

## **Allan MacRae, Prophecies of Daniel: Lecture 2**

Now we were speaking last time about chapter 2, the setting of the prophecy. We noticed that there is no reason to think that it was just an arbitrary action on Nebuchadnezzar's part. I think we are quite justified in concluding that he had been fooled by these so-called wise men and therefore he said, "This decision is firm from me." Now the word "firm" only occurs in this chapter. And so the way that it was guessed at before "The word has gone from me," could just as well mean exactly the same thing as, "This is the word that I have given." In fact, that word "word" is often used for a command. But the way it's stated in the King James Version, in two different verses, it could suggest that he meant that he had forgotten it. I don't believe that there is any necessity to take it as "he had forgotten it," even if the word meant "gone out from me" that means the command has gone out. But it is quite generally recognized, as I mentioned to you last time, that in at least one of these places, the word is a word which means "firm." Now I just received a question if that's true in both the cases, but unfortunately I didn't bring my Aramaic with me this morning, so I'll look that up later, but it's my impression it means the same in both of the cases this word is used.

Now we also began to look at Nebuchadnezzar's vision. And we noticed Nebuchadnezzar was king from 605 to 562, and his vision has two parts. First, there is a static picture; there is a statue with three parts. Then we notice that it has a dynamic series of events, and I asked you to look at those events for the assignment for today. We will not immediately get to the discussion of them, but I hope I can get to that before the end of the hour.

Now outline letter C: "The interpretation," under that, number one is "The meaning of the statue." And there I think it is important that we have in mind that if God gave a person a dream, and the dream showed a statue in front of him, which was made up of five different kinds of material, that you would have no basis whatever to make any guess as to what this meant. Some people have suggested that this statue was the basis for the statue described in the next chapter that Nebuchadnezzar put up in the plain of Dura

and told everybody to worship. Now that's purely a guess. We have no reason to say that statue it relates to this one. But you would have no basis to have any idea what this statue meant, and what the progression of events from the head down to the feet meant. It might just as well mean a progression of events from the feet up to the head. Or it might mean a situation that was present at that time. It might represent various nations of that particular time or various types of people, or various languages. It might represent something about mining the materials in the statue, or general plans for the advance of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom.

There would be absolutely no way to have any idea what the statue meant, except as we have the interpretation given. And when we have the interpretation given, we immediately know that it represents a series of events starting with the head and moving down to the feet. Then we could, if we're inclined, make guesses as to what each part meant. For instance, he said to Nebuchadnezzar, "You are this head of gold." Well, does that mean that Nebuchadnezzar, being the head, had better eyesight than anyone else in his kingdom because the statue had eyes of gold? Does it mean he had better hearing than anybody else in the kingdom? Does it mean he had a better mind than any ruler who would ever come? There's all kinds of guesses we could make from parts of the statue, but that would be pure guess work.

Now, we move a little further in the statue and we find that the breast and arms are made of silver. As you look at the breast and arms, you have three parts; you have two arms, and I suppose the hands would be included, but we can't say for sure whether the hands are included or whether the hands belong with the next part down. What do the fingers mean? What does it mean that there is a central body and two arms? Are there going to be three parts to the next kingdom? There are all kinds of guesses we could make, but we have no basis for them unless we're specifically told something about them in Scripture.

Then the third part, which is of bronze. "Of bronze" is a better translation, unless you want to say copper, which would be equally good, than "brass," as it is in the King James. The old English says "brass" and that is unfortunate. The Hebrew word is simply

“copper.” It can stand for any alloy of copper and it could be brass, which we think of as a rather shiny but not particularly strong alloy, but the common alloy of copper in ancient times was bronze, which was very strong and was widely used for weapons. Brass is stronger than silver. Perhaps silver is a slightly better conductor of electricity than bronze, but I don’t think either of those facts tells us anything about the meaning of the statue. We notice that the third part includes the belly and the thighs. That would mean that it would reach from the middle, the trunk, down about to the knees. Does that mean that the third kingdom is going to be originally one and then divided into two parts? We have no basis in the account to lead us to think so.

Then we have the legs, which are of iron and it is quite generally thought that the legs stand for the Roman Empire; and some people say that the fact that there are two legs indicates the eastern and western parts of the Roman Empire. I don’t think we have any more warrant for that than for the previous statement, particularly as we realize that the Roman Empire lasted for four centuries and was almost ready for its downfall before its division into two parts occurred. And so I just want to warn against that type of reading into the statue additional meanings beyond what is suggested in the text.

We may, as we find other parallels somewhere, have a right to look back and say, “Here is something that fits with something in the history or that fits with something in a later prediction.” But at this point I’m particularly anxious that we look at it from the viewpoint of what do we have in this chapter: We think of Nebuchadnezzar and of Daniel; what would they find there? We may find points suggested, which are clarified later in Daniel or in New Testament. And in such a case, if you note particular things like that, you might make a note of them and bring them to our attention later. Make a note of anything that occurs to you where you think something later in the Bible throws light on something here. But at this point, we’re interested in seeing what we have here and what can legitimately be drawn from this without looking further forward in the Scripture. We are justified, I think, at this point, in looking at the future history to see how it fits with it.

Now, then, number 2: “The parts of the statue in general.” What has specific meaning and what is only part of the picture, that is what I was just speaking of.

As for number 3: "What do the metals signify?" Well, we are told "You are this head of gold", but beyond that the head of gold stands for Nebuchadnezzar. I don't think we have a right to say that it means that the Babylonian kingdom had any more gold than any of the later kingdoms or that it was a more powerful kingdom; or that it was a greater kingdom. It's simply the first of the metals. It doesn't say anything about a difference in meaning between the gold and the silver. The silver is next, and then the bronze, and then the iron. Now the iron we do have evidence that it has a specific meaning. It says that the iron is strong and it breaks everything; similarly this kingdom represented by iron will be strong. So we have four kingdoms here mentioned, of which the fourth one is to be very strong. And, of course, the art of warfare would gradually improve through those years. The Persians, for instance, were able to make tremendous conquests because of their ability with shooting arrows; they would shoot great clouds of arrows and just nothing could stand before them. But then the Greeks came under Alexander the Great and they were encased in heavy armor, and standing close together with this strong armor that could hold back the arrows from injuring them. And they had a step forward, and the art of war stepped forward, so we might say that the iron represents a stronger force than any previous one. How much beyond that it goes, we don't know. But we do know that the iron stands for strength. And then there is clay mixed with iron in the feet and toes. The clay, we are told more about what it indicates. We'll look at that later.

Outline letter D: "The five parts of the statue." As of this chapter, I will just refer to four kingdoms. As it stated here, you could not tell whether there were four kingdoms or five kingdoms. I have not noticed anything here that would indicate which. There are five parts. The fourth and fifth have a similarity that one of them is entirely iron and the other is partly iron. Are they the same kingdom, or are they two distinct kingdoms? I don't think you can decide that from chapter 2, unless someone eventually calls my attention to something I haven't noticed yet. But I do think that it can be definitely decided when we get to chapter 7. So for the present, I think we should say that we do not know whether there are four or five kingdoms, but there are definitely five parts to the statue.

We look at number 1 under letter D: "The starting point is Nebuchadnezzar." We have a remarkable series of statements that Daniel makes to Nebuchadnezzar in verses 36 and 37. I'd like to read those as they stand in the King James Version. "Daniel said, 'This is the interpretation.'" We'll tell his interpretation before the king. "You, king, are the king of kings, where the God of heaven has given thee a kingdom, power, strength, and glory. And wherever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls in heaven have been given by the divine hand and made you ruler over them all." Does that mean that Nebuchadnezzar had a power that none of us have to order the birds of the heaven which direction to fly and tell them to change their migratory progress as we may choose? It sounds to me like flattery given to Nebuchadnezzar. God has given the fowls of heaven into his hands and him ruler over them all. I'm sure that the birds could fly over Babylonia and there'd be very little Nebuchadnezzar could do about it unless they flew rather low. And there's many beasts of the field that he could not possibly control.

"You are this head of gold." I asked a question there. Are Daniel's words to Nebuchadnezzar inerrant? I believe very definitely in the inerrancy of Scripture, that whatever God has given us in the Scripture about any subject we can stand upon, accept and believe that it is true. But I think we have to be very careful. When Daniel gives Nebuchadnezzar the interpretation that God has given to Daniel, we can certainly accept every word that he says as being absolutely true and without error. But when he flatters Nebuchadnezzar a little bit as he begins to tell him what this means, I would question just how far we can go in saying that that is a true description of Nebuchadnezzar's rule. "Wherever the children of men dwell . . ." Were there no Indians in the United States at that time? Were there no great civilizations in Mexico or in Peru at that time? Were there no peoples in China at that time? We have very considerable evidence that there were great numbers of people in these areas, some of them possessing rather high civilizations and none of them probably ever heard of Nebuchadnezzar. I say "probably" because it most likely that there was commercial traffic between Babylon and Egypt and China at this time, so word of Nebuchadnezzar may have spread beyond Babylonia.

But these are the introductory words to the statement that is made that is part of the interpretation, "You are this head of gold. The head of gold stands for you." But as for the flattering words that he gives to Nebuchadnezzar, it is absolutely true that that is what Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar. But that Daniel's words express exact truth, I think would be carrying inerrancy beyond what it means.

Well, now number 2. Here's an interesting question: "What is meant by this head of gold? Is this Nebuchadnezzar? Is he the head of gold?" Well, immediately when I ask these questions you can turn to the sheet of paper that I have given you here and with a few facts on it. I'm not giving these facts to you for you to memorize. There may be some of them you think important to remember, but there are facts that will be useful in connection to today's lecture and with many subsequent lectures during the course. So please keep this sheet and have it with you when we want to refer to it.

Now you'll notice I mention the new, or Neo-Babylonian Empire. There had been a great power from Babylon many centuries before Nebuchadnezzar, which had wielded control over a very large area. And then that had been overcome by the Assyrians, who followed the Babylonian culture very closely; so closely that we can think of them as one civilization, the Assyrians and the Babylonians. And for some centuries, Babylon was subject to Assyria with its capital first at Ashur, then at Nineveh. During those centuries, Babylon was constantly trying to gain its independence. But there was a close similarity of culture, of type of people, and of language between the two. Eventually, the Babylonians gained their independence; as I've mentioned here, they overthrew the Assyrian army by the forces of Nebuchadnezzar and the Medes. Now, whether I should have said "of Nebuchadnezzar," I'm not quite sure there because it was 604 BC, that Nebuchadnezzar was a great force. In 614, the other date that's given here in which Ashur fell it is probably his father who led Babylonia. His father had been governor of Babylon when Babylonia was under the Assyrians, but he had revolted. And then a group of peoples to the east of them, who are called the Medes, had a rather loose confederacy. These different tribes joined together with the father of Nebuchadnezzar and in 614, they destroyed the old capital of Assyria at Ashur. Two years later they were able to conquer

Nineveh, which had been the capital for about a century, they destroyed it in 612 BC. They destroyed it so completely that until 150 years ago, no one even knew where Nineveh had been, one of the greatest cities of ancient times. But a large group of the Assyrians fought on after that and it wasn't until 604 BC, when Nabopolassar's son, Nebuchadnezzar, was leading the army. In fact, it was a year after Nabopolassar died that Nebuchadnezzar and the Medes together put a complete end to the Assyrian domination. And some of the Assyrian territory was taken over by the Medes, but the greater part of the territory was taken over by Nebuchadnezzar.

Nebuchadnezzar reigned from 605 to 562 BC. He was unquestionably one of the great fighters of ancient times, one of the great rulers. He deserved all the praise that he was given. "You Nebuchadnezzar are this head of gold." Then it says in verse 39, "After these shall rise another kingdom and another third kingdom of bronze, which shall bear rule over all the earth, and the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron." Well, when Nebuchadnezzar died in 562, he was succeeded by his son Amel-Marduk, who reigned for two years, but who proved not be a very satisfactory ruler, so he was assassinated and a general who had married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, Nergal-sharezer, succeeded him. His name is sometimes shortened into Neriglissar, and he ruled four years and then was succeeded by his son who was very unsatisfactory and was soon removed. And then a man named Nabonidus became king.

Now does this mean that the breast and arms represent Amel-Marduk who reigned two years and the belly and thighs represent Nergal-sharezer? Certainly neither Amel-Marduk nor Nabonidus would be worthy to be represented as a great force as iron. So we must say that when it says, "You are the head, Nebuchadnezzar, you are the head of gold and after you will arise another kingdom," that this is either jumping ahead,--there is a gap there between Nebuchadnezzar's death and the coming of this other kingdom some years later around 539, about 23 years later--or else that when it says, "You are this head of gold," it represents not simply Nebuchadnezzar, but the empire over which he is the temporary head. And so, as between those two, I'm inclined to think that the second is

the more likely interpretation: that this does not represent Nebuchadnezzar alone but represents the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

But then again we raise a new question. The Neo-Babylonian Empire altogether only lasted from 605 to 539 BC. The Persian Empire lasted two centuries, the Hellenistic Empire lasted about two centuries; and the Roman Empire lasted for somewhere between four and six centuries. When you say, “You are this head of gold,” does it mean just the Neo-Babylonian kingdom, or is it the entire period, perhaps, of Assyrian-Babylonian power, a period of about a thousand years in which great power was wielded by the Babylonians, the Assyrians, and again by the Babylonians? They were a closely related people using the same the language, the same type of writing, a closely related culture. Now those are three possibilities, you see. And at this point, we cannot speak dogmatically on that. Personally, I’m inclined very much to the third one, which is the entire Babylonian, and Assyrian era.

Now, this word “kingdom” is a word that isn’t used much today. Sixty years ago, we would speak of the Kingdom of Spain, the Kingdom of Portugal, the Kingdom of Greece, the Kingdom of Italy. We had many kingdoms in the world. Today, the word kingdom is little used. By the word “kingdom,” are we referring specifically to the rule of one man, or do we simply mean a nation, a national power, a strong power? Well, the word “kingdom” is used in this particular chapter in a way that seems to me is not what we meant by kingdom even one hundred years ago, but what it means is more like what we mean by “empire.” And this word “empire” never occurs in the Bible, but I think that it comes closer to representing what is meant by the word “kingdom” used in the Bible. This word “empire” originally just meant a military commander. The Roman troops after a great battle would sometimes hail their commander as *empiratu*, “the commander” par excellence, the man who gave the commands. From this word “*empirator*” we derive our word “emperor.” And so it developed from the great power of the Roman rulers and it has been carried on since that time. Usually it means someone who ruled much more than one nation. Thus the king of Germany, during the Middle Ages, if he had sufficient power, would go to Rome and be crowned emperor by the Pope and then he would call



himself "Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire," which was supposed to embrace Germany and Italy and all the regions in between. And if he was a very powerful man, he could march south several times and keep Italy under his control. It was a difficult thing to do, and most "emperors" didn't succeed very well in the task. But the word "emperor" was considered a higher title than a king. So in modern times, I believe the word "empire," like the word "kingdom," refers not so much to a particular ruler as to a power. And when we think of an empire, we are apt to mean that more than one nation is involved; that one nation exercises control over another nation, or that one man exercises control over several nations. And I think most interpreters would feel convinced that that is what is meant by the various kingdoms here: in that it is not kingdom in the sense that we speak of the Kingdom of Portugal, the Kingdom of Spain, the Kingdom of Greece, and the Kingdom of Italy, but that it means an "empire." It means a power like Nebuchadnezzar had, where a group of different nations were all under his control and direction, and that the definition could be extended to include "empire" even if the rule was not a one man rule, even if you had a senate or a group of leaders that controlled rather than the individual.

Now a third question here is, "Is there a progression in the metals?" Verse 39 says, "After you shall rise another kingdom inferior to you, and another third kingdom of bronze which shall bear rule over the all the earth, and the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron." Well this certainly gives the suggestion the fourth kingdom is going to be the strongest of all. And so you think, if there's going to be a progression, it will be a progression in strength rather than weakness. And that would fit with the history because Nebuchadnezzar ruled over an area, you can see on this map here, which would extend to about here. He conquered Jerusalem about halfway through the millennium. Once he made a passage down into Egypt, but he held Palestine and Syria. He held Mesopotamia. The Medes were not under his control over there, nor the Persians just south of the Medes in what is today called Iran to the east of Iraq. He didn't control Asia Minor. There's much area there that he did not control.

The Persians that followed him first got control over all the Medes. And then they conquered Asia Minor. Then Cyrus, leading the Persians, came back and he conquered Babylon. Took over the empire that Nebuchadnezzar had. His armies went clear to India and conquered a part of India. And so the empire that followed was three times as large in area as Nebuchadnezzar's and at least twice as large in population. And then when Alexander the Great came from Greece—this area here had not been under the Persians at all—they conquered the whole Persian empire, so their area was much larger. But the area that the Romans had, added still more territory. So that if you speak of area, these empires increase in size, rather than diminish in size.

Now, I should speak of populations. They increase in size instead of diminishing in size. Some have said there is a decrease. But where there's no decrease in area, there's no decrease in population. Some claim the decrease must be because Nebuchadnezzar was an absolute despot and then next one gets weaker and the next gets weaker yet and the next gets weaker still. That idea has been advanced in recent years, but there's no basis for that because Nebuchadnezzar was not an absolute despot, even if it sounds so in the account of his relation with Daniel in this chapter.

Nebuchadnezzar was very much bound by the laws Babylon. In fact, there has been found in Babylon a great monument put up in the central square of Babylon that was put up by King Hammurabi more than a thousand years before Nebuchadnezzar. The monument shows a picture of the sun god giving Hammurabi the laws at the top and then tells people how the sun god gave him these laws and ordered him to put them up in the main square so that any citizen could come and read and know exactly what his rights were. Now today, if you want to know what your rights are, you pay a hundred dollars to a lawyer to try to find out. And another lawyer may differ from the first. But in Babylon, the people had definite rights, not nearly as many rights as individuals in this country, but they had definite rights. The power of the king, while very great, was not absolute. And in the various kingdoms, there was sometimes more autocracy, sometimes less.

You cannot show a progression in that regard. And so I was puzzled by this statement "After you another kingdom shall rise inferior to you." And so I asked the

question, "Is this inferior a correct translation?" And I looked at the Aramaic and I found that the Aramaic is the word *erkah*, which corresponds to the Hebrew word *eretz*, which means "earth." And it has an ending which means "toward." The word occurs, I believe, only in this place in the Aramaic of the Bible. Literally, it means "toward the earth." I had been told this thirty years ago by the man who was the professor of Aramaic at the University of Chicago. He was making up a complete list of all the words in all the Aramaic inscriptions that have been found, and in all the Aramaic literature that has been preserved. And so I wrote to that professor of Aramaic and I asked him, "Could you tell me, from this list, whether there is any other case you can call my attention to where this word means 'inferior?'" And he said, "I know of no case where, in the context, the word means 'inferior.'" He said, "As far as the list of all the Aramaic words is concerned, I know of no such thing here." So it may be that the former professor took this knowledge with him when he retired. I don't know. But however he said it, it is perfectly obvious here in Daniel that it means "inferior." Now I don't think you can decide what the Lord means even if the meaning of this word is perfectly obvious. The word means "toward the earth," but the Persian kingdom was not inferior to the Babylonian kingdom. It was superior to it in very many regards. And if this simply means "toward the earth," I think he is simply speaking of the place on the statue. "You are the head of gold and after you there will be another kingdom, 'which is lower down on the statue.'" And then he says, "There will be after it another kingdom of bronze." Now the third kingdom wasn't specifically bronze. In fact, they were using mostly iron in weapons by that time. But it means that it is represented by bronze on the statue. And so to take it as meaning that there is a progression that they are getting weaker or inferior, is reading into the Scripture on the basis of a translation of one word, and that translation that is not warranted. It is "lower down" on the statue. There are four kingdoms which actually increase in strength and in size, rather than decrease.

Now number 4: "The second, third, and fourth kingdoms." I have already mentioned, in fact, what they would seem to be. In the sheet that I gave out, it explains Cyrus, the Persian, conquered the Medes. When he became king over a group of Persians,

they were subject, to some extent, to the loose confederation of the Medes. In fact, he married the daughter of the king of the Medes. But eventually he declares his independence of them, and then he fought them and overcame them and put them under his control and led them to conquer other nations around. And they came to the west, north of Babylon, and then they went up and conquered the whole of Asia Minor. And after they had conquered all that territory, a territory much larger than the area that Nebuchadnezzar had, then he turned southward and went against Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom and in 539, 23 years after Nebuchadnezzar's death, Cyrus the Persian conquered Babylon. And so we have this second kingdom of Cyrus the Persian. I've mentioned certain dates under him: 559 B.C., he became king; 546, he conquered Asia Minor; 539, he conquered Babylon; and 529, he died. There's quite a bit on this chart that relates to later chapters, not just to this chapter. But after him came the Hellenistic, or Greek, Empire and then the Roman Republic and Empire.

I want to mention the critical theory at this point. We have referred to it before. We are not in this course trying to prove the authenticity of Daniel. We accept it as part of the Bible, as part of that upon which the Lord Jesus Christ set his seal as being authentic and genuine. But as I mentioned last time, Porphyry, in the third century AD, advanced the theory that the book of Daniel was not written in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, but written in the time of the Hellenistic Empire, at a time of great crisis for the Jews. We'll look at this later as it connects to later chapters. But at that time somebody wrote Daniel and described past history as if it were a prediction. But now you notice the difficulty in meaning that critics have there, that the Hellenistic Empire is the third of these empires. And so the critics all say that the man who wrote the book of Daniel thought that there was first the Babylonian Empire, then the Median Empire, then the Persian Empire, and now the Greek Empire in his own day. And actually, as we mentioned, Cyrus had the Medes entirely under his control and they formed part of his army before he destroyed the Babylonian Empire. So the critics say that the writer was mistaken in his idea of the history, but on most things, he's so accurate that it must be that it was written later rather than earlier. Incidentally, remember the phrase that occurs

in the book of Esther and also here, "the laws of the Medes and the Persians," which combines the two as one power. In Daniel 5, where it tells of the destruction, of the conquest of Babylon, it says that "your kingdom is given to the Medes and Persians." So to say that Daniel believed in a separate Median Empire is simply contrary to the facts. To the critics there were the Medians, a kingdom of the Medes, and then the Persians, and then the Greeks. But the Medes and the Persians are historically one empire.

Now outline letter E: "The fifth part of the statue." Under number 1 I raise the question, "Are there four kingdoms or five?" I don't think we could tell from the book of Daniel. He says the fourth kingdom will be strong as iron and verse 41, "Whereas you saw the feet and toes, part of potter's clay and part of iron, the kingdom shall divided." What does he mean by that? The next kingdom or the same kingdom? I don't think you could prove one or the other from this chapter, but I think you'll find conclusive evidence about it when we get on a little further in the book of Daniel.

But now let's look at number 2: "The symbolic meaning of potter's clay, which of course means 'weak' or 'brittle.' When we think of clay, we think of something like mud. The statue just couldn't stand up if it just had some mud in the feet. It is quite obvious that what he means is potter's clay. In other words, it is clay which is dried in the sun or else baked in a furnace and therefore becomes what we know to be called "china" or "pottery." It is something that can stand up by itself and you could put a fair amount of weight on it, but nothing like the weight you could put on iron. And so it means that the feet have clay interspersed between them. They have this material which is brittle, which is easily broken, which is not strong like the iron in the fifth part.

Now number 3: "Does the statement in verse 43 simply mean an un-integrated mixture of people? What is the character of this last part?" The kingdom shall be divided. "There shall be in it the strength of the iron for as much as you saw the iron mixed with miry clay. And the toes and the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men, but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." Does that simply mean an un-

integrated mixture of people, something like the present nation of Israel is where you have a large part of the area with mostly Jews speaking Hebrew, and then you have another large section under their control of people who are mostly Arab with a very different culture? Is that the sort of picture that is described here? Is it like Switzerland today, where you have about 60% speaking German and maybe 25% speaking French. One day I walked from the German section just five miles across through the woods to the French section, and I couldn't find a person in the town that could even talk German. So distinct is the line, and yet they are one nation. Does this mean simply an un-integrated mixture of peoples or does it mean something more than that? If that's all it means an unintegrated mixture it would fit the whole history of each of these empires. The Babylonians had various peoples mixed together. They transported people away from their homes to another section of the land and carried some of the people from that to another section. So they had these people mixed together and all having to look to the Babylonian king for protection from other groups. Does it simply mean an un-integrated mixture of peoples? If so, it could fit the Babylonian Empire. It could fit the Persian Empire, which had so many different peoples in it that when Xerxes led a tremendous army to conquer Greece, they had maybe forty different languages spoken by the soldiers, and it was very difficult to communicate or to organize them together into much smaller groups. With extra good weather and very unusual circumstances, the Greeks were able to prevent them from conquering them. So this could fit the Persian Empire. Certainly the Hellenistic Empire had many different groups in it, not very well assimilated together. And certainly the Roman Empire did as well.

So the possibility remains that verse 43 describes something that is not obvious. We first see this later on, but at the present, I simply give it as a problem. Exactly what does verse 43, mean?

Now we have noticed that in this chapter that: we have a symbol given, we have the statue, then we have the three dynamic occurrences. The stone breaks away from the mountain without human hands, the stone hits the statue, utterly destroys it, and the stone grows until becomes a whole nation. Now all of that is symbolic. It is strictly figurative.

But then when you get the interpretation, the interpretation is nearly all literal, plain language. “You are the head of gold.” In other words, it stands for you. After you will come another kingdom, farther down on the statue, a kingdom which will rule the whole earth. And then the third kingdom, and then a fourth kingdom.

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