

3–6 MH 148 ; PP 592

4 FE 77 ; PK 484

4, 5 Te 271

5 CD 29 ; PK 481 ; 4T 570

6 PK 480

7 PK 481

8 CD 28 , 30 , 154 ; CE 43 ; CG 166 ; CH 50 , 65 ; CT 478 , 496 ; Ed 54 ; FE 78 , 86 ,
227 ; ML 75 , 120 , 147 , 254 ; MM 276 ; SL 19 ; Te 35 , 101 , 151 , 189 , 237 , 271 ;
4T 515 , 570 ; 5T 448 ; 9T 157 , 165

8–12 CH 64 ; PK 483

9 PK 546

10 SL 21

12 CD 31 ; FE 79

12–20 SL 22

15–17 PK 484

15–20 CH 65 ; FE 80

17 CD 31 , 154 ; CH 50 , 65 ; COL 357 ; CT 456 ; FE 87 , 225 , 247 , 339 , 358 ; MM 89

17–20 FE 193

18–20 CH 65

19 CD 32 ; Te 271

19, 20 Ed 55 ; ML 147 ; MYP 241 ; PK 485

20 CH 50 ; FE 247 , 358 , 374 ; MM 276 ; Te 191 ; 6T 220

CHAPTER 2

1 Nebuchadnezzar, forgetting his dream, requireth it of the Chaldeans, by promises and threatenings . 10 They acknowledging their inability are judged to die . 14 Daniel

obtaining some respite findeth the dream . 19 He blesseth God . 24 He staying the decree is brought to the king . 31 The dream . 36 The interpretation . 46 Daniel's advancement .

1. Second year. On the identification of the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign and for an explanation of how the three years of Daniel's training (ch. 1:5, 18) were completed before the end of the king's 2d year see on ch. 1:18 .

Dreamed dreams. Possibly the plural is intended to describe the series of incidents in the dream. The singular occurs in vs. 3, 4, 5, 6 , etc. The records of ancient Mesopotamia tell of many royal dreams. In one of these Gudea saw a man with a kingly crown upon his head whose stature reached from earth to heaven. The ancients regarded dreams with awe, treated them as revelations from their deities, and sought to discover their true interpretation.

The Lord in His providence gave Nebuchadnezzar this dream. God had a message for the king of the Babylonian realm. There were representatives in the palaces of Nebuchadnezzar through whom God could communicate a knowledge of Himself. God is no respecter of men or of nations. His object is to save as many as are willing, of whatever tribe or nation. He was as anxious to save the ancient Babylonians as He was to save Israel.

The dream was intended to reveal to Nebuchadnezzar that the course of history was ordained by the Most High and subject to His will. Nebuchadnezzar was shown his place of responsibility in the great plan of Heaven, in order that he might have the opportunity of cooperating effectively with the divine program.

The lessons of history given to Nebuchadnezzar were designed for the instruction of nations and men till the close of time. Other scepters than those of Babylon have held sway over the nations of men. To every ancient nation God assigned a special place in His great plan. When rulers and people failed in their opportunity, their glory was laid in the dust. Nations today should heed the lessons of past history. Above the fluctuating scene of international diplomacy the great God of heaven sits enthroned "silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will" (PK 500). Eventually stability and permanence will come when God Himself, at the end of time, sets up His kingdom, which shall never be destroyed. (v. 44). See on ch. 4:17 .

God approached King Nebuchadnezzar through a dream because, evidently, that was the most effective means by which to impress his mind with the importance of the message thus imparted, win his confidence, and secure his cooperation. Like all ancient peoples, Nebuchadnezzar believed in dreams as one of the means by which the gods revealed their will to men. Divine wisdom always meets men where they are. In communicating a knowledge of His will to men today God may use means that are less spectacular, yet as certainly ordained for the accomplishment of His beneficent purposes. He ever adapts His modes of working with men to the capacity of each individual and to the environment of the age in which each lives. See further on ch. 4:10 .

Was troubled. Or, “was disturbed.” The Hebrew verb thus translated occurs also in Gen. 41:8 and Ps. 77:4 . The dream experience had greatly impressed King Nebuchadnezzar.

2. Magicians. Heb. *charṭummim* , an Egyptian loan word (see on ch. 1:20).

Astrologers. Heb. *'ashshaphim* , an Akkadian loan word (see on ch. 1:20).

Sorcerers. Heb. *mekashshephim* , from a root meaning “to use enchantments.” The Babylonians called them by the cognate word *kashshapu* . The *mekashshephim* professed to be able to produce magic spells (see on Ex. 7:11). The Mosaic law pronounced the death penalty upon those who practiced this black magic (Lev. 20:27 ; cf. 1 Sam. 28:9).

Chaldeans. Heb. *Kaśdim* (see on ch. 1:4).

3. To know the dream. Though the king had been deeply impressed by the dream, when he awoke he found it impossible to recall the particulars (see PK 491). Some have suggested that Nebuchadnezzar had not forgotten his dream and that he was putting to the test the reputed skill of the supposedly wise men. But the king appears too concerned about gaining a knowledge of the dream and its interpretation to use the occasion to test his would-be interpreters.

4. Syriack. Heb. *'aramith* , “Aramaic.” The royal family and the ruling class of the empire were Aramaic-speaking Chaldeans originating from southern Mesopotamia. It is therefore not surprising to find that the king’s courtiers spoke to him in Aramaic and not in Babylonian, the tongue of the native population of Babylon. The Aramaeans were an important branch of the Semitic peoples, and their language included many dialects.

From this verse on to the end of ch. 7 the record is in Aramaic and not in Hebrew, as is the remainder of the book. On the possible reasons for this see p. 749.

O king, live for ever. The Babylonian formula found in contemporary inscriptions reads somewhat like this: “May Nabu and Marduk give long days and everlasting years to the king my lord.” Compare 1 Sam. 10:24 ; 1 Kings 1:31 ; Neh. 2:3 ; Dan. 3:9 ; 5:10 ; 6:21 .

5. The thing is gone from me. Some scholars translate this expression so as to give it the meaning “the thing is certain with me,” or “the word is promulgated by me.” The RSV reads, “the word from me is sure.” These alternative translations are based on the assumption that the Aramaic word *'azda* ' is an adjective rather than a verb, as the translators of the KJV considered it. The translation of the KJV is supported by the LXX and by Rashi, who translates *'azda* ' “has gone.” Whatever meaning is adopted there is no question about Nebuchadnezzar’s being unable to recall the particulars of the dream (see on v. 3). The dream was purposely taken from the king, that the wise men should not place upon it a false interpretation (see FE 412).

Cut in pieces. Literally, “dismembered.” They were to be cut limb from limb (see 2 Macc.1:16 ; Josephus *Antiquities* xv. 8. 4). Such cruelty as is here depicted was common in the ancient world. The Assyrians and Babylonians were notorious for the severity and barbarity of their treatment of offenders. Ashurbanipal reports that he cut in pieces rebel rulers.

Dunghill. Aramaic *newali* , which, from a similarity with an Akkadian root, some interpret as meaning “ruins.” Others retain the definition “dunghill,” or “refuse heap,” and interpret the clause as meaning that the houses would be turned into “public privies” (see 2 Kings 10:27). The LXX supports neither interpretation, but reads, “your houses shall be spoiled.”

8. *Gain the time.* Literally, “buy the time.” The wise men were temporizing, and their repeated request aroused the suspicion of the king that they were seeking to gain and advantage by delay. It is doubtful whether at this point he was already seriously questioning their ability to give him the requested information. The whole fabric of his faith was built around a belief that the gods communicated with men through the various channels represented by these men. Their hesitancy to comply immediately with his request may at first have aroused his suspicion that they had conspired together to take advantage of him. If the dream contained a communication concerning action to be taken at an auspicious moment, delay would result in tragic loss. Certain communications through divinations demanded that action be undertaken at a precise moment, such as a particular conjunction of the planets. The expressions, “gain the time,” and “till the time be changed” (v. 9), may have reference to such a supposed opportune moment.

9. *One decree for you.* Literally, “your law is one.” The word for “decree” may also be rendered “sentence,” or “penalty.”

Time be changed. Either until the king should forget the whole affair or till they could invent some form of reply. “Time” here may also refer to the auspicious moment for carrying out the alleged communication of a god (see on v. 8).

10. *Not a man.* The Chaldeans were compelled to acknowledge their inability to reveal the dream. They told the king that he was asking for something that was beyond human power to reveal, and that no king had ever made such an unreasonable request of any of his subjects.

King, lord, nor ruler. Literally, “king, great and powerful.” “Great king” (see 2 Kings 18:28) is an old Babylonian title. Such an expression as “Great King, Mighty King, King of Assyria [or, of Babylon]” is common in the inscriptions.

11. *Rare.* Better, “difficult.”

Gods. Some see a hint here of two classes of gods. They suggest that these wise men claimed to be in communication with certain gods, such subordinate deities as were

supposed to maintain contact with men, but that the higher gods were unapproachable. In any case the Chaldeans were revealing the limitations of their art.

Others suggest that the plural *'elahin*, “gods,” even as the Hebrew plural *'elohim* (see Vol. I, pp. 170, 171), could be used of a single deity, and that, in common with other polytheists, the Chaldeans recognized some supreme deity. In any case the wise men were frank to admit that they recognized a higher intelligence, some master mind or minds, that had knowledge beyond that possessed by human beings. This confession of failure provided a remarkable opportunity for Daniel to reveal something of the power of the God whom he served and worshiped.

12. Commanded to destroy. The severity of the sentence was not out of keeping with the customs of the times. It was, however, a bold step on the part of the king, because the men whose death he had ordered were the learned classes of society.

Babylon. Possibly only the city and not the whole realm of Babylonia.

13. They sought Daniel. Daniel and his friends would not have been “sought” had they not already become members of the profession of “wise men.” Thus the view that they were still in training seems unfounded (see on ch. 1:18). The fact that they had but recently graduated is sufficient to explain why they had not been called to interpret the dream. The monarch would have summoned only the highest ranking leaders, representative of all the knowledge of their craft. Neither the king nor the leading wise men would have thought of calling on Daniel and his three friends any more than the top specialists of the land, baffled by a royal ailment, would consult fledgling doctors just out of medical school. Nor is it necessary to suppose that Daniel’s training included courses in exorcism and soothsaying, as modern critics suggest (see on ch. 1:20).

14. Wisdom. Aramaic *te'em*, which may also be translated “taste,” or “discretion.” Daniel showed great tact in approaching his superior.

15. Hasty. The LXX has *pikros*, which means “bitter,” or “harsh.” Some scholars also assign this meaning to the Aramaic, whereas others insist that the original has the basic idea of urgency.

16. Give him time. One of the things that infuriated the king was that the wise men were seeking to postpone their answer (see on v. 8). Obviously the king was still troubled over the dream, and may have been happy over the new prospect of finding a solution to the mystery that was harassing his spirit. Since Daniel had not been consulted previously, the king may have thought it only fair to give him an opportunity. In his previous contact with this young Judean captive, Nebuchadnezzar had evidently been favorably impressed with Daniel’s sincerity and ability. Daniel’s previous faithfulness in lesser things now opened the door to greater things.

Interpretation. Daniel's request differed from that of the Chaldeans. The wise men demanded that the king relate to them the dream. Daniel simply requested time, and assured the king that the interpretation would be provided.

18. Desire mercies. Daniel and his companions could approach God with strong faith and implicit confidence because, to the best of their knowledge and ability, they were living up to His revealed will (see 1 John 3:22). They had the consciousness that they were in the place where God wanted them to be, and were doing the work that Heaven designed. If in their earlier experience they had compromised principle and had yielded to the temptations that constantly surrounded them in the royal court, they could not have expected such marked divine intervention in this crisis. Contrast their experience with that of the prophet of Judah who forfeited divine protection by his rash disobedience (1 Kings 13:11–32 ; see on 1 Kings 13:24).

19. Night vision. Aramaic *chazu* , akin to the Heb. *chazon* (see on 1 Sam. 3:1).

Daniel blessed. Upon receiving the divine revelation, Daniel's first thought was to return due praise to the Revealer of secrets, a worthy example of what all should do who receive signal blessings from the Lord.

On the meaning of the expression "blessed the God" see on Ps. 63:4 .

20. Name of God. The expression is frequently used to denote the being, power, and essential activity of God. "Name" is often used in the Bible synonymously with "character."

Wisdom. Those who lack wisdom may receive it from its true source in response to the prayer of faith (James 1:5). The boasted claim of the Babylonians that their deities possessed wisdom and insight had been demonstrated to be false. Heathen deities continually disappoint their devotees.

21. And he. The pronoun is emphatic in the Aramaic. The effect may be shown in the English by the translation, "It is he that changeth," etc.

Times and the seasons. The two words are almost synonymous. The latter may refer to a more specific point of time; the former seems to stress more the idea of a period of time.

Removeth kings. Here is portrayed the true philosophy of human history. Kings and rulers are ultimately under the direction and control of an almighty Potentate (see Ed 173 ; see on v. 1 and on ch. 4:17).

Unto the wise. The Lord delights to bestow wisdom upon those who will use it wisely. He did this for Daniel, and He will do it today for every one who trusts fully in Him.

22. He revealeth. God reveals Himself in nature (Ps. 19), in personal experience, through the prophetic gift and other gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12), and His written Word.

Deep. Things beyond human comprehension until revealed.

Darkness. That which man is unable to see is not hidden from the eye of God (see Ps. 139:12 ; 1 John 1:5).

23. Thank thee. The pronoun is emphatic in the Aramaic. The word order in the original is as follows: “To thee, O God of my fathers, I give thanks.”

What we desired. Although the dream has been revealed to Daniel, he does not take all the credit to himself, but includes his companions who prayed with him.

24. Destroy not the wise men. Daniel’s first concern was to plead for the wise men of Babylon, that the sentence of death upon them might be canceled. They had done nothing to earn their reprieve, but they were saved because of the presence of a righteous man in their midst. It has often been thus. The righteous are “the salt of the earth.” They have a preserving quality. Because of Paul’s presence in the ship the sailors and all aboard were saved (Acts 27:24). The wicked know not how much they owe to the righteous. Yet how often the wicked ridicule and persecute the very ones whom they should thank for the preservation of their lives.

25. In haste. Possibly because of his great joy that the secret had been discovered. He might now be spared the gory task of executing all the wise men, an assignment for which obviously he had no heart.

I have found. Arioch appears to take undeserved credit to himself, for his statement seems to imply that through strenuous efforts on his part he had discovered someone who could interpret the dream. However, Arioch may not have known of Daniel’s interview with the king (v. 16). In this case his statement would be the natural way of announcing the discovery.

26. Belteshazzar. For the meaning of this name and the reason why it was given to Daniel see on ch. 1:7 . In Nebuchadnezzar’s presence Daniel naturally assumed his Babylonian name.

27. Cannot the wise men. Daniel had no desire to exalt himself above the wise men. He aimed, rather, to impress upon the king the futility of trusting his wise men for counsel and help. He hoped to turn the king’s eyes to the great God in heaven, the God whom Daniel worshiped, the God of the Hebrews, whose people had been conquered by the king.

The astrologers, the magicians. See on ch. 1:20 .

Soothsayers. Aramaic *gazerin* , from a root meaning “to cut,” “to determine.” Hence the generally accepted meaning is “the deciders,” or “the determiners [of destiny].” From the position of the stars, by various arts of computation and divining, these soothsayers thought they could determine the future (see on ch. 1:20).

28. Latter days. See on Isa. 2:2 . The message of the dream was for the instruction of Nebuchadnezzar as well as of the rulers and people to the end of time (see on v. 1). The outline of prophecy carries us from Nebuchadnezzar’s day (see on v. 29) down to the end of the world and the second coming of Christ (see on vs. 44 , 45). Nebuchadnezzar had been looking forward with anxious forebodings to the future (see SL 34). God revealed to him the future, not to satisfy his curiosity, but to awaken in his mind a sense of personal responsibility toward the program of heaven.

29. Hereafter. In this dream are depicted future developments beginning with the time of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar and extending to the end of the world.

30. Their sakes. “Their” is a supplied word. The clause reads literally, “but on account of the thing that they may make known to the king the interpretation.” “They” appears to be used impersonally. The LXX probably gives the simplest meaning of the passage, “Moreover, this mystery has not been revealed to me by reason of wisdom which is in me beyond all living, but for the sake of making known the interpretation to the king, that thou mightest know the thoughts of thine heart.”

31. Image. Aramaic *ṣelem* , “a statue,” corresponding to the Heb. *ṣelem* , which also may be translated “statue.” In every instance except one (Ps. 39:6 , where it is translated “vain shew”) the KJV translates *ṣelem* , “image,” though statue would be an appropriate translation in a number of instances, such as 2 Kings 11:18 ; 2 Chron. 23:17 ; Amos 5:26 .

Whose brightness was excellent. Or, as in the LXX , “whose appearance was extraordinary.”

Terrible. Or, “dreadful.” The word occurs again in Dan. 7:7, 19 .

32. Fine gold. That is, “pure gold.”

Brass. Rather, “bronze,” or “copper” (see on 2 Sam. 8:8 ; 1 Kings 7:47).

33. Legs. The word thus translated seems here to refer to the lower part of the legs. The word translated “thighs” (v. 32) refers to the upper part of the hips. Precisely where on the leg the transition from brass to iron occurred is not clear from these words.

Clay. Aramaic *chasaph* . From an examination of the cognate languages *chasaph* seems to designate an earthen vessel or a potsherd rather than the clay itself from which these objects are formed. The word for “clay,” Aramaic *ṭin* , occurs in vs. 41, 43 , in

connection with *chasaph*, and is there translated “miry.” It seems better, therefore, in v. 33 to translate *chasaph* “molded clay,” or “earthenware,” rather than simply “clay.”

34. Cut out. Or, “quarried,” or “broken out.”

Without hands. That is, unaided by human agencies.

35. Chaff. For a description of threshing as carried out in ancient Oriental lands, see on Ruth 3:2 ; Matt. 3:12 . Inasmuch as Inspiration has attached no particular significance to the “chaff” and the “wind” that blows it away (see on Matt. 13:3), it is best to consider them simply details added to complete the picture. For a description of the threshing floor as a common illustration, see on Ps. 1:4 ; (cf. Matt. 13:3 ; see Vol. III, p. 1111).

36. We will tell. The plural may indicate that Daniel classed his companions with himself. They had joined him in earnest prayer that the interpretation might be revealed, and Daniel may have wished to acknowledge their part in the matter (vs. 17, 18).

37. King of kings. This same title is found in the inscription of the Persian king Ariaramnes, a contemporary of Nebuchadnezzar.

God of heaven hath given. In his inscriptions Nebuchadnezzar attributes his regal success to his god Marduk, but Daniel, in a kindly manner, corrects this mistaken idea. He affirms that it is the God of heaven who has bestowed such power upon him.

A kingdom. The territory that Nebuchadnezzar ruled had had a long and checkered history and had been under the varied leadership of different peoples and kingdoms. According to Genesis, the city of Babylon was part of the kingdom founded by Nimrod, the great-grandson of Noah (Gen. 10:8–10). A number of city-states existed in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates at a very early period. Later, some states were grouped together into several Sumerian kingdoms. Following the first period of Sumer’s domination came the kingdom of Akkad, with its great Semitic kings Sargon and Naram-Sin. However, these Semites were again replaced by various nations, such as the Gutti, Elamites, and Sumerians. They in turn had to give way to the Semites who founded the Old Babylonian Empire, which flourished in the time of the later patriarchs. This Amorite Empire, of which Hammurabi was the most important king, came to include all of Mesopotamia and expanded into Syria, like the Akkadian Empire of Sargon. Later, Mesopotamia was taken over by Hurrians and Kassites, and Babylonia became less important than the powerful Hittite and Egyptian empires. Then in northern Mesopotamia arose another world power, the Assyrian Empire, which again united Mesopotamia and Western Asia to the Mediterranean. After a period of Assyrian domination Babylon became independent again under Chaldean rule, and took over once more the leadership of the world. Nabopolassar (626–605 B.C.) was the founder of what is termed the Chaldean, or Neo-Babylonian, Empire, which had its golden age in the days of King Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 B.C.), and lasted until Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians in 539 (see Vol. II, pp. 92–94; Vol. III, pp. 45–50).

38. *Beasts of the field.* See Jer. 27:6 ; Jer. 28:14 cf. Gen. 1:26 . A fitting representation of Babylon’s dominion in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. The manner in which ancient kings included the animal world in their sphere of domination is illustrated by a statement by Shalmaneser III: “Ninurta and Palil, who love my priesthood, have given me all the beasts of the field.”

The following passage from the so-called East India House inscription is typical of archeological evidence which substantiates Daniel’s description of Nebuchadnezzar’s conquests:

“In his [Marduk’s] exalted service I have traversed distant countries, remote mountains from the Upper Sea [Mediterranean] to the Lower Sea [Persian Gulf], steep paths, blockaded roads, where the step is impeded, [where] no foothold is possible, [also] uncharted routes, [and] desert paths. The disobedient I subjugated; I captured the enemies, established justice in the land; exalted the people; the bad and evil I removed far from the people.”

Thou art this head. Nebuchadnezzar was the Neo-Babylonian Empire personified. The military conquests and the architectural splendor of Babylon were, in large measure, due to his prowess.

Gold. An abundance of gold was used in embellishing Babylon. Herodotus describes in lavish terms how gold sparkled in the sacred temples of the city. The image of the god, the throne on which he sat, and the table and the altar were made of gold (Herodotus i. 181, 183; iii. 1–7). The prophet Jeremiah compares Babylon to a golden cup (Jer. 51:7). Pliny describes the robes of priests as interlaced with gold.

Nebuchadnezzar was outstanding among the kings of antiquity. He left to his successors a great and prosperous kingdom, as may be gleaned from the following inscription:

“[From] the Upper Sea [to] the Lower Sea (one line destroyed) ... which Marduk, my lord, has entrusted to me, I have made ... the city of Babylon to the foremost among all the countries and every human habitation; its name I have [made, or elevated] to the [most worthy of] praise among the sacred cities. ... The sanctuaries of my lords Nebo and Marduk (as a) wise (ruler) ... always. ...

“At the time, the Lebanon (*La-ab-na-a-nu*), the [Cedar] Mountain, the luxurious forest of Marduk, the smell of which is sweet, the hi[gh] cedars of which, [its] pro[duct], another god [*has not desired*, which] no other king has *fe[lled]* ... my *nâbû* Marduk [had desired] as a fitting adornment for the palace of the *ruler* of heaven and earth, (this Lebanon) over which a foreign enemy was ruling and robbing (it of) its riches—its people were scattered, had fled to a far (away region). (Trusting) in the power of my lords Nebo and Marduk, I organized [my army] for a[n expedition] to the Lebanon. I made that country happy by eradicating its enemy everywhere (*lit.* : below and above). All its scattered inhabitants I led back to their settlements (*lit.*: collected and reinstalled). What no former king had done (I achieved): I cut through steep mountains, I split rocks, opened passages and (thus) I constructed a straight road for the (transport of the) cedars. I made the Arahtu flo[at] (down) and carry to Marduk, my king, mighty cedars, high and strong, of precious beauty and of excellent dark quality,

the abundant yield of the Lebanon, as (if they be) reed stalks (carried by) the river. Within Babylon [I stored] mulberry wood. I made the inhabitants of the Lebanon live in safety together and let nobody disturb them. In order that nobody might do any harm [to them] I ere[cted there] a stela (showing) me (as) everlasting king”

(*Ancient Near Eastern Texts* , p. 307).

39. Another kingdom inferior. As silver is inferior to gold, the Medo-Persian Empire was inferior to the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

Some commentators have explained the term “inferior” as meaning “lower down in the image,” or “below.” The expression correctly means “downward,” “earthward,” but in this verse Daniel is speaking, not of the relative position of metals, but of nations. As we contrast the two kingdoms, we find that though the latter covered more territory, it certainly was inferior in luxury and magnificence. The Median and Persian conquerors adopted the culture of the complex Babylonian civilization, for their own was far less developed.

This second kingdom of Daniel’s prophecy is sometimes called the Medo-Persian Empire, because it began as a combination of Media and Persia. It included the older Median Empire and the newer acquisitions of the Persian conqueror Cyrus. The second kingdom cannot be the Median Empire alone, as some contend, with Persia as the third. The Median Empire was contemporary with the Neo-Babylonian, not its successor. Media fell to Cyrus the Persian before Babylon did. The fact that after Belshazzar’s death Darius the Mede “was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans” (ch. 9:1) does not mean that there was a separate Median Empire after the Babylonian and before the Persians took over (see Vol. III, pp. 48–56, 94–96). Darius the Mede ruled in Babylon by permission of the real conqueror, Cyrus (see Additional Note Chapter 6), as Daniel obviously knew. The book of Daniel repeatedly refers to the nation that conquered Babylon, and that Darius represented, as that of “the Medes and Persians” (see on chs. 5:28 ; 6:8, 28), and it pictures that dual empire elsewhere as a single beast (see on ch. 8:3, 4).

The origin of the Medes and Persians is not clear, but it is believed that around 2000 B.C. a number of Aryan tribes, led by the Madai (Medes) began to migrate from what is now southern Russia into what later became northern Persia, where they first appear in history in the 9th century (see on >Gen. 10:2 ; see Vol. III, pp. 50, 51). Among these Aryans were also the Persians, who settled in the Zagros Mountains bordering on Elam late in the 9th century B.C. Probably by 675 their ruler established himself as king of the city of Anshan. There he and his descendants ruled in comparative obscurity. At the beginning of the 6th century they were vassals of the Median king, ruling a relatively insignificant border state in the large Median Empire, which stretched from eastern Asia Minor around the north and east of the Babylonian Empire (see *The Rival Empires in Jeremiah’s Time* ; see Vol. III, pp. 50, 51).

In 553 or 550 B.C. Cyrus, who had become king of Persia as a vassal of the Median Empire, defeated Astyages of Media. Thus the formerly subordinate Persians became the

dominant power in what had been the Median Empire. Since the Persians were the ruling power from the time of Cyrus on, it is now generally referred to as the Persian Empire. But the older prestige of Media was reflected in the phrase “Medes and Persians” applied to the conquerors of Babylon in Daniel’s day and even later (Esther 1:19 ; etc.). The honorary position of Darius the Mede after the conquest of Babylon demonstrates Cyrus’ deference to the Medes even after he himself wielded the actual power (see Vol. III, pp. 51–53, 95, 96).

Years before, under prophetic guidance, the prophet Isaiah had described the work of Cyrus (Isa. 45:1). This conqueror of Media soon defeated the neighboring tribes and ruled from Ararat in the north to southeastern Babylonia and the Persian Gulf in the south. To round out his empire, he defeated the rich Croesus of Lydia in 547 B.C. and took Babylon by strategy in 539 B.C. (see Vol. III, pp. 51–55). Cyrus recognized that the Lord had given him all these kingdoms (2 Chron. 36:23 ; Ezra 1:2). For parallel prophecies concerning this empire, see on chs. 7:5 ; 8:3–7 ; 11:2 .

Third kingdom. The successor of the Medo-Persian Empire was the “Greek” (more properly Macedonian or Hellenistic) Empire of Alexander and his successors (see ch. 8:20, 21).

The Hebrew word for Greece is *Yawan* (Javan), which is the name of one of the sons of Japheth. Javan is mentioned in the genealogy immediately after Madai, the progenitor of the Medes (see on Gen. 10:2). About the time the Israelites were settling in Canaan, those Indo-European tribes later called Greeks were migrating in successive waves into the Aegean region (mainland Greece, the islands, and the western coasts of Asia Minor), conquering or driving out the earlier Mediterranean inhabitants. These displacements were connected with the movement of the Peoples of the Sea (including the Philistines) into the eastern Mediterranean coastlands (see Vol. II, pp. 27, 33, 34). Ionian Greeks were found in Egypt in the time of Psamtik I (663–610 B.C.) and in Babylonia during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 B.C.), as attested by written records.

Greece was divided into small city-states with a common language but little concerted action. When we think of ancient Greece we think chiefly of the golden age of Greek civilization, under the leadership of Athens, in the 5th century B.C. This flowering of Greek culture followed the period of the greatest united effort of the divided city-states—the successful defense of Greece against Persia about the time of Queen Esther. On the Persian wars, see on ch. 11:2 ; see also Vol. III, pp. 59–62.

The “Grecia” of ch. 8:21 does not refer to the divided city-states of classical Greece, but rather to the later Macedonian kingdom that conquered Persia. The Macedonians, a kindred nation north of Greece proper, conquered the Greek cities and incorporated them for the first time into a strong, united state. Alexander the Great, inheriting his father’s newly expanded Greco-Macedonian kingdom, set out to extend Macedonian dominion and Greek culture eastward, and conquered the Persian Empire. The prophecy represents the kingdom of Greece as following Persia, because Greece never became united into a kingdom until the formation of the Macedonian Empire, which replaced Persia as the

leading world power of that time (for parallel prophecies see on chs. 7:6 ; 8:5–8, 21, 22 ; 11:2–4).

The last reigning king of the Persian Empire was Darius III (Codomannus), who was defeated by Alexander at the battles of Granicus (334 B.C.), Issus (333 B.C.), and Arbela, or Gaugamela (331 B.C.). For comments on the period of Alexander and the Hellenistic monarchies see on ch. 7:6 ; see also historical article on the intertestament period in Vol. V.

Brass. That is, bronze (see on 2 Sam. 8:8). The Greek soldiers were noted for their brazen armor. Their helmets, shields, and battle-axes were made of brass. Herodotus tells us that Psamtik I of Egypt saw in invading Greek pirates the fulfillment of an oracle that foretold “men of bronze coming from the sea” (Herodotus i. 152, 154).

Rule over all the earth. History records that the rule of Alexander extended over Macedonia, Greece, and the Persian Empire, including Egypt and extending eastward to India. It was the most extensive empire of the ancient world up to that time. Its dominion was “over all the earth” in the sense that no power on earth was equal to it, not that it covered the whole world, or even the known world of that time. A “world power” may be defined as the one that stands above all the rest, invincible, not necessarily actually governing the whole known world. Superlative statements were commonly used by ancient rulers. Cyrus called himself “king of the world, . . . king of the four rims [quarters of the world].” Xerxes styled himself “the great king, the king of kings, . . . the king of this big and far [reaching] earth.”

40. Fourth kingdom. This is not the later, divided stage of Alexander’s empire, but the next empire, which conquered the Macedonian world. Daniel elsewhere represents the Hellenistic monarchies, the divisions of Alexander’s empire, by the Grecian goat’s four horns (ch. 8:22), not by a separate beast (compare the four heads of the leopard; see on ch. 7:6).

It is obvious that the kingdom that succeeded the divided remnants of the Macedonian Empire of Alexander was what Gibbon has aptly called the “iron monarchy” of Rome, though it was not a monarchy at the time it first became the leading world power. Early Rome was settled, long before the traditional date of 753 B.C. , by Latin tribes who had come into Italy in successive waves about the time other related Indo-European tribes had settled in Greece. From about the 8th to the 5th century the Latin city-state was ruled by neighboring Etruscan kings. Roman civilization was strongly influenced by the Etruscans, who came to Italy in the 10th century, and especially by the Greeks, who arrived two centuries later.

About 500 B.C. the Roman state became a republic, and remained a republic for nearly 500 years. By 265 B.C. all Italy was under Roman control. By 200 B.C. Rome had emerged victorious from the life-and-death struggle with her powerful North African rival Carthage (originally a Phoenician colony). Henceforth Rome was mistress of the western Mediterranean, and more powerful than any of the states in the east, although she

had not yet come to grips with them. From then on Rome first dominated and then absorbed, in turn, the three surviving kingdoms of Alexander's successors (see on ch. 7:6), and thus became the next great world power after Alexander's. This fourth empire was the longest lived and most extensive of the four, stretching in the 2d Christian century from Britain to the Euphrates. For a parallel prophecy see on ch. 7:7.

Breaketh in pieces. All that we have been able to reconstruct of Roman history confirms this description. Rome won her territory by the force or the fear of her armed might. At first she intervened in international affairs in a struggle for her life against her rival, Carthage, and was drawn into war after war. Then, crushing one opponent after another, she finally became the aggressive, irresistible conqueror of the Mediterranean world and Western Europe. At the beginning of the Christian Era and a little later, the iron might of the Roman legions stood back of the Pax Romana—the Roman peace. Rome was the largest and strongest empire the world had hitherto known.

41. Toes. Though mentioning the toes, Daniel does not specifically call attention to their number. He does mention that the kingdom was to be divided (see 1T 361). Many commentators have held that the toes, of which there were presumably 10, correspond to the 10 horns of the fourth beast of ch. 7 (see on ch. 7:7).

Miry clay. See on v. 33. Rome had lost its iron tenacity and strength, and its successors were manifestly weak, like the admixture of clay with the iron.

42. Partly strong. These barbarian kingdoms differed greatly in military prowess, as Gibbon states when he refers to “the powerful monarchies of the Franks and the Visigoths, and the dependent kingdoms of the Sueves and Burgundians.”

Broken. Literally, “fragile,” “brittle.”

43. With the seed of men. Many commentators refer this to royal intermarriages, though the intent of the statement may be wider. The word for man is *'enash*, “mankind.” “Seed” means descendants. Hence there may also be a general indication of a shifting back and forth of populations, but with nationalism continuing strong. The original LXX version has several variations from the Masoretic text, vs. 42, 43 reading: “And the toes of the feet a certain part of iron and a certain part of earthenware, a certain part of the kingdom shall be strong and a certain part shall be broken. And as you saw the iron mixed with earthenware, there shall be mixings among nations [or, among generations] of men, but they shall not agree [literally, “be like-minded”], nor be friendly with one another even as it is impossible to mix iron with clay.” Theodotion's translation of Daniel, which practically displaced the original Greek translation, known as the LXX, is more like the Masoretic text, but even it shows variations: “And the toes of the feet a certain part of iron and a certain part of clay, a certain part of the kingdom shall be strong and from it [a part] shall be broken. Because you saw the iron mixed with earthenware, there shall be mixings in the seed of men and they shall not cleave this one with this one according as iron is not mixed with earthenware.”

It is difficult to evaluate the authority of the LXX in any given statement; hence it is impossible for us to know to what extent the above readings may have preserved Daniel's original words. Interestingly, the recently discovered Chester Beatty Papyri, in the Daniel section dating from the beginning of the 3d century A.D. , contain the original LXX version rather than the translation of Theodotion.

Shall not cleave. Daniel's prophecy has stood and will stand the test of time. Some world powers have been weak, others strong. Nationalism has continued strong. Attempts to unite into one great empire the various nations that grew out of the fourth empire have ended in failure. Temporarily certain sections have been united, but the union has not proved peaceful or permanent.

There have also been many political alliances among the nations. Farseeing statesmen have tried in various ways to bring about a federation of nations that would operate successfully, but all such attempts have proved disappointing.

The prophecy does not specifically declare that there could not be a temporary union of various elements, through force of arms or political domination. It does declare, however, that the constituent nations, should such a union be attempted or effected, would not become organically fused, and that they would remain mutually suspicious and unfriendly. A federation created on such a foundation is doomed to crumble. The temporary success of some dictator or nation must, therefore, not be labeled a failure of Daniel's prophecy. In the end Satan will actually be able to achieve a temporary union of all nations (Rev. 17:12–18 ; cf. Rev. 16:14 ; GC 624), but the federation will be brief, and in a short time the elements composing this union will turn on one another (GC 656 ; EW 290).

44. *Set up a kingdom.* Many commentators have attempted to make this detail of the prophecy a prediction of the first advent of Christ and the subsequent conquest of the world by the gospel. But this "kingdom" was not to exist contemporaneously with any of those four kingdoms; it was to succeed the iron-and-clay phase, which had not yet come when Christ was here on earth. The kingdom of God was still future at the time, as He clearly stated to His disciples at the Last Supper (Matt. 26:29). It is to be set up when Christ comes at the last day to judge the living and the dead (2 Tim. 4:1 ; cf. Matt. 25:31–34).

45. *Stone.* Aramaic *'eben* , identical with the Heb. *'eben* , "a single stone," used of slabs, sling stones, hewn stones, stone vessels, precious stones. The word "rock," frequently used of God (Deut. 32:4, 18 ; 1 Sam. 2:2 ; etc.), is from the Heb. *šur* rather than *'eben* . It cannot be established that there is any necessary connection between Daniel's symbol for the kingdom of God and the figure of a rock or stone used elsewhere. The interpretation offered by Daniel is of itself sufficient to identify the symbol.

Without hands. This kingdom has a superhuman origin. It is to be founded, not by the ingenious hands of man, but by the mighty hand of God.

46. Fell upon his face. A mark of respect and reverence. Such expressions of respect are frequently noted in the OT (Gen. 17:3 ; 2 Sam. 9:6 ; 14:4).

Worshipped. Aramaic *segad* , a word that normally seems to imply actual worship. The king was already upon his face; so it may mean more than “bow down”. *Segad* is used throughout ch. 3 to describe the worship of the golden image demanded by the king but refused by the Hebrews. The Hebrew words for “oblation” and “sweet odours,” combined with the word for “offer,” also strongly imply worship. Whether Daniel permitted these acts without remonstrance we are not told. The record says only that Nebuchadnezzar commanded that an oblation and sweet odors should be offered to Daniel, but does not say that the actions were carried out. Daniel may have tactfully called attention to what he had already positively affirmed, that the revelation came from the God of heaven and that he had not received it because of any superiority in wisdom (see on v. 30).

In the light of Peter’s refusal of the worship of Cornelius (Acts 10:25, 26), of Paul and Barnabas’ rejection of the adoration of the men of Lystra (Acts 14:11–18), and of the angel’s reproof of John when he fell at his feet to worship him (Rev. 19:10), many think it unlikely that Daniel would have permitted the king to worship him. Others reason that, inasmuch as God accepts sincerity of motive when men follow the best light they have, Daniel may have been directed not to interfere in the matter at this time. Many commentators follow the suggestion of Jerome that Nebuchadnezzar was not worshipping Daniel, but through Daniel was adoring Daniel’s God. They also call attention to Josephus’ record of how Alexander the Great bowed before the Jewish high priest, and when Parmenio, the king’s general, inquired concerning the meaning of this act, Alexander replied, “I did not adore him but that God who hath honored him with his high priesthood” (*Antiquities* xi. 8. 5). However, a strict reading of the second commandment of the Decalogue brings all such acts under most serious question.

As yet Nebuchadnezzar knew but little of the true God, and even less of how to worship Him. Thus far his acquaintance with God was limited to what he had seen of the divine character reflected in the life of Daniel and to what Daniel had told him of God. It is entirely possible that Nebuchadnezzar, seeing in Daniel the living representative of “the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh” (v. 11), intended the acts of worship he accorded Daniel to be in honor of Daniel’s God. With his limited knowledge of the true God, Nebuchadnezzar was doubtless doing the best he knew at the time to express his thankfulness and to honor the One whose wisdom and power had been so impressively demonstrated.

An oblation. The Hebrew word corresponding to the Aramaic word here used generally denotes a bloodless offering (see on ch. 9:21).

Sweet odours. That is, incense.

47. Your God is a God of gods. Better, “your God is God of gods.” The expression is in the superlative degree. Nebuchadnezzar, who called his patron god Marduk “lord of

gods,” here acknowledges that Daniel’s God is infinitely superior to any of the so-called gods of the Babylonians.

Lord of kings. Nebuchadnezzar evidently knew that this was a title applied to Marduk in the Babylonian creation story; he himself annually received his kingship anew from Marduk in the New Year festival. Further, he was named for Nabu, the son of Marduk, the scribe who wrote the Tablets of Fate.

Nebuchadnezzar was himself a man of superior intelligence and wisdom, as his provision for the professional training of court officials (ch. 1:3, 4) and his ability to evaluate their “wisdom and understanding” (vs. 18–20) make clear. Imperfect as was Nebuchadnezzar’s concept of the true God, he now had irrefutable proof that Daniel’s God was infinitely wiser than either the wise men or the gods of Babylon. Later experiences were to convince King Nebuchadnezzar with respect to additional attributes of the God of heaven (see on chs. 3:28, 29 ; 4:34, 37 ; see also p. 751).

48. Chief of the governors. Better, “chief prefect.” Daniel did not interpret the dream with a view to obtaining any reward from the king. His one aim was to exalt God before the king and all the people of Babylon.

49. Daniel requested. Daniel did not become intoxicated by the great honors that had been conferred upon him. He remembered his comrades. They had shared in the prayer (v. 18); they shared also in the reward.

Gate. The place where Oriental kings sat as judges and where chief councils convened (see on Gen. 19:1).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–49 FE 410-413 ; PK 491-502 ; 7T 151

1, 2 FE 410

1–4 PK 491

1–5 SL 34

4–12 FE 410

5–11 PK 492

12 SL 34

12–18 PK 493

13–19 FE 374

16–18 FE 411

16–19 SL 35

19–26 PK 494

20–22 FE 374

20–28 FE 374

21 Ed 175

22 MH 433 ; 8T 282

24–30 AA 13 ; 6T 227

27, 28 SL 36

27–36 PK 497

28 FE 411

37 PK 514

31–49 7T 161

37–43 PK 498 , 548

38 Ed 175 ; PK 504

42, 43 1T 361

44 DA 34 ; 1T 360

44, 45 PK 503

44–49 PK 499

46–49 FE 412

47 Ed 56 ; PK 503 , 513 ; SL 36 ; 6T 220

CHAPTER 3

1 Nebuchadnezzar dedicateth a golden image in Dura . 8 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego are accused for not worshipping the image . 13 They, being threatened, make