

The Four-Metal Statue and the Stone

📖 Daniel 2:24-49

👤 Pastor Jeremy Thomas

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🌐 fgbible.org

📍 Fredericksburg Bible Church

107 East Austin Street

Fredericksburg, Texas 78624

(830) 997-8834

Question from Previous Week

Q: Why did God want Hitler to be in charge?

A: God wanted Hitler to be in charge in order to cause the Jews to return to the land in unbelief in preparation for the fulfillment of prophecies in the Tribulation that relate to Jerusalem and the Temple. If the nation Israel is not in the land and in control of Jerusalem then these prophecies cannot be fulfilled. Hitler played a major role in fulfilling the prophecy of the nation Israel being regathered to the land in unbelief in 1948 and Jordan played a major role in the nation Israel becoming sovereign over Jerusalem and the Temple Mount in 1967. These events prepared the way for other prophecies. The prophesy of a return in unbelief that relates most directly to Hitler is recorded in at least six passages; Isa 11:11-12; Ezek 20:33-38; Ezek 22:17-22; Ezek 36:22-24; Ezek 37:1-8, 11-13; Zeph 2:1-2. The interesting thing about these passages is that the prophecy precedes the Tribulation and is therefore preparatory for it. So God raised up Hitler to be the instrument that would catalyze the nation Israel's return in unbelief in preparation for the coming Tribulation. What we are seeing now has major prophetic significance.

If you'd turn with me to Daniel 2. In 2:1 it was the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, which was 603BC. Daniel was still in school and unknown to Nebuchadnezzar. In that year Nebuchadnezzar had dreams (plural) referring to a recurrent dream. The dream troubled him and he became an insomniac because he realized the dream had significance, though he did not understand that significance. In 2:2 the king called in the wise men of Babylon to tell him his dreams. In 2:3 Nebuchadnezzar told them he had a dream and was anxious to know the dream. In 2:4 the men who took the lead were the Chaldeans, an elite class of priests, spoke in Aramaic with the customary greeting, "O king, live forever!" Tell us the dream and we will declare the interpretation. They claimed to be able to contact the gods but in reality they had books that gave rules for interpreting symbols. So all they had to do was know the dream and apply the rules in the books to the dream and spit out an interpretation. However, in 2:5 the king shows he was skeptical of their ability to contact the gods. He did not want to know the interpretation of the dream but the dream itself and its interpretation. He reasoned that if they could contact the

gods for the interpretation then they could contact the gods for the dream itself. If they did not, they would be torn limb from limb and their families would be destroyed. On the other hand, in 2:6, if they could they would receive a lot of money and public recognition. In 2:7 they answer a second time that the king tell them the dream. In 2:8 the king's suspicions were confirmed and he began to accuse them of bargaining for time and in 2:9 for agreeing together to keep their methods secret in order to protect their profession. In 2:10 and 11 they are forced to admit that they could not do what they claimed to be able to do and also accused the king of asking something unreasonable. In 2:12 the king became indignant and very angry because he still did not know the meaning of the dream that he so wanted to understand and this entire profession of men who had been living off of his wealth turned out to be fraudulent. He gave orders to destroy them all and their families. In 2:13 the decree went forth and they looked for Daniel and his friends because they were in training to be of this class of men. In 2:14 Daniel's character is the highlight of the drama. He replied with discretion, which means "according to counsel," the counsel of his parents, and with discernment, which means "in a suitable manner." This gained him the ear of Arioch, the king's chief executioner and he was able to inquire concerning the urgency of the decree to execute. Arioch informed Daniel of the situation. In 2:16 Daniel went in before the king and requested time to give him the dream and its interpretation. This was not something that Daniel could do but Daniel knew that the God of Israel could. In 2:17 Daniel immediately went to his prayer warriors so that in 2:18 God would distinguish them from all the other wise men of Babylon so that they would not be destroyed along with them. Sometime in the night 2:19 informs us that "the mystery was revealed to Daniel" by way of a vision. At that time Daniel knelt down and blessed the God of heaven who controls whatsoever comes to pass on earth. In 2:20 He blessed the name of God which refers to the character of God. Two characteristics are pointed out; first His wisdom, which refers to His omniscience, and second His power, which refers to His omnipotence. In 2:21a the attribute of omnipotence is displayed by the fact that He is the author of kingdom changes and He is the author of king changes. This gives us insight into the meaning of the dream, it refers to kingdoms and kings in the course of history. In 2:21b the attribute of omniscience is displayed by the fact that He gives wisdom and understanding to men who already have wisdom and understanding. In 2:22 Daniel admits that it is He who reveals profound and hidden things, things we cannot know left to ourselves. He knows what is in the darkness and the light dwells with Him. In 2:23 he gives thanks and praise because the Lord had given him wisdom and power in the Babylonian kingdom since he would be rewarded greatly for making known to the king the dream and the interpretation. In 2:24 Daniel went immediately to Arioch and told him to not destroy the wise men of Babylon because he would declare the interpretation to the king, which would, of course, include telling him the dream itself. In 2:25, with urgency Arioch brought Daniel into the king and announced that he could do what no one else could do. Evident is the fact that the king did not yet know Daniel since he is announced as an exile from Judah.

Today's Lesson

Today we pick up our exposition in 2:26. **The king said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar.** Remember Daniel was renamed on the first day of school. Daniel means "God is my judge." Belteshazzar means "Belti, protect the king." The Babylonians were trying to change their worldview and make them good Babylonians. Because we see both names we are reminded that we can look at the situation from two points of view. From the Babylonian worldview this young man is **Belteshazzar** and he's just another wise man of Babylon, a man who supposedly has some kind of supernatural insight. But from the biblical worldview this young man is **Daniel** and he's a prophet of the one true God and so he does not have it in himself but is one who receives revelation. Understand that when Nebuchadnezzar asks, **Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen and its interpretation?"** he's not expecting him to be able to do so. Nebuchadnezzar doubted this could be done but he kept open the possibility because in paganism possibility is back of all so then there is always chance. So it may be a slim chance but there is chance in Nebuchadnezzar's thinking.

Verse 27, **Daniel answered before the king and said, "As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians nor diviners are able to declare it to the king.** In other words, what's the first thing Daniel does? He agrees with the Chaldeans who said back in verses 10-11 that nobody can do this, it's impossible. What Daniel is doing is setting up a contrast between men and God. And you're right Nebuchadnezzar, with men this is impossible. I agree with you that no man is able to do this, that these professions are bankrupt.

However, verse 28, **there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries.** Notice there is but one God, singular, who Daniel says can do this, the **God in heaven.** Now the noun **heaven** is called a "dual noun." Aramaic has dual nouns and they refer to precisely two things; so God in heaven refers to precisely two heavens. And I'd suggest that Daniel knows Babylonian concepts of the gods – that they hover in the atmospheric heavens above the earth, they monitor the rain, the fertility, the economy, all the things that are important to human life. So when Daniel uses a dual noun **in heaven** he's referring to a God above all these in the atmospheric heavens, a God who is in heaven above them. And this will be his standard way of referring to the one true God who is sovereign over all. He claims that it is this God **who reveals mysteries.**

Now notice, he's focusing Nebuchadnezzar's attention not on himself, that's what Arioch did, hey, look at me Nebuchadnezzar, I found this man, Daniel, he can give you the interpretation. No, says Daniel, only God can do this, don't look at me, your attention should be on the **God in heaven who reveals mysteries.** And he's doing what here? He's starting to evangelize this man; right there in the throne room of Babylon he's going to evangelize this man. I think Reagan did that with Gorbachev right in the Kremlin. That's what we see here. And the first thing a true evangelist does is get the unbeliever's eyes focused on the God with whom he has short accounts. The evangelist does not draw attention to himself and his testimony but to the one true God. And note three things we can see about the one true God from this statement. First, He's **the God in heaven**, that is,

He's sovereign over all; second, He **reveals** things, so He's a personal God, He's a speaking God; third, He reveals **mysteries**, things hidden, so He's got to be omniscient.

At this point Daniel is doing superbly in his evangelism. He's rejected the Babylonian worldview, a very gutsy move, and now he's proclaiming the one true God.

Then he says that this God **has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days**. In other words, God did this on purpose. And notice the expression **the latter days**. Obviously the expression is being viewed very broadly at this point as referring to the entire times of the Gentiles. In this sense we are already living in the last days and have been for two and a half millennia. And in verse 29, **your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future**. The dream had to do with the future and we already knew that it had to do with kingdoms and kings and so it's about the future of kingdoms and kings.

In verse 29 Daniel says, **As for you, O king, while on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future**. The idea I get from this is that Nebuchadnezzar was just lying on his bed thinking about his kingdom, what the future held for his kingdom, then he fell asleep and he started having this dream. He knew it was about kingdoms but he didn't understand what it meant. Daniel is brought in to explain what it meant. Always a Jew explains.

But as for me, verse 30, **this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man**. In other words, put me beside any other man in the world and left to myself, I have no more wisdom than any of them. This is humility. Daniel doesn't take credit for this knowledge. And just think of all the credit he could have taken, I am so wise, nobody is like me in the entire kingdom of Babylon, I have such supernatural powers, Daniel could have given Daniel all kinds of accolades, but Daniel wasn't like that, Daniel wasn't an opportunist. Daniel was a young man of humility who knew the principle that he who humbles himself will be exalted by God. And once again Daniel's example is there to teach Jews who will live among Gentile nations how to live and receive God's blessing.

So having removed attention from himself Daniel proceeds in verse 31 to make known the dream.¹ Let's make a few up front remarks. First, the statue is a prophecy of the time Jesus referred to as "the times of the Gentiles." Four Gentile kingdoms will rule over the Jews. It is critical to note that these are successive kingdoms. One rules after another, they are not contemporaneous. As one falls another rises in four successive kingdoms. Second, the times of the Gentiles begins in 586BC when the Davidic throne is left empty and ends when the Davidic throne is re-occupied. Jesus is the Davidic King and has throne rights but His sitting to reign is contingent on Israel's acceptance of Him as the Messiah. Since they rejected Him at His first advent we are still living in the times of the Gentiles. When He is accepted He will return at His second advent to sit on the glorious throne of David and thus end the times of the Gentiles. The revelation is given at this time so that Gentile kings will understand that their sovereignty has been given to them by the God of Israel and is temporary and until Israel receives their Messiah.

Since this has never occurred we are still living in the times of the Gentiles. Third, Dan 2 is similar to Dan 7. Chart 6 shows the similarities in your handouts. Both chapters teach the same four successive Gentile kingdoms followed by an everlasting kingdom. Fourth, Dan 2 also has differences with Dan 7. The four Gentile kingdoms appear as a beautiful four metal statue in Dan 2 but Dan 7 portrays them as four ugly beasts. What this means is that Dan 2 is what man thinks about these kingdoms and Dan 7 is what God thinks and it's a very different picture and I'll be encouraging you to view them as God views them.

Let's pick up with verse 31 and this verse emphasizes the unity of the statue. There are not four statues, there's only one statue. So these are all distinct but related kingdoms. **You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue;** the fact of one statue shows you all four kingdoms are a unified system, there's one world system and all the various kingdoms and kings that govern this world system are together in this way of thinking. So the **king** was **looking and behold, there was a single great statue which was large and of extraordinary splendor**, so the sight of it was a magnificent thing and Nebuchadnezzar saw it **standing in front of** him, Daniel says **and its appearance was awesome**, meaning it induced fear. That verb **awesome** means fearful and this answers to verse 2 earlier in the chapter, explaining why Nebuchadnezzar became anxious and couldn't sleep, it was a disturbing sight.

Verse 32, and the emphasis shifts to the four distinct parts of the statue, **the head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.** There are your four parts, you have a handout you might consult that depicts what Daniel describes he saw and notice verse 34, **You continued looking**, indicating a time element to the dream, he would look at this great statue for a period of time, **until** Daniel says, **until a stone was cut out without hands**, signifying no human involvement, but something supernaturally formed, **a stone cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them.** It didn't strike the head of gold or the breast and arms of silver, it just struck at the base of the statue, at the **feet of iron and clay.** Verse 35, **Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time**, so the entire statue was destroyed simultaneously by this stone and then the after effects are noted: the entire statue **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.** So, if we could summarize what Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dreams; a great statue of gold, silver, bronze, iron and iron with clay would appear, it would be there for a while, then suddenly a stone, apparently large, cut out of the side of a mountain without hands, would violently strike it on the feet and the entire statue would be obliterated. Then the stone grew and grew until it filled the whole earth. That's the dream and that's an outline of the future from Daniel's day. Later prophecies are to be interpreted within this framework.

Verse 36 and now we come to the interpretation of the dream, **This was the dream; now we will 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; ³⁸**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.** What's the big lesson in vv 37-38? What is said twice in these verses that conveys the dominating thought of the head of gold? The **God of heaven** gave you your kingdom Nebuchadnezzar. God is sovereign over the Gentile kingdoms. Why does God reveal this to Nebuchadnezzar? To keep him humble. Gentile rulers tend to grow arrogant. They constantly need the message of Dan 2. That message is that they didn't build their kingdom or establish their power, the God of heaven gave them their kingdom.

Now in verse 38 **the sons of men, the beasts of the field, the birds of the sky** are all being given into Nebuchadnezzar's hand, those are symbols too and we'll see them again in chapter 4. The meaning is not literal beasts and birds but throughout Scripture they represent smaller kingdoms that Nebuchadnezzar had conquered and now ruled over and was receiving annual tribute from. He ruled over all these smaller kingdoms and that's what the beasts of the field and birds of the sky refer to, all these smaller empires now inside his empire. And God gave it all to him. Daniel concludes verse 38, **You Nebuchadnezzar are the head of gold.** So we don't have to guess what the **head of gold** is. It is interpreted for us as **Nebuchadnezzar**. Now no other kings are identified as parts of the statue. They are simply identified as whole kingdoms in verse 39. But a king is closely identified with his kingdom and the identification of Nebuchadnezzar as the kingdom of Babylon might be an indication that we are to identify each other part with its first and greatest king who is strongly identified with his kingdom. So Babylon is Nebuchadnezzar, Persia is Cyrus, Greece is Alexander the Great and Rome is Caesar Augustus. We're not told that explicitly but we are told that Nebuchadnezzar is the **head of gold**. And he is said in verse 37 to be **the king of kings**, which is a title used later of Jesus Christ, and obviously means the greatest of kings. It can mean at the head of other kings and that is true of Nebuchadnezzar too, but it probably means he is the greatest Gentile king in the times of the Gentiles. And so this man and his life story is very important. He was a great ruler and we will see why later. For the time being, he is the **head of gold**, he is Babylon.

Verse 39, **"After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth. ⁴⁰"Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron.** All these are on your handout and the Chart 6 if you follow and you'll notice these are successive kingdoms, not contemporary, verse 39 begins with **after you**, so Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom will fall, then another kingdom **inferior to you will arise**, we're not told the name of the kingdom but it can be none other than the Medo-Persia kingdom. Daniel says it's **inferior to** Nebuchadnezzar, we are to understand that each is inferior to the prior in some sense and that is indicated by the quality of the metals declining in value, **then another third kingdom**, it's composed of **bronze** and **will rule over all the earth**. This third kingdom can be none other than Greece, especially in light of the note that it **will rule over all the earth**. Alexander the Great conquered a territory far larger than any kingdom in history. So these kingdoms while declining in value are expanding in size

and strength until they can no longer hold together. Plutarch writes that Alexander cried “when he heard Anaxarchus talk about the infinite number of worlds in the universe.” When “One of Alexander's friends asked him why he was crying...he replied: “There are so many worlds, and I have not yet conquered even one.”² So the **third kingdom of bronze** is Greece. Then, verse 40, **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.** ⁴¹**“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.** Now here we have a kingdom of iron and iron mixed with clay, this is more complex. It depicts two phases of this kingdom, a phase of iron only which **crushes and shatters all things** and a phase of **iron mixed with clay** which has strength but is a divided kingdom. This fourth kingdom can be none other than Rome in two phases, a phase that is only strong and a phase that is a mixture of strong and weak. There are your four kingdoms that make up the times of the Gentiles; Nebuchadnezzar, the kingdom of Babylon, Medo-Persia a kingdom inferior, Greece the kingdom rule over all the earth and Rome the kingdom in two phases, one strong and the other a mixture of strong and weak and you have the dates there in hindsight.³

Now as far as these four kingdoms are concerned we observe four important factors. First, they all decline in value as we go from the top of the statue to the bottom; gold has the greatest value, then silver is less valuable, bronze is still less valuable and lastly iron and iron mixed with clay are the least valuable. This refers to declining purchase power of money, or inflation. It’s the economics of fractional reserve banking that is designed by governments to commit theft against its citizens in trying to amass wealth. But the system overall declines in value until it collapses. Second, they all increase in hardness as we go from the top of the statue to the bottom; gold is the softest metal, silver is still soft but harder than gold, brass is harder and finally iron and iron mixed with clay, iron is the hardest of all and there seems to be some ambiguity in the final condition because of the mixture of iron and clay. But the material hardness increases from top to bottom showing that military strength is going to increase until the last kingdom when that strength begins to falter in ever expanding kingdoms. These are characteristics of the four kingdoms that make up the times of the Gentiles. A third note, the feet have ten toes. This is not picked up in detail here but it is in Dan 7. These represent ten contemporaneous kings of future Rome who will come to power. And that’s how we get a picture that in the end the world will be ruled by ten kings over ten divisions. Fourth, observe there is much more attention given to the fourth kingdom than the first, second or third. Simply observe the number of verses allotted to the fourth kingdom comparatively. Why is this? Because there is a complexity to the fourth kingdom, the kingdom of Rome. It does not come and go off the scene in the way that Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece will. Rome comes on the scene, fades into the background and then is revived in a new form with these ten kings. So there are actually two phases or forms of the Kingdom of Rome. We are living in the development of the final form. We’re not there yet but we are on the way there.

Let's look in vv 40-41 at historic Rome. This kingdom is said to be **as strong as iron** and iron is far and away the strongest of the four metals in the statue. So it will have the strongest military, the strongest government and strongest rule. And indeed Rome was so strong that no power could defeat her for more than 500 years. That is far longer than any kingdom has been on top. So during these 500 years it is proper to describe Rome as **iron** that **crushes and shatters all things, so like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. These** meaning the prior kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece, not in the sense that Babylon and Medo-Persia were still on the scene for Rome to defeat militarily because only Greece stood in her way, but elements of Babylon and Medo-Persia had been inherited by Greece as well as the real estate and in that sense Rome would **crush and break all these** prior kingdoms **in pieces**.

Verse 41, **In that you saw the feet and toes**, the focus is on the lower part of the image, since Greece only comes down to the thighs at the kneecap, I take it that the legs are historic Rome and the feet and toes are future Rome that is now in formation. So now we're looking at the **feet and toes**. And he says it's not iron only but **partly of potter's clay and partly of iron**. So future Rome is partly strong and partly weak, and that's why the middle of verse 41 clarifies with the words, **it will be a divided kingdom**. It won't be only strong like the historic phase, it will have strong and weak elements and we are looking at this historic phase as having already happened from our standpoint today and the future phase as now forming, but, of course, in Daniel's day they were both future.

Some people have tried to argue that there's a gap in the historic and future phases of Rome but I view them as continuous, just like the statue. Of course, historic Rome fell and we should cite the reasons for that before moving on. Gibbon, the famous 18th century historian who wrote *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, asked why did Rome fall? Reason number one, rampant immorality that led to divorce and disruption of the family. Reason number two, the Roman's preoccupation with sports, circuses and games, the way they devoted their whole time to the pursuit of those things. Reason number three, dependence on the state for support rather than working, so that they had time to devote to leisure and pleasure.⁴ Rome crumbled from the inside, not from military invasion. But even so, in a way Rome is with us because the thought form, the culture, the law, the military, the global mentality, the banking system, they are all still with us. So I don't view a gap, I view Rome as present but not yet in the final form described here.

Let's look at that form in verse 42, this depicts what it will be like, we have not yet seen this. **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.** ⁴³**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.**

What in the world does that mean? **Combine with one another in the seed of men?** It's a very obscure, confusing, puzzling statement. Let me paraphrase what I think this is saying. You've got the ten toes on the feet, they refer to ten kings, the feet are partly iron and partly clay so some of these kings are strong and some are

weak, it's a brittle combination, and they are mixed meaning the strong and weak rulers are going to attempt to combine to form a unified strong kingdom, a global kingdom but it's a failed attempt according to the text, Daniel says, **they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.** So it's the attempt among the ten kingdoms in the last days to combine the weaker and stronger kings and their kingdoms into a single kingdom but it will fail. Now Dan 7 adds that when the ten combine an eleventh king will arise and Rev 13 and 17 add that he will subdue three of the kings, that's the anti-Christ and he will defeat three weaker kings and try to take over and rule as world dictator, but he will fail. So we're being set up here for other end time elements. Daniel is the key to Bible prophecy.

Verse 44, **"In the days of those kings** referring to the ten 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.** ⁴⁵**"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."** This is a fifth kingdom and note that this one is eternal, it gets more emphasis than the others, it is set up by **the God of heaven** and it will **never be destroyed**, and never **be left for another people**, it will crush all four prior kingdoms. It's pictured as a **stone cut out of the mountain without hands**, meaning it is not from this world, and the **stone will** crush the **iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold**, all four kingdoms simultaneously. How is that? The **stone** is the Messiah and His kingdom. And note that the stone strikes only at the base of the statue, the feet, which is future Rome but all four kingdoms are part of the same basic structure and destroyed simultaneously and therefore what this is saying is that each kingdom made a contribution to the next kingdom that succeeded it until they all came together in the final form of Rome so that when the final form of Rome is destroyed they are all destroyed at the same time. We'll talk more about those contributions later but they relate to economy, they relate to military, they relate to human reason...

Verse 46, not only Daniels' declaring the dream but the revealing of the interpretation was so obviously supernatural that Nebuchadnezzar is compelled to make a decree and make this pronouncement. **Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries...** He recognized that there is one true God over all other gods. He has not renounced that there are other gods, only that this God is greater than other gods. He's also admitting that this is Daniel's God and that this God is sovereign over all kings, including himself, and that this God is going to set up other kings in later kingdoms. And Daniel at this time in verse 48 is promoted to a position of prominence in the central province of Babylon and is going to be made chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon, which means he is going to be the president of the top university that trains the wise men. And realize, this man is just 17 years old. Finally, we see the answer to Daniel's prayer in vv 17-18. Daniel and his friends had prayed they would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. But the answer to that prayer is that none of the wise men and their families are going to be torn from limb to limb. Can you imagine

how appreciative these wise men and their families are going to be of Daniel? They will view Daniel as having saved all of them. God has answered his prayers exceedingly abundantly beyond all that he could ask or think. And Daniel is going to stand in a position of prominence and influence over all of them. Do you think he used his influence to evangelize them as he had Nebuchadnezzar? I think he did. I think this event was remembered in the annals of Babylon among this class of wise men all the way to the birth of Jesus Christ. I believe when the wise men come from the east in Matt 2 claiming to have followed the Messiah's star they are coming because Daniel exposed them to the Hebrew God and the Hebrew Bible. And for generations they had studied the Hebrew Scriptures just waiting for the star to appear as described in Num 24:17, "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel." Daniel's God became their God, the God of **Shadrach, Meshech and Abed-nego** because notice that Daniel did not leave them behind. In verse 49 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.** He brought them right along with him because they were in this together.

In summary what do I want to emphasize? I want to emphasize that the structure of future history was laid out here with extreme precision. The head of gold represents Nebuchadnezzar, the physical embodiment of Babylon, a kingdom which lasted from 605-539BC, the chest and arms of silver represents Medo-Persia, a kingdom inferior which lasted from 539-331BC, the waist and thighs of bronze represent Greece, an expansive kingdom which lasted from 331-63BC and the legs of iron and feet of iron and clay represent Rome in a historic phase which lasted visibly as described here from 63BC-AD476 and is developing now into its future phase which will be global and have ten kings, some strong and some weak which will try to rule the whole earth but then a stone cut out without hands, the kingdom of God will strike the final kingdom and destroy them all simultaneously and fill the earth with peace and righteousness. That is the structure of history and the structure for interpreting all of Bible prophecy.

In conclusion, what can we learn? First, we can learn humility at a young age. Daniel learned humility at a young age, he did not take credit where credit was not due, he gave all credit to God and was therefore exalted by God to a very prominent position. He who is least among you, he will be the greatest. We do not get exalted by self-exaltation, but by God's grace. Are you humble? Second, we can learn that God is sovereign over kingdoms and kings. He is the one who controls history. He is the one who has given Gentile kingdoms sovereignty at this time and will remove it in the future and establish His kingdom on the earth, the stone cut out without hands, an eternal kingdom. Do you recognize the sovereign hand of God? Third, we can learn that Gentile rulers should humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. Nebuchadnezzar, at least for the moment, recognized that God made him king. This is humility among governmental leaders. Fourth, we can learn that God still has a plan for Jews living during the time of the Gentiles. He has not cast them off. He always has a believing remnant and He will one day restore them in the kingdom of God. Fifth, be realistic about where we live, the times we live in and our purpose. We live in America, it is part of the kingdom of Rome, it is instrumental in forming the final

picture of Gentile kingdoms. Within that, Christians have been called out by the gospel of Jesus Christ so that we are no longer primarily citizens of this world but of the kingdom to come. And we are presently in a situation where we are to evangelize others, just as Daniel evangelized the King and the other wise men of Babylon. We are not trying to solidify America as an eternal kingdom. We are trying to call men out by the gospel so they can become citizens of the kingdom to come through faith in Jesus Christ.

¹ Here the type of literature shifts from narrative which tells a story, to apocalyptic. Apocalyptic literature is an unveiling of something hidden, a bringing out into the open something previously concealed, namely the dream. You can identify apocalyptic literature by certain characteristics used by the author; one it's highly symbolic and we'll find several symbols in this section, the statue, the gold, the silver, the bronze, the iron, etc...two, there are often, though not always, angelic interpreters, in this dream there are none, but often there are...three, an interpretation of the symbols is given and that we do find in this section, it was revealed to Daniel the prophet what these symbols meant...four, the purpose of apocalyptic literature is the main idea you want to catch, whenever this kind of literature is employed it is done to encourage the believers and warn the unbelievers. You've got to have hope if you are a believer that is going to face tremendous Gentile powers and even before most of the Jew are deported God is giving this revelation so that when they arrive they have this revelation that will encourage them, give them hope that God will ultimately restore them. So watch for that purpose as we work through the statue. As for the unbelievers, this kind of literature is a warning to Gentile powers against arrogant. They do have a time of sovereignty but it's a sovereignty that has been granted to them by God and it's temporary, so don't get arrogant. And the revelation Daniel gives accomplishes both of those important goals.

² <http://www.pothos.org/content/index.php?page=quotes>

³ the liberals reject these four identifications because they don't believe that anyone can know the future. So they argue that Daniel was written late, around 165BC, that way Daniel is writing history and not prophecy. And to get the four kingdoms before 165BC they split Media and Persia into two separate kingdoms so that Greece is the fourth. The problem is that the description of Greece as a kingdom in two phases, one of iron and the other of iron mixed clay having ten toes does not fit Greece.

⁴ Dwight Pentecost, *Lectures on the Book of Daniel*, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1988 class notes.