

Mid Week • Daniel 2

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 of the book of Daniel is recognized by almost all diligent students of the Bible as a critical overview of the scope of history from the time of Daniel right up to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Using biblical terminology, evangelical scholars call it an “outline of the ‘times of the Gentiles.’”

In simple terms, what we find in these verses is an astounding foretelling of the rise and fall of empires from Daniel’s day right up to their culmination in the Kingdom of God on earth.

Chapter 2 is one of the reasons why critics of the Bible and Daniel in particular have argued for a late date for the book.

Though the books claims to have been written in the 6th Century before Christ, skeptics assign it a date sometime in the 2nd Century BC.

They say it’s more *history* than *prophecy* and only made to look like prophecy by some forger who lived during the time of *the Maccabees*.

Since there are numerous prophecies later in the book which speak pretty clearly a fulfillment in the time of the Maccabees, they say that’s when it had to have been written; and was only used as propaganda among the Jews to unite them under their Jewish leadership in opposition to the Greco-Syrians.

It’s interesting that when this theory of a late date for Daniel was first suggested, there was not much manuscript evidence to refute it.

But all that has changed with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and other finds of ancient manuscripts.

These all conspire to rip the rug out from under the skeptics.

But it’s interesting because while they’ve had to move their position to other ground, they still maintain it – even when the *evidence* is against them.

All this only proves yet again – the problem with *unbelief* isn’t a problem of a *lack of evidence*, it’s a determination to reject anything that doesn’t square with what the person WANTS to believe.

Follow the reasoning:

- 1) If I accept the early date for Daniel, then what we find here is prophetic.
- 2) If this is indeed prophecy, then there is someone who stands outside the time-domain and gave this information to Daniel.
- 3) This someone who stands outside the constraints of time is of course, God.
- 4) If there’s a God, and the bible is His word, which legitimate prophecy would prove it is, then it not only foretells the future but it’s commands carry moral authority and weight.
- 5) So it is something I must conform to – but I don’t want to!
- 6) So, I reject the whole thing!

How much easier it is to accept the evidence and what the evidence points to.

There is a God and He revealeth secrets!
And here we find the outline of Gentile kingdoms from Daniel's day to the
Second Coming of Christ.

TEXT

¹Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. ²Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. ³And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream."

Those who are paying close attention may raise a question at this point:

If Nebuchadnezzar was the one who had taken Daniel captive – and Daniel's Babylonian training took *three* years to complete, as it says in 1:5, how could this have taken place in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign? Wouldn't Daniel still have been in his apprenticeship?

The answer is – no!

This was Nebuchadnezzar's 2nd year as king, AS THE BABYONIAN'S figured it.

They did not count the unexpired months of the previous king's reign as part of the first year of the new king.

For example: If Clinton were to die in office and Al Gore became president now, the Babylonians would not start counting his years in office until January 1st.

When Nebuchadnezzar took over from his father, Nabopolassar, there were several months left in the calendar year.

These constitute the first year of Daniel's Babylonian training.

There's something a bit subtle in the language here that is missed in the translation into English.

We read that Nebuchadnezzar had *dreams* – plural.

Then he reports that he had a *dream* - singular - that was troubling.

It seems that he had had the *same* dream again and again, and each time he had it, it became more distressing to him.

It was clear to him that this dream was unlike others – first of all it was repeated night after night.

Second, it possessed a power that fixed his mind and moved him to realize it had a deeper meaning than just some sleep-time activity of his mind.

It came to dominate his waking hours and finally, he was unable to sleep, probably for fear of having it yet again!

The solution, gather that stable of guys whose profession it was to deal with this kind of stuff.

So in come the Chaldeans; the astrologers, the conjurers, and all who practice the esoteric and occult arts of fortune-telling and dream interpretation.

They lined up in front of the King and he told them he'd had this dream.

They reply with the usual . . .

⁴Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic,

Aramaic was the language spoken in Babylon at this time.

By the way, it's at this point in Daniel that the language the prophet writes in turns from Hebrew to Aramaic.

He keeps this up all the way thru Chapter 7.

Beginning with Ch. 8 he reverts to Hebrew for the remainder of the book

The Chaldeans say . . .

“O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation.”

This is the way it worked:

The person who had a dream told them what they had dreamed, and then they would consult their dream-interpretation manuals and explain what it meant.

In the minds of the Chaldeans, the accuracy of the interpretation depended on one thing, the detail and accuracy with which the person could relate their dream.

Dream-interpretation was a common practice among the occult sciences of the ancient world.

We have the records of several ancient civilizations and how different groups interpreted dreams.

It's expected that the King of Babylon would have such men as the Chaldeans he could refer to.

But these guys were in for a bit of a shock . . .

⁵The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, “My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. ⁶However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation.”

Nebuchadnezzar comes up with a brilliant, if not impossible, scenario.

His idea is this: How do I know if these clowns are worthy of their position as royal counselors?

They say they can interpret dreams – but how can I be sure?

How do I know they're not just making something up?

You see, Nebuchadnezzar had the awareness that what he dreamed was far more than just another dream; this one had the stamp of something more.

He sensed it as the spiritual communication it was – so he asked these spiritual men, men who claimed to be in touch with the spiritual realm, for the stamp of authenticity to their claims - -

“Tell me what the dream was first – then I'll know you have the insight to interpret it.”

Then he adds an incentive – “Tell me or die! Meet my criteria or I'll slice and dice you, and curse your family by leveling your house by fire.”

This is origin of the term, “Getting fired!”

“If on the other hand, you can tell me the dream and it's meaning, then I'll

promote you.”

The reaction of the Chaldeans is stunned disbelief . . .

7They answered again and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation.”

In v. 5, Nebuchadnezzar had already served them notice that he was not going to take any of their negotiating.

He said, “My decision is firm . . .”

But his demand is *so far outside* their realm of experience it simply doesn’t fit in to their scheme.

It’s like all of a sudden Nebuchadnezzar was talking another language.

So they back up and repeat themselves – “Tell us the dream, we’ll tell you the interpretation.”

8The king answered and said, “I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: ⁹if you do not make known the dream to me, *there is only one decree for you!* For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation.”

Nebuchadnezzar says he knows they’re just trying to buy time – but it won’t work.

He tells them that his mind is not going to change – he’s determined.

They have to tell the dream or die.

10The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, “There is not a man on earth who can tell the king’s matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. ¹¹*It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.*”

These pagan occult practitioners got it right!

No man could do what Nebuchadnezzar asked – only God could.

In all their wisdom, they came up empty and were incredulous at the King’s request.

But in their attempt to throw it all back on him, they give forth a truth that sets the scene for the rest of the chapter, and in a way, for the rest of the book of Daniel.

Vs. 10 & 11 remind us that sometimes the lost do speak truth – but they inevitably do so out of the wrong motive or without personal understanding of what it is they’re saying.

Like when the high priest said about Jesus, that it was better than one many die than that the whole nation perish.

These Chaldeans express their frustration with the King and his demand, but what they say is absolute truth – no MAN can tell Nebuchadnezzar what his dream was – but God can!

12For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise *men* of Babylon. ¹³So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise *men*; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill *them*.

This shows the absolute tyranny the King of Babylon had over the kingdom.

What he does here is simply *unjust* – to kill a whole group of people because of the failure of the few who stood as their representatives.

But you can empathize a bit with Nebuchadnezzar.

He had used these guys as his counselors in the past and had made numerous important decisions based on their guidance.

Now all of that was in doubt as he realized they may have been bluffing and blowing smoke to this point.

He sees them as nothing less than traitors and fakers who deserve death for their treachery.

The problem was, Daniel and his three friends were now classed as a part of this group known as Chaldeans

So when the order went out to off all of them, they began looking for the 4 Hebrews.

¹⁴Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon; ¹⁵he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel.

Daniel, showing an inordinate amount of grace and dignity, spoke with great discretion and wisdom to the commander of the execution squad and asked why the order had been given and why there was such a sense of urgency in it's dispatch.

The commander was moved by the grace and wisdom of Daniel and stopped long enough to answer his questions.

Daniel then indicated that he had a solution . . .

¹⁶So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. ¹⁷Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, ¹⁸that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁹Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

This is curious.

When Nebuchadnezzar suspected that the other wise men were only stalling for time, he didn't permit it.

But now that Daniel *asks* for time, Nebuchadnezzar grants it!

Why the difference?

Well, we can't be certain but the answer probably lies in the clue we see in v. 14.

Just as Daniel answered Arioch with counsel and wisdom, so he spoke to the king in the same manner.

And Nebuchadnezzar could see that this young man had a dignity and bearing that was unlike the other wise men.

Where as *they* were haughty and proud, Daniel showed a humbleness that commended him to others, specially those in power.

When he walked into the court that day, Nebuchadnezzar saw something markedly

different.

Daniel was the kind of man whose bearing and countenance exuded dignity and something truly spiritual.

When he walked into the king's presence, Nebuchadnezzar could see what it was he was looking for.

Most of us have probably known someone like that – people who possessed an air about them that just commended them.

They are people who spend much time in the presence of God.

And just as Moses' countenance on Mt. Sinai came to reflect the glow of God's glory, their whole manner seems to reflect the glory and dignity of heaven.

Prov. 16:13 says,

Righteous lips are the delight of kings, And they love him who speaks *what is right*.

Nebuchadnezzar could sense integrity in Daniel whereas the Chaldeans possessed none.

They knew that most of what they did was nothing more than fakery and illusion.

Prov. 22:29 says,

Do you see a man *who excels in his work*? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before unknown *men*.

Daniel's work was to give counsel to the king – and he excelled at it – even though he was young.

Heretofore, he had not attained a place of prominence at the king's side; he was a lesser counselor who didn't have the king's ear.

All of that is about to change.

He asked the king for permission to go home and spend some time seeking God for the dream and its interpretation.

All the other guys had done was stall for more time and tell Nebuchadnezzar how unreasonable he was.

Daniel says that if God gave him the wisdom, he could do it.

Nebuchadnezzar was impressed with the request and granted it.

Daniel called his friends, and together they sought the Lord in prayer.

That night, Daniel was given his own dream that was more than a dream – it was a replay of the king's, and with it the meaning.

No doubt with a sigh of great relief, Daniel thanked God.

²⁰Daniel answered and said:

“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,

For wisdom and might are His.

²¹ And He changes the times and the seasons;

He removes kings and raises up kings;

He gives wisdom to the wise

And knowledge to those who have understanding.

Daniel, reflecting the content of the dream, thanks God for what he has been shown.

He understand that he has seen the overview of Gentile history – the sequence of kingdoms that will rise and fall till the end of the age.

Note what Daniel says – God gives wisdom to whom? The wise
And whom does he give more knowledge to? Those who already possess understanding?

We find this truth repeated in the NT when we read that to those who have, more will be given, but to those who do not have, even what they do have will be taken away.

There is a spiritual law that says that wisdom is only given to those who use what wisdom they already have.

Knowledge is only given to those who exercise the knowledge *already* given. Fools are not made privy to the gift of wisdom, and those willfully ignorant are not given knowledge.

So many Christians today are seeking counsel and guidance for their lives, but they're lazy in their study of God's Word and sloppy in their putting to use what they've already learned.

If you want more wisdom – use what you already have!

22 He reveals deep and secret things;

He knows what *is* in the darkness,

And light dwells with Him.

23 "I thank You and praise You,

O God of my fathers;

You have given me wisdom and might,

And have now made known to me what we asked of You,

For You have made known to us the king's demand."

24Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise *men* of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise *men* of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation."

It appears that some of the Chaldeans had been executed *prior* to Daniel's intervention.

But with his request of the king for time, the killing had stopped.

Now he tells Arioch he's received the interpretation and is ready to see the king.

25Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, "I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation."

Here's an interesting little piece of classic positioning and posturing on the part of those near power.

Arioch tells Nebuchadnezzar, "I'VE found someone who can interpret your

dream.”

Where was Arioch when Daniel had first gone to ask for time? No where! Arioch didn't want to ask for time from Nebuchadnezzar – he'd seen what happened to the first group of guys who asked for time.

Daniel was on his own then.

But now that there's good news and success to be shared, Arioch is all over it.

This is so classic for people *near* power.

26The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?”

27Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, “The secret which the king has demanded, the wise *men*, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. **28**But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.

See this against the backdrop of what we've just seen in Arioch.

Arioch claims to be the one who found Daniel.

But when Daniel comes before the king, he claims nothing for himself.

It's *God* who reveals secrets, not Daniel, nor any other man.

Daniel doesn't even say, “And God showed ME what your dream was.”

He says, “God has shown you, Nebuchadnezzar, what will transpire in the latter days.”

Now, that phrase, “latter days” is used in the bible to refer to the age that see the culmination of human history and the advent of the kingdom of God.

So though the dream Daniel is about to relate stretches from that time all the way to the end, Daniel's says the dream is really about the end of history as we know it.

Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: ²⁹As for you, O king, thoughts came to your *mind while on your bed, about* what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be.

³⁰But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for *our* sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

Daniel begins with a little background.

Nebuchadnezzar had been wondering about the rise and fall of kingdoms such as his own.

He knew all about the Assyrians who had dominated this region before Babylon and to whose empire he had helped bring and end.

He knew also about the mighty Egyptians and had been the general in charge of the armies of Babylon at the Battle of Carchimesh that had seen the decimation of the Egyptians forces.

But Nebuchadnezzar was a fairly sharp fellow and knew that kingdoms don't last forever.

So, just as Assyria had fallen and Babylon had risen to rule over it, he wondered what empire, what kingdom would rise to eventually take Babylon's place.

Then his mind stretched out to the distance and he wondered how and when it

would all end.

Would there ever be one final, unconquerable empire that would rule over all and never decline?

God answered Nebuchadnezzar's inquiry with a vision of the future addressing those very questions.

Daniel says that God gave him this dream, *not only* to answer his questions, but to bring Daniel and his friends to the king's attention.

Now he launches into the dream . . .

31“You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. **32**This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, **33**its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. **34**You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. **35**Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Daniel begins by simply explaining the dream the king saw, in detail.

It's clear from Nebuchadnezzar's response that he was dead on!

I don't really need to say any more on this because the text explains itself.

Let's see what Daniel says about it's interpretation . . .

36“This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. **37**You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; **38**and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given *them* into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold. **39**But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. **40**And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, *that kingdom* will break in pieces and crush all the others. **41**Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. **42**And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. **43**As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. **44**And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. **45**Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.”

These verses give us an overview and outline of history from the time of Daniel right up to the Second Coming.

Daniel's interpretation is abundantly clear and few scholars have doubted precisely how all this has been fulfilled in history.

Daniel begins by saying that the head of gold on the image Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream represents him.

God had given him a kingdom that covered the entire ancient world.

It's notable as well that Nebuchadnezzar, being king over the Babylonian system was a total despot!

His word could not be denied – he was absolute law and his power unfettered by any law other than himself.

Pure, unrestrained political power = Gold

But Daniel says that another kingdom will rise after the Babylonians.

This kingdom is represented by what? – Chest and arms of silver.

Daniel says that this kingdom will be inferior to Babylon, as silver is inferior in value to the head of Gold.

Question: If this next kingdom is inferior, how does it conquer Babylon?

Answer: It's politically inferior, but militarily, it's stronger, just as silver is a stronger metal than gold, it is also less valuable.

Now, it's interesting that as we look at history we know that the Persians were the next empire to dominate the ancient middle east.

They were indeed stronger than Babylon militarily, but their political system was weaker.

Their kings did *not* possess the total power Nebuchadnezzar and the other kings of Babylon had.

They were bound by laws already passed.

We see this a bit later when Daniel was thrown into the lion's den by the order of Darius, the Persian king.

Darius realized he'd been tricked into passing the law that led to Daniel's being placed in the den.

But he couldn't just countermand the order and get Daniel out – that's why even though the King *wanted* to save him, he had to leave him in the pit overnight.

After this, another kingdom would rise, symbolized by the belly and thighs of bronze.

Daniel said this kingdom would rule over all the earth.

Again, history tells us that the next kingdom to rise was Greece which under Alexander the Great conquered not only the regions of Babylon and Persia, but all the way down in to Egypt and as far east as India.

Indeed, to the ancient middle eastern mind, this comprised the extent of the borders of the known world.

They knew there were lands beyond these and people who lived in them but they considered them inconsequential.

Just as bronze is stronger than silver, the armies of Greece under Alexander were simply unstoppable!

But in similar manner, just as bronze is of less value than silver, the political strength of the Greek system was weaker as well.

As I'm sure you know, the Greeks championed the idea of the city-state and

democracy, or the rule of the people.

This system was wholly unsuited for the far-flung Greek empire when the unifying strength of Alexander's leadership passed with his early death. The whole empire fractured into 4 separate and warring parts under 4 of his main generals.

But this isn't the end of the dream. There's a 4th empire – represented by legs of iron.

Now, here's what's interesting about this – iron is the strongest metal yet in this image, but also of the least value.

Daniel says that this fourth kingdom will completely dominate all that has gone before, in fact, it will stamp and press itself indelibly into them.

What world empire replaced the remnants of Greece and stamped itself indelibly on world history with the force of iron will and military power? Rome!

But what was Rome's political form – a weak amalgam of Senate and Caesar.

It was always the *political weakness* not military power of Rome that proved her downfall.

What's most amazing about this image is that it ends in feet and toes that are a mixture of iron and clay.

In keeping with the symbolism that's gone before, each part of the body and metal it's made of represents a *new* kingdom.

But the feet and toes are somehow linked to the 4th, or Roman kingdom.

They are attached to the legs, so they come *after* Rome, and they are made of iron, so they come *out* of Rome in some way or other, but they are mixed with clay, which Daniel here says results in a *weakness*!

That weakness is one of *division*.

There will be strength in them – but the division there will result in the arrangement being fragile.

An important clue into what we're looking at here is the phrase in v. 43, "seed of men."

43 As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

Rome managed to conquer many different tribes and ethnic groups.

And though those different groups never coalesced into a united whole, they did take on many of the features of the Roman system.

Throughout the Middle Ages, as Rome's old imperial system fell away, the people groups of the old Roman Empire banded together to form nations.

Those nations that formed then are pretty much what we see today throughout Europe, Western Asia, and North Africa.

Most of Asia and Africa tried to throw off the Roman yoke and trappings while the European nations tried to resurrect Rome's glory and power.

Charlemagne, Frederick, and other European monarchs tried to assert themselves as the new Caesar.

Try as they might, Rome would not rise from the ashes.

Rome was never replaced by another empire as Babylon, Persia and Greece were.

Rome fell of its own corruption and weight.

Yet today, in Europe, we see the vestiges of the old Roman Empire regaining their strength.

We see it in what is known as the *European Community*, or what some are calling, the United States of Europe.”

These nations, once the territory of the Roman Empire, are seeking to carry on the legacy that was Rome.

But they are each a different and independent political system.

They've formed a *European Parliament* and elected an *executive council*, whose aim it is to address the political weakness they know is their single greatest hindrance to the future.

The growing use of the Euro, which is the common monetary unit among the nations of the EC points to a day when they will unite.

If there is a common currency and economic system, the political system will soon follow since politics always follows the money.

But the weakness of the EC will always be that it will be governed by a Parliament made up of representatives of several different nations – speaking different languages and representing different cultures and customs.

Still, we watch with some interest as we see the EC nations forming a *united* military.

Imagine the strength of the combined forces of England, France, Germany, Spain, and Italy!

Note what Daniel goes on to say about these feet and toes of mixed iron and clay -

44And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed;

This points not to some esoteric and mysterious spiritual lesson – Daniel says that this deals with a period of time – “in the days of these kings”

What kings? –The context is clear, the kings represented by the feet and toes of iron and clay.

As we take a step back and look at the entire image and what is represented here, we see that each empire from Babylon to Rome arose to take dominance from the previous.

Each was militarily stronger but politically weaker than the previous.

But with the 4th empire, there is a change.

It is never supplanted – it merely changes and gives rise to something in the end that is like it yet different.

Many bible students believe that the European Community is what is represented by the feet and toes of the image.

Others have come to believe that it's bigger than that and includes several regions, larger than just the borders of Europe, like trading blocks or regions which are connected to what Rome was.

Whatever exactly is represented by the feet and toes, if we're to stay true to the image and how it has been already fulfilled in history, then we'd have to say it comes out of Rome somehow and is linked to what Rome was.

There is both strength and fragility in it – the strength coming from its iron military power, and its weakness coming from its division due to many different people groups that comprise it.
It would seem from this that the EC does fit the bill pretty nicely.

But here's what we are to take careful note of . . .

What did Daniel tell Nebuchadnezzar God had given him a vision of? The latter days!

It's not this image that's the focal point of the dream – it's what comes next and what *happens* to the image.

In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he saw a rock that had been cut without hands.

In other words, this was a "dressed stone" – one quarried as if for use in a building.

But this stone was not quarried or shaped by *human* hands.

It was eternally perfect.

It smashed the image in the feet, and when it did, the image crumbled to the ground and shattered into tiny pieces that blew away like chaff on the wind.

Then the stone grew in dimension until it covered the earth.

Daniel explains in v. 44 . . .

⁴⁴And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

⁴⁵Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

The end of the image, and so the reign of human empires and kingdoms, comes when a perfect stone, comes to end human rule on earth.

You see, the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream represents human kingdoms.

But the stone cut without hands presents Christ, who is called in both the OT and NT the Chief Cornerstone, the stone of stumbling and the rock of offense who nevertheless becomes the foundation stone of the Church and the kingdom of God.

It's in the days of the reign of the feet and toes, the Old Roman Empire in some revived and renewed state that Christ comes and brings an end to mere human rule by establishing the Reign of God over all the Earth.

⁴⁶Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. ⁴⁷The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God *is* the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret." ⁴⁸Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise *men* of Babylon. ⁴⁹Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel *sat* in the gate of the king.

This event sees the promotion of Daniel to a favored place in the court of

Nebuchadnezzar.

He immediately uses his influence to see his friends promoted as well.
He knows their godly character and that they can be of great use in the administration of the growing empire called Babylon.

Daniel's not saying anything to the King about his offer of worship has troubled many students of the bible.

If they would just look on to consider Nebuchadnezzar's words they'd see that the king isn't worshipping Daniel – he's worshipping Daniel's God.

Nebuchadnezzar was prostrating himself before Daniel and commanding these sacrifices, not with Daniel as the focus, but in Daniel's presence because he is overwhelmed with Daniel's God and considers the young Hebrew man a *priest* who is capable of officiating in this capacity.

CONCLUSION

The great lesson of this chapter is found in vs. 20 & 21

20 Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His.

21 And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding.

Nebuchadnezzar was given an overview of History.

More to the point – he was given a vision of the goal of History – the emergence of the Reign of Christ on Earth.

Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold, the beginning of the image.

We live in the days of the feet and toes.

It is my absolute conviction that it's in our epoch, in our time that we will see the Second Coming of Christ.

As I look at Europe today I see a very natural and unforced fulfillment of the feet and toes of iron and clay.

But as I consider all these things it's in vs. 20 & 21 that I find my comfort and confidence.

God didn't just foretell the future – He controls the future!

Wisdom and might are His – he doesn't just *have* them – they belong to Him.

He is in total control of the times, the ages, the epochs of history.

He sets up kings, He removes kings.

A nation rises, a nation declines – like clockwork, it's all part of His Master Plan.

And all the while He governs the affairs of History He's concerned about the affairs of your life and my life.

He gives us wisdom and knowledge, not just in the scope of history, but in the details of daily life.

He is a God who is near and concerned about that which concerns us.