

# Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

One Sunday morning after the worship service a woman approached the pastor and thanked him for the encouraging sermon he had preached. Struggling to respond he said, "Oh, do not thank me, but thank the Lord." He waited for what seemed to be a long minute and then she answered with, "Well, I thought about that, but the sermon was not THAT good!" We laugh at the situation but the pastor's point is true. It is God's Spirit that produces good in our lives. Yet not everyone will agree or realize that God should receive the credit. We will see shortly that Nebuchadnezzar has his own view!

**GOD HONORS AN UNBELIEVING KING.** During our last study we saw that God had revealed a dream to Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel 2:29 told us that Nebuchadnezzar had been on his bed thinking about the future and that God can read our thoughts. Have you ever wondered if God can read your thoughts? Then this verse answers your question.

As for you, O king, while on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future; and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place.  
(NASB) Daniel 2:29

God knew his thoughts. Thoughts he had while in bed; and God answered his wish - he did not even pray. God graciously reached out to this man one more time, to a man who did not worship Him. The king did not believe in the one true God but in many gods. Stop to think - God gave the first outline of the future to one who did not worship the one true God. Now if God cared for one who did not love Him, how much more does He love His saints. God is good!

Nebuchadnezzar wanted to know the meaning of his

dream but his "wise men" had failed him. So he decided to kill them. But Daniel asked for time to discover and interpret the dream. After Daniel and his friends prayed, God gave the dream and its interpretation to Daniel. Then Daniel returned to the king and told him that God had given him the dream along with the interpretation. Daniel rejected any personal glory or credit and gave it all to God.

The Dream Revealed. Then Daniel proceeded to describe the dream.

You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and

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crushed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that



struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. This was the dream . . . Daniel 2:31-36 (NASB)

The dream is about a statue with a head of gold, a chest made of silver, a waist and hips made of bronze, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay. A stone smashes the statue and turns into a mountain. What a strange dream! This last symbol would have had meaning to Nebuchadnezzar since the Babylonians believed that the earth was a mountain and called it *e-kur* which means “Mountain House.” Babylon was a city with many gold idols. No wonder the king must have been eager to know the meaning of the statue.

**THE INTERPRETATION.** Daniel then continued and explained the meaning of the statue.

. . . now we shall tell its interpretation before the king. You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory; and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold. (NASB) Daniel 2:36-38

*Babylonian Empire.* The head of gold is Nebuchadnezzar or the Babylonian Empire. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar the

only reason he had been successful in conquering people and nations was that He, God, had done it. The prophet Jeremiah explained this when he recorded the Lord’s words,

For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, “I have put a yoke of iron on the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him. And I have also given him the beasts of the field. Jeremiah 28:14 (NASB)

Nebuchadnezzar did not do this on his own. It was actually God who gave him the victory and authority. This is a great reminder for us.

When we accomplish something we consider to be wonderful, we need to thank God for doing it through us. We need to give Him the credit. And after you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth. (NASB) Dan. 2:39

## The Great Statue

Daniel 2:36-45



*Media-Persia and Grecian Empires.* The next two kingdoms are silver and bronze which history tells us are Media-Persia and Greece. Later we will see that Daniel also called them Media-Persia and Greece.

Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch

as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. (NASB) Dan. 2:40

*Roman Empire.* The fourth kingdom is symbolized by iron. History tells us that this is the Roman Empire. It conquered Greece. In this verse we are told this kingdom is strong since iron “crushes and shatters all things.” The point God is making is that this kingdom is the strongest of the four kingdoms. Each kingdom is made of stronger metals but God says each one is also inferior than the proceeding one. Strength and greatness are not the same as far as God is concerned.

And in that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery. (NASB) Dan. 2:41-43

*Future Form of the Roman Empire.* When we come to the feet, the focus is on the ten toes. We will see later that

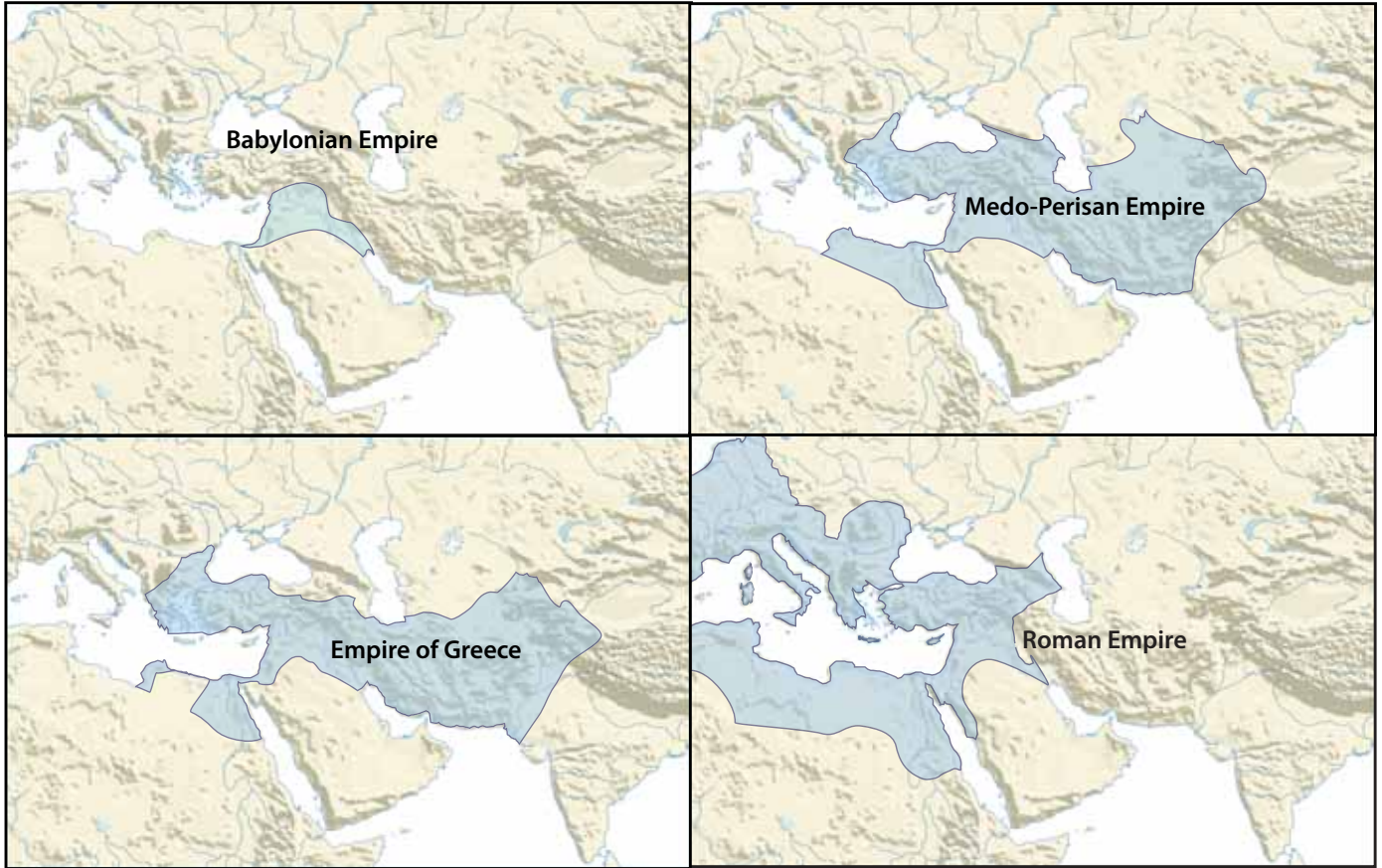
the feet represent a kingdom and the ten toes are ten kings. Since the feet are iron and the toes are made of both iron, and clay, this is a continuation of the last kingdom - the Roman Empire. The Spirit of God said the iron and clay will combine in the seed of men but not adhere to one another. What is being described is a group of different nations, kings, or peoples (for example English, French, Spanish, German, American, Italian, etc.) coming together and acting as one power. Today we would call this an alliance or a coalition. We will learn more about this kingdom, symbolized by ten toes, later in Daniel. For now, we should remember that this kingdom is a return of the old Roman Empire in a different form.

And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy.” (NASB) Dan. 2:44-45

*Eternal Kingdom.* The stone represents the last kingdom. It is God’s kingdom. Daniel has been describing real,

### Kingdoms Compared

	Babylonian	Medo-Persian	Grecian	Roman
Metal →	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Iron
Value →	Highest	High	Low	Lowest
Density →	19	11	8.5	7.8
Size ←	Smallest	Small	Large	Largest
Dynasty ←	70 yrs	208 yrs	185 yrs	622 yrs



earthly, literal kingdoms which conquer each other. We will see later this kingdom is also a real, earthly, literal kingdom. It hits the feet and the statue disappears - the statue represents human power, government, and authority. God's message is that some day He will finally take over and establish His kingdom forever. With those comments, Daniel was finished.

**CONCLUSION.** My family and I developed a game we called Cahoots We would play the game with some our guests and used it to introduce Jesus Christ. We explained there was nothing supernatural about it. The game required that one of my children to step out of the room while one of our guests selected an object in the room. Then my daughter would return and I would start naming various objects in the room and she would eventually identify the object from a list of objects I named. We allowed our guests to place restrictions on what I said, the number of objects I named, who named the objects - any limits they wanted. My daughter would almost always identify the selected object

correctly. Some believed she was reading their thoughts. She did not. Our guests were impressed. Imagine how the king must have felt. He was sitting their listening to this young man, a recent captive, reveal his thoughts. Thoughts he had while in bed. Nebuchadnezzar was impressed! He was so impressed that he . . .

. . . fell on his face and did homage to Daniel, and gave orders to present to him an offering and fragrant incense. The king answered Daniel and said, "Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery." Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. And Daniel made request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego over the administration of the province of Babylon, while Daniel was at the king's court. Dan. 2:46-49 (NASB)

The king did not respond like the woman to the pastor saying, “. . . the sermon was not THAT good! The king responded by worshipping Daniel. He thought Daniel’s interpretation was supernatural and it was.



Holy Spirit has done through them. We see God causing spiritual growth in the lives of people, folks coming to the Lord, or experience something wonderful through us and

Did Daniel allow the king to worship him? It appears that Daniel rebuked the king between verse 46 and 47 (it is not recorded) for worshipping him since the Hebrew text says the king was “answering.” I think Daniel did this because it appears the king immediately started to make excuses. The king honored his promise in Daniel 2:6 gave Daniel gifts and a promotion.

But as honorable as he was, Nebuchadnezzar missed the point just as we often do. We forget that God is the Designer and we are just the vessel He works through. When Daniel first started speaking to the king, he told the king the dream and its interpretation was from God. Daniel’s point was it is not me! But just like us, the king still missed the point and he worshiped the servant not the Sender. He worshiped the dust and not the Creator.

All too often Christians want the credit for what God’s

we find it hard to give all the credit to God. Some years ago, a man commented during a Bible study that he deserved the credit. He explained that he had studied and labored; if God used it, he deserved part of the credit. Daniel disagrees!

*It is said that Alexander the Great was standing and watching Diogenes and after awhile asked Diogenes what he was doing. When asked, the older man answered, “I am searching for the bones of your father, but I cannot determine the dust of your father from the dust of the slaves.”*

When all of our labor is over, what credit do we gain in this life? When I pass from this life into heaven, I want to hear, “You have been a good and faithful servant!” I have no need to rob God in this life. I want to be like Daniel and give all the credit to God - to give My Creator all of the glory?