

## The Panorama of Bible Prophecy

**Text:** Daniel 2:24-49

### Introduction:

1. This chapter contains one of the most significant prophecies in the Bible giving an overview of the times of the Gentiles. It describes four great kingdoms that are associated with Israel and dominate it during this time.
2. Someone has said that this is the ABC of prophecy and the book of Revelation is the XYZ of prophecy. But we cannot get to the XYZ of prophecy until we understand the ABC's. (Lyle)
3. Nebuchadnezzar's image gives a panoramic view of what our Lord Jesus Christ described as "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). It gives an overview of Gentile world history, particularly as it relates to Israel, from the time of Nebuchadnezzar through to Christ's millennial reign. The "times of the Gentiles" is distinct from the "fulness of the Gentiles" (Rom. 1:25). The "fulness of the Gentiles" has to do with the completion of the church age where Christ is taking out of the world a people for His Name, especially the Gentile peoples.
4. This dream was clearly prophetic. Notice "later days" (Vs. 28); "what shall come to pass" (Vs. 29) "the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter" (Vs. 45)
5. Observe three things about this prophetic dream:

### I. The Revelation of the Dream (Vs. 24-35)

#### A. Daniels Audience with the King (Vs. 24-30)

1. He petitioned Arioch (Vs. 24-25)
  - a. Daniel requests for the lives of the wise men to be spared and for an audience with the king. If it hadn't been for godly Daniel, all these wise men would have perished with their supposed powers. (Vs. 24)
  - b. Arioch appears to try and take some of the credit before the king – "I have found" (Vs. 25)
2. He exalted God (Vs. 26-29)
  - a. Nebuchadnezzar's questions presented a tempting opportunity to exalt self. After all, Daniel now was in possession of the Divine Revelation. It would have been easy for Daniel to say, "Yes king, I can do it!" But he didn't.
  - b. Daniel states the fact that the kings request is impossible for any man (Vs. 27). In this statement, he includes himself!
  - c. He then turns Nebuchadnezzar's attention to the One True God who had revealed the dream and the interpretation.
  - d. He makes it clear that the purpose of the dream was so that it might be revealed "what shall come to pass". We now have the

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advantage of looking back on much of this prophecy being already fulfilled but in Daniel's day, most of the prophecy was yet unfulfilled.

3. He humbled self (Vs. 30)

### **B. Daniel's Articulation of the Dream (Vs. 31-35)**

1. The appearance of the image (Vs. 31)

- a. It was huge – 'great' (Vs. 31a)
- b. It was brilliant – "brightness was excellent"
- c. It was frightening – 'terrible'

2. The sections of the image (Vs. 32-33)

- a. The structure of the image was as follows: Head of gold; breast and arms of silver; belly and thighs of brass; legs of iron and feet partly iron and partly clay.
- b. Taking a step back and looking at this image, a few noteworthy things can be observed:
  - i. It's impressive appearance and make up reveal that this is the kingdoms of the world viewed from man's viewpoint. In chapter 7, the same world empires are depicted by God as ravening beasts.
  - ii. It is top heavy and weak in its feet, indicating an unsteady and precarious foundation. "Gold has a specific gravity of 19.3, silver of 10.51, brass of 8.5, iron of 7.6 and clay has a specific gravity of 1.9." (Phillips)
  - iii. It represents a gradual deterioration through human history as it progresses from top to bottom (from gold at the head to clay and iron at the feet). This is the inevitable progression of human governments.

3. The destruction of the image (Vs. 34-35)

- a. The image is totally devastated and destroyed by a stone smiting it in the feet.
- b. The statue is so ground to pieces that it becomes like chaff and is carried away by the wind.
- c. This is the ultimate destiny for this world's system!

## **II. The Interpretation of the Dream (Vs. 36-45)**

Vs. 36 clearly marks the transition from Daniel's re-telling of the dream to his interpretation of the dream.

### **A. Gold: The Babylonian Kingdom (Vs. 37-38) (606BC to 536BC)**

1. The source of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom – God (Vs. 37)
2. The scope of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom – world dominion (Vs. 38)
3. The symbol of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom – gold (Vs. 38)
  - a. The Babylonian kingdom was a wealthy and magnificent kingdom.

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- b. “When Herodotus the historian visited Babylon 100 years after Nebuchadnezzar, he wrote that in all of his life he had never seen more gold nor imagined there could be so much.” (Lyle)

### **B. Silver: The Persian Kingdom (Vs. 39a) (536BC to 333BC)**

1. Daniel would witness the transition to this kingdom as recorded in Daniel 5.
2. The two arms appear to represent to two people groups that made up this empire – the Medes and the Persians.
3. This empire was still in power at the close of the Old Testament.

### **C. Bronze: The Grecian Kingdom (Vs. 39b) (332BC to 63BC)**

1. This empire arose in the silent years between the two Testaments. However, the identify of this kingdom is clearly disclosed in Daniel 8:21, “And the rough goat is the king of Grecia and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.”
2. History tells us that the Grecian army used bronze extensively for their armor and weaponry (e.g. shields and swords). Alexander the Great was their leader and has gone down in history as the greatest general of ancient times, conquering the known world of his time. Tradition says he wept that there were no more worlds to conquer. He died in Babylon around 30 years of age.

### **D. Iron: The Roman Kingdom (Vs. 40-43)**

More is said about this fourth kingdom than about any other. Notice the three divisions to this Empire.

1. The legs of iron – the imperial Roman empire (63BC to 476AD). Iron signifies Rome’s power and severity towards those refusing to submit to her. It was a kingdom that “breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things.” (Dan. 2:40). Josephus the Jewish Historian recorded that over 1 million Jews perished in Rome’s siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and 97,000 were taken captive. Ten thousand were burned alive or killed in gladiatorial games to entertain Roman crowds. (Cloud)
2. The feet of iron and clay – weakened form of Roman empire (e.g. the rule of the papacy, European Union) AD 476 to present.
3. The ten toes – revived Roman empire which will be the Antichrist’s kingdom in the tribulation.
  - a. Same kingdom described as ten horns in Daniel 7:7-8.
  - b. Same kingdom described in Revelation 13:1-5 and 17:12-14.
  - c. It appears the European Union is the early development of this kingdom that will eventually become antichrist’s confederacy.
  - d. David Cloud comments:

In 1957, six nations signed the Treaty of Rome, pledging unity (France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands). In 1958, the European Economic Community was born, often called the Common Market. In 1979, an election was held for the first European Parliament. In 1993, the European Union was formed. It encompasses 500 million people and in 2014 owned about 24% of the

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world's gross domestic product. In 2002, the Euro was adopted as a common currency. One of the symbols of the European Union is the ancient Tower of Babel. The Tower was featured on the European Union poster in 1992, and the Union's headquarters in Strasbourg, France, is shaped like an unfinished tower. Another symbol of the Union is the ancient goddess Europa riding a bull, which is a woman riding a beast! (Rev. 17:3). Europa is on the Euro coin, and a statue of her resides outside the Union's headquarters in Brussels, Belgium." We don't know if the existing European Union will play any role in the rise of the Antichrist, but we do know that some sort of European Union will.

### E. Stone: The Eternal Kingdom (Vs. 44-45)

1. The King of this kingdom – “the stone” This is clearly a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ who is referred to as the stone frequently in Scripture. (Ps 118:22 Lk 20:17 Is 28:16 1 Pet 2:6-7) Note the following outline by Pastor Denis Lyle on Christ the Stone:
  - a. He was the Supernatural stone – “cut out without hands” (Vs. 34)
  - b. He was the Stumbling stone – “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense” (1 Peter. 2:8)
  - c. He was the Smitten stone - “*Take the rod and smite the rock.*” (Ex. 17:6) Christ is our “*Rock of Ages,*” smitten on Calvary for our sins.
  - d. He is the Salvation stone – “the stone which the builders rejected the same is become the head of the corner” (Psalm 118:22; Matt. 21:42) Salvation is in no other! (Acts 4:12)
  - e. He is the Sovereign stone – “the stone...became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth” (Vs. 35)
2. The timing of this kingdom – “in the days of these kings” (Vs. 44) This is a reference to the 10-kingdom confederacy of antichrist. Christ will smash antichrist's kingdom at the end of the 7-year tribulation period and setup his eternal kingdom.
3. The character of this kingdom – “shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom” (Vs. 44) Question: Were the first four kingdoms literal or spiritual? It is absolutely inconsistent to interpret the first four as literal and this last one as spiritual! Christ will reign on this earth as surely as Nebuchadnezzar sat on the throne of Babylon.
4. The duration of this kingdom – “which shall never be destroyed...it shall stand for ever”
5. The conquest of this kingdom – “the stone...break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold...” (Vs. 45)

### III. The Promotion after the Dream (Vs. 46-49)

#### A. Praise (Vs. 46-47)

1. The praise of Daniel (Vs. 46) – Nebuchadnezzar was pagan king and offered to Daniel the sort of adoration he would offer one of the pagan deities. While Nebuchadnezzar was wrong to do this, it is an amazing gesture considering he was the most powerful ruler on

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earth at that time. Later in chapter 4, Nebuchadnezzar will come to know the One true God in sincerity and truth.

2. The praise of Daniel's God (Vs. 47) – the fact the king “answered unto Daniel” is noteworthy. It would appear that Daniel protested this adoration, hence the kings change to a focus upon Daniel's God.

### **B. Position (Vs. 48-49)**

1. The elevation of Daniel (Vs. 48) – Daniel made ruler of Babylon proper which would be the capital city of the empire. This was a high honor indeed! Daniel was given wonderful gifts from the king.
2. The elevation of Daniel's friends (Vs. 49) – at Daniel's request, the king elevates his three special friends to positions of leadership in the realm. Daniel was not selfish with the blessings he received. He knew these dear friends had played an important part in seeking the Lord with him.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Will you be in the kingdom of Christ? The requirement for being a part of the kingdom is to be “born again” (John 3)
2. Are we living for the kingdoms of this world or for the coming kingdom of Christ?
3. Be encouraged! Our God still reigns and His sovereign plan will be accomplished!