

BOOK OF DANIEL

THE GREAT IMAGE (DAN. 2) – COREY STARK

I. OUTLINE OF DANIEL 2:1-49

- A. Circumstance of the dream (2:1)
- B. Futility of worldly wisdom (2:2-13)
- C. Daniel's intervention (2:14-30)
- D. Dream revealed (2:31-35)
- E. Dream interpreted (2:36-45)
- F. Nebuchadnezzar's response (2:46-49)

II. OVERVIEW

A. In 605 BC, young Daniel (approx. 14-15 years old) was taken as a Jewish slave to Babylon in the first of three deportations (605 BC, 597 BC, 586 BC). Due to their unusual qualifications, Daniel and his three friends were selected to be indoctrinated in the ways of Babylon in preparation to serve in the royal court.

B. In 603 BC, during the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, he had a troubling dream that all the wise men of Babylon were unable to interpret. Therefore, the king called for their destruction. However, to save Daniel's life, God revealed the king's dream to him in a night vision, giving Daniel insight into *four world empires* (Dan. 2:19). Daniel not only recounted the dream (vs. 31-35), but the interpretation (vs. 36-45).

III. THE DREAM REVEALED – A GREAT IMAGE AND A GREAT MOUNTAIN (DAN. 2:31-35)

A. In response to king Nebuchadnezzar questioning “what would come to pass” *after* his current reign (2:28-29, 45), the God who reveals secrets made known to king Nebuchadnezzar “what will be” *after* him (2:30).

Dan. 2:29 Thoughts came to your mind on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be. 30 ...that you may know the thoughts of your heart.

B. God revealed a great image with *five distinct sections*, each comprised of a different material. Each section represents the unfolding of world empires from the *human perspective* of a glorious image that deifies man (2:31-35). Their progressive deterioration is seen in accelerating *devaluation* (gold-chaff) and *division* (1-10).

Dan. 2:31 You were watching; and behold, a GREAT IMAGE! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. 32 This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and sides of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, and struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a GREAT MOUNTAIN and filled the whole earth.

1. Gold head (Gravity 19.3*) – a united kingdom
2. Silver chest and arms (Gravity 10.5*) – a dual kingdom
3. Bronze belly and sides (Gravity 8.5*) – a fourfold kingdom
4. Iron legs (Gravity 7.6*) – initial phase of kingdom
5. Iron and clay feet and toes (Gravity 1.9*) – final phase of kingdom is tenfold
6. Chaff image (Gravity 0.0*) – entire image broken in pieces, crushed together, no trace found
7. Divine Stone – becomes a great mountain that fills the whole earth, unifying it in one kingdom!

** Specific gravity is how you measure the density of precious metals to determine their value.*

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IV. THE DREAM INTERPRETED – FOUR WORLD EMPIRES (DAN. 2:36-45)

A. After retelling the dream (Dan. 2:31-35), Daniel gives the interpretation (Dan. 2:36-45). He describes a divine governmental stewardship given to a succession of *four earthly kingdoms* that progressively deteriorate until they are utterly consumed by the Messianic Kingdom coming from heaven in the latter days (Dan. 2:28).

Dan. 2:36 *This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. 37 You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 38 and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—you are this head of gold. 39 But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that [fourth] kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. 41 Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. 43 As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they [ten toes] will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. 44 And in the days of these [ten] kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the GREAT GOD has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.*

B. Babylonian Empire (605-539 BC): Daniel clearly reveals Nebuchadnezzar as the “head of gold” and “king of kings” (Dan. 2:37-38). For sixty-six years the Neo-Babylonian Empire ruled the Middle East (see map).

Dan. 2:37 *You, O king [Nebuchadnezzar], are a king of kings... 38 you are this head of gold.*

1. Head: A new era had begun in God's divine program with king Nebuchadnezzar, as He was the “head” or beginning of a new progression of empires to follow. The times of the Gentiles had begun (Lk. 21:24).
2. Gold: The “golden city” (Isa. 13:19; Jer. 51:7) was superior to all successive kingdoms, even as gold is superior in value, weight and glory to all subsequent materials (i.e. silver, bronze, iron, clay, chaff).
3. Context: In response to king Nebuchadnezzar questioning “what would come to pass” *after his current reign* (Dan. 2:28-29, 45), the God who reveals secrets made known “what will be” *after him* (2:30). The context of the dream is Babylon-centric, meaning it was revealed in Babylon, to a Babylonian king, concerning kingdoms that would succeed his Babylonian empire. Therefore, the sections of the great image that follow represent kingdoms that would succeed Babylon, each possessing its' former dominion.

C. Medo-Persian Empire (539-331 BC): Both Scripture and the clear testimony of history reveal that the dual kingdom of Medo-Persia succeeded the kingdom of Babylon, during the reign of the eighth and final ruler of Babylon – king Belshazzar (Est. 1:19; Isa. 13:17; Jer. 51:11, 28; Dan. 5:25-28, 30-31). The Medo-Persian Empire dominated the Middle East for approximately 208 years (see map).

Dan. 5:30 *That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans [Babylon], was slain. 31 And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.*

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1. Two arms: The two arms speak of the dual kingdom of the Medes (Darius) and Persians (Cyrus) (Est. 1:3, 14, 18, 19; 10:2; Dan. 5:28, 31; 6:8, 12, 15, 28; 8:20; 9:1; 11:1).

2. Silver: Persia was known for her treasures of silver. History shows all taxes were paid in silver.

3. Inferior: Daniel emphasized that this kingdom would be inferior to Babylon, as silver is to gold in value, weight and glory (Dan. 2:39a). But in what respect, since the Medo-Persian Empire was superior in size? It would be inferior in a moral sense, as each subsequent empire would continue to degenerate until history culminates in the fourth kingdom, which reaches the height of blasphemy, cruelty and arrogance.

Dan. 2:39 But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours

D. Grecian Empire (331-146 BC): Again, both Scripture and the clear testimony of history reveal that the kingdom of Greece succeeded the Medo-Persian Empire (Dan. 8:20-21; 10:20; 11:2-4). The Greek Empire dominated the Middle East for approximately 185 years (see map).

Dan. 8:5 A male goat came from the west... 7 And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns... 20 The ram which you saw, having the two horns—they are the kings of Media and Persia. 21 And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece.

1. Belly and sides: The word commonly translated as “thighs” (Strong’s H3410 yarkâ’, yar-kaw’; (Aramaic) corresponding to yêrkâh, yer-ay-kaw’ H3411) is more accurately translated “sides.” Because of its dual construction the word properly means both sides, the flanks, the haunches, or buttocks.

2. Bronze: The “brazen coated Greeks,” as they were called, were experts in molding bronze, their soldiers wearing breastplates and helmets of bronze, carrying both shields and swords made of bronze as well.

3. Rule over all the earth: Daniel emphasized this kingdom’s vast dominion (Dan. 2:39b).

Dan. 2:39b Then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.

E. The Fourth Empire: The overwhelming weight of emphasis in the dream is placed on the fourth kingdom, which is characterized by the strength and crushing power of iron (Dan. 2:40).

Dan. 2:40 The fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that [fourth] kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

1. Nearly every commentary lists the fourth kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream as the Roman Empire. However, while both Medo-Persia and Greece are specifically named in the book of Daniel as succeeding Babylon (Dan. 5:25-28, 30-31; 8:20-21; 10:20; 11:2-4) the fourth empire is *never* mentioned by name. If we remain faithful to the *biblical criteria* listed in Daniel chapter two, as well as observe the clear *testimony of history* it is impossible to confidently identify the fourth kingdom as the Empire of Rome.

2. However, we can be confident that this is the *final world empire* prior to the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth. According to the book of Daniel, Revelation and other prophetic passages this fourth kingdom will reach its height of power in the generation of the LORD’s return and be personally destroyed by Jesus Christ at His coming. He is the “stone” from heaven (Dan. 2:34-35, 44-45).

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IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FIRST FOUR WORLD EMPIRES

A. *Divine Stewardship*: All four world empires are a divine stewardship granted by God in His unfolding governmental purposes on the earth (2 Chr. 36:23; Ezra 1:2; Pr. 21:2; Dan. 2:21, 37-38; Rom. 13:1-4).

Dan. 2:20 “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever... 21 He removes kings and raises up kings...

Dan. 2:37 For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 38 and wherever the children of men dwell... He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all...

1. It is a mystery how God in His infinite wisdom can use the freewill of evil leaders to further His divine purpose and yet hold them accountable for their own wickedness (Jer. 25:9-14).

Jer. 25:9 I will send and take... Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land [Israel], against its inhabitants... and will utterly destroy them... 12 Then when seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation... for their iniquity...

2. From Pharaoh to the Antichrist and his ten king confederation, God has divinely used the freewill of evil leaders to further His governmental purposes on the earth (Rom. 9:17; Jer. 51:11; Rev. 17:16-17).

Rom. 9:17 For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.”

B. *Deification*: The succession of empires was revealed in the form of a large idol from the *human perspective* of a glorious man. Throughout history world leaders have deified themselves, to be worshipped as God.

Dan. 2:31 This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome.

C. *Devaluation*: The descending materials deteriorate from the *value* of gold down to worthless chaff.

D. *Degeneration*: The descending materials deteriorate from the *glory* of gold down to mixture of clay.

E. *Diminution*: The descending materials deteriorate from the *softness* of gold to the brittleness of clay.

F. *Destabilization*: The descending materials decline in *weight*, producing a top-heavy idol (i.e. arrogance).

G. *Disintegration*: As the kingdoms of fallen man progress they become increasingly *divided* from a single Monarch (Nebuchadnezzar) to a ten-king confederation, as seen in the “ten toes” (Dan. 2:41-42, 44).

Dan. 2:37 You, O king... 38 are this head of gold... 42 And the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay... 44 In the days of these [ten] kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom...

H. *Destruction*: All four empires of the great image will be “crushed together” (Dan. 2:35), when the God of Heaven establishes a kingdom that will “consume all these kingdoms” (Dan. 2:34-35, 44-45; Rev. 11:15).

Dan. 2:44 The God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall... consume all these kingdoms...

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V. WHY THE ROMAN EMPIRE IS NOT THE FOURTH KINGDOM

A. There are two criterions in Daniel 2 that must be met in order to clearly identify the fourth kingdom.

1. The *rise* of the fourth kingdom (Dan. 2:40).

Dan. 2:40 The fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that [fourth] kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

2. The *demise* of the fourth kingdom (Dan. 2:34-35).

Dan. 2:34 You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, and struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found.

B. Rise of the kingdom: In describing the rise of the fourth kingdom Daniel says that this kingdom would “crush all the others” (Dan. 2:40). The other kingdoms that he is referencing are Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece. However, since these kingdoms never coexisted, how does the fourth kingdom “crush all the others?”

1. Geography: The first and most obvious meaning to “crush” is geographically. However, when we consult history, it is clear that the Roman Empire left approximately two-thirds of the former land holdings of the Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Grecian Empires entirely untouched (see map).

a. Rome only conquered approximately one-third of the regions controlled by the previous kingdoms. However, the criterion of Daniel 2:40 states that the fourth kingdom must “crush all of the others.”

b. Rome only conquered approximately one-fifth of the Medo-Persian Empire and never even reached its two capitals of Ecbatana and Persepolis. Therefore, it is not accurate to say that Rome “crushed” Medo-Persia when it never even captured its capital cities. That would be like saying that the United States of America was “crushed” by a hostile nation simply because it invaded the southern states. However, if it never even reached or occupied Washington D.C. that statement wouldn’t be accurate.

c. The Roman Empire never controlled the capital city of Babylon with the exception of one very brief period under the command of emperor Trajan in AD 116. This is critical, because again the dream is given in response to king Nebuchadnezzar questioning, “what would come to pass” *after his current reign* (Dan. 2:28-29, 45). The context of the dream is *Babylon-centric*. It was revealed in Babylon, to a Babylonian king, concerning kingdoms that would succeed his Babylonian empire. Therefore, the following kingdoms *must* all succeed Babylon, each possessing its’ former dominion and capital city.

2. Culture: Many have described the power of the Roman Empire and its’ military strength as a rebellion crushing force, but occasionally responding to rebellions isn’t sufficient to explain what Daniel described as seeing in the dream. In fact, instead of being a nation-crushing force, the Roman Empire was quite well known as a nation-building force in ancient world. Instead of destroying the culture Rome actually brought order by adding law, building roads and creating infrastructure.

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a. “The famous Roman roads reached every corner of the Roman Empire. These were well-built, stone covered roads on solid foundations. To control their territories, the Romans needed easy access even to the most outlying provinces. Roads also caused trade to prosper, which brought with it more taxes. Eventually every town and city of the empire was connected by an elaborate system of Roman-built roads. This led to the famous phrase, ‘All roads lead to Rome.’”¹

b. “Rome’s law and the protection of its’ military also created a peace and stability that came to be famously known as Pax Romana. Rather than being a crushing force, the Roman Empire was often a positive influence to its conquered peoples.”²

c. “Consider... the relationship of the Roman Empire to the Greek culture. Rather than crushing Greek culture, much of the Roman Empire was overwhelmed by Greek ways.”³

3. *Language*: In Jesus’ day, under Roman hegemony, Greek was a dominant language throughout the Middle East.

4. *Religion*: Although the Romans expected to receive taxes and an acknowledgement of Caesar, they were a very tolerant empire by ancient standards.

a. “During Jesus’ day, the Jewish Temple stood prominently in Jerusalem under Roman authority, and the Jews practiced their religion freely. Roman law protected the Jews’ right to practice their religion. While there were exceptions, such as a brief period of persecution under Emperor Caligula, throughout the majority of its reign, the Roman Empire was relatively forbearing.”⁴

b. Consider again the relationship of the Roman Empire to the Greek gods. Instead of crushing the Greek pantheon of gods, the Roman culture adopted them and simply changed their names; Zeus was changed to Jupiter, Artemis was changed to Diana, Aphrodite was changed to Venus, etc.

C. In consideration of the destructive nature and crushing power that the fourth empire must exhibit in relationship to geography, culture, language and religion to fulfill the criteria of Daniel 2:40, it’s difficult to imagine that the Roman Empire is what Daniel had in view as the fulfillment of this description.

D. *Demise of the kingdom*: The second criterion that must be met in order to clearly identify the fourth kingdom is the day of its destruction and demise (Dan. 2:34-35).

Dan. 2:34 You watched while a stone [Jesus Messianic Kingdom] was cut out without hands, and struck the image on its feet of iron and clay [Fourth Empire], and broke them in pieces. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found.

1. In describing the demise of the fourth kingdom (Dan. 2:34-35) notice that Jesus (i.e. stone cut without hands) directly confronts the fourth kingdom personally and when He does, the Messianic Kingdom not only destroys the fourth and final empire, but Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece all at the same time!

2. The clear testimony of history reveals that if the Roman Empire were fully revived to its’ greatest extent today and Jesus returned to totally destroy all of it, approximately two-thirds of the former land holdings of the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Grecian Empires would still be completely untouched (see map).

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VI. WHO IS THE FOURTH KINGDOM?

A. It's obvious that the overwhelming weight of emphasis in the dream is placed upon the fourth kingdom, which is characterized by the strength and crushing power of iron. However, to fulfill the two-fold criterion of its' rise (Dan. 2:40) and demise (Dan. 2:34-35) it must completely crush the Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Grecian Empires in relationship to their geography, culture, language and religion.

Dan. 2:40 The fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that [fourth] kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

B. In the history of the middle eastern region surrounding Babylon from the fall of the Greek Hellenistic period (31 BC) until the early 1900's there has only been *one empire* that could fulfill the two-fold criterion, concerning the rise (Dan. 2:40) and demise (Dan. 2:34-35) of the fourth empire – the Islamic Caliphate.

C. "The Islamic Caliphate is the historical Islamic government or empire, which began with the Rashidun Caliphate in 632 AD, shortly after the death of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, and culminated in the Ottoman Empire, which officially came to an end in 1923."⁵

1. Geography: Without question, the historical Islamic Caliphate absolutely and completely "crushed" all of the former land holdings of the Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Grecian Empires (see map).

2. Culture: "In contrast to the Roman Empire, the Islamic Caliphate from its inception was an Arab-Islamic-supremacist force that crushed and erased the cultures and religions of the peoples it conquered. This is due to the uniquely all-encompassing ideology of Islam, which includes every facet of life. Islam has rules and commandments that pertain to far more than just theology. It also dictates law, government, language, military, and even the sexual and hygienic practices of those under its authority. The very name Islam means "submission" to the laws of Allah, the Muslims' god, as well as the practices of Muhammad, their prophet. Islam is the epitome of a totalitarian ideology."⁶

3. Language: "Wherever Islam spread, it brought with it this oppressive ideology of submission... It exported and imposed the Arabic language onto a vast proportion of its conquered peoples. Today, in Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and throughout much of North Africa, the people speak Arabic. While the Persians and the Turks have retained their own languages, their alphabets were both Arabized."⁷

4. Religion: "As an imperial force, Islam imposed religion and culture onto all of its dominated peoples, while erasing evidence of previous religions and cultures."⁸ Examples are too numerous to list here.

D. Rise of the fourth kingdom: The historical Islamic Caliphate fulfills the criteria of Daniel (Dan. 2:40) by completely conquering all of the former land holdings of the Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Grecian Empires, while endeavoring to erase the former cultures and religions of the people they conquered, as well as exporting and imposing their own totalitarian ideology, including religion, law, government and language.

E. Demise of the fourth kingdom: Once again the historical Islamic Caliphate perfectly fulfills the criteria of Daniel (Dan. 2:34-35). If the Caliphate were fully revived to its' greatest extent today and Jesus returned to conquer it, the Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Grecian Empires would all be destroyed as well.

Dan. 2:34 You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, and struck the image on its feet of iron and clay... 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and gold were crushed together...

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VII. THE UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FOURTH KINGDOM

A. In reviewing the dream given to king Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:31-35), it is clear that there are five distinct sections of the great image. However, because of the *continuity* between the legs and feet through the element of iron, as well as the fact that Daniel *never* refers to a “fifth kingdom” in any of his visions, it is apparent that the “legs of iron” and the “feet of iron and clay” should be considered *two phases* of the same fourth kingdom.

1. Head of gold
2. Chest and arms of silver
3. Belly and sides of bronze
4. Legs of iron
5. Feet and toes of iron and clay

B. Many modern commentators recognize the two phases of the fourth empire to be Rome and a revived version of the Roman Empire. However, since the Roman Empire doesn’t meet the criteria of the fourth kingdom in Daniel chapter two and the Islamic Caliphate does, the two phases should be understood as:

1. Legs of iron (Dan. 2:40) – Historical Islamic Caliphate (632 – 1923 AD)
2. Feet and toes of iron and clay (Dan. 2:41-43) – Revived Islamic Caliphate

C. *Divided*: Apart from the obvious division seen in the difference between the “legs of iron” and “feet of iron and clay,” an important key to seeing this two-phase kingdom is contained in its own description (Dan. 2:41).

Dan. 2:40 The fourth kingdom [legs of iron v. 33] shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything... 41 Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, the [fourth] kingdom shall be DIVIDED; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it...

1. Many assume that the “divided” nature referenced here is between the iron and clay within the feet. However, the word describing the relationship between the iron and clay is “mixed,” as seen in the next verse when Daniel begins describing the nature of the *final phase* of the fourth kingdom (Dan. 2:42-43).

Dan. 2:43 As you saw iron MIXED with ceramic clay... they will not adhere to one another...

2. The word “divided” is simply describing the relationship between the *historical phase* of the fourth kingdom and the *revived phase* of the fourth kingdom in the latter days (Dan. 2:28). Even as legs and feet are distinct body parts, so also there are *two distinct phases* to the fourth kingdom that are unified by iron.
3. The Hebrew equivalent used for the Aramaic word “divided” (H6385) is pâlag, paw-lag'; and means to split, cleave or divide. It isn’t a good description for two very different natures (i.e. iron and clay) being “mixed” together in an effort to unify them (Dan. 2:43), but a perfect description for a unified kingdom being “divided” into two parts that are separated by a period of time. This word is only used five times in Scripture and always describes a unified object being split in two or subdivided into smaller parts, whether earth, water, a tongue or in this case; a kingdom (Gen. 10:25; 1 Chr. 1:19; Job 38:25; Ps. 55:9; Dan. 2:41).
4. In Revelation, John sees a Satanically empowered beast with seven heads, revealing seven world empires that persecuted Israel. One of the heads was wounded to death, but later revived (Rev. 13:1-4)!

Rev. 13:3 I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed.

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D. Strong as iron (Dan. 2:33-35, 40-43, 45): The fourth kingdom is characterized by the strength and crushing power of iron, which is the strongest, hardest and most unyielding metal in the dream. Since this is the *first description* it is the kingdom's *most dominant* trait. Divine poetry is at work, revealing this kingdom as an imposter (i.e. antichrist) to the true Messiah who rules with a "rod of iron" (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15).

Dan. 2:40 And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others.

E. Composite kingdom (Dan. 2:40): As stated earlier, the fourth kingdom will conquer all three former world empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece, absorbing their geographic territory, ethnic people, natural resources and traits of evil. Therefore, it is a "composite kingdom" of all four world empires. Further evidence of it consuming all three previous kingdoms is seen in the description of its' destruction. For when the fourth empire is destroyed by the Messianic Kingdom, all four previous empires are described as being "crushed together" (v. 35) as the Kingdom of Heaven is said to "consume all these kingdoms" (v. 44).

F. Confederation (Dan. 2:42, 44): Unlike any kingdom before it, the revived phase of the fourth kingdom is a ten-nation confederation under the leadership of ten kings, as alluded to through the use of "ten toes." Later, both Daniel and John see these ten kings again described as "ten horns" (Dan. 7:24; Rev. 17:12).

Rev. 17:12 The ten horns which you saw are ten kings...

G. Dual nature (Dan. 2:33, 42-43): The revived phase of the fourth kingdom (feet and toes) is a mixture of two distinct natures (iron and clay). Daniel reveals that because these two natures are very opposite in their composition they will not adhere to one another (v. 43), causing the final expression of the fourth kingdom to be both strong (iron) and fragile (clay) at the same time (v. 42). This dual nature seems to be a direct reflection of its' leadership (toes of the feet), which are also a mixture of iron and clay (v. 42).

Dan. 2:42 And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. 43 As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

H. Final kingdom (Dan. 2:32-33, 37-40): In a succession of four world empires, beginning with Babylon (head of gold), the revived phase of the fourth kingdom (feet of iron and clay) is the final earthly kingdom of fallen man, prior to the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom upon the earth.

Dan. 2:32 This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and sides of bronze, 33 its legs of iron [historical phase], its feet partly of iron and partly of clay [revived phase].

I. Destroyed by Jesus Christ (2:34-35, 44-45): Jesus Christ will personally destroy the final phase of the fourth kingdom (feet and toes). Whereas, the other kingdoms were absorbed into the next, the fourth kingdom will be "broken in pieces," "crushed" and "consumed" so that "no trace" of it will ever be found again (v. 35).

Dan. 2:34 You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay... 35 Then the iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found.

Dan. 2:44 In the days of these [ten] kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed... it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

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VIII. CONCLUSION: WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR (DAN. 2:1-49)

- The fourth empire must succeed Babylon.
- The fourth empire is both a king and a kingdom.
- The fourth empire has two phases that are divided by time – historical and revived.
- The fourth empire is the final Gentile world empire in human history.
- The fourth empire has a dual nature that will not adhere to one another.
- The fourth empire will be personally destroyed by Jesus Christ at His coming.
- The fourth empire cannot be the Roman Empire, as it does not fulfill the criterion of its rise and demise as listed in Daniel 2:34-35, 40.
- The historical Islamic Caliphate perfectly fulfills the two-fold criterion listed in Daniel 2:34-35, 40.
- A revived version of the Islamic Caliphate seems to be what Daniel had in view.

DANIEL 2	EMPIRE / KING
Head of gold	Babylon <i>Nebuchadnezzar</i>
Chest and arms of silver	Medo-Persia <i>Darius and Cyrus</i>
Belly and sides of bronze	Greece <i>Alexander the Great</i>
Legs of iron	Historical Islamic Caliphate
Feet and toes of iron and clay	Revived Islamic Caliphate <i>Ten-king confederation</i>
The Rock	Messianic

Endnotes:

1. Joel Richardson, *Mideast Beast*, pg. 60.
2. Joel Richardson, *Mideast Beast*, pg. 60.
3. Joel Richardson, *Mideast Beast*, pg. 60-61.
4. Joel Richardson, *Mideast Beast*, pg. 60.
5. Joel Richardson, *Mideast Beast*, pg. 57.
6. Joel Richardson, *Mideast Beast*, pg. 61.
7. Joel Richardson, *Mideast Beast*, pg. 61.