

# The Book of Daniel-Chapter Two (Part Eight)

## Dr. Luther Ray Smith Jr.

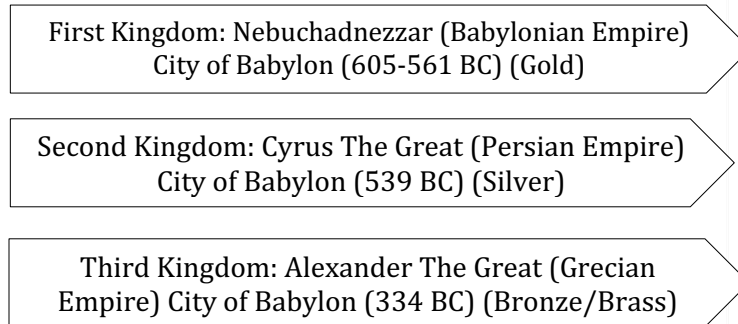
### Review From Previous Week

#### Where We Are at With the Dream

**The head of gold** = Nebuchadnezzar's rule over the region and city of Babylon.

**The chest and arms of silver** = Cyrus's The Great rule over the region and the city of Babylon.

**The belly and thighs** = Alexander the Great's rule over the region and the city of Babylon.



**The Question That We Must Continue To Ask Ourselves:** Are the conclusions that a person is coming to about an explanation of the Scripture using to the CLGH(C) method of explanation?

**What Is the Fourth Kingdom?** Most of all the commentators believe that Daniel is discussing the rise and the endurance of the Roman Empire. This has been the prevailing teaching for over 1900 years. However, I would like to submit an alternative explanation of this statement by Daniel...

**My Analysis of Daniel's Statement:** I would submit to you that the fourth kingdom that is described by Daniel to king Nebuchadnezzar is **NOT** the Roman Empire (or kingdom).

But it is **the Parthian empire (or kingdom)**

### Review From Last Week

We discussed the history, military, economics, and religion of the Parthian empire.

The Parthian empire was influential throughout the ancient world.

They controlled commerce, trade, and a heavy influence in politics throughout the known world.

They had a skilled tactical military that was unrivaled for a long period of time.

They had influence over the city and region of Babylon well into 100 AD, and the Parthian empire was the centerpiece of trade and commerce.

**Another New Question:** *Why do commentators, teachers, and others who have studied this text when they read this passage believe that the fourth kingdom is the Roman Empire?*

**The Obvious Fallacy:** The "obvious fallacy" is when a person or a group of individuals in order to persuade a person to be convinced that what they are saying is true or clear they will use words such as "OBVIOUSLY," "UNDOUBTEDLY," "CERTAINLY," or

# The Book of Daniel-Chapter Two (Part Eight)

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"ALL REASONABLE PEOPLE HOLD THAT..." These statements, and many others like them, are presented to others that are used in exchange for logical reasons.

1. **Flavius Josephus:** "This is the dream which thou sawest; and its interpretation is as follows. The head of gold denotes thee, and the Kings of Babylon that have been before thee. But the two hands and arms signify this, that your government shall be dissolved by two Kings. **But another King, that shall come from the west, armed with brass, shall destroy that government.** And another government that shall be like unto iron shall put an end to the power of the former, and shall have dominion over all the earth; on account of the nature of iron which is stronger than that of gold, of silver, and of brass." Daniel did also declare the meaning of the stone to the King. But I do not think proper to relate it: since I have only undertaken to describe things past, or things present; but not things that are future..." (Flavius Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 10. 208-210 (LCL 6:273)).
2. **Irenaeus:** "In a still clearer light has John, in the Apocalypse, indicated to the Lord's disciples what shall happen in the last times, and concerning the ten kings who shall then arise, **among whom the empire which now rules [the earth] shall be partitioned.** He teaches us what the ten horns shall be which were seen by Daniel, telling us that thus it had been said to him: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet, but shall receive power as if kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and give their strength and power to the beast. These have one mind, and give their strength and power to the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, because He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings." It is manifest, therefore, that of these [potentates], he who is to come shall slay three, and subject the remainder to his power, and that he shall be himself the eighth among them. **And they shall lay Babylon waste, and burn her with fire, and shall give their kingdom to the beast, and put the Church to flight. After that they shall be destroyed by the coming of our Lord. For that the kingdom must be divided, and thus come to ruin...**" (*Against Heresies* 5:26:1).
3. **Hippolytus:** "...The golden head of the image and the lioness denoted the Babylonians; the shoulders and arms of silver, and the bear, represented the Persians and Medes; the belly and thighs of brass, and the leopard, meant the Greeks, who held the sovereignty from Alexander's time; **the legs of iron, and the beast dreadful and terrible, expressed the Romans, who hold the sovereignty at present...**" (*Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* 5.28).
4. **Apbraates:** "And "the legs and the feet of the statue were of iron" (Dan. 2:33) **which is the kingdom of the children of Shem, who are the children of Esau, which is strong as iron...**" (*Select Demonstrations* 108:13).

The reason for this explanation is he believed that the Edomites were the first to accept the Nazarene's Creed (known as the Apostle's Creed) and that they brought the cult to Rome, where it later became the state religion.

5. **Cyril of Jerusalem:** "...Now these things we teach, not of our own invention, but having learned them out of the divine Scriptures used in the Church, and chiefly from the prophecy of Daniel just now read; as Gabriel also the Archangel interpreted it, speaking thus: **The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall surpass all kingdoms. And that this kingdom is that of the Romans, has been the tradition of the Church's interpreters.** For as the first kingdom which became renowned was that of the Assyrians, and the second, that of the Medes and Persians together, and after these, that of the Macedonians was the third, **so the fourth kingdom now is that of the Romans...**" (*Catechetical Lectures* 15.13).
6. **Roman Catholic Church:** "...These four are: the Babylonian kingdom (gold), that of the Medes and the Persians (silver), the Greek (bronze), **and that of iron (the Ptolemy (or the Egyptian) kingdom)...**" (*Catholic Answers*).
7. **Roman Catholic Church:** "The fourth kingdom—Some understand this of the successors of Alexander, the kings of Syria and Egypt: others, of the Roman empire and its civil wars. (Challoner) --- The former supposition seems best, though the latter is almost universally received, and will be explained hereafter. (Calmet) --- The Roman empire did not immediately rise out of Alexander's, and had no relation to the Jews, &c. (Grotius, L'Empereus.) --- But it surely swallowed up all that he had left to his generals, and proved the greatest scourge to the Jewish nation; which has been ever since scattered, **while the kingdom of Christ gains ground, and will flourish till that of Rome shall be no more...**" (*Leo Haydock Catholic Bible Commentary*).

# The Book of Daniel-Chapter Two (Part Eight)

Dr. Luther Ray Smith Jr.

8. **Martin Luther:** "...For Daniel prophesies boldly and determines plainly that the coming of Christ and the beginning of His kingdom (that is, His baptism and preaching) is to happen five hundred and ten years after King Cyrus, and the empire of the Persians and Greeks is to be at an end, and **the Roman Empire in force, that Christ, therefore, must certainly come at the time of the Roman Empire, when it was in its best state, and that it was to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple, since after it no other empire was to come, but the end of the world was to follow, as Daniel clearly announces in Daniel 2 and 7.** (*Commentary on the Book of Daniel*).
9. **John Calvin:** "...**Here the Fourth Empire is described, which agrees only with the Roman**, for we know that the four successors of Alexander were at length subdued. Philip was the first king of Macedon, and Antiochus the second; but yet Philip lost nothing from his own kingdom; he only yielded it to the free cities of Greece. It was, therefore, hitherto, entire, except as it paid tribute to the Romans for some years on account of the expenses of the war..." (*Commentary on the Book of Daniel*).
10. **Thomas Constable:** Rome defeated the last vestige of the Greek Empire in 31 B.C. and ruled for hundreds of years-until A.D. 476 in the Western Roman Empire, and until A.D. 1453 in the Eastern Roman Empire. The eastern and western divisions of this empire crushed all opposition with a brutal strength that surpassed any of its predecessors. **Certainly, iron legs fitly symbolized the Roman Empire.** Rome also dominated the map more extensively than any previous kingdom, encompassing almost all of Europe, including Spain and the British Isles, as well as India. Those legs stood astride most of the ancient world.

## Some Things That May Impact This Explanation of the Forth Kingdom

- **The destruction of the Temple by Titus Flavius (70 AD)**
- **The removal of Jews out of Israel by the Romans (135 AD)**
- **The changing of name of Jerusalem's name in Israel (135 AD)**
- **The allegorizing and symbolization of geographical locations**
- **The emperor led Persecution of believers by the Roman Empire (249-305)**
- **The Theological tradition of the prominent religious traditions (380)**

## The Theologians And the Times in which they lived

*Flavius Josephus (37AD-100 AD)*

*Irenaeus (130 AD-202 AD)*

*Hippolytus (170 AD-235 AD)*

*Aphraates (301 AD-400 AD)*

*Jerome (347AD-420 AD)*

*RCC (380 AD-Present)*

*Martin Luther (1483AD-1546AD)*

*John Calvin (1509 AD-1564 AD)*

## Possible Implications of the Explanations

- Those who may interpret this as Rome may do this because they observe Christ being born in the Roman Empire (i.e., a Christocentric view of the text).
- Christ in his first advent was offering the kingdom of God in a spiritual sense within the "fourth kingdom." (i.e., Rome).
- This explanation may be convinced that the Roman Empire may continue but it takes a different form (i.e., the Roman Catholic Church, America, American Evangelicalism, the WHO, etc.).
- This may cause one to allegorize certain texts when cross-referencing it with this one (e.g., Revelation Chapter 17 Babylon = the revived Roman Empire from Daniel 2).

# The Book of Daniel-Chapter Two (Part Eight)

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### **Babylon**

- Recall that Babylon is a region located in Mesopotamia. Even when the city was gone, the region was still known as Babylon.
- Babylon was a stronghold for defense and commerce. Whoever controlled Babylon controlled trade and commerce in the fertile crescent.
- Rome was a significant kingdom and plays a role in Biblical history. However, there is no record of Rome ever ruling over the people or the city of Babylon.
  - Babylon was conquered by Trajan, a Roman Emperor in 116 AD.
  - However, a year the death of Trajan Hadrian a Roman Emperor resigned control over the land east of the Euphrates River.
  - After this, Babylon became a territory of vassal states that retained the language of Aramaic.
- At this point in history the people/citizens of Babylon do not have a king ruling over them (in fact, the region and city switched allegiances with Rome and Persians until 226 AD until they were taken by the Persians). Rome attempted to recapture the city of Babylon (or what was left of it) several times, but never recaptured the city.
- If we are employing the CLGH(C)M the word “Babylon” from the perspective of the readers and the writers of Scriptures much like the word “Israel,” when and where the word occurs HAS ALWAYS MEANT TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS THE GEOGRAPHICAL REGION IN MESOPOTAMIA.

### **Why This Makes More Sense That it is Parthian Empire**

- The dream is given to Nebuchadnezzar who is the king of the region of Babylon.
- The other two kingdoms that are described in this text have do to with the city and the region of Babylon.
  - **Persian Empire (and Media) (539 BC)**
  - **Greece (Alexander The Great) (331 BC) (In fact, Alexander the Great was buried in Babylon)**
- If Babylon is the center of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream it does not make sense that it is Roman Empire when Rome never captured Babylon.

### **To Sum Up:**

It could be possible that the explanation of this passage of Scripture has been influenced by a person’s theological perspective. I am convinced based upon the language within the text this is discussing the influence of the kingdoms, however, I believe it is in relation to Gentile history (specifically the land of Babylon).

They controlled commerce, trade, and had a heavy influence in politics throughout the land.

If the land of Babylon is considered, this keeps in line with the normal way that Babylon is understood with the view of the writer.

**To Be Continued...**