

## Daniel's Prophecies – Nebuchadnezzar's Vision

### Daniel's Prophecies – The Dream of Nebuchadnezzar About the Beast

It is very important to note that more than 250 years before the time of Ezekiel's vision, a civil war had taken place that divided the nation into two kingdoms. The Assyrians conquered the Ten Tribes of the Northern Kingdom, called Israel (in 722 B.C.). This was the result of a long period of unbelief and apostasy. The Ten Northern Tribes were hopelessly dispersed among the nations by the time of Ezekiel.

It wasn't until 606 B.C., that God's patience became exhausted with Judah's unbelief. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon conquered the Southern Kingdom, known as Judah for the first time in 605 B.C., exactly as God had forewarned through His Prophets. He left a token number of Jews there and had the rest carried off to Babylon as slaves. When the appointed king Jeconiah rebelled, Nebuchadnezzar returned (in 586 B.C.), and utterly destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. Many survivors were carried off as slaves, including Ezekiel.

**From Empire to Empire (Beast):** John tells us that the 7 heads of the beast also represent 7 kingdoms; five have fallen, one is, and the other is still to come. The Other is Not Yet Come (see Rev. 17:10). Here he is referring to those great world empires from the time of the original Babylon of Nimrod's day which have been dominated by the false occultic religion of Babylon Beast with Seven Heads (see Rev 13:1).

The first kingdom was Assyria, with its occult mad capital city of Nineveh (see Nahum 3:4). The second was Egypt, which devoted much of its total wealth to the construction of the pyramids, all built according to astrological specifications. Egypt was also given to black magic (see Exodus 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18; and 2 Tim. 3:9). The third was the neo-Babylonian religion of Daniel's day, which really perfected the black arts. The fourth was Medo-Persia, which conquered Babylon but was in turn enslaved by the Babylonian religion.

The fifth was the Greek Empire. One visit to Greece and her ancient temple sites will convince you of the sway which idolatrous religions held there. Running through the culture of all these great past empires was an underlying belief in astrology. This was the cohesive force that bound together all the witchcraft, sorcery and magic. Kings would seldom make a move without consulting advisors steeped in the ancient art of Babylonian religion. The ancient priests enjoyed royal stature and power, especially in Egypt.

When John speaks of the "five kingdoms that have fallen," he means the five just mentioned. But then he says, "One is". This has to refer to the great empire of his day, Rome, which was filled with the same occultic beliefs that had originated on the plains of Shinar in ancient Babylon. This was the sixth kingdom of John's vision. John looks to the future when he says of the seventh head (kingdom)," the other is not yet come; and when it comes, it must continue a short while" (Rev. 17:10c). This refers to the future revival of the Roman empire.

**The Kingdom According to Daniel:** (In Daniel 2:31-35), we find the vision of Nebuchadnezzar recalled by Daniel, the great prophet. He sums up this description of the four world empires with

these words: “While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them”. “Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth” (Dan. 2:34-35).

The interpretation of this vision is provided by Daniel (in 2:36-45). After describing the parts of the great image as four world kingdoms, the head of gold as Babylon, the breast and arms of silver representing the Medo-Persian Empire, the belly and thighs of bronze representing the Greek Empire. And legs of iron signifying the Roman Empire. Daniel describes the ten toes and the feet of iron and clay as representing the ten kingdoms that will cooperate in establishing the Antichrist in power during the Tribulation period.

In verse 44 we find the interpretation of the stone cut without hands, which grinds to powder the rest of the image. “In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever”. This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands, a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces. “The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy” (Dan 2:44-45).

Daniel’s four beasts in chapter 7 represented future kingdoms, beginning with the lion, which represented the Babylonian Empire. Then he saw a bear, which represented the Medo Persian Empire, followed by a leopard, representing the Grecian Empire, and a nondescript beast, portraying the Roman Empire. These 4 animals, representing the four world kingdoms, are most interesting, for no world powers have existed other than the four described by Daniel, who wrote at the beginning of this chain of conquests.

John writes his description when the last government beast is in control; therefore, his description is in reverse order. Whereas Daniel began with the lion, John ends with the lion. Because these 2 prophets lived some 600 years apart, Daniel was looking forward to what would come to pass in relationship to these world kingdoms, but John is looking backward, for the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman Empires have already appeared on the world scene.

From this prophecy and its interpretation, we see that God Himself will “set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed.” Will pulverize all the known kingdoms of the world, and will expand His Kingdom until it will “crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end.” This can be none other than the Kingdom of God. This, then, is the Kingdom of God ruled over by Christ, who is symbolized in the Bible as a rock.

His Kingdom will be firmly established, filling the whole earth. We have already seen in (Rev. chapters 17 and 18), that nothing is more detrimental to humanity than religion and government. Humanity tends to look on government as a panacea to solve all of its ills. By contrast, the Bible teaches that a government without a benevolent despot of supernatural origin as its leader cannot be a happy experience, but a source of human misery.

The seven heads described here probably refer to the 7 heads of the Roman government, the epitome of human evil, that would appear through history states Tim Lahaye. Five emperors had come and gone by the apostle John's time; one ruled during his time; and the 7th represents the Antichrist to come.

Others suggest that these are the 7 phases of Roman type of government through which the nondescript beast, which represents Caesarean imperialism, passed. In any case, the whole animal represents a bestial kingdom that will be in dominant control of the earth during the Tribulation.

A rather interesting side note regarding the Holy Spirit's description of the beast to represent kingdoms appears in the contrasts in the book of Daniel. When one thinks of world governments, they take on a beautiful shape, as did Nebuchadnezzar's image (in Dan. chapter 2). Each section of that image represented one of the four coming world kingdoms. However, when God describes the coming world kingdoms, He uses beasts to symbolize them. Human beings look favorably on government as a great help to them, whereas God looks on government as a great hindrance to them, as does anyone who has studied history and observed government's bestial treatment of humanity.

The ten horns symbolize the ten kings at the time of the end who would rule the world under Antichrist. When John tells us that the devil's tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to earth, he is probably describing the original demonic uprising against God. Satan somehow managed to convince a third of all God's angels to join him in his rebellion; these beings we now call "demons" or "fallen angels". They serve Satan and play an important role in the judgments of the Tribulation. We are given a glimpse into the future of the devil and his evil forces starting (in Dan. 2:7).

Daniel was the first prophet to write about the Antichrist's one world government. The prophecy was given in a dream to the man whom historians consider the most absolute dictator in world history, king Nebuchadnezzar.

**The Historical Accuracy of Daniel:** Daniel wrote his book long before this prophecy came to pass; yet here we are, 2500 years later, and it has been fulfilled exactly as he predicted. In fact, his prophecy was so specific that for many years it was fashionable to suggest that an unknown author wrote it long after the four world governments were in place. Skeptics said the reason the prophecies were so accurate was that the writer was merely writing history, not prophecy.

Unfortunately for those skeptics, archaeologists have discovered copies of Daniel's prophecy dated from well within the period of the 2nd or Medo-Persian kingdom. There is no question today that Daniel's prophecy was accurate history written in advance. And that, of course, can happen only by divine revelation.

It is important to note that many have tried to conquer the world and become a 5th world leader. Genghis Khan, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm, Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and many others have tried, all to no avail. The Bible said there would be four world governments and history reveal there have been only four.

Today, even though Rome is no longer an empire, virtually all western nations have taken their basic principles of government from Rome. The laws, statutes, senate, and other debating bodies have continued in what is called “Cesarean imperialism.”

In the 13th chapter of Revelation, the apostle John describes Daniel’s ten kings as “horns” on the seven heads of a “beast”. Don’t let the imagery confuse you; while Nebuchadnezzar saw the future governments of man as a beautiful image or statue, God in parallel descriptions saw (in Rev. chapters 7 and 8), them as beasts. This contrasts the human and divine views of government. Man sees government as beautiful and impressive and worships it, while God sees the governments of the world as beasts.

Daniel reveals that the ten kings pictured in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream will not always obey every whim of the Antichrist. In fact, three of them rebel against him and are quickly crushed. Here is how he describes their rebellion and defeat: I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots, “And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words” (Daniel 7:8).

**Alexander – An Important Footnote in History:** An amazing footnote of history which is enormously important: When Alexander began his conquest southward toward Egypt, he conquered most of Israel and besieged Jerusalem. The High Priest requested an audience, and showed Alexander that his whole life and career had been fore known and predicted by Israel’s God more than 200 years before. He taught Alexander from the 2nd, 7th, and 8th chapters of Daniel. It is said that Alexander fell down and declared Yahweh, the Lord of Israel, the God of gods.

Also, he spared Jerusalem and took with him many of the royal family of Judah and made them royal administrators of his conquered kingdoms. Jews were spread throughout the empire. Because of this, it later became necessary for the Hellenized Jews to have a Greek translation of their Hebrew Bible. The translation, known as the Septuagint (or LXX), for the seventy translators, was completed (in 165 B.C.), in a city founded by and named for Alexander, Alexandria, Egypt.

Thus, long before His birth, there were now available for the Gentile world the prophecies of the Messiah’s coming as a humble servant who would provide a way to God for all peoples.