

25. In Nebuchadnezzar's dream about a statue (Dan 2), what do the different parts represent?

In a vivid dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw a large statue. Daniel and his three friends received revelation from God concerning the interpretation of this dream. In order to understand this scene from Scripture, we find ourselves having to interpret Daniel's interpretation.

God gave Daniel the following understanding of the dream. The head of gold was Nebuchadnezzar, and God gave him governing authority over all the earth. The statue's breast and arms were made of silver, meaning that the kingdom to follow Nebuchadnezzar would be a lesser kingdom or realm in some way. The belly and thighs were made of bronze, so the third kingdom to follow would be lesser yet, but still have God-given dominion over the entire earth. Continuing down the statue, the legs were made of iron, and the feet of iron and clay, meaning a fourth kingdom would emerge, having a measure of strength that the previous kingdoms did not have. Since the feet and toes that were part iron and part clay, this future kingdom would be a divided kingdom – strong and tough in some ways and weak and brittle in others, mixed together but not alike.

The most comprehensive understanding of these images is that they represent Babylon and four successive kingdoms to reign over the region that follow. They are Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and the empire of Islam. (Rome ruled the region until 630 AD, when Islam came into power.) This is a foreshadowing of the future government of the antichrist.

An equally plausible interpretation is that they all represent a succession of Babylonian kings. History shows that king

Nebuchadnezzar was followed by king Amel-Marduk, then king Belshazzar (the very brief reigns of Neriglissar, Labashi-Marduk and Nabonidus were not recognized). In this interpretation, they could simply be kings in the lineage of Nebuchadnezzar (Amel-Marduk was the son of Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar was his grandson). Both Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel likely would have understood the dream in this context. In each of these interpretations, the final king of greater “Babylon” will be the antichrist in the end times.

Another variation of this interpretation simply focuses on the spiritual monarchy of individual kings that ruled the earth, proclaiming to be God. The following kingdoms had, at the height of their power, a single king with sovereign rule that proclaimed he was God: Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar), Persia (Cyrus), Greece (Alexander), Rome (Caesar) and Mystery Babylon of the future (the antichrist as seen in 2 Thessalonians 2:4).

All these interpretations view the last kingdom in the dream, the stone cut out of a mountain without hands and used as a hammer, as representing King Jesus and His all-encompassing reign throughout the Millennium and beyond. (See illustrations #16 through #18: Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream Statue)