

TRUTH THAT NEVER CHANGES

George Ross

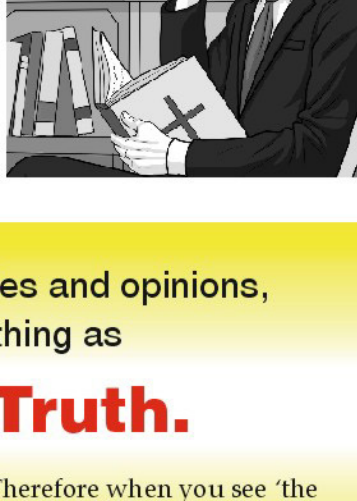
Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

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Daniel was a master interpreter of dreams. His book is included in the canon of sacred Jewish writings and is part of all mainline Bible church teaching.

Daniel's prophecies are a picture of the future and his status as a prophet is in fact affirmed by Jesus in Matthew 24:15. Yet as most of Nebuchadnezzar's dream has already come true, we understand that we are indeed in the last days, when the final stages of Daniel's prophecies are about to be fulfilled.

In this short tract we have Daniel's response to the king of Babylon's demand to recall and interpret a dream which the king had forgotten. An unreasonable demand in human terms, yet answered by God, through Daniel!

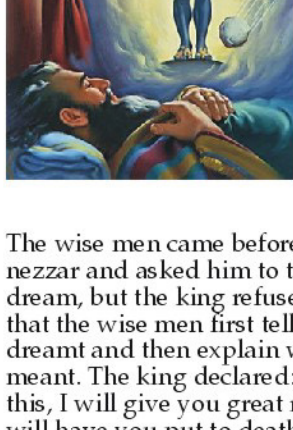


Despite many philosophies and opinions, there is such a thing as

Absolute Truth.

Jesus Himself endorses Daniel: "Therefore when you see 'the abomination of desolation', spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand)."

Matthew 24:15 (NKJV)



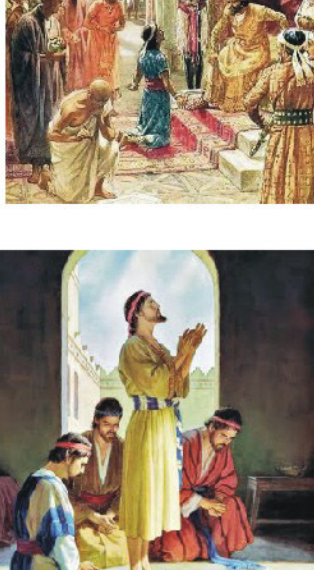
Let's have a closer look at Nebuchadnezzar's dream and what God says through Daniel the prophet. (Read about it in Daniel Chapter 2.)

Two years after rising to the throne of Babylon, King Nebuchadnezzar had a terrible dream; this dream disturbed him so much that he couldn't sleep.

Ironically, next morning he couldn't remember the dream. Desperate to find out what it meant, he summoned his wise men and demanded that they tell him what he dreamt and interpret the dream, on pain of death.

The wise men came before king Nebuchadnezzar and asked him to tell them about his dream, but the king refused, demanding that the wise men first tell him what he had dreamt and then explain what the dream meant. The king declared: "If you can do this, I will give you great rewards; if not, I will have you put to death."

The shocked wise men replied: "Sire, what you ask is impossible, no one but a god can do that." This made the king so angry that he ordered all his wise men to be put to death, including Daniel and his three friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.



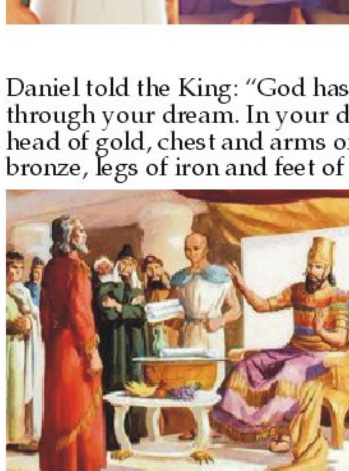
When the captain of Nebuchadnezzar's guards, Arioch, arrived to arrest Daniel, the latter wanted to know the reason. Arioch explained about the king's dream.

Daniel went to Nebuchadnezzar and asked for time to interpret the dream. The king agreed and Daniel hurried back and held a prayer meeting together with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to ask God for help.



Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Mark 11:24



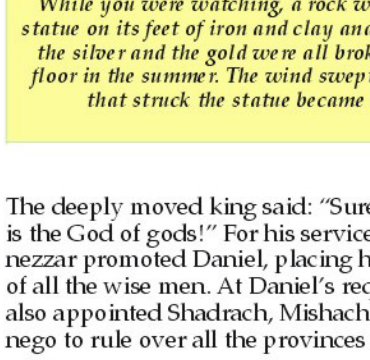
That night God revealed to Daniel the King's dream and its meaning. The next morning Daniel went to Arioch and said he would interpret the King's dream.

When Arioch brought the troubled King asked Daniel "Can you tell me what I saw in my dream?" Daniel replied: "No one can tell you this, but there is a God in Heaven Who reveals mysteries; He showed me your dream and what it means."

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

James 5:16

Daniel told the King: "God has shown you the future through your dream. In your dream you saw a statue with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron and feet of iron mixed with clay."



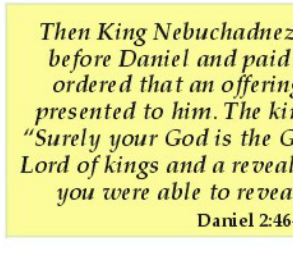
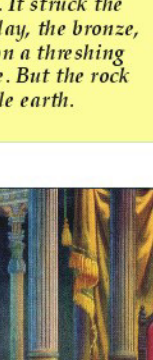
Gold: Babylon (605 to 539 BC)

Silver: Persia (539 to 331 BC)

Brass: Greece (331 to 168 BC)

Iron: Rome (168 BC to 476 AD)

Iron and Clay: 2nd Roman Empire, European Union (476 AD to present day)



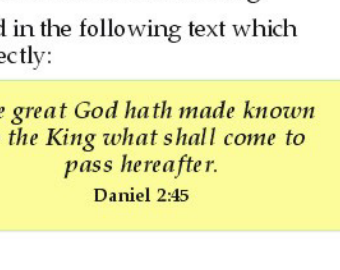
"Then," Daniel continued, "a rock smashed the statue. The rock became a mountain that filled the whole earth. You, King, are the head of gold, and the other parts of the statue are the kingdoms that will come after you. The rock represents the kingdom that God will establish that will last forever."

Remember, this dream is still valid as we are awaiting the last part to be fulfilled!

While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

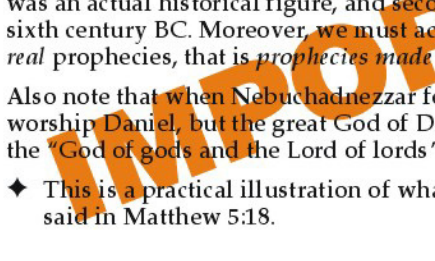
Daniel 2: 34-35

The deeply moved king said: "Surely your God is the God of gods!" For his service Nebuchadnezzar promoted Daniel, placing him in charge of all the wise men. At Daniel's request the king also appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to rule over all the princes of Babylon.



Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honour and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. The king said to Daniel, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."

Daniel 2:46-47



Dear reader!

At this point we need to consider the 'prophetic aspect' of the dream - Daniel's divinely-inspired interpretation. Since it's now 2 600 years since Daniel spoke those words, we can turn to history to check the accuracy of his answer to the king.

It has been affirmed in the following text which quotes Daniel directly:

The great God hath made known to the King what shall come to pass hereafter.

Daniel 2:45

It is important to note that Daniel's overall message is that God alone knows the future and holds our future in His hands, that God's kingdom is the Kingdom of all kingdoms, and that the King of kings, the ruler of this Kingdom, is Jesus Christ.

For these messages to be valid, we MUST accept/believe firstly that Daniel was an actual historical figure, and secondly that he wrote the book in the sixth century BC. Moreover, we must accept that the prophecies in his book are real prophecies, that is prophecies made before the event.

Also note that when Nebuchadnezzar fell down before Daniel, he didn't worship Daniel, but the great God of Daniel (Daniel 2:46-47). He worshipped the "God of gods and the Lord of lords" (Daniel 2:47).

◆ This is a practical illustration of what it means to be Christian, as Jesus said in Matthew 5:18.

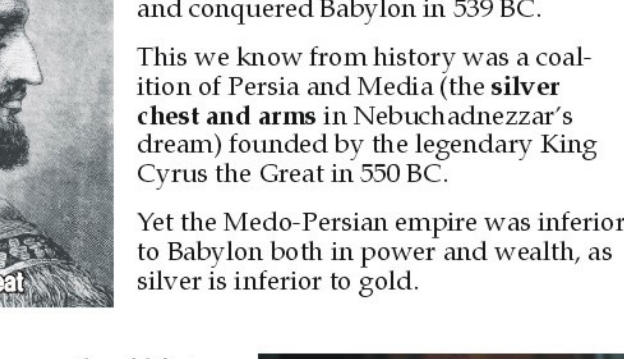
Daniel was a righteous man of princely lineage and lived about 620-538 BC.

Nebuchadnezzar was a warrior king of the Chaldean dynasty of Babylonia (modern Iraq). He conquered Syria and Palestine and rebuilt Babylon as a city of immense riches and splendour, and an economic and cultural hub. Under him, Babylon dominated the then known world. He destroyed the Temple of Jerusalem and forced the Israelites into exile (the 'Babylonian Captivity'). As was the standard practice of invading rulers, Nebuchadnezzar took the Jewish intelligentsia to Babylon, 800 km from Jerusalem. This happened in 605 BC.

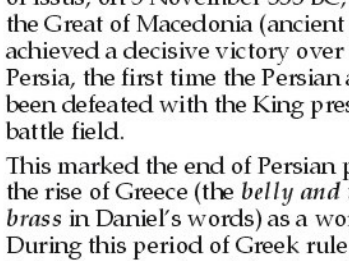
So let's get to the prophecy, and the passage of Daniel 2:37-45. This passage we can call the ABC of prophecy; by the same token we can call the book of Revelation the XYZ of prophecy. Remember, in Daniel's time the events were still in the future, as he was speaking from Babylon, the head of gold in his prophecy.

Thou art the head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and a third kingdom which is the brass, which shall have dominion over all the earth.

Daniel 2:39



The fabulous Hanging Gardens of Babylon



Cyrus the Great

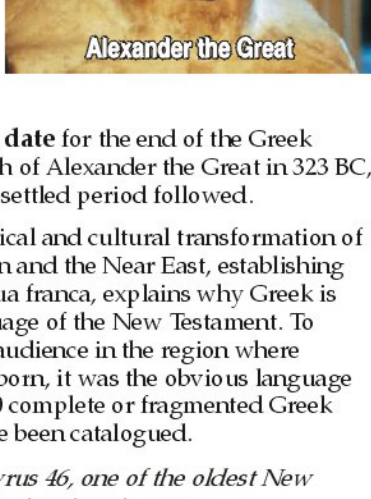
But Nebuchadnezzar's sons could not hold the empire together and, true to Daniel's prophecy, another power rose and conquered Babylon in 539 BC.

This we know from history was a coalition of Persia and Media (the silver chest and arms in Nebuchadnezzar's dream) founded by the legendary King Cyrus the Great in 550 BC.

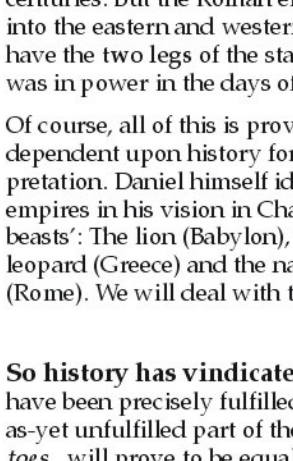
Yet the Medo-Persian empire was inferior to Babylon both in power and wealth, as silver is inferior to gold.

Still the relentless march of history followed Daniel's prophecy, and at the Battle of Issus, on 5 November 333 BC, Alexander the Great of Macedonia (ancient Greece) achieved a decisive victory over Darius III of Persia, the first time the Persian army had been defeated with the King present on the battle field.

This marked the end of Persian power and the rise of Greece (the belly and thighs of brass in Daniel's words) as a world power. During this period of Greek rule Antiochus Epiphanes plundered the Temple in Jerusalem and carried off the sacred vessels to help finance his campaigns.



Alexander the Great



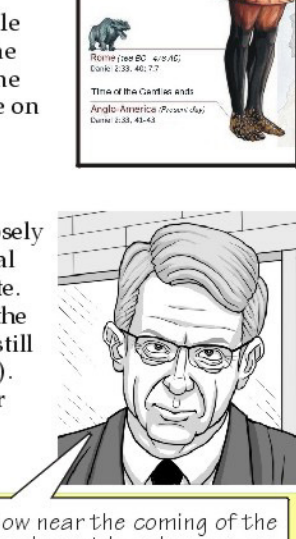
The traditional date for the end of the Greek period is the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, after which an unsettled period followed.

Alexander's political and cultural transformation of the Mediterranean and the Near East, establishing Greek as the lingua franca, explains why Greek is the original language of the New Testament. To reach the largest audience in the region where Christianity was born, it was the obvious language to use. Over 5 800 complete or fragmented Greek manuscripts have been catalogued.

A folio from Papyrus 46, one of the oldest New Testament manuscripts in existence

Now we reach the year 168 BC: the rise of Rome, the prophecy's legs of iron stage. Rome swept over the world, ruling large swathes of Europe for centuries. But the Roman empire became divided into the eastern and western empires, and so we have the two legs of the statue in the dream. Rome was in power in the days of the Lord Jesus.

Of course, all of this is proven history, but we are not dependent upon history for our prophetic interpretation. Daniel himself identifies these successive empires in his vision in Chapter 7 as the 'four fearful beasts': The lion (Babylon), the bear (Persia), the leopard (Greece) and the nameless monstrosity (Rome). We will deal with these in the next tract.



Statue of Julius Caesar

So history has vindicated Daniel, as his predictions have been precisely fulfilled. This makes it likely that the as-yet-unfulfilled part of the prophecy, the feet and the ten toes, will prove to be equally accurate. What do the feet and ten toes, a mixture of iron and clay, represent? Well, they are part of the same image as the head of gold, chest of silver, etc., representing the continuation of man's rule of the earth during the 'times of the gentiles'.

Daniel even suggested when the final days of gentile world power will dawn: It will be at a time when the world will be divided between two great powers (the two feet), with ten smaller nations, the ten toes, five on each foot.

These will be the last world federation of nations, loosely held together with ties of common danger and mutual fear. They can never blend, they mix but will not unite. In John's day five kingdoms had already fallen, and the sixth (Rome) was in power. In Daniel's day Babylon still held sway (he prophesied only about the future ones). John also says the final manifestation of world power was still in the future.

◆ Think about it! That's where we are now!

And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

Revelation 17:10

How near the coming of the Lord must be, when we see all these things happening before our very eyes!

Dear friend and fellow believer, This tract is a basic introduction to Daniel Chapter 2, yet it outlines profound truths about events yet to come, so I encourage you to read the book of Daniel for yourself and discover its prophecies! The lines are being drawn... we are just waiting for the final events to unfold. The next event may well be the coming of the King of kings! The end is at hand - ARE YOU READY?

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