

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of a Huge Statue



DANIEL 2:1-49

**TEXT, EXPOSITION AND PRACTICAL
HELPS**

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DIVISION II

The History and Destiny of the Nations: Six Pictures Revealed in Daniel's Prophecies, [Daniel 2:1-7:28](#)

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of a Huge Statue: A Picture of Nations Rising and Falling and of God's Coming Triumphant Kingdom, [Daniel 2:1-49](#)

[\(Daniel 2:1-49\)](#) **Introduction:** nations rise and nations fall. No nation lasts forever. Nations collapse *because of* changes in government, rebellion, war, betrayal, weak leadership, and a lack of righteousness, justice, morality, and godliness.

In the present Scripture *Babylon is seen to be the first major worldwide empire*. Thus King Nebuchadnezzar, as well as all the world leaders who were to succeed him, needed to learn a much needed lesson: it was the LORD Himself who had appointed them to be rulers; therefore they were held accountable for the way they treated and governed people. It was their wicked behavior and sinful lifestyles that caused nations to rise and fall upon earth. Wicked behavior and unbelief eats away at the heart of any nation and eventually causes a nation to collapse. But the day is coming when God will banish all the wicked and unbelieving nations from the face of the earth. He will establish His kingdom and rule the citizens of the earth in perfect righteousness and justice.

In the days of Daniel there was a great need for this wonderful promise given by God. Jerusalem and the nation of Judah had fallen to Babylon. The entire country with all its cities had been totally destroyed, and the land had been stripped of all its wealth. The survivors of the war had been deported to Babylon, and a deep sense of despair and hopelessness had gripped their hearts. After all, their nation had been utterly destroyed, which meant that they had lost their homes, property, wealth, and that many of their own family had been slaughtered in the war. Each exile was bound to be wondering what lay ahead in the future? Would Jerusalem and that nation ever be rebuilt? Would they and their family ever again have a home, property, jobs, and money enough to live a normal life? Were their fate and the fate of their nation finally sealed when Babylon burned the city to the ground?

If the Jewish people ever needed some glimpse of hope, it was now. As this passage points out, God knew the people's need. He gave Nebuchadnezzar, the very king who had destroyed Jerusalem, a special dream. This dream is the subject of the present Scripture.

Within the dream God pronounces a strong warning to the nations of the earth and offers the greatest of hopes to all true believers, both Jews and Gentiles. **This is, *Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream of a Huge Statue: A Picture of Nations Rising and Falling and of God’s Coming Triumphant Kingdom*, [Daniel 2:1-49](#).**

1. **Nebuchadnezzar’s disturbance over a particular dream: an example of the occult world’s inability to help in time of dire need (vv.1-13).**
2. **Daniel’s intervention and seeking to understand the dream: an example of God’s answering prayer (vv.14-30).**
3. **God’s explanation of the dream: a picture of the ultimate triumph of God’s kingdom (vv.31-49).**

1. ([Daniel 2:1-13](#)) Dreams, Interpretation of, Sought Anxiously; not Given to Occult Advisors—Occult World, Inability of, to Interpret Dreams; to Truly Help—Magicians, of Occult World, Inability to Help—Enchanters, of Occult World, Inability to Help—Sorcerers, Inability of, to Interpret Dreams—Astrologers, Inability of, to Truly Help—Nebuchadnezzar, Dreams of, Anxiously Disturbed: Nebuchadnezzar was deeply disturbed over a particular dream, so troubled and agitated that he could not sleep.

Scripture says that Nebuchadnezzar had this dream in the second year of his reign ([Daniel 2:1](#)). Since Daniel was already a royal adviser by the time Nebuchadnezzar had this dream, how could it have occurred in the second year of the king’s reign? How could this be if Daniel was taken captive in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign and studied in the king’s palace for three years before becoming a royal adviser ([Daniel 1:1-21](#))?

Most likely, Daniel was counting the years of the king’s reign in fractions of years rather than full years. This would mean that Nebuchadnezzar’s reign began in **605 B.C.** and that his dream took place in **603 B.C.**

The following chart shows how all the events could have taken place:

Years of Training	King Nebuchadnezzar’s Reign
First Year	605 B.C.: the year Nebuchadnezzar assumed the throne
Second Year	604–603 B.C.: the first full year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign
Third Year	603–602 B.C.: the second full year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign

Note that Scripture uses the plural: *dreams*. Since Daniel interpreted only one dream, the king was obviously having the same dream night after night. Every night the troubling dream woke him up. This nightly occurrence convinced him that its message was of extreme importance.

Scripture graphically describes his desperate search for someone who could tell him what it meant:

a. King Nebuchadnezzar summoned his occult advisers to *recall* and *interpret* the dream ([Daniel 2:2-3](#)). These advisers included the *magicians* and *enchanters* discussed earlier ([Daniel 1:20](#)) and two other classes of occult advisors: the *sorcerers* and *astrologers*. *Sorcerers* (*mekassepim*) were wizards who practiced witchcraft or sorcery. They used their witchcraft to charm and fascinate people, to bewitch and cast spells over them. No doubt, some sorcerers were influenced by evil spirits. Consequently, the LORD strongly warned His people against sorcerers and pronounced severe judgment upon them ([Ex. 7:11](#); [22:18](#); [Deut. 18:10](#); [Isa. 47:9, 12](#); [Jer. 27:9](#); [Mal. 3:5](#)).

Astrologers or *Chaldeans* (*kasdim*) were a special class of wise men or priests who studied the stars and horoscopes in order to predict the destiny of people and events. Apparently the Chaldeans were the leaders among the occult advisors, an elite class of Babylonian men or priests who held a high position in the royal court. They were the leaders among the occult advisors, the ones who always spoke directly to the king in behalf of the others ([Daniel 2:4, 5, 10](#)).

Standing before the mighty king of the Babylonian Empire, the occult advisers were the religious leaders of the nation. They specialized in knowing the gods of the Babylonians, the future and destiny that the so-called gods had determined for the king and people. They were the *psychics*, the secular religious advisers of their day. As soon as they appeared before him, Nebuchadnezzar informed them that he had a dream that deeply troubled him, a dream that he wanted the occult advisers to interpret.

b. Addressing the king with the customary greeting (“O King, live forever”), the occult advisers urged Nebuchadnezzar to tell them his dream ([Daniel 2:4](#)). Speaking with great confidence, they assured him they would study and interpret the dream for him. **Note that the advisors spoke to the king in Aramaic. From this point to the end of chapter seven, Daniel is written in Aramaic, which was the common language of the day ([Daniel 2:4–7:28](#)).** These are the chapters that deal primarily with the Gentile nations; therefore, Daniel used the Aramaic language so that the common people could more easily understand the LORD’s prophecies and messages that concerned them. **Beginning with chapter eight, Daniel will once more write in Hebrew because the final chapters of the book concern the future destiny of the Jewish people ([Daniel 8:1–12:13](#)).**

c. The king repeated his impossible demand: his occult advisers **must reveal as well as interpret** his dream ([Daniel 2:5-6](#)). This demand shows how important Nebuchadnezzar thought the dream was. He considered it so significant that he tested his advisers to make sure their interpretation was correct. After all, if they had the power to know the future by interpreting dreams, they should be able to know the past by recalling dreams. If they were servants of true gods, their gods

could reveal the content of the dream to them as well as the meaning of the dream. Nebuchadnezzar knew that if he simply told them his dream, they might come up with an interpretation that would seem plausible but be utterly false. The dream seemed so important that he could not run the risk of receiving some speculative, worthless interpretation. If the dream was truly from God, he wanted the true interpretation.

Nebuchadnezzar issued a severe warning to his advisers. If they failed to reveal and interpret his dream, they would be executed in the most gruesome way imaginable. He would have them torn limb from limb and their bodies cut into small pieces. Furthermore, he would have their houses reduced to rubble ([Daniel 2:5](#)). However, if they revealed and explained the dream, he would see to it that they were richly rewarded and greatly honored ([Daniel 2:6](#)).

d. No doubt the occult advisers were terrified, for they knew that the king meant exactly what he said. Nebuchadnezzar never made idle threats. His harsh treatment of enemies and those who failed him was well known. Remember that Nebuchadnezzar had slain the sons of King Zedekiah before his very eyes and then put out Zedekiah's eyes and enslaved him ([2 Kings 25:7](#)). He had also executed two Jewish rebels by burning them while alive ([Jeremiah 29:22](#)).

[2 Kings 25:7 \(NASB\)](#)

“⁷ They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, then put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon.”

[Jeremiah 29:22 \(NASB\)](#)

“²² Because of them a curse will be used by all the exiles from Judah who are in Babylon, saying, May the Lord make you like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire.”

The occult advisers were helpless. They had no way of knowing what Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed, and their so-called gods were powerless to reveal it to them. They knew they were doomed unless they could convince Nebuchadnezzar to divulge his dream. Once more, they urged and pleaded with the king to tell them his dream. If he would reveal the contents, they could give him an accurate interpretation.

e. Obviously irritated, Nebuchadnezzar accused the occult advisers of stalling for time ([Daniel 2:8-9](#)). Reminding them of the severe penalty hanging over their heads, he accused them of conspiring to mislead him by continuing to discuss the issue until he changed his mind and revealed the dream. Thus he warned them again: they must prove the accuracy of their interpretation by also revealing the dream.

f. Knowing that they could no longer stall for time, the occult advisers pleaded with the king.

They made three claims ([Daniel 2:10-11](#)):

1. No person on earth could recall another person's dream.
2. No king in history had ever asked such a thing.
3. Only the gods themselves could reveal the dream, and the gods did not live among people.

The occult advisers **made two serious mistakes** in their plea. **First**, they were accusing the king of being unreasonable in his demand that they recall as well as interpret the dream. **Second**, they were admitting that they were not in close enough touch with their so-called gods to receive messages from them. As a result of this admission, Nebuchadnezzar knew that they were frauds, false prophets.

g. Filled with anger, Nebuchadnezzar reacted furiously ([Daniel 2:12-13](#)). He immediately ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon, which included Daniel and his friends.

Thought 1. In the ancient world Babylon was known as the major center of astrology and of every conceivable practice of the occult world. All the *occult powers* for which people's hearts craved were found in Babylon. But they were not *true powers*. They were **either one of two things: deceptive gods** created by the imaginations of people's minds or *demonic forces* that were misleading people.

We must guard against placing our confidence in the false claims of the occult world, a world that is controlled by demonic forces. When we face hardships or crises, true help cannot come from the occult world. ***True help*** can be found only in the LORD. No occult ritual can ever save or help a person. Even if we continually seek the help of some astrologer or psychic, there will be no *true* help forthcoming. When all has been said and done, we will simply be left helpless and exhausted. Even the occult leaders who study the stars and planets and forecast their influence over human affairs cannot save one person from the future, from what is coming upon him or her.

Our destiny cannot be foretold or changed by astrology or by stargazing. Occult leaders can only give us empty counsel, no matter how much money we may pay them for their advice. No matter how much they may look into the future to foresee our destiny, they themselves are only physical human beings like us. Both the occult leader and we are limited by the physical, material world. Neither they nor any of us can look into the spiritual world (**dimension**) and foresee the future destiny of our lives. Only God Himself is **omniscient** (all-knowing), **omnipresent** (present everywhere), and **omnipotent** (all-powerful).

Only the LORD knows the future destiny of our lives and of the world. Therefore, only He has the power to control our future. Only He can meet our needs. Only He can deliver us from the hardships and crises of life. Time and again God warns us against following the practices of the occult world.

Note the occult practices mentioned in these warnings:

Galatians 5:19-21 (NASB)

**“¹⁹ Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,
²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,
²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”**

Revelation 21:8 (NASB)

“⁸ But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part *will be* in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

Leviticus 19:31 (NASB)

“³¹ Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.”

Leviticus 20:6 (NASB)

“⁶ As for the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists, to play the harlot after them, I will also set My face against that person and will cut him off from among his people.”

Deuteronomy 18:9-13 (NASB)

**“⁹ When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations.
¹⁰ There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer,
¹¹ or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.
¹² For whoever does these things is detestable to the Lord; and because of these detestable things the Lord your God will drive them out before you.
¹³ You shall be blameless before the Lord your God.”**

1 Chronicles 10:13 (NASB)

“¹³ So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against the Lord, because of the word of the Lord which he did not keep; and also because he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry *of it*.”

Isaiah 8:19-20 (NASB)

“¹⁹ When they say to you, "Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter," should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?

²⁰ To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn [light].”

Isaiah 47:12-15 (NASB)

“¹² Stand *fast* now in your spells And in your many sorceries With which you have labored from your youth; Perhaps you will be able to profit, Perhaps you may cause trembling.

¹³ You are wearied with your many counsels; Let now the astrologers, Those who prophesy by the stars, Those who predict by the new moons, Stand up and save you from what will come upon you.

¹⁴ Behold, they have become like stubble, Fire burns them; They cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame; There will be no coal to warm by *Nor* a fire to sit before!

¹⁵ So have those become to you with whom you have labored, Who have trafficked with you from your youth; Each has wandered in his own way; There is none to save you.”

Micah 5:12 (NASB)

“¹² I will cut off sorceries from your hand, And you will have fortune-tellers no more.”

2. (Daniel 2:14-30) Prayer, Example of, Daniel—Dreams, Interpretation of, Sought by Daniel; Given by God—God, Described, by Daniel: Daniel intervened and sought to understand the dream of Nebuchadnezzar.

Apparently, he was not in the royal court when Nebuchadnezzar issued the decree for the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. When word reached him, he immediately took the necessary steps to do what he could to help the situation.

Scripture paints a suspenseful, dramatic scene of his intervention into the crises:

a. Daniel learned about the king’s decree of execution when Arioch, the commander of the royal guard, came to arrest the prophet. Naturally Daniel tactfully questioned Arioch, asking why he was being arrested and why the king issued such a harsh decree. After Arioch had explained the situation, Daniel requested that the captain secure an audience for him with Nebuchadnezzar.

b. When Daniel was ushered into the presence of the king, he requested time to seek the LORD for both the *content* and *meaning* of the dream (**Daniel 2:16**). **Note the confidence of Daniel in the LORD. Without hesitation**, he declared that the LORD could do the impossible and reveal the dream as well as its interpretation. Obviously, Nebuchadnezzar held Daniel in the highest esteem, for he granted Daniel’s request.

c. Quickly returning home, Daniel explained the situation to his three friends so they could join him in seeking the LORD for mercy ([Daniel 2:17-18](#)). The situation was critical, life-threatening. They would be executed unless the LORD had mercy by revealing the dream and delivering them from the decree of execution. Only the LORD's mercy in revealing the dream and its meaning could preserve their lives. **Note that no record is given of the actual prayer offered up by Daniel and his three friends.**

d. Sometime during the night, the LORD gave Daniel a very special vision of the dream ([Daniel 2:19](#)). In answer to the prayers of the four young men, the LORD revealed both the *content* and the *meaning* of the dream to Daniel.

e. The prophet immediately began to praise the name of the LORD by declaring that God deserved praise forever and ever ([Daniel 2:20-23](#)).

Constant praise was due God for four reasons.

1) God deserves praise because all wisdom and power belonged to the LORD. He is **omniscient**, which means that He knows all things as well as what to do in every circumstance. The LORD is also **omnipotent**, possessing all power, which means that He can do anything to accomplish His purposes on earth and to deliver His people through the crises of life.

2) God deserves praise because He controls all events ([Daniel 2:21^a](#)). He controls the times and seasons of events, exactly when they take place and how long they last. Furthermore, He alone removes and rises up the rulers of the world. Although the leaders of the world may think they have secured power and authority by their own efforts, it is the LORD who has given them the ability and right to rule and lead people.

3) God deserves praise because He gives “**wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning**” (NIV). He alone reveals deep and mysterious things and knows what is in the darkness. He alone dwells in perfect light. Thus it was the LORD alone who revealed both the dream and its interpretation to Daniel. Note how Daniel is claiming that *ultimate truth* can be found only in the LORD Himself, in His Holy Word that He alone reveals.

4) God deserves praise because He had given Daniel superhuman wisdom and power ([Daniel 2:23](#)). The LORD had revealed and interpreted the king's dream for his dear servant. The LORD had given him the wisdom and power to understand what no human power could ever reveal. The LORD had revealed the actual *content* and *meaning* of another person's dream.

Note Daniel's deep love for the LORD. Instead of rushing immediately to Nebuchadnezzar with the content and meaning of his dream, Daniel took time—a long time—to praise the LORD. Filled with deep love and appreciation for the LORD's mercy, this dear servant worshipped the LORD despite the life and death threat that hung over his head. In Daniel's mind it was far more important to *first* worship and praise the LORD than it was to have the king remove the decree of execution.

f. After his prayer of praise and thanksgiving, Daniel immediately appealed to Arioch not to execute the wise men of Babylon ([Daniel 2:24](#)). Assuring him that he could interpret the king's dream, the prophet asked Arioch to take him to see Nebuchadnezzar.

g. Escorting Daniel into the king's presence, Arioch informed Nebuchadnezzar that he had found a man who could reveal and explain the dream. Nebuchadnezzar asked Daniel if this was true. Could he both **recall and interpret** the dream?

h. Grasping this unusual opportunity, Daniel bore a strong witness for the LORD ([Daniel 2:27-30](#)). He declared that the LORD alone had the knowledge to reveal both the content and the meaning of the king's dream. The occult advisers did not possess such knowledge. Neither they nor their so-called gods could do such a thing, as had already been proven before the king. But there is a *God in heaven* that is able to reveal such mysteries. In fact the dream of the king had been given by the LORD, this **"God in heaven."**

The LORD was showing Nebuchadnezzar *what will happen in the latter days*. The LORD was giving the king a dream about coming events while he was sleeping upon his bed ([Daniel 2:28-29](#)). **But the king must keep in mind one important fact:** the credit for revealing this mystery of future events belongs to the LORD alone, not to Daniel. Daniel was not wiser than other people. He possessed no greater knowledge than any other wise person. It was God Himself who alone revealed the content and meaning of the dream for the king. **No credit for recalling and interpreting was to be given to Daniel. All credit was to be given to the LORD alone.**

Note how Daniel is declaring that all the occult advisers and their so-called gods were worthless in being able to help Nebuchadnezzar or any other person. Only the LORD Himself possessed the knowledge and power to *truly help* people in their understanding of life and in facing the crises of life.

Thought 1. Only the LORD can help us when we face the hardships, crises, and temptations of life. When any trial or seduction confronts us, we need to do exactly what Daniel did: immediately go to the LORD in prayer. When we pour our hearts out to Him and seek His help, the LORD promises to come to our aid.

No matter what pressure, distress or grief presses in upon our souls, the LORD will help us to triumph over the difficult circumstance.

Listen to the wonderful promises God gives to those who truly seek Him through prayer:

Matthew 7:7-8 (NASB)

“⁷ Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

Mark 11:24 (NASB)

“²⁴ Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be *granted* you.”

John 14:13-14 (NASB)

“¹³ Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

¹⁴ If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*.”

John 15:7 (NASB)

“⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”

John 16:24 (NASB)

“²⁴ Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.”

James 5:15-18 (NASB)

“¹⁵ And the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.”

1 John 3:22-23 (NASB)

“²² And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

²³ This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.”

Deuteronomy 4:29 (NASB)

“²⁹ But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find *Him* if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul.”

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NASB)

“¹⁴ And My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

Psalms 91:15 (NASB)

“¹⁵ He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him.”

Isaiah 41:17 (NASB)

“¹⁷ The afflicted and needy are seeking water, but there is none, And their tongue is parched with thirst; I, the Lord, will answer them Myself, As the God of Israel I will not forsake them.”

Isaiah 65:24 (NASB)

“²⁴ It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.”

Jeremiah 29:13 (NASB)

“¹³ You will seek Me and find *Me* when you search for Me with all your heart.”

Jeremiah 33:3 (NASB)

“³ Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”

3. (Daniel 2:31-49) Kingdom of God, Prophecy Concerning, Triumph of—Prophecy, of Five Kingdoms, Rise and Fall of—Dream, of Nebuchadnezzar, Rise and Fall of Five Kingdoms—History, Prophecy Concerning, Five World Empires—Daniel, Interpreter of Dreams, Five Kingdoms—Daniel, Prophecies of, Five World Empires—Nebuchadnezzar, Dreams of, a Huge Statue—Messiah, Prophecy Concerning, Ultimate Triumph—World Empires, Prophecy Concerning, Messiah’s Final Triumph Over: God’s explanation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream concerned “the times (or age) of the Gentiles,” which is a term given by Christ Himself (Luke 21:24).

This term, “**the times of the Gentiles,**” *refers* to the rule of Gentile nations over the earth until the day when Christ will return to set up God’s kingdom on earth (Luke 21:24-28).

Luke 21:24-28 (NASB)

“²⁴ And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

²⁵ There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves,

²⁶ men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

²⁷ **Then they will see The Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.**

²⁸ **But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”**

Nebuchadnezzar’s dream concerned **four significant empires** that were to rule upon earth. The **fourth empire (Rome)** would have features that would be adopted by the succeeding world powers of human history. Then in the last days a restoration of the **fourth empire** will take place, a power so great that it will wreck havoc all over the world. This final Gentile power will be led by the infamous *man of lawlessness*, the antichrist himself. However, **the LORD revealed a fifth kingdom** in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. **God’s kingdom is the fifth kingdom.** The Scripture and outline paint a suspenseful scene of Daniel standing before the mighty king Nebuchadnezzar as he reveals one of the most amazing prophecies in all the Holy Scripture.

a. First, Daniel revealed the content of the dream to the king (**Daniel 2:31-35**). In his dream Nebuchadnezzar had seen a large, huge statue. The statue was enormous, awesome, dazzling—a frightening image.

Five features in particular were noticed about the statue:

1. Its head was pure gold.
2. Its chest and arms were silver.
3. Its belly and thighs were bronze.
4. Its legs were iron.
5. Its feet were part iron and part clay.

While staring at the statue in his dream, the king watched as a huge rock was supernaturally cut out of a mountain and started rolling down the side of the mountain (**Daniel 2:34**). The huge stone struck the statue’s feet of iron and clay, smashing them. With no foundation under it, the statue collapsed with great force. Its pieces were shattered into minute dust, so minute that the wind swept away all trace of the statue. Then suddenly, where the statue had stood, the huge stone actually began to grow into a huge mountain until it finally filled the whole earth with its presence (**Daniel 2:35**).

b. Daniel announced that this was the dream Nebuchadnezzar had been given by the LORD. Now he would interpret and explain the meaning of the dream. As mentioned in the introductory statement, the statue represented four kingdoms and the stone symbolized the very kingdom of God Himself (**Daniel 2:36-45^a**).

1) The head of gold represented Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon (625–539 B.C.). Note that Daniel informed Nebuchadnezzar that he was the most powerful king on earth at that time, a king who ruled over many kings. But he must keep in mind one thing: it was **“the God of heaven”** who had given him the right to rule upon earth. His kingdom, in fact, his very life—all his power, honor and strength—were a gift from God Himself.

Therefore, his rule was a responsibility placed into his hands by God. The suggestion is that Nebuchadnezzar would be held accountable for the way he ruled over people.

2) The chest and arms of silver represented the reign of the Medes and Persians (539–331 B.C.). Daniel said that after the fall of Babylon another world empire would arise, but that it would be inferior to the Babylonian Empire. The two arms apparently symbolized the **two divisions** of the empire, that is, **Media** and **Persia**. The **Medo-Persian Empire** dominated the **Near and Middle East** for *more* than two hundred years.

3) The bronze belly and thighs of the statue represent the Grecian Empire (331–146 B.C.). In 331 B.C., **Alexander the Great** quickly swept across the Medo-Persian Empire and decisively defeated its army in a number of battles.

4) The statue's legs of iron was the fourth kingdom, which was represented by Rome (Daniel 2:40-43). Rome was to dominate the world for about **600 years (146 B.C.–476 A.D.)**.

Four significant features of the fourth kingdom are pointed out:

1. The fourth kingdom will crush all opposing powers with its iron fist ([Daniel 2:40](#)).
2. The fourth kingdom will be a divided empire, a federation of nations at the end of its history ([Daniel 2:41](#)). This is represented by the feet and ten toes that were part iron and part clay.
3. The fourth kingdom will have parts (nations) as strong as iron and others as weak as clay ([Daniel 2:42](#)).
4. The fourth kingdom will be a mix of people who will not remain united any more than iron mixed with clay ([Daniel 2:43](#)).

It should be noted that the feet and toes are a mere extension of the legs or the fourth kingdom (**the Roman Empire**). But the feet and toes are at the end or bottom of the legs, which suggests that they represent the final phase of the Roman Empire. Interestingly, the long legs or long history of the Roman Empire are said to be made of iron, but its feet and toes, which represent the end of its history, are said to be a kingdom made of iron and clay.

The point is significant and is explained in more detail by chapter seven ([Daniel 7:7-8, 19-27](#)). Although chapters two and seven involve two different dreams, the same kingdoms or empires are being described. A quick glance at the two chapters and outlines will clearly show this.

Thus the explanation of the present Scripture is *clearly explained* by **chapter seven**.

1. In **chapter seven**, Daniel dreams of four fearsome beasts that arose out of the great sea of humanity. The fourth beast represented Rome, just as it does here in chapter two. The beast of Daniel's dream had ten horns that paralleled the ten toes, of Nebuchadnezzar's huge statue. Again the ten horns are said to be ten kings who arise from the fourth kingdom (**Rome**). But a new feature is added: a little horn arises from among the other ten, which clearly represents the antichrist who is to arise in the latter days of human history. This fact places the ten toes and ten horns—the federation of nations—in the latter days right before the coming of Christ to establish God's kingdom on earth. In the last days of human history there will apparently be a league of nations that will be very much like the Roman Empire.
2. In **chapter two**, prophecy reveals that the final phase of the fourth kingdom—the Roman Empire—will have the same four traits that are spelled out by the Scripture and outline above ([Daniel 2:40-43](#)).
3. The federation of nations governed by the antichrist will crush all opposing powers with its iron fist ([Daniel 2:40](#)).
4. The federation of nations governed by the antichrist will be a divided empire, a league of nations with each having its own interests at heart ([Daniel 2:41](#)).
5. The federation of nations governed by the antichrist will include some nations as strong as iron and some as weak as clay ([Daniel 2:42](#)).
6. The federation of nations governed by the antichrist will be a mix of people who will not remain united any more than iron mixed with clay ([Daniel 2:43](#)).

However, despite the strong federation of nations that will be established by the antichrist, his world empire will be broken up, divided by a revolt among some of the stronger nations from the east and north ([Daniel 2:41](#); [Daniel 11:44-45](#)). Because of the emphasis prophecy places upon the fourth kingdom (the Roman Empire), it is helpful to study the following Scriptures together: [Daniel 2:40-43](#); [Daniel 7:7-28](#); [Daniel 11:36-45](#).

Another fact should be noted about these four kingdoms. Each kingdom seems to decline more than the former empire. **This is seen in two facts.** **First**, the metals of the statue became less valuable with each succeeding kingdom. For example, the **gold representing Babylon** was far more valuable than the **silver representing Medo-Persia**, and the **silver representing Greece** was more valuable than the **iron and clay that represented Rome**.

Secondly, the Scripture actually states that Medo-Persia was inferior to Babylon. The implication seems to be that each succeeding empire or period of

history was inferior to the one before. Of course, this could not be referring to the military and economic power of nations, for the might and wealth of nations have increased enormously.

Thus the decline must be referring to the deterioration of morality down through the centuries.

1. Almost all nations or eras can look back over their history and see a general decline in their society's morality. But the cesspool of immorality, lawlessness, violence, greed, selfishness, and oppression that is so prevalent throughout society today all suggests a greater degree of decline in morality than ever before. What God's Holy Word calls *evil* is now called *good* and *acceptable* by many people. And most tragic of all, although it has been thousands of years since Christ came to save the world, people still reject, deny, and even curse the Name of God—perhaps now more than ever.
2. Even those who worship are often worshipping a god created by their own imagination rather than the God revealed by Christ and the Holy Bible. And sadly, more people are probably seeking truth through the occult world than in the Holy Scriptures.
3. Daniel clearly predicts that in the last days of the **fourth kingdom**, during the days of the antichrist, there will be an increase of evil on earth. The name of God will be cursed as never before. Lawlessness, violence, cruelty, and all other imaginable evil will run rampant throughout the world. Morally the kingdoms of the earth will not grow but rather decline, and they will be ruled over by the *man of lawlessness* himself, **the antichrist** (see **chapters seven and eleven**).

Note how Scripture describes morality in the last days of human history:

2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NASB)

“¹ But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.
² For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,
³ unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good,
⁴ treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,
⁵ holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.”

5) The stone cut out of a mountain represents the last kingdom, which will be God's eternal kingdom (**Daniel 2:44-45**). This is the final scene, the climax of human history. The final kingdom and empire to rule the world will be established by the Lord Jesus Christ, the God of heaven Himself.

Five facts are revealed about God's coming kingdom.

First, God's kingdom will be set up during the days of the kings mentioned above ([Daniel 2:44](#)). Obviously, this is a reference to the kings represented by the feet and ten toes of the fourth kingdom ([Daniel 2:41-43](#)). This is clear because the first four kings were not in existence at the same time; whereas, the kings represented by the toes will be ruling when Christ returns to set up God's kingdom on earth ([Daniel 7:7-27](#)). As indicated above these kings will be the rulers of a federation of nations at the end of human history ([Daniel 2:41](#)).

Second, God's kingdom will triumph over all other kingdoms, crushing and shattering them ([Daniel 2:44^b](#)). All the evil nations of the earth will face the judgment of God and be brought to an end. God Himself will then establish His kingdom on earth.

Third, God's kingdom will endure forever ([Daniel 2:44^c](#)). No earthly power will ever be able to conquer or remove God's kingdom. His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, will establish an indestructible kingdom that will last forever.

Fourth, God's kingdom will be the rock miraculously cut out of a mountain that crushes the nations ([Daniel 2:45^a](#)). This is a clear picture of Christ, the cornerstone of God's work on earth. Of course, God's final, climatic work will be the sending of His Son to establish His kingdom on earth. All the wickedness and false worship that presently sweeps the world will be abolished, and the righteousness of God will fill the earth. The human race will be delivered from evil when the Lord Jesus Christ returns.

Fifth, God's kingdom will certainly come. It is a surety, guaranteed by God Himself ([Daniel 2:45^b](#)). The LORD showed Nebuchadnezzar events that would take place in the future. And Daniel proclaimed that the dream was from God. The dream is true and the interpretation given by Daniel is trustworthy. With this declaration, the prophet concluded his interpretation of the king's dream.

c. Nebuchadnezzar was overwhelmed at the meaning of the dream, so overwhelmed that he fell prostrate before Daniel ([Daniel 2:46-47](#)). He honored and treated Daniel like a god, ordering his attendants to present an offering and incense to this advisor. Such offerings and incense were usually presented only to the gods of Babylon. Most likely, however, Nebuchadnezzar was treating Daniel like a high priest. He recognized the hand of Daniel's God upon his life, the divine authority of the prophet. Then the king shocked the members of the royal court who were present, for he acknowledged that Daniel's God was superior to all other gods ([Daniel 2:47](#)).

In a public pronouncement, he declared that Daniel's God is.....

1. the God of gods
2. the Lord of kings
3. the revealer of mysteries

But note a significant fact: the king was not acknowledging the LORD as the only living and true God. He was merely acknowledging the LORD as the greatest *God among gods*. He was deeply impressed that the LORD had revealed to Daniel both the content and interpretation of his dream. He was not claiming to be a converted follower of the LORD. He still believed in many gods and was merely adding the LORD to the gods that he would acknowledge.

King Nebuchadnezzar immediately promoted Daniel (Daniel 2:48). He made him ruler over the province of Babylon and also the chief counsel over all the king's advisers, which included the occult advisers. These were two very logical steps for the king to take. Daniel had demonstrated an unusual understanding of history and a very special gift in understanding the future. Moreover, Daniel had been the only royal adviser who was able to help the king in his moment of distress. Thus it was only natural for Daniel to be promoted over the province of Babylon and to be appointed the chief counsel to the king. In addition to Daniel's promotion, he was rewarded with many valuable gifts and great wealth.

At some point Daniel requested that the king promote his three friends as well (**Daniel 2:49**). Thus the three were appointed to serve under Daniel as administrators over the province of Babylon. Daniel remained in the royal palace while they, apparently, oversaw the day-to-day affairs of the province.

Thought 1. The ultimate triumph of God's kingdom on earth will take place. We can rest assured that God will gain victory over all the wickedness and false worship of this world. Immorality, greed, covetousness, oppression, injustice, lawlessness, violence, brutality, slavery, murder, war, and all the other acts of wickedness will be abolished from the face of the earth. God's righteousness will cover the earth as far as the east is from the west. God will triumph over all the unrighteousness and ungodliness of people when Jesus Christ returns to establish God's kingdom on earth. All the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen to what God's Holy Word says:

Revelation 11:15 (NASB)

“¹⁵ Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.”

Matthew 2:1-2 (NASB)

¹ Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,
² "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."

Matthew 21:5 (NASB)

⁵ Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold your king is coming to you, Gentle, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'

Matthew 25:34 (NASB)

³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'

Luke 1:31-33 (NASB)

³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.
³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;
³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

John 1:49 (NASB)

⁴⁹ Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel."

1 Corinthians 15:24-25 (NASB)

²⁴ Then *comes* the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

²⁵ For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet."

1 Timothy 6:13-16 (NASB)

¹³ I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate,
¹⁴ that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,
¹⁵ which He will bring about at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,
¹⁶ who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him *be* honor and eternal dominion! Amen."

Hebrews 12:28 (NASB)

²⁸ Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe."

Revelation 1:5 (NASB)

“⁵ And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood”

Revelation 17:12-14 (NASB)

“¹² The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour.

¹³ These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.

¹⁴ These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him *are the* called and chosen and faithful.”

Revelation 19:11-16 (NASB)

“¹¹ And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

¹² His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and on His head *are* many diadems; and He has a name written *on Him* which no one knows except Himself.

¹³ *He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

¹⁴ And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses.

¹⁵ From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

¹⁶ And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Psalms 2:8-9 (NASB)

“⁸ Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the *very* ends of the earth as Your possession.

⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.”

Isaiah 9:7 (NASB)

“⁷ There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.”

Daniel 7:13-14 (NASB)

“¹³ I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.

¹⁴ And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.”

Zechariah 9:9 (NASB)

“⁹ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

Thought 2. Jesus Christ is the *Rock* of God, the cornerstone of God’s work on earth. Time and again throughout Scripture the symbol of a rock or stone is used to represent God and Christ.

Lesson after lesson can be learned by studying these passages:

Matthew 21:42-44 (NASB)

**“⁴² Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'The stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief corner *stone*; This came about from the Lord , And it is marvelous in our eyes ' ?
⁴³ Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it.
⁴⁴ And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.”**

Acts 4:11-12 (NASB)

**“¹¹ He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, *but* which became the chief corner *stone*.
¹² And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”**

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 (NASB)

**“¹¹ For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
¹² Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,
¹³ each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.
¹⁴ If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.
¹⁵ If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”**

1 Corinthians 10:4 (NASB)

“⁴ And all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.”

Ephesians 2:19-20 (NASB)

**“¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,
²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*.”**

1 Peter 2:4-8 (NASB)

⁴ And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God,

⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

⁶ For *this* is contained in Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner *stone*, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.

⁷ This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "The stone which the builders rejected, This became the very corner *stone*,

⁸ and, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed."

Psalms 118:21-23 (NASB)

²¹ I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me, And You have become my salvation.

²² The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner *stone*.

²³ This is the Lord's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes."