

The Book of Daniel and Prophecy

Part 2, World History Told in Advance

In Daniel Part 1 we covered evidence for the dating of the book of Daniel. Daniel was written in the 6th century BC. The reign of Nebuchadnezzar, under whom Daniel served in the first part of the Book of Daniel, was approximately 561 BC - 605 BC.

The Bible tells us that God has control over kings and governments. God can take governments out or replace them at any time that He chooses.

Now we will look at some of the prophecies of Daniel and how it was fulfilled in history. There is far more detailed prophecy in Daniel than what will be dealt with here. This is only a small taste of what can be found in Daniel. Hopefully this will whet your taste buds for wanting to study more prophecy yourself. This prophecy in the second chapter of Daniel continues even into our future and end times. For our purposes we will only be dealing with those parts that have already come to pass. Some key passages are printed here for you. However, it would be to the anyone's benefit to read each chapter in Daniel beginning a study in Daniel.

In the beginning of Daniel, we find that Nebuchadnezzar is king of Babylon. It is interesting to note that Nebuchadnezzar is king because God has placed him there. In the Bible we can see that God not only can forecast the future but also controls the future.

Jeremiah 28:14: "For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'I have put a yoke of iron on the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they shall serve him. And I have also given him the beasts of the field.'"

Daniel speaking to Nebuchadnezzar said in Daniel 2:37: "You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory."

(Read Daniel Chapter 2.) In Daniel Chapter 2 we find that King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. He told his wise men that they must tell him both the dream he had and the interpretation. Daniel was the only one who could do this after seeking God in prayer. Following is Daniel's response to the king.

Daniel 2:31-40: 31 "You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. 32 The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. 35 "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. 36 This was the dream; now we shall tell its interpretation before the king. 37 You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory; 38 and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold. 39 And after you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth. 40 Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces."

God was not revealing spiritual truth to Nebuchadnezzar; rather He was showing him what would take place in history concerning himself and the governing authorities after him. Later in Daniel Chapter 4 we find that Nebuchadnezzar has his sanity taken from him until he recognizes God as the one in authority.

We learn in this passage that the dream that was given to King Nebuchadnezzar was about future kingdoms. In this dream he saw a large image and we are told Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold (verse 38). Following him there are three other kingdoms mentioned (verses 39-40).

We do not have to guess as to the interpretation of this prophecy. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon was the head of gold. Following him are three other kingdoms. As for the second kingdom in king Nebuchadnezzar's dream we are only told (verse 39) "And after you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you" This inferior kingdom is represented as the breast and arms of silver in the dream. (verse 32): "The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze..." Further interpretation as to the identity of this second kingdom can be found later in the book of Daniel. **However, Isaiah tells us who will overthrow Babylon at least a hundred years before the writing of the book of Daniel.** Remember, Daniel was written in the 6th century BC. The reign of Nebuchadnezzar was approximately 561 BC - 605 BC. (While reading don't forget that on the timeline numbers or dates get larger the farther back you go — BC 600, 500, 400, 300, 200, 100, 1, 100, 200, 300 AD.)

Webster's Family Encyclopedia, 1989 edition, Volume 6, pg. 1329: "Isaiah, (8th century BC) Old Testament Prophet. He was influential at the court of the rulers of Judah until the Assyrian invasion (701 BC) and, according to tradition, was later martyred."

Isaiah 13:17-20: 17 Behold, I am going to stir up the Medes against them, who will not value silver or take pleasure in gold, 18 And their bows will mow down the young men, they will not even have compassion on the fruit of the womb, nor will their eye pity children. 19 And Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans' pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. 20 It will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation; nor will the Arab pitch his tent there, nor will shepherds make their flocks lie down there.

Daniel was written in the 6th century BC. The reign of Nebuchadnezzar, whom Daniel served under in the first part of the book of Daniel, was approximately 561 BC - 605 BC. Webster's Family Encyclopedia gives us the date 701 BC as the later part of Isaiah's ministry (701 BC - 605 BC = 96 years) Keep in mind that the Medes and the Persians took over after Nebuchadnezzar. This means that approximately a hundred years before Daniel God told his people through Isaiah that the Medes would rise up against Babylon. We will soon see that Babylon will be destroyed as Sodom and Gomorrah and will never be inhabited again.

Daniel Chapter 4 is the last we see of King Nebuchadnezzar. In the beginning of Daniel Chapter 5 we are introduced to Belshazzar. In my study I found that some have questioned Daniel because Belshazzar is said to be the son of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 5:22). I will explain this before we go on to the fulfillment of prophecy. The Aramaic word translated "father" here does not necessarily mean immediate father. It can also mean grandfather or an ancestor, as shown in the following Hebrew\Aramaic reference works.

Strong's Definitions of Biblical Words

'ab (Aramaic) (ab); KJV — father. corresponding to 1: 'ab (awb); a primitive word; father, in a literal and immediate, or figurative and remote application): KJV-- chief, (fore-) father ([less]), X patrimony, principal. Compare names in "Abi-".

Brown, Driver, Briggs Lexicon

'ab- the father of an individual

used of God as Father of His people the head or the founder of a household, a group, a family, or a clan an ancestor a grandfather, the forefathers --of a person used of people (in general)

These references show that the word translated as "father" in the following passage can also mean a grandfather or descendant.

Daniel 5:2: “When Belshazzar tasted the wine, he gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his **father** had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, in order that the king and his nobles, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them.”

This same Aramaic word is translated as "fathers" speaking of ancestors in the following passage.

Ezra 5:12: “But because our fathers had provoked the God of heaven to wrath, He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this temple and deported the people to Babylon.”

We find further indication that the passage in Daniel 5:2 is speaking of a descendant of Nebuchadnezzar, rather than an immediate son, in the book of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 27:6-7 "And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and I have given him also the wild animals of the field to serve him. And all the nations shall serve him, and his son, and his grandson, until the time of his own land comes; then many nations and great kings will make him their servant.”

In this text we can see that the rule of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon will continue at least until his grandson. As we have already seen in Isaiah the Medes will rise up against Babylon.

In Daniel Chapter 5 Belshazzar brings in some silver vessels that were taken from the temple in Jerusalem so they could use them to toast to the foreign gods and idols. After doing this Belshazzar sees some handwriting supernaturally being written on the wall. Daniel is called in to give King Belshazzar the interpretation. Daniel rebukes him by reminding him that he knew how God humbled King Nebuchadnezzar causing him to lose his sanity for a while. Yet knowing this he used the sacred vessels to toast to the foreign gods and idols, Daniel then gives him the interpretation (read Daniel Chapter 5).

Daniel 5:22-29: 22 "Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, 23 but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand. But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and your ways, you have not glorified.' 24 Then the hand was sent from Him, and this inscription was written out. 25 Now this is the inscription that was written out: 'MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.' 26 This is the interpretation of the message: 'MENE'-- God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. 27 'TEKEL'-- you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient. 28 'PERES'-- your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians. 29 Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he now had authority as the third ruler in the kingdom.

Remember that in Daniel Chapter 2 in king Nebuchadnezzar's dream we are told that another power inferior to Nebuchadnezzar and represented by its breast and its arms of silver would arise (Daniel 2:32 and 39). Here we are told that this second kingdom would be the Medes and the Persians. One should not overlook the fact that Daniel includes the Persians with the Medes in the takeover of Babylon. Also, Belshazzar speaks of making Daniel the third ruler of the kingdom.

So, the question is: What actually took place in history?

1. Did Babylonian rule under Nebuchadnezzar last at least until Nebuchadnezzar's grandson as foretold by Jeremiah?
2. Did the Medes and the Persians conquer Babylon?
3. How would Daniel be labeled the third ruler in the kingdom under Belshazzar?
4. Was Babylon destroyed never to be inhabited again as foretold by Isaiah?

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“ref , ‘**Belshazzar**,’ Belshazzar (550?-539?BC), in the Old Testament, Babylonian prince mentioned in Daniel 5 as the last Chaldean king of Babylon. He was slain when Babylon was captured by the Medes and the Persians. Although no ancient historian mentions his name as one of the successors of the second Chaldean king, Nebuchadnezzar II, the Babylonian cuneiform inscriptions gave the name Belsaruzar as that of the son of Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon. A later inscription suggested that Belshazzar was associated with his father on the throne.”

In this encyclopedia article we have seen that:

Babylon was captured by the Medes and the Persians as foretold by Daniel and Isaiah. Isaiah's ministry ended around 701 BC. The Medes entered Babylon around 539-550 BC. This means Isaiah foretold the rising of the Medes against Babylon about 150-160 years before it actually happened.

Belshazzar was associated with his father on the throne. In other words, Nabonidus and his son Belshazzar were co-rulers of Babylon. This is why Daniel was told he would be made the third ruler of the kingdom. Nabonidus and Belshazzar were the first two rulers. Daniel would have been the third ruler if their kingdom had not been overthrown. Remember the promise of being the third ruler came from the pagan king Belshazzar not as part of Daniel's prophecy. This does however give credibility to the historical part of Daniel.

Enclopaedia Britanica, Multimedia CD 98

“Belshazzar, Neo-Babylonian BEL-SHAR-USUR, Greek BALTASAR, or BALTHASAR (d. c. 539 BC), coregent of Babylon who was killed at the capture of the city by the Persians. Belshazzar had been known only from the biblical Book of Daniel (chapters 5, 7-8) and from Xenophon's Cyropaedia until 1854, when references to him were found in Babylonian cuneiform inscriptions. Though he is referred to in the Book of Daniel as the son of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian inscriptions indicate that he was in fact the eldest son of Nabonidus, who was king of Babylon from 555 to 539, and of Nitocris, who was perhaps a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. When Nabonidus went into exile (550), he entrusted Belshazzar with the throne and the major part of his army.”

In this encyclopedia article we have seen that:

Babylon was captured by the Persians as foretold by Daniel.

King Belshazzar was very likely related to King Nebuchadnezzar. Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus and Nitocris. Nitocris being the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar would make Belshazzar the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. This would fulfill the Babylonian kingdom lasting until the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar as foretold by Jeremiah 622 BC.

Before 1854 which is a couple of thousand years later our main reference for the existence of Belshazzar was the Bible. This is not an isolated event by any means. This alone should help us to recognize the credibility of the Bible.

The Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land, 1990

“BABYLON (CITY OF); BABYLONIANS One of the most important cities of Mesopotamia, whose ancient name probably meant ‘the gate of the gods’

It was not until the downfall of Assyria that Babylon, in the time of Nebuchadnezzar II, rose again to the status of the most important city in Mesopotamia. Cyrus, King of Persia, conquered the city, which then became part of the Persian Empire. In 331 bc Babylon was conquered by Alexander the Great, who attempted to rebuild the venerated but decaying city. With his untimely death its long decline set in and in the Roman period it was no more than a famous heap of ruins.”

In this reference work we have seen:

Babylon was conquered by Persia as foretold by Daniel.

Although Babylon was once considered the most important city in Mesopotamia it was left a heap of ruins and uninhabited as foretold by Isaiah approximately 701 BC.

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“(Babylon) Babylon lost its independence forever when it fell to Cyrus the Great of Persia in 539 BC, but it continued to be a center of trade and culture. It was still fairly prosperous when Alexander the Great took up his residence in Nebuchadnezzar's palace, where he died in 323 BC. His successor, Seleucus, built a new city, Seleucia, nearby on the Tigris, because it had a deeper channel for navigation. From this time Babylon rapidly decayed. Its structures, which were faced with glazed brick, were torn down to provide brick for building elsewhere, and the once proud capital was reduced to a vast ruin. The ruins are near the town of al Hillah in Iraq.”

In this encyclopedia article we have seen that:

Babylon was conquered by the Persians as foretold by Daniel. The city of Babylon is left still uninhabited in Iraq as foretold by Isaiah.

So far, we have covered the first two kingdoms in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom is the head of gold. (BABYLON). The second kingdom represented by the breast and arms of silver was the Medes and the Persians. The third kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the statue was its belly and its thighs of bronze (Daniel 2:32 and 39) We do not have to guess as to the interpretation of this kingdom of bronze, either. We can see that the kingdoms, starting from Nebuchadnezzar represented as the head

of gold, are following in consecutive order. We also know who the first two kingdoms are (Babylon being the first and the Medes and the Persians being the second). Daniel has a vision that we find in Chapter 8 where these kingdoms overlap.

Daniel 8:4-7: “4 I saw the ram butting westward, northward, and southward, and no other beasts could stand before him, nor was there anyone to rescue from his power; but he did as he pleased and magnified himself. 5 While I was observing, behold, a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground; and the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes. 6 And he came up to the ram that had the two horns, which I had seen standing in front of the canal, and rushed at him in his mighty wrath. 7 And I saw him come beside the ram, and he was enraged at him; and he struck the ram and shattered his two horns, and the ram had no strength to withstand him. So he hurled him to the ground and trampled on him, and there was none to rescue the ram from his power.”

Introducing the kingdom of Greece

In this text we see that the ram was the one in power. Then we see a male goat that strikes the ram. We also saw the ram had no strength to withstand the goat. In other words, the goat overcame the ram. So, who are the goat and the ram? The following text tells us.

Daniel 8:16-22: “16 And I heard the voice of a man between the banks of Ulai, and he called out and said, ‘Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision.’ 17 So he came near to where I was standing, and when he came I was frightened and fell on my face; but he said to me, ‘Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end.’ 18 Now while he was talking with me, I sank into a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me and made me stand upright. 19 And he said, ‘Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for

it pertains to the appointed time of the end. 20 The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia. 21 And the shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king. 22 And the broken horn and the four horns that arose in its place represent four kingdoms which will arise from his nation, although not with his power.’”

In this text we see that the ram represents the Medes and the Persians. We have already seen the Medes and the Persians as the ones who would conquer Babylon, in the writing on the wall seen by Belshazzar in Daniel Chapter 5. Now we see that the shaggy goat that represents the kingdom of Greece is the one that would conquer the Medes and the Persians. So, the next question is "Did the kingdom of Greece conquer the Medes and the Persians in history?"

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“ ‘**Ancient Greece**’ Macedonian Supremacy (359-323 BC) Two Macedonian kings, Philip II (ruled 359-336 BC) and his son Alexander the Great (ruled 336-323 BC), filled the power vacuum in Greece by turning their formerly weak kingdom into an international superpower. The mountainous kingdom of Macedonia, north of the central Greek heartland, eventually became the **leader of Greece and conqueror of the Persian empire.**”

From this encyclopedia article we learn that:
Alexander the Great was the leader of a Greek empire.
Alexander conquered the Persian Empire.

“**‘Persia,’** III ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND THE SELEUCIDS.
Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia, conquered the Persian Empire in a series of battles between 334 and 331 BC. Alexander integrated Persia into his empire, and by 323 BC, when he died, Alexander ruled most of the civilized world.”

From this encyclopedia article we learn that:
Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire 334-331 BC.

Keep in mind that Nebuchadnezzar reigned approximately 605-561 BC. Daniel interpreted his dream during this time period. This means that Daniel foretold the Medes and the Persians being conquered by the Greeks at least 200 years before it happened.

The text we looked at in Daniel Chapter 8 goes into further detail concerning the Greek empire (verse 22). We are told that four kingdoms would arise from the Greek empire. This division is not mentioned in our text in Daniel Chapter 2. As one reads Daniel, especially the detail in Chapter 11, it is easy to see that there is much more detail than what I am covering here. However, that would be a book in itself. For the sake of brevity, I am sticking to the basic outline as seen in Daniel Chapter 2. This division still falls within the Greek empire in the text as well as what took place in history.

The Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy, page 380

“After Alexander's death in 323 and the eventual fall of his leading general Antigonos in 301, the empire divided into some four major areas, controlled by Greek generals: Macedonia under Cassander, Asia Minor under Lysimachus, Syria and eastward under Seleucus, and Egypt under Ptolemy.”

These Greek generals are also listed as successors of Alexander the Great by the 1st century Jewish Historian Josephus (The Works of Josephus, The Antiquities of the Jews, Book 12, Chapter 1 (PDF pg. 441)).

Concerning Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel Chapter 2, we have now covered the first three kingdoms:

1. Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon were represented by the head of gold (Daniel 2:32 and 38).
2. Babylon was then conquered by the Medes and the Persians, which was said to be an inferior kingdom and represented as the breast and arms of silver (Daniel 2:32-39, and Daniel 5:28).
3. The Medes and the Persians were then conquered by the Greeks, represented as the belly and thighs of bronze (Daniel 2:32 and Daniel 8:20-21).

The Roman Empire

The fourth kingdom is unlike the first three kingdoms; while we were specifically told who they were, the fourth kingdom is not interpreted and named for us in Scripture. We know the succession of the first three kingdoms — (1) Babylon; (2) The Medes and the Persians; (3) The Greeks. History tells us that the empire that followed the succession of these three empires was the Roman Empire. Therefore, all we have to do is look at the description given to us in the Bible and see if it correlates with the Roman Empire. First we will give a couple of references showing that the Roman Empire did indeed follow the Greek Empire.

Enclopaedia Britanica, Multimedia CD 98

“The forms of Government, Primitive Government, the spread of civilization The empire of the Medes and Persians was overthrown by Alexander of Macedon; the Macedonian successor states were conquered by Rome...”

“Alexander of Macedon” was “Alexander the Great”, as can be seen in the following reference.

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Electronic Database
“ALEXANDER, THE GREAT, Parentage and Early Life: Alexander, of Macedon, commonly called ‘the Great’ (born 356 BC), was the son of Philip, king of Macedon, and of Olympias, daughter of Neoptolemos, an Epeirote king.”

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“‘ROMAN EMPIRE’. When the ancient Greeks were reaching the height of their glory, the power of Rome, to the west, was slowly rising. The genius of the Greeks lay in art, literature, science, and philosophy. The Romans were best in warfare, engineering, and government. Rome rose to power gradually, with no set plan for world conquest. The Romans fought many wars and enslaved many people. By the time of Augustus, shortly before Christ, most of the known world was unified and at peace under Roman rule.”

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“‘Ancient Greece,’ In the Hellenistic kingdoms, foreigners — kings and queens of Greek and Macedonian descent — had unrestricted rule over local populations. This kind of rule disturbed Greeks, who remembered their history of freedom. Therefore, in the 2nd century BC when the kingdoms had been weakened by war, some mainland Greeks appealed for help from the region's growing superpower, Rome....Within about a hundred years, Rome conquered the remaining Hellenistic kingdoms and their Greek cities.”

Now that we have established that the Roman Empire did indeed follow the Greek Empire, we will examine the Biblical description of this empire.

Daniel 2:33-45: "its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. (34) You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. (35) Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. (36) "This was the dream; now we shall tell its interpretation before the king. (37) You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory; (38) and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold. (39) And after you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth. (40) "Then there will be a **fourth kingdom** as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. (41) "And in that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. (42) "And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. (43) And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery. (44) And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

(45) Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy."

One should notice that in verse 40 we are told, "Then there will be a fourth **kingdom**". Observe that this fourth kingdom is spoken of singularly. In verse 41 when we are told, "it will be a divided **kingdom**" — it is still spoken of singularly. Then in verse 44 we find kings and kingdoms in plural, not singular. It is in the days of these kings and kingdoms in which the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed. There are those that interpret this last part a little differently, but the end result is still the same. First we will look at "the divided kingdom" then we will move on to the "kingdom which will never be destroyed" in verses 44-45.

a) The division of the Roman Empire

"And in that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom." (Daniel 2:41)

The Roman Empire was divided into two divisions between the East and the West. Some commentators see this as the division spoken of in verse 41.

Webster's Family Encyclopedia, 1989 edition, Volume 9, Page 2209
“ **‘Roman Empire’**: The imperial period of ancient Roman history from 27 BC, when Octavian became emperor as * Augustus, until 476 AD....The 3rd century saw a rapid succession of army-nominated emperors, while Rome's frontiers were threatened by the aggression of the * Sasanians and the Goths. * Diocletian (reigned 284-305) countered these attacks with the reorganization of the Empire between East and West.”

The Universal World Reference Encyclopedia, © 1947, Volume 13-14
“ **‘Rome, or The Roman Empire’**:....In 27 BC Octavian became first emperor of Rome under the title of Augustus....In 284 Diocletian reorganized the empire, and for nearly 200 years reforms delayed the inevitable disruption; but in 395 the empire separated into two divisions; the Eastern or Byzantine. and the Western....”

b) The division of the Roman Empire

"And in that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom." (Daniel 2:41)

Other commentators see the division as being between the Jewish religious leaders who maintained authority or influence in the government and the Roman government. The Romans and the Jews, although cohabiting, certainly did not mix well as with the clay and the iron in the text in Daniel 2:42-43.

SANHEDRIN (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

“[SAN hee drun] (a council or assembly) — the highest ruling body and court of justice among the Jewish people in the time of Jesus. Headed by the high priest of Israel, the Sanhedrin was granted limited authority over certain religious, civil, and criminal matters by the foreign nations that dominated the land of Israel at various times in its history. The Sanhedrin was exercising this limited power when it charged Jesus with the crime of blasphemy but then sent him to Pilate, the Roman official, for a formal trial and sentencing.”

ROMAN EMPIRE (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

"The situation of the Jews varied considerably under the different Roman rulers. Basically, the Romans treated the Jews fairly. Herod the Great rebuilt the Temple in 20 BC, and Herod Agrippa sought Jewish favor by persecuting the Christians <Acts 12:1-3>. Archelaus, on the other hand, was a cruel and tyrannical ruler who massacred many Jews <Matt. 2:22>. Resentful of the presence of these foreign oppressors, the Jews refused to recognize anyone but God as sovereign."

c) The division of the Roman Empire

"And in that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom." (Daniel 2:41)

Other commentators see the division of the Roman Empire as something that still continues to this day. They see ten divisions within the Roman Empire corresponding to the ten toes in Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the ten horns mentioned in Daniel chapter 7 and Revelation chapter 17.

In Vernon McGee's commentary on Daniel, on page 47 he states, "The Roman Empire fell apart

— no enemy destroyed it. Rome is still living in the great nations of Europe today: Italy, France, Great Britain, Germany, and Spain are all part of the Roman Empire. The laws of Rome live on and her language also."

Groliers Multimedia Encyclopedia

" 'Rome, ancient': Ancient Rome grew from a small prehistoric settlement on the Tiber River in Latium in central Italy into an empire that encompassed all of the Mediterranean world. The Romans developed a civilization that formed the basis for modern Western civilization."

(This encyclopedia article tends to agree somewhat with those who claim the Roman Empire can still be seen in the world today.)

SUMMARY OF THE DIVISION

The Bible tells us that the fourth kingdom (the Roman Empire) will be a divided kingdom. Exactly how it is divided the Bible does not actually say. Each of the divisions that were covered have some valid points as well as confirmation found in history. It is logical then to conclude that this portion of prophecy is valid because the Roman Empire was indeed divided.

IN THE DAYS OF THOSE KINGS

"And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy."
(Daniel 2:44-45)

Here is where our text in Daniel Chapter 2 shifts. The fourth kingdom in verse 40 is spoken as a single kingdom. Next, we have some sort of division of the fourth kingdom and then after that we have kingdoms in plural, in which time the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed. The reader should also take notice of the fact that the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw was destroyed by a stone that was cut out without hands (Daniel 2:34-35 and 44-45).

There are three questions that should be asked here.

1. What sort of kingdom will never be destroyed and will last forever?
2. What is the stone that destroys the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw?
3. When are "the days of those kings" as we see in verse 44?

1. What sort of kingdom will never be destroyed and will last forever?

In the Bible the only kingdom that will last forever is a heavenly kingdom. The kingdom of Christ will have no end.

Isaiah 9:6-7: "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this."

Daniel 7:13-14: "I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed."

Luke 1:31-33: "And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end."

John 18:36: “Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.’”

Revelation 11:15: “And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.’”

The Bible, including the book of Daniel, tells us that the kingdom which will never be destroyed is Christ’s kingdom. We can then logically conclude that the kingdom which is to follow the division of the Roman Empire is Christ's kingdom.

2. What is the stone that destroys the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw?

Considering that the Bible tells us that the kingdom that will never be destroyed is Christ's kingdom, it is interesting to find that Jesus Christ is also referred to as a stone.

Isaiah 28:16: “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.’”

Matthew 21:42-45: “Jesus said to them, ‘Did you never read in the Scriptures, ‘The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner stone; this came about from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes’? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.”

And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them.”

Acts 4:10-12: “let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead— by this name this man stands here before you in good health. He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the very corner stone. And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.”

Romans 9:32-33: “Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, just as it is written, ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.”

Ephesians 2:20: “having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone”

1 Corinthians 10:4: “and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.”

The stone that King Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream was cut out without hands. This is an indication that what was to come was beyond human means. This stone in Nebuchadnezzar's dream destroyed all the earthly nations (Daniel 2:34-35). Furthermore, in the Bible, the kingdom which will never be destroyed is Christ's kingdom. Then we find that Jesus Christ is referred to as a stone in Scripture. The Bible reveals to us that Jesus Christ is the stone that destroys all the earthly kingdoms and sets up his own kingdom that will have no end.

According to the Book of Daniel this will take place after the division of the fourth kingdom (The Roman Empire, Daniel 2:40-45).

3. When are "the days of those kings" as we see in verse 44?

Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever."

There are two dominate views of this within the Christian church today:

a) In the days of the Roman Empire Christ's Kingdom was set up and it will have no end.

In this view Christ's kingdom is seen in a spiritual sense in that Christ has already overcome the world, and by accepting Jesus we enter His kingdom rule now. This view also maintains that there will later be a literal fulfillment when all the nations come to an end.

John 16:33: "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

Colossians 1:13: "For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son...."

In the days of the kingdoms derived from the division of the Roman Empire, Christ's kingdom will be set up. (This would be the nations we see today, as seen earlier in McGee's commentary on Daniel and in the book National Sunday Law by A. Jan Marcussen.)

This view takes the more literal approach, declaring that all the nations were not actually overthrown as seen in Daniel. This literal view expects this to take place as part of the fulfillment of the Book of Revelation.

Daniel 2:35: "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

Revelation 11:15: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.'"

WHY IS ANY OF THIS IMPORTANT?

Keep in mind that Daniel lived in the 6th century BC. The book of Daniel accurately foretold the Medes and the Persians conquering the Babylonian empire. Furthermore, Daniel accurately foretold the Greeks as being the ones that would conquer the Medes and the Persians. Then we are introduced to the Roman Empire which, we were told, would be divided. Up to this point we have several hundred years of history, accurately predicted. Considering that the Book of Daniel accurately foretold the rise and fall of major world powers over a period of several hundred years; it is a good bet that the rest of this prophecy will come true as well. Whichever view one takes as to when this will happen the result is still the same. Jesus Christ will indeed rule and all earthly kingdoms will be abolished. The Bible also tells us there is life after death, so it will affect everyone, no matter when it takes place. The question then is how will Jesus respond to you when you ask for entrance into his kingdom?

Matthew 10:33: "But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven."

Mark 8:38: "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

I John 2:22-25: "Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. As **for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.** And this is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life."

The Bible tells us that no one is good enough on their own to gain entrance into the kingdom of God. However, Jesus paid the full price for all of our sins. All we have to do is ask for His forgiveness and surrender our life to Him and we will dwell with Him forever.