediluvians were suffered after Noah had entered the ark, or the Sodomites after Lot had departed from their polluted and polluting presence. If only ten righteous persons could have been found in Sodom, the multitude of its wicked inhabitants would for their sakes have been spared. Yet the wicked will despise, ridicule, and oppress the very ones on whose account it is that they are still permitted the enjoyment of life and all its blessings.

*Verse 25 Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation.*

It is ever a characteristic of ministers and courtiers to ingratiate themselves with their sovereign. So here Arioch represented that he had found a man who could make known the desired interpretation, as if with great disinterestedness in behalf of the king he had been searching for someone to solve his difficulty, and had at last found him. In order to see through this deception of his chief executioner, the king had but to remember, as he probably did, his interview with Daniel, and Daniel's promise, if time could be granted, to show the interpretation of the dream. (Verse 16.)

*Verse 26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? 27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king; 28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these.*

"Art thou able to make known unto me the dream?" was the king's salutation to Daniel as he came into the royal presence. Notwithstanding his previous acquaintance with this Hebrew, the king seemed to question the ability of one so young and inexperienced, to make known a matter in which aged and venerable magicians and soothsayers had utterly failed. Daniel declared plainly that the wise men, the astrologers, the soothsayers, and the magicians could not make known this secret. It was beyond their power. Therefore the king should not be angry with them, nor put confidence in their vain superstitions. The prophet proceeded to make known the true God, who rules in heaven, and is the only revealer of secrets. He it is, said Daniel, who "maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days."

*Verse 29 As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and He that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. 30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.*

Here is brought out another of the commendable traits of Nebuchadnezzar's character. Unlike some rulers, who fill up the present with folly and debauchery without regard to the future, the king thought forward upon the days to come, with an anxious desire to know with what events they should be filled. It was partly for this reason that God gave him this dream, which we must regard as a token of divine favor to the king. Yet God would not work for the king independently of His own people. Though He gave the dream to the king, He sent the interpretation through one of His acknowledged servants.

Daniel first disclaimed all credit for the interpretation, and then he sought to modify the king's natural feelings of pride in being thus noticed by the God of heaven. He informed him that although the dream had been given to him, it was not for his sake alone that the interpretation was sent, but also for their sakes through whom it should be given. Ah! God had some servants there, and it was for them that He was working. They were of more value in His sight than the mightiest kings and potentates of earth.

How comprehensive was the work of God in this instance! By this one act of revealing the king's dream to Daniel, He made known to the king the things he desired, He saved His servants who trusted in Him, He brought conspicuously before the Chaldean nation the knowledge of Him who know the end from the beginning, He poured contempt on the false systems of the soothsayers and magicians, and He honored His own name and exalted His servants in their eyes.

**Daniel Relates the Dream.**--After making it clear to the king that the purpose of the "God in heaven" in giving him the dream, was to reveal "what shall be in the latter days," Daniel related the dream itself.

*Verse 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. 35 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.*

Nebuchadnezzar, a worshiper of the gods of the Chaldean religion, was an idolater. An image was an object which would at once command his attention and respect. Moreover, earthly kingdoms, which, as we shall hereafter see, were represented by this image, were objects of esteem and value in his eyes.

But how admirably adapted was this representation to convey a great and needful truth to the mind of Nebuchadnezzar. Besides delineating the progress of events through the whole course of time for the benefit of His people, God would show Nebuchadnezzar the utter emptiness and worthlessness of earthly pomp and glory. How could this be more impressively done than by an image whose head was of gold? Below this head was body composed of inferior metals descending in value until they reached their basest form in the feet and toes of iron mingled with miry clay. The whole was then dashed to pieces, and made like the empty chaff. It was finally blown away where no place could be found for it, after which something durable and of heavenly worth occupied its place. So would God show to the children of men that earthly kingdoms are to pass away, and earthly greatness and glory, like a gaudy bubble, will break and vanish. In the place so long usurped by these, the kingdom of God shall be set up and have no end, while all who have an interest in that kingdom shall rest under the shadow of its peaceful wings forever and ever. But this is anticipating.

*Verse 36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. 37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. 38 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.*

**Daniel Interprets the Dream.**--Now opens one of the most comprehensive of the histories of world empire. Eight short verses of the inspired record tell the whole story, yet that story embraces the history of this world's pomp and power. A few moments will suffice to commit it to memory, yet the period which it covers, beginning more than twenty-five centuries ago, reaches from that far-distant point past the rise and fall of kingdoms, past the setting up and overthrow of empires, past cycles and ages, past our own day, to the eternal state. It is so comprehensive that it embraces all this, yet it is so minute that it gives us the great outlines of earthly kingdoms from that time to this. Human wisdom never devised so brief a record that embraced so much. Human language never set forth in so few words such a great volume of historical truth. The finger of God is here. Let us heed the lesson well. With what interest and astonishment must the king have listened as he was informed by the prophet that his kingdom was the golden head of the magnificent image. Daniel informed the king that the God of heavens had given him his kingdom, and made him ruler over all. This would restrain him from the pride of thinking that he had attained his position by his own power and wisdom, and would enlist the gratitude of his heart toward the true God.

The kingdom of Babylon, which finally developed into the nation represented by the golden head of the great historic image, was founded by Nimrod, the great-grandson of Noah, more than two thousand years before Christ. "Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel ["Babylon," margin], and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar." Genesis 10: 8-10. It appears that Nimrod also founded the city of Nineveh,

which afterward became the capital of Assyria. (See marginal reading of Genesis 10: 11.)

**Fulfillment of the Dream.**--The Babylonian Empire rose to power under the general who also became king, Nabopolassar. When he died in 604 B.C. his son Nebuchadnezzar became king. As R. Campbell Thompson declares: "Events had already shown that Nebuchadnezzar was a vigorous and brilliant commander, and physically as well as mentally a strong man, fully worthy of succeeding his father. He was to become the greatest man of his time in the Near East, as a soldier, a statesman, and an architect. Had his successors been of such a stamp instead of callow boys or dilettanti without redeeming vigor, the Persians would have found Babylonia a harder problem. 'All the nations,' says Jeremiah (Jeremiah 27: 7, R. V.), 'shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the time of his own land come.' " [2]

Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar in the first year of his reign, and the third year of Judah (Daniel 1: 1). 606 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar reigned two years conjointly with his father, Nabopolassar. From this point the Jews computed his reign, but the Chaldeans from the date of his sole reign, 604 B.C., as stated above. Respecting the successors of Nebuchadnezzar, the authority just quoted adds:

"Nebuchadnezzar died about August-September, 562 B.C., and was succeeded by his son Amel-Marduk (562-560 B.C.), whom Jeremiah calls Evil-Merodach. He was given little time to prove his worth; the two years of his brief reign are merely enough to show that political conditions were again hostile to the royal house." [3]

The later Babylonian rulers, weak in power, could not equal the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. Cyrus, king of Persia, besieged Babylon, and took it by stratagem.

The character of the Babylonian Empire is indicated by the head of gold. It was the golden kingdom of a golden age. Babylon, its metropolis, towered to a height never reached by any of its successors. Situated in the garden of the East; laid out in a perfect square said to be sixty miles in circumference, fifteen miles on each side; surrounded by a wall estimated to have been two hundred to three hundred feet high and eighty-seven feet thick, with a moat, or ditch, around this, or equal cubic capacity with the wall itself; divided into squares by its many streets, each one hundred and fifty feet in width, crossing at right angles, every one of them straight and level; its two hundred and twenty-five square miles of enclosed surface laid out in in luxuriant pleasure grounds and gardens, interspersed with magnificent dwellings--this city, with its sixty miles of moat, its sixty miles of outer wall, its thirty miles of river wall through its center, its gates of solid brass, its hanging gardens rising terrace above terrace till they equaled in height the walls themselves, its temple of Belus three miles in circumference, its two royal palaces, one three and a half and the other eight miles in circumference, with its subterranean tunnel under the River Euphrates connecting these two palaces, its perfect arrangements for convenience, ornament, and defense, and its unlimited resources--this city, containing it itself many things which were themselves wonders of the world, was itself another and still mightier wonder. There, with the whole earth



prostate at her feet, a queen in peerless grandeur, drawing from the pen of inspiration itself this glowing title, "The glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency," stood this city, fit capital of that kingdom which was represented by the golden head of this great historic image.

Such was Babylon, with Nebuchadnezzar in the prime of life, bold, vigorous, and accomplished, seated upon its throne, when Daniel entered within its walls to serve as a captive in its gorgeous palaces for seventy years. There the children of the Lord, oppressed more than cheered by the glory and prosperity of the land of their captivity, hung their harps on the willows by the Euphrates, and wept when they remembered Zion.

There began the captive state of the church in a still broader sense; for ever since that time the people of God have been in subjection to earthly powers, and more or less oppressed by them. So they will be until all earthly powers shall finally yield to Him whose right it is to reign. And lo, that day of deliverance draws on apace!

Into another city, not only Daniel, but all the children of God, from least to greatest, from lowest to highest, are soon to enter. It is a city not merely sixty miles in circumference, but fifteen hundred miles; a city whose walls are not brick and bitumen, but precious stones and jasper; whose streets are not the stone-paved streets of Babylon, smooth and beautiful as they were, but transparent gold; whose river is not the Euphrates, but the river of life; whose music is not the sighs and laments of broken-hearted captives, but the thrilling paeans of victory over death and the grave, which ransomed multitudes shall raise; whose light is not the intermittent light of earth, but the unceasing and ineffable glory of God and the Lamb. To this city they shall come, not as captives entering a foreign land, but as exiles returning to their father's house; not as to a place where such chilling words as "bondage," "servitude," and "oppression," shall weigh down their spirits, but to one where the sweet words, "home," "freedom," "peace," "purity," "unutterable bliss," and "unending life," shall thrill their souls with delight forever and ever. Yea, our mouths shall be filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing, when the Lord shall turn again the captivity of Zion. (Psalm 126: 1, 2; Revelation 21: 1-27.)

*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.*

Nebuchadnezzar reigned forty-three years, and was succeeded by the following rulers: His son, Evil-Merodach, two years; Neriglissar, his son-in-law, four years; Laborosoarchod, Neriglissar's son, nine months, which, being less than on year, is not counted in the canon of Ptolemy; and lastly, Nabonadius, whose son, Belshazzar, grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, was associated with him on the throne.

"The proof of this association is contained in the cylinders of Nabonadius [Nabonidus] found at Mugheir, where the protection of the gods is asked for Nabu-nadid and his son Bel-shar-uzur, who are coupled together in a way that implies the cosovereignty of the

latter. (British Museum Series, Vol. I. pl. 68, no. 1.) The date of the association was at the latest 540 B.C., Nabonadiu's fifteenth year, since the third year of Belshazzar is mentioned in Daniel 8: 1. If Belshazzar was (as I have supposed) a son of a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar married to Nabonadius after he became king, he could not be more than fourteen in his father's fifteenth year." [4]

**The Fall of Babylon.**--In the first year of Neriglissar, only two years after death of Nebuchadnezzar, broke out that fatal war between the Babylonians and the Medes, which resulted in the overthrow of the Babylonian kingdom. Cyaxares, king of the Medes, who is called "Darius" in Daniel 5: 31, summoned to his aid his nephew Cyrus of the Persian line. The war was prosecuted with uninterrupted success by the Medes and Persians, until in the eighteenth year of Nabonidus (the third year of his son Belshazzar), Cyrus laid siege to Babylon, the only city in all the East which then held out against him. The Babylonians gathered within their seemingly impregnable walls, with provision on hand for twenty years, and land within the limits of their broad city sufficient to furnish food for the inhabitants and garrison for an indefinite period. They scoffed at Cyrus from their lofty walls, and derided his seemingly useless efforts to bring them into subjection. According to all human calculation, they had good ground for their feelings of security. Never, weighed in the balance of earthly probability, could that city be taken with the means of warfare then known. Hence they breathed as freely and slept as soundly as though no foe were waiting and watching around their beleaguered walls. But God had decreed that the proud and wicked city should come down from her throne of glory. And when He speaks, what mortal arm can defeat His word?

In their feeling of security lay the source of their danger. Cyrus resolved to accomplish by stratagem what he could not effect by force. Learning of the approach of an annual festival in which the whole city would be given up to mirth and revelry, he fixed upon that day as the time to carry his purpose into execution.

There was no entrance for him into that city unless he could find it where the River Euphrates entered and emerged, as it passed under the walls. He resolved to make the channel of the river his highway into the stronghold of his enemy. To do this, the water must be turned aside from its channel through the city. For this purpose, on the evening of the feast day above referred to, he detailed on body of soldiers to turn the river at a given hour into a large artificial lake a short distance above the city; another to take their station at the point where the river entered the city; and a third to take a position fifteen miles below, where the river emerged from the city. The two latter bodies were instructed to enter the channel as soon as they found the river fordable, and in the darkness of the night explore their way beneath the walls, and press on to the palace of the king where they were to surprise and kill the guards, and capture or slay the king. When the water was turned into the lake, the river soon became shallow enough to ford, and the soldiers followed its channel into the heart of the city of Babylon. [5]

But all this would have been in vain, had not the whole city given itself over on that eventful night to the most abandoned carelessness and presumption, a state of things upon which Cyrus calculated largely for the carrying out of his purpose. On each side of

the river through the entire length of the city were walls of great height, and of equal thickness with the outer walls. In these walls were huge gates of brass, which, when closed and guarded, debarred all entrance from the river bed to any of the streets that crossed the river. Had the gates been closed at this time, the soldiers of Cyrus might have marched into the city along the river bed, and then marched out again, for all that they would have been able to accomplish toward the subjugation of the place.

But in the drunken revelry of that fatal night, these river gates were left open, as had been foretold by the prophet Isaiah years before in these words: "Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut." Isaiah 45: 1. The entrance of the Persian soldiers was not perceived. Many a cheek would have paled with terror, had the sudden going down of the river been noticed, and its fearful import understood. Many a tongue would have spread wild alarm through the city, had the dark forms of armed foes been seen stealthily treading their way to the citadel of their supposed security. But no one noticed the sudden subsidence of the waters of the river; no one saw the entrance of the Persian warriors; no one cared for aught but to see how deeply and recklessly he could plunge into the wild debauch. That night's dissipation cost the Babylonians their kingdom and their freedom. They went into their brutish revelry subjects of the king of Babylon; they awoke from it slaves to the king of Persia.

The soldiers of Cyrus first made known their presence in the city by falling upon the royal guards in the vestibule of the palace of the king. Belshazzar soon became aware of the cause of the disturbance, and died fighting for his life. This feast of Belshazzar is described in the fifth chapter of Daniel, and the scene closes with the simple record, "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old."

The historian Prideaux says: "Darius the Mede, that is Cyaxares, the uncle of Cyrus, took the kingdom; for Cyrus allowed him the title of all his conquests as long as he lived." [6]

Thus the first empire, symbolized by the head of gold of the great image, came to an ignoble end. It would naturally be supposed that the conqueror, becoming possessed of so noble a city as Babylon, far surpassing anything else in the world, would have taken it as the seat of his empire, and maintained it in its splendor. But God had said that that city should become a heap, and the habitation of the beasts of the desert; that its houses should be full of doleful creatures; that the wild beasts of the islands should cry in its desolate dwellings, and dragons in its pleasant palaces. (Isaiah 13: 19-22.) It must first be deserted. Cyrus established a second capital at Susa, a celebrated city in the province of Elam, east from Babylon, on the banks of the River Choaspes, a branch of the Tigris. This was probably done in the first year of his sole reign.

The pride of the Babylonians being particularly provoked by this act, in the fifth year of Darius Hystaspes, 517 B.C., they rose in rebellion and brought upon themselves again

the whole strength of the Persian Empire. The city was once more taken by stratagem. Darius took away the brazen gates of the city, and beat down the walls from two hundred cubits to fifty cubits. This was the beginning of its destruction. By this act, it was left exposed to the ravages of every hostile band. Xerxes, on his return from Greece, plundered the temple of Belus of its immense wealth, and then laid the lofty structure in ruins. Alexander the Great endeavored to rebuild it, but after employing ten thousand men two months to clear away the rubbish, he died from excessive drunkenness and debauchery, and the work was suspended. In the year 294 B.C., Seleucus Nicator built the city of New Babylon in the neighborhood of the old city, and took much of the material and many of the inhabitants of the old city, to build up and people the new. Now almost exhausted of inhabitants, neglect and decay were telling fearfully upon the ancient capital. The violence of Parthian princes hastened its ruin. About the end of the fourth century, it was used by the Persian kings as an enclosure for wild beasts. At the end of the twelfth century, according to a celebrated traveler, the few remaining ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace were so full of serpents and venomous reptiles that they could not be closely inspected without great danger. And today scarcely enough even of the ruins is left to mark the spot where once stood the largest, richest, and proudest city of the ancient world.

Thus the ruin of great Babylon shows us how accurately God fulfills His word, and makes the doubts of skepticism appear like willful blindness.

"After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee." The use of the word "kingdom" here, shows that kingdoms, and not particular kings, are represented by the different parts of this image. Hence when it was said to Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou art this head of gold," although the personal pronoun was used, the kingdom not the king himself was meant.

**Medo-Persian Kingdom.**--The succeeding kingdom, Medo-Persia, answered to the breast and arms of silver of the great image. It was to be inferior to the preceding kingdom. In what respect inferior? Not in power, for it conquered Babylon. Not in extent, for Cyrus subdued all the East from the AEgean Sea to the River Indus, and thus erected a more extensive empire. But it was inferior in wealth, luxury, and magnificence.

Viewed from a Scriptural standpoint, the principal event under the Babylonian Empire was the captivity of the children of Israel; under the Medo-Persian kingdom it was the restoration of Israel to their own land. At the taking of Babylon Cyrus, as an act of courtesy assigned the first place in the kingdom to his uncle, Darius, in 538 B.C. But two years afterward Darius died, leaving Cyrus sole monarch of the empire. In this year, which closed Israel's seventy years of captivity, Cyrus issued his famous decree for the return of the Jews and the rebuilding of their temple. This was the first installment of the great decree for the restoration and building again of Jerusalem (Ezra 6: 14), which was completed in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, 457 B.C., a date of much importance, as will hereafter be shown.

After a reign of seven years, Cyrus left the kingdom to his son Cambyses, who reigned seven years and five months, to 522 B.C. Eight monarchs reigned between this time and the year 336 B.C. The year 335 B.C. is set down as the first of Darius Codomannus, the last of the line of the old Persian kings. This man, according to Prideaux, was of noble stature, of goodly person, of the greatest personal valor, and of a mild and generous disposition. It was his ill fortune to have to contend with one who was an agent in the fulfillment of prophecy, and no qualifications, natural or acquired, could make him successful in the unequal contest. Scarcely was he warm upon the throne, ere he found his formidable enemy, Alexander, at the head of the Greek soldiers, preparing to dismount him from it.

The cause and the particulars of the contest between the Greeks and the Persians we leave to histories especially devoted to such matters. Suffice it to say that the deciding point was reached on the field of Arbela in 331 B.C., where the Grecians, though only one to twenty in number as compared with the Persians, won a decisive victory. Alexander became absolute lord of the Persian Empire to an extent never attained by any of its own kings.

**Grecian Empire.**--"Another third kingdom of brass . . . shall bear rule over all the earth," the prophet had said. Few and brief are the inspired words which involved in their fulfillment a succession in world rulership. In the ever-changing political kaleidoscope, Grecia came into the field of vision, to be for a time the all-absorbing object of attention, as the third of what are called the universal empires of the earth.

After the battle which decided the fate of the empire, Darius endeavored to rally the shattered remnants of his army, and make a stand for his kingdom and his rights. But he could not gather out of all the host of his recently so numerous and well-appointed army a force with which he deemed it prudent to hazard another engagement with the victorious Grecians. Alexander pursued him on the wings of the wind. Time after time Darius barely eluded the grasp of his swiftly following foe. At length three traitors, Bessus, Nabarzanes, and Barsaentes, seized the unfortunate prince, shut him up in a close cart, and fled with him as their prisoner toward Bactria. It was their purpose, if Alexander pursued them, to purchase their own safety by delivering up their king. Hereupon Alexander, learning of the dangerous position of Darius in the hands of the traitors, immediately put himself with the lightest part of his army upon a forced pursuit. After several days hard march, he came up with the traitors. They urged Darius to mount on horseback for a more speedy flight. Upon his refusing to do this, they gave him several mortal wounds, and left him dying in the cart, while they mounted their steeds and rode away.

When Alexander arrived, he beheld only the lifeless form of the Persian king, who but a few months before was seated upon the throne of the universal empire. Disaster, overthrow, and desertion had come suddenly upon Darius. His kingdom had been conquered, his treasure seized, and his family reduced to captivity. Now, brutally slain by the hand of traitors, he lay a bloody corpse in a rude cart. The sight of the melancholy spectacle drew tears from the eyes of even Alexander, familiar though he

was with all the horrible vicissitudes and bloody scenes of war. Throwing his cloak over the body, he commanded that it be conveyed to the ladies of the Persian royal family who were captives at Susa, and furnished from his own treasury the necessary means for a royal funeral.

When Darius died, Alexander saw the field cleared of his last formidable foe. Thenceforward he could spend his time in his own manner, now in the enjoyment of rest and pleasure, and again in the prosecution of some minor conquest. He entered upon a pompous campaign into India, because, according to Grecian fable, Bacchus and Hercules, two sons of Jupiter, whose son he also claimed to be, had done the same. With contemptible arrogance, he claimed for himself divine honors. He gave up conquered cities, freely and unprovoked, to the mercy of his bloodthirsty and licentious soldiery. He often murdered his friends and favorites in his drunken frenzies. He encouraged such excessive drinking among his followers that on one occasion twenty of them died as the result of their carousal. At length, having sat through one long drinking spree, he was immediately invited to another, when, after drinking to each of the twenty guests present, he twice drank, says history, incredible as it may seem, the full Herculean cup containing six of our quarts. He was seized with a violent fever, of which he died eleven days later, Jun 13, 323 B.C., while yet he stood only at the threshold of mature life, in the thirty-second year of his age.

*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.*

**Iron Monarchy of Rome.**--Thus far in the application of this prophecy there is a general agreement among expositors. That Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece are represented respectively by the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, and the sides of brass, is acknowledged by all. But with as little ground for a diversity of views, there is strangely a difference of opinion as to what kingdom is symbolized by the fourth division of the great image--the legs of iron. What kingdom succeeded Greece in the empire of the world, for the legs of iron denote the fourth kingdom in the series? The testimony of history is full and explicit on this point. One kingdom did this, and one only, and that was Rome. It conquered Grecia; it subdued all things; like iron, it broke in pieces and bruised.

Says Bishop Newton: "The four different metals must signify four different nations: and as the gold signified the Babylonians, and the silver the Persians, and the brass the Macedonians; so the iron cannot signify the Macedonians again, but must necessarily denote some other nation: and we will venture to say that there is not a nation upon earth, to which this description is applicable, but the Romans." [7]

Gibbon, following the symbolic imagery of Daniel, thus describes this empire:

"The arms of the Republic, sometimes vanquished in battle, always victorious in war, advanced with rapid steps to the Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine, and the ocean; and

the images of gold, or silver, or brass, that might serve to represent the nations and their kings, were successively broken by the iron monarchy of Rome." [8]

At the opening of the Christian Era, this empire took in the whole south of Europe, France, England, the greater part of the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the south of Germany, Hungary, Turkey, and Greece, not to speak of its possessions in Asia and Africa. Well therefore may Gibbon say of it:

"The empire of the Romans filled the world, and when that empire fell into the hands of a single person, the world became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies . . . To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly." [9]

It will be noticed that at first the kingdom is described unqualifiedly as strong as iron. This was the period of its strength, during which it has been likened to a mighty colossus bestriding the nations, conquering everything, and giving laws to the world. But this was not to continue.

*Verse 41 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. 42 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.*

**Rome Divided.**--The element of weakness symbolized by the clay, pertained to the feet as well as to the toes. Rome, before its division into ten kingdoms, lost that iron vigor which it possessed to a superlative degree during the first centuries of its career. Luxury, with its accompanying effeminacy and degeneracy, the destroyer of nations as well as of individuals, began to corrode and weaken its iron sinews, and thus prepared the way for its disintegration into ten kingdoms.

The iron legs of the image terminate in feet and toes. To the toes, of which there were of course ten, our attention is called by the explicit mention of them in the prophecy. The

kingdom represented by that part of the image to which the toes belonged, was finally divided into ten parts. The question naturally arises, Do the ten toes of the image represent the ten final divisions of the Roman Empire? We answer, Yes.

The image of Daniel 2 is exactly parallel with the four beasts in the vision of Daniel 7. The fourth beast represents the same kingdom as do the iron legs of the image. The ten horns of the beast correspond naturally to the ten toes of the image. These horns are plainly declared to be ten kings which should arise. They are as much independent kingdoms as are the beasts themselves, for the beasts are spoken of in precisely the same manner--as "four kings, which shall arise." Daniel 7: 17. They do not denote a line of successive kings, but kings or kingdoms which existed contemporaneously, for three of them were plucked up by the little horn. The ten horns, beyond controversy, represent the ten kingdoms into which Rome was divided.

We have seen that in Daniel's interpretation of the image he uses the words "king" and "kingdom" interchangeably, the former denoting the same as the latter. In verse 44 he says that "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom." This shows that at the time the kingdom of God is set up, there will exist a plurality of kings. It cannot refer to the four preceding kingdoms; for it would be absurd to use such language in reference to a line of successive kings, since it would be in the days of the last king only, not in the days of any of the preceding, that the kingdom of God would be set up.

**The Ten Kingdoms.**--Here, then, is a division presented; and what have we in the symbol to indicate it?--Nothing but the toes of the image. Unless they do, we are left utterly in the dark on the nature and extent of the division which the prophecy shows did exist. To suppose this would be to cast a serious imputation upon the prophecy itself. We are therefore held to the conclusion that the ten toes of the image denote the ten parts into which the Roman Empire was divided.

This division was accomplished between A.D. 351 and 476. The era of this dissolution thus covered a hundred and twenty-five years, from about the middle of the fourth century to the last quarter of the fifth. No historians of whom we are aware, place the beginning of this work of the dismemberment of the Roman Empire earlier than A.D. 351, and there is general agreement in assigning its close in A.D. 476. Concerning the intermediate dates, that is, the precise time from which each of the ten kingdoms that arose on the ruins of the Roman Empire is to be dated, there is some difference of views among historians. Nor does this seem strange, when we consider that there was an era of great confusion, that the map of the Roman Empire during that time underwent many sudden and violent changes, and that paths of hostile nations charging upon its territory crossed and recrossed each other in a labyrinth of confusion. But all historians agree in this, that out of the territory of Western Rome, ten separate kingdoms were ultimately established, and we may safely assign them to the time between the dates above named; namely A.D. 351 and 476.

The ten nations which were most instrumental in breaking up the Roman Empire, and which at some time in their history held respectively portions of Roman territory as separate and independent kingdoms, may be enumerated (without respect to the time of their establishment) as follows: Huns, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Vandals, Suevi, Burgundians, Heruli, Anglo-Saxons, and Lombards. [\*] The connection between these and some of the modern nations of Europe, is still traceable in the names, as England, Burgundy, Lombardy, France, etc.

But it may be asked, Why not suppose the two legs denote division as well as the toes? Would it not be as inconsistent to say that the toes denote division and the legs do not, as to say that the legs denote division and the toes do not? We answer that the prophecy itself must govern our conclusions in this matter; for though it says nothing of division in connection with the legs, it does introduce the subject of division as we come to the feet and toes. The record says, "Whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided." No division could take



place, or at least none is said to have taken place, until the weakening element of the clay is introduced; and we do not find this until we come to the feet and toes. But we are not to understand that the clay denotes one division and the iron the other; for after the long-existing unity of the kingdom was broken, no one of the fragments was broken, no one of the fragments was as strong as the original iron, but all were in a state of weakness denoted by the mixture of iron and clay.

The conclusion is inevitable, therefore, that the prophet has here stated the cause for the effect. The introduction of the weakness of the clay element, as we come to the feet, resulted in the division of the kingdom into ten parts, as represented by the ten toes; and this result, or division, is more than intimated in the sudden mention of a plurality of contemporaneous kings. Therefore, while we find no evidence that the legs denote division, but serious objections against such a view, we do find good reason for supposing that the toes denote division, as here claimed.

Furthermore, each of the four monarchies had its own particular territory, which was the kingdom proper, and where we are to look for the chief events in its history shadowed forth by the symbol. We are not, therefore, to look for the divisions of the Roman Empire in the territory formerly occupied by Babylon, or Persia, or Grecia, but in the territory proper of the Roman kingdom, which was finally known as the Western Empire. Rome conquered the world, but the kingdom of Rome proper lay west of Grecia. That is what was represented by the legs of iron. There, then, we look for the ten kingdoms, and there we find them. We are not obliged to mutilate or deform the symbol to make it a fit and accurate representation of historical events.

*Verse 43 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.*

**Rome the Last Universal Empire.**--With Rome fell the last of the world's universal empires. Heretofore it was possible for one nation, rising superior to its neighbors in prowess, bravery, and the science of war, to consolidate them into one vast empire. But when Rome fell, such possibilities forever passed away. The iron was mixed with clay, and lost the power of cohesion. No man or combination of men can again consolidate the fragments. This point is so well set forth by another that we quote his words:

"From this, its divided state, the first strength of the empire departed--but not as that of the others had done. No other kingdom was to succeed it, as it had the three which went before it. It was to continue, in this tenfold division, until the kingdom of the stone smote it, upon its feet; broke them in pieces, and scattered them as the wind does 'the chaff of the summer threshing-floor!' Yet, through all this time, a portion of its strength was to remain. And so the prophet say, '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. Verse 42. . . . Time and again men have dreamed of rearing on these dominions one mighty kingdom.

Charlemagne tried it. Charles V tried it. Louis XIV tried it. Napoleon tried it. But neither succeeded. A single verse of prophecy was stronger than all their host. . . 'Partly strong, and partly broken,' was the prophetic description. And such, too, has been the historic fact concerning them. . . . Ten kingdoms were formed out of it; and 'broken,' as then it was, it still continues--i.e., 'partly broken.' . . . It is 'partly strong'--i.e., it retains, even in its broken state, enough of its iron strength to resist all attempts to mold its part together. 'This shall not be,' says the word of God. 'This has not been,' replies the book of history.

"But then, men may say, 'Another plan remains. If force cannot avail, diplomacy and reasons of state may--we will try them. And so the prophecy foreshadows this when it says, 'They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men'--i.e., marriages shall be formed, in hope thus to consolidate their power, and, in the end, to unite these divided kingdoms into one.

"And shall this device succeed?--No. The prophet answers: 'They shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.' And the history of Europe, is but a running commentary on the exact fulfillment of these words. From the time of Canute until the present age, it has been the policy of the reigning monarchs, the beaten path which they have trodden, in order to reach a mightier scepter and a wider sway. . . . Napoleon . . . sought to reach by alliance, what he could not gain by force, i.e., to build up one mighty, consolidated empire. And did he succeed?--Nay. The very power with which he was allied, proved his destruction, in the troops of Blucher, on the field of Waterloo! The iron would not mingle with clay." [10]

But Napoleon was not the last to try the experiment. Numerous European wars followed the efforts of the Little Corporal. To avert future conflicts, benevolent rulers resorted to the expedient of intermarriage to ensure peace, until by the opening of the twentieth century it was asserted that every ranking hereditary ruler of Europe was related to the British royal family. World War I showed the futility of these attempts.

Out of the horrors of that titanic struggle was born an ideal expressed by President Woodrow Wilson, who exclaimed, "The world has been made safe for democracy!" With the conviction that a war had been fought which would end war came the announced inherent rights of minorities, and the principles of self-determination, ensured by a world league of nations which would restrain dictators and punish aggressors.

Yet under the very shadow of the League of Nations' palace arose leaders who would destroy world peace and shatter the ideal of world union, while preaching a new social revolution. They vainly promised the triumph of culture and a union born of racial superiority ensuring the "partly strong" and "partly broken" nations of Europe "a thousand years of tranquility."

Out of the welter of confusion, the wreck of nations, the destruction of institutions, the sacrifice of treasure resultant from centuries of frugality, through eyes grief-dimmed by the loss of the flower of its young manhood, the ravishment of its womanhood, the

slaughter of infancy and age, through clouds of smoking human blood a distraught world looks anxiously for its signs of surcease. Will the elusive mirage of world peace based upon a trust in European solidarity, the result of wishful thinking, again cause men to forget the counsel of the word of God, "They shall not cleave one to another"?

Alliances may come, and it may appear that the iron and miry clay of the feet and toes of the great image have finally fused, but God said, "They shall not cleave one to another." It may seem that old animosities have disappeared and that the "ten kings" have gone the way of all the earth, but "the Scripture cannot be broken." John 10: 35.

We conclude with a word by William Newton: "And yet if, as the result of these alliances, or of other causes, that number is sometimes disturbed, it need not surprise us. The iron was 'mixed with clay.' For a season, in the image, you might not distinguish between them. But they would not remain so. 'They shall not cleave one to another.' The nature of the substances forbids them to do so in the one case; the word of prophecy in the other. Yet there was to be the attempt to mingle--nay, more, there was an approach at mingling in both cases. But it was to be abortive. And how marked the emphasis with which history affirms this declaration of the word of God!" [11]

*Verse 44 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. 45 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 God of Heaven to Set Up a Kingdom.**--We here reach the climax of this stupendous prophecy. When Time in his onward flight shall bring us to the sublime scene here predicted, we shall have reached the end of human history. The kingdom of God! Grand provision for a new and glorious dispensation, in which His people shall find a happy terminus of this world's sad, degenerate, and changing career. Transporting change for all the righteous, from gloom to glory, from strife to peace, from a sinful to a holy world, from death to life, from tyranny and oppression to the happy freedom and blessed privileges of a heavenly kingdom! Glorious transition, from weakness to strength, from the changing and decaying to the immutable and eternal!

But when is this kingdom to be established? May we hope for an answer to an inquiry of such momentous concern to our race? These are the very questions on which the word of God does not leave us in ignorance, and herein is seen the surpassing value of this heavenly boon.

The Bible plainly declares that the kingdom of God was still future at the time of our Lord's last Passover. (Matthew 26: 29.) Christ did not set up the kingdom before His ascension. (Acts 1: 6.) It states further that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of god. (1 Corinthians 15: 50.) It is a matter of promise to the apostles, and to all those

who love God. (James 2: 5.) It is promised in the future to the little flock. (Luke 12: 32.) Through much tribulation the saints are to enter the coming kingdom. (Acts 14: 22.) It is to be set up when Christ shall judge the living and the dead. (2 Timothy 4: 1.) This is to be when He shall come in

His glory with all His holy angels. (Matthew 25: 31-34.)

We do not say that the exact time is revealed (we emphasize the fact that it is not) in this prophecy of Daniel 2 or in any other prophecy; but so near an approximation is given that the generation which is to see the establishment of this kingdom may mark its approach unerringly, and make that preparation which will entitle the children of God to share in all its glories.

Time has fully developed this great image in all its parts. Most accurately does it represent the important political events it was designed to symbolize. It has stood complete for more than fourteen centuries. It waits to be smitten upon the feet by the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, that is, the kingdom of Christ. This is to be accomplished when the Lord shall be revealed in flaming fire, "taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thessalonians 1: 8. (See also Psalm 2: 8, 9.) In the days of these kings the God of heaven is to set up a kingdom. We have been in the days of these kings for many centuries, and we are still in their days. So far as this prophecy is concerned, the very next event is the setting up of God's everlasting kingdom. Other prophecies and innumerable signs show unmistakably that the coming of Christ is near at hand.

The early Christian church interpreted the prophecies of Daniel 2, 7, and 8 as we do now. Hippolytus, who lived A.D. 160-236, and is thought to have been a disciple of Irenaeus, one of the four greatest theologians of his age, says in his exposition of Daniel 2 and Daniel 7:

"The golden head of the image and lioness denoted the Babylonians; the shoulders and arms of silver, and the bear, represented the Persians and Medes; the belly and thighs of brass, and the leopard, meant the Greeks, who held the sovereignty from Alexander's time; the legs of iron, and the beast dreadful and terrible, expressed the Romans, who hold the sovereignty at present; the toes of the feet which were part clay and part iron, and the ten horns, were emblems of the kingdoms that are yet to rise; the other little horn that grows up among them meant the Antichrist in their midst; the stone that smites the earth and brings judgment upon the world was Christ." [12]

"Speak with me, O blessed Daniel. Give me full assurance, I beseech thee. Thou dost prophesy concerning the lioness in Babylon; for thou wast a captive there. Thou hast unfolded the future regarding the bear; for thou wast still in the world, and didst see the things come to pass. Then thou speakest to me of the leopard; and whence canst thou know this, for thou art already gone to thy rest? Who instructed thee to announce these things, but He who formed thee in (from ) thy mother's womb? That is God, thou sayest. Thou hast spoken indeed, and that not falsely. The leopard has arisen; the he-goat is

come; he hath broken his horns in pieces; he hath stamped upon him with his feet. He has been exalted by his fall; (the) four horns have come up from under that one. Rejoice, blessed Daniel! thou hast not been in error: all these things have come to pass.

"After this again thou hast told me of the beast dreadful and terrible. 'It had iron teeth and claws of brass: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it.' Already the iron rules; already it subdues and breaks all in pieces; already it brings all the unwilling into subjection; already we see these things ourselves. Now we glorify God, being instructed by thee." [13]

The part of the prophecy that had been fulfilled at that time was clear to the early Christians. They saw also that there would develop ten kingdoms out of the Roman Empire, and that the Antichrist would appear among them. They looked forward with hope to the grand consummation, when the second coming of Christ would bring an end to all earthly kingdoms, and the kingdom of righteousness would be set up.

The coming kingdom! This ought to be the all-absorbing topic with the present generation. Reader, are you ready for the issue? He who enters this kingdom shall dwell in it not merely for such a lifetime as men live in this present state. He shall not see it degenerate, or be overthrown by a succeeding and more powerful kingdom. No, he enters it to participate in all its privileges and blessings, and to share its glories forever, for this kingdom is not to "be left to other people."

Again we ask you, Are you ready? The terms of heirship are most liberal: "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3: 29. Are you on terms of friendship with Christ, the coming King? Do you love His character? Are you trying to walk humbly in His footsteps, and obey His teachings? If not, read your fate in the cases of those in the parable, of whom it was said, "But those Mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before Me." Luke 19: 27. There is to be no rival kingdom where you can find an asylum if you remain an enemy to this, for God's kingdom is to occupy all the territory ever possessed by any and all of the kingdoms of this world, past or present. It is to fill the whole earth. Happy they to whom the rightful Sovereign, the all-conquering King, at last can say, "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25: 34.

*Verse 46 Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odors unto him. 47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret. 48 Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. 49 Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.*

We must return to the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, and to Daniel, as he stands in the presence of the king. He has made known to the monarch the dream and its interpretation, while the courtiers and the baffled soothsayers and astrologers waited in silent awe and wonder.

**Nebuchadnezzar Exalts Daniel.**--In fulfillment of his promise of rewards the king made Daniel a great man. There are two things which in this life are specially supposed to make a man great, and both these Daniel received from the king: A man is considered great if he is a man of wealth; and we read that the king gave him many and great gifts. If in conjunction with riches a man has power, certainly in popular estimation he is considered a great man; and power was bestowed upon Daniel in abundant measure. He was made ruler over the province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. Thus speedily and abundantly did Daniel begin to be rewarded for his fidelity to his own conscience and requirements of God.

Daniel did not become bewildered or intoxicated by his signal victory and his wonderful advancement. He first remembered the three who were companions with him in anxiety respecting the king's matter. As they had helped him with their prayers, he determined that they should share his honors. At his request they were placed over the affairs of Babylon, while Daniel himself sat in the gate of the king. The gate was the place where councils were held and where matters of chief moment were considered. The record is a simple declaration that Daniel became chief counselor to the king.

[1] See Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol. IV, pp. 564, 567, notes on Daniel 1: 1; 2: 1*; Thomas Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies, Vol. I, p. 231*; Albert Barnes, *Notes on Daniel, pp. 111, 112, comment on Daniel 2: 1*.

[2] *The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. III, p. 212. By permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers in the United States.*

[3] *Ibid., p. 217.*

[4] George Rawlinson, *The Seven Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World, Vol. II, p. 610, Note 202.*

[5] See Herodotus, pp. 67-71; George Rawlinson, *The Seven Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World, Vol. II, pp. 254-259*; Humphrey Prideaux, *The Old and New Testament Connected in the History of the Jews, Vol. I, pp. 136, 137.*

[6] Humphrey Prideaux, *The Old and New Testament Connected in the History of the Jews, Vol. I, p. 137.*

[7] Thomas Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies, Vol. I, p. 240.*

[8] Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. III, general observations following chap. 38, p. 634. There are many editions of Gibbon's work*

*beside the one used in the preparation of this book. For the student who has a different edition, the chapter is included in all references to facilitate the finding of the quotations.*

*[9] Ibid., Vol. I, chap. 3, pp. 99, 100.*

*[10] William Newton, Lectures on the First Two Visions of the Book of Daniel, pp. 34-36.*

*[11] Ibid., p. 36.*

*[12] Hippolytus, "Treatise on Christ and Antichrist," Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. V, p. 210, par 28.*

*[13] Ibid., pars. 32, 33.*

*[\*] In harmony with seven leading commentators, the author includes the Huns as one of the ten kingdoms. Others, however, with historical precedent, name the Alamanni, or Germans, instead of the Huns.--Editors.*