

## Daniel 2:24-49

**Daniel 2:27,28 Daniel answered in the presence of the king and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these..."**

The politics of the court bookend the dream and its interpretation. Daniel boldly declared that he had the dream and its interpretation and immediately intervened on behalf of all who had been condemned to death by the king. He was rushed into the presence of the king who may have been skeptical of Daniel's claim. The king's question to Daniel suggests the possibility that the king was well aware that He had demanded the impossible. Daniel gave credit to the God of heaven who reveals secrets and proceeded to tell the dream and to give its interpretation.

The dream was of a great image whose head was of gold, arms and chest of silver, waist and thighs of bronze, legs of iron and feet of iron mixed with clay (or pottery). Then, a stone cut out without hands struck

the image on its feet of iron and clay destroying the image and the stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Daniel then explained that the image represented kingdoms of which Nebuchadnezzar's was the first. Historically there were three world empires that followed that of the Babylonians; the Medes and Persians were followed by the Greeks and then succeeded by Rome. Nebuchadnezzar had the greatest kingdom represented by its placement (the head) and by the superior value of gold. Silver is also of more value than bronze, and bronze than iron. This is not a claim that Nebuchadnezzar had the largest kingdom since he did not. I think that we can do no better than to accept this as the judgment of heaven and leave it there. Anything else is speculation and there are too many options to even try to guess.

Most of the interpretation is focused on the fourth kingdom. To this day, while there are many who want to exclude Rome, there is general agreement about the first three parts of the image. Much discussion remains concerning the meaning of clay mixed with iron and the significance of the toes of the feet which also, as the rest of the feet, were iron mixed with clay.

Where you can readily see a correspondence between the image and the historical great world empires, Medes and Persians being 2 arms of one empire, the Greeks dividing into 2 spheres of influence and the Roman Empire also having an East and a West, there is no circumstance of history where the stone destroying the remains of Rome and filling the earth appears to have taken place. This part of the prophecy should be seen as not yet fulfilled.

In the Bible, when a prophecy is incompletely fulfilled, we look for a future and more complete fulfillment. What has occurred in the past suggests a future even more glorious that is yet to come. Compare the judgment of the flood that brought in a new world with the prophecies of a judgment by fire and a new heaven and earth that will follow.

For Daniel and for Nebuchadnezzar, the dream elevated the God of heaven who reveals secrets and delegitimized the gods of the nations. The king who thought of himself as if he had all power discovered that he did not. If he had internalized the message of the dream, he might have had many more sleepless nights.