

The Book of Daniel-Chapter Two (Part Seven)

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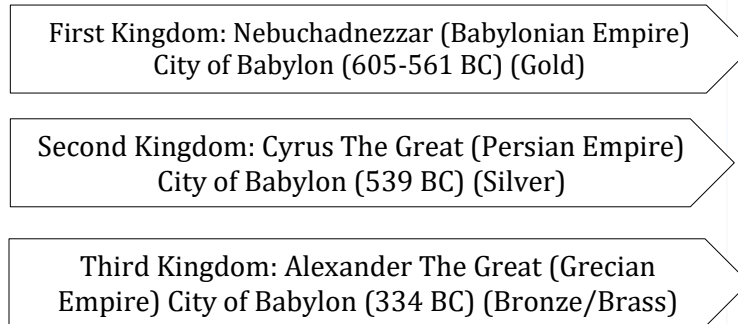
Review From Previous Week

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.



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)

Two Obvious Questions

1. *What is the Parthian empire?*
2. *Why is this an alternative to the Roman Empire?*

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?

The History of the Parthian Empire

- The history begins with Selucius I (one of Alexander the Great's generals)
- Selecius I acquired Mesopotamia, and districts in Persia.
- Selecius I instituted the Persian form of government.
 - Districts and city-states were led by governors (satraps) who promoted a central form of government who were governed by a king.
- Parthia was one of those districts that would grow and become its own empire.
- The Parthian satrapy began in the Southeast of the Caspian Sea.
- The Seleucids (who were associated with Selucius I) were in conflict with wars and conflict in the kingdom and the Ptolemies in the West, this gave an opportunity for Parni in 247 BC, to move into the satrapy and conquered Parthia.

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- The first king who conquered Parthia was a man by the name of Arsaces (247 BC-217 BC).
- Antiochus III, a Seleucid ruler, wanted Parthia back so during Arsaces II (217 BC-191 BC) rule, Antiochus moved to reconquer Parthia.
- Antiochus III instead of killing Arsaces II made him a governor of Parthia.
- Those within Parthia disposed Arsaces II and replaced him with a man by the name of Phriapatius (191 BC-176 BC).
- Phriapatius son, Phraates, invaded the Seleucid empire and conquered the Amardians (an ancient Iranian tribe). This gave him control over Hyrcana and Media.
- Phraates selected his brother Mithridates to succeed him (171BC-132 BC) to succeed him. It was under his rule that the Parthian empire expanded dramatically.
- Around 168 BC Mithridates went on to conquer Bactria, which became the capital of Parthia.
- After Bactria Mithridates turned his attention West and after a nine-year war Mithridates conquered Media (151 BC).
- Later on, Mithridates went to take on the fertile crescent (Mesopotamia).
- In 144 BC, He took Seleucia (the capital of Seleucid).
- Three years later Mithridates took the city of Babylon (141 BC). Three years later he took the city of Susa.
- The Seleucid's would attempt to regain their land they lost. However, Phraates II, Mithridates son would kill the Seleucid's ruler Antiochus VII. However, Phraates would die in battle.
- The uncle of Phraates II, Artabanus I (127 BC-124 BC) took control of uprisings in Mesopotamia. however, he was killed in battle.
- Artabanus I's son Mithridates II (124 BC-88 BC) strengthened his control in the eastern region of the empire and captured Albania, Armenia, and Dura-Europos in the West. This resulted in empire that stretched from the Mediterranean to China, making Parthia a superpower.

The Military Might of the Parthian Empire: The Parthians had a unique fighting style. They developed what was known as the "Parthian shot." They could shoot a bow and arrow backwards on horseback at full speed. They would also fake like they were retreating oncoming armies and would shoot them as they were approaching them. As a result, they had the ability to attack the opposing force from all sides. Additionally, they had an armored calvary (called *Cataphracts*). This calvary would provide offense to the soldiers when in battle with long spears and swords.

The Economics of the Parthian Empire

- The Parthians inherited the economic infrastructure from the Seleucids and just reappropriated the cities and roads they received.
- With Armenia (and possibly control of the Black Sea), and Hyrcania (with the control of the Caspian Sea) gave them influence in the Central Asian markets. The takeover of Persis and Antioch gave them control over the Persian Gulf. In addition, the control of Susa in the fertile crescent and wealthy city of Ecbatana gave them significant political and economic influence.

The Royal Road

- The Royal Road was constructed by Darius I (Persia), and stretched over 1600 miles, and begun in the capital of Susa to Sardis.
- A person who was a messenger on horseback could travel from one point to another in seven days! A person on foot could travel from one end to another in 90 days!
- During the reign of Darius I there were royal outposts known as *Caravanserai*, which is the rest stop for travelers that included food, horses, lodging, and Persian soldiers if the king needed to deliver a message quickly.
- Part of the Royal Road was in the Roman Empire (i.e., Sardis). However, most of the Royal Road was under control of the Parthian Empire.
- Parts of the Royal Road were connected to what became known as the "Silk Road."

The Religion of the Parthian Empire

- The possible religion that was in Parthia was the worship of the god Mithra (Mitra) (this could be seen in the two kings' names Mithridates I and Mithridates II).
- They also had a high regard for Zoroastrianism and in some places, Mithra became a head-deity under *Ahura Mazda*.
- Even though they had this overall religious practice, they did not compel others to follow this religion but instead follow their own religious beliefs.

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- The Parthians also controlled the *Royal Road*, which secured Parthia position as an international trader. In addition, their commerce and trade were expanded in China with the Han Dynasty.

To Sum Up:

- The Parthian Empire was influential throughout the ancient world.
- They controlled commerce, trade, and had a heavy influence in politics throughout the land.
- They had a skilled and tactical military that was unrivaled for a long period of time.
- They had control over the city of Babylon well into 100 AD, as it was a 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?*

To Be Continued...