

# 12 Foundation Stones—Class 7A

## Daniel Two

### —A Picture of Past and Future

## Bible Prophecy, Part 1

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### Bible Study on Daniel 2

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Part of this is fulfilled; part is yet to happen. Knowing that parts of the prophecies in this chapter have been fulfilled increases our faith and expectation that just as surely, the rest will come to pass! Let's see what is yet to happen!

#### ➤ **The prophet Daniel**

Daniel was born sometime around 620 B.C., and he was therefore already a teenager when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem for the first time in early 605 B.C. Daniel, along with other Jews of royal blood, was taken captive and brought to Babylon.

*Daniel 1:1–3, 6—In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. (2) And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god. (3) Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles. (6) Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. [The names of Daniel's companions were later changed to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.]*

There he spent three years studying "the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans."—Daniel 1:4. He and his three friends were made wise men and counselors of the king.

*Daniel 1:19–20—Then the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king. (20) And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm.*

Daniel lived at least 72 years in Babylon and his life there extended from the first year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar through the reigns of the succeeding five Babylonian kings, past the Fall of Babylon into the Persian Empire, through the governorship of Darius the Mede and the first three years of Cyrus the Persian.

*Daniel 10:1—In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision.*

#### ➤ **Daniel chapter 2**

Daniel Chapter 2 is the briefest and most concise overall picture of the history and future of the world in the entire Bible. The prophetic dream in this chapter describes five of the seven great empires of man from ancient Babylon to the final World Empire of the Antichrist, which is destroyed by the Kingdom of God. This dream was originally given to Nebuchadnezzar and was interpreted for him by Daniel during his reign.

*Daniel 2:1—Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him.*

The second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign was approximately 603 B.C.

#### ➤ **The Dream**

*Daniel 2:2–5—Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. (3) And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream." (4) Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation." (5) The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap."*

The king knew that it was a very important dream.

*Daniel 2:6–13—“However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation.” (7) They answered again and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation.” (8) The king answered and said, “I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: (9) if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation.” (10) The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, “There is not a man on earth who can tell the king’s matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. (11) It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.” (12) For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave a command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. (13) So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.*

God’s prophet Daniel was a captive in Babylon at the time this decree was made and was serving with some fellow Jews as one of the king’s wise men.

*Daniel 2:14–15—Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon; (15) he answered and said to Arioch the king’s captain, “Why is the decree from the king so urgent?” Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel.*

*Daniel 2:16–18—Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation. (17) Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: (18) That they would desire mercies of the God of Heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.*

Imagine how Daniel must have prayed and cried out desperately to God! He didn’t know what to do; he didn’t know the answer! How in the world could he possibly tell the king his dream, how could he interpret it, when he didn’t even know the dream?—He prayed!

*Daniel 2:19—Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of Heaven.*

*Daniel 2:20–23—Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. (21) And He changes the times and the seasons; he removes kings and raises up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. (22) He reveals deep and secret things; he knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him. (23) I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of You, for You have made known to us the king’s demand.”*

*Daniel 2:24–28—Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: “Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation.” (25) Then Arioch brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, “I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation.” (26) The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?” (27) 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. (28) 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.”*

God alone is the One Who could reveal the king’s dream and its interpretation to His prophet.

Daniel was faithful to give God all the credit and all the glory!

*Daniel 2:29–30—As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. (30) But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.*

## ➤ **The Image**

① Use the (ideally enlarged) Teacher’s Aid “Image of Daniel 2” (found in the Study Notes book) to help explain the following.

*Daniel 2:31—You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome.*

Here now begins the description of one of the most amazingly prophetic dreams ever given to man! In this astonishing vision, each of the different parts of this “great and awesome” image symbolizes a different empire.

*Daniel 2:32–33—This image’s head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, (33) its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.*

Looking closer, we see that each major section of this image’s body is made of a different metal:

“Head of gold”—we’ll look at the interpretation in verse 38.

“Chest and arms of silver”—we’ll find the interpretation in verse 39.

“Belly and thighs of bronze”—interpretation comes in verse 39. [Bronze is translated as “brass” in the King James Version.]

“Legs of iron”— interpretation in verse 40.

"Feet part of iron and part of clay"—interpretation in verses 41–43.

*Daniel 2:34—You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.*

"The Stone"—interpretation in verse 44.

This stone was not part of the image but was "cut out of a mountain." We'll look at this more in verses 44 and 45. This great stone struck the image upon its feet. The reason it struck the image on the feet and not on the head, was because God wanted to show at what point in history the kingdoms of man would be destroyed!—In the days of the feet.

*Daniel 2:35—Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the 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.*

In the days of these ten toes, the stone will strike the image and the image will be turned to powder, "like chaff." That will be the world's last big dust storm, when God crushes the image and blows it all away! (See interpretation in verses 44 and 45.)

## ➤ **The head of gold = Babylon**

*Daniel 2:36–38—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.*

According to God's Word, the great kingdom of Babylon, the "golden city" of ancient times, with its great King Nebuchadnezzar, was the head of gold. He was the first part of the image. Babylon was also represented in other verses by gold:

*Isaiah 14:4—That you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: "How the oppressor has ceased, the golden city ceased!"*

Nebuchadnezzar later proclaimed God as the most high God above all other Gods, and he commanded all of his people to reverence the Lord.

*Daniel 2:47—The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret."*

*Daniel 3:29—Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this.*

*Daniel 4:37a—Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of Heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice.*

## ➤ **The chest and arms of silver = Medo-Persia**

*Daniel 2:39a—But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours ...*

*Daniel 2:32—... its chest and arms of silver ...*

Since the head is definitely pinpointed as Babylon, all we have to do in order to find out what this next kingdom was is to look at history to see which kingdom arose after Babylon. According to world history, the kingdom of Medo-Persia followed Babylon, conquering it in 538 B.C.

It is even specifically named later on in Daniel 5:30–31, as being the kingdom that conquered Babylon.

*Daniel 5:30–31—That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain. (31) And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.*

Also, the prophet Jeremiah, about 55 years earlier in 593 B.C., had prophesied that the Medes would conquer Babylon.

*Jeremiah 51:11, 28—Make the arrows bright! Gather the shields! The Lord has raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes. For His plan is against Babylon to destroy it, because it is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance for His temple. (28) Prepare against her the nations, with the kings of the Medes, its governors and all its rulers, all the land of his dominion.*

The kingdom of Persia is depicted here by two arms. The Medes were the first nation to be incorporated into the Persian Empire. Previous to Cyrus, the Medes had dominated the Persians, but Cyrus beat the Median king at the Battle of Persepolis. Afterwards, many Medes held important places in the Persian Empire.

### **Historical Notes**

(Based on information from the Microsoft Encarta encyclopedia.)

Media, an ancient country of Asia, corresponds to the northeastern section of present-day Iran. The inhabitants, who were known as Medes, and their neighbors, the Persians, spoke Indo-Iranian languages that were closely related to Old Persian.

Beginning about 835 B.C. the Median tribes became subject intermittently to the kings of Assyria.

In 625 Median king Cyaxares (625–585 B.C.) drove the Scythians out of Media and imposed his

rule over the Persians. He attacked the Assyrians next and captured (614 B.C.) the city of Ashur. In 612, in alliance with the newly independent kingdom of Babylonia, he captured the city of Nineveh and overthrew the Assyrian Empire. He chose as his capital the city of Ecbatana (present-day Hamadan, Iran).

In about 550 B.C., the Persians, under Cyrus the Great, revolted against a later Median king Astyages (r. about 584-c. 550 B.C.). Joined by a portion of the Median army under a chief named Harpagus, they took Ecbatana and deposed the Median king. From that time Media was politically subservient to Persia; the Persians, however, regarded the Medes as equals, and thenceforth the two peoples were considered as one.

### **More on Medo-Persia**

Medo-Persia is specifically named in a later chapter, the "Mene Mene" handwriting on the wall vision of Daniel 5:18–31, as being the kingdom that conquered Babylon.—See Daniel 5:18–31.

Notice also the remarkable symbolism in the image: The dual kingdom of Medo-Persia is depicted here by two arms. Persia was the stronger of the two, just as in the body one arm is usually stronger than the other!

## ➤ **The belly of bronze = Greece**

*Daniel 2:39b—... another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.*

We know from history that this third kingdom of bronze, the one to follow Persia, was the Grecian Empire.

In a later chapter Daniel specifically prophesies that Greece will be the conqueror of Medo-Persia. In this passage in Daniel chapter 8, nations are symbolized as animals. Greece is pictured as a "male goat." The "horn" is its prominent leader.

*Daniel 8:21–22—And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king. (22) As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.*

This was fulfilled in 333 B.C., 219 years after the prophecy was given, when Alexander the Great led the Greek army in conquering the Persian Empire. Following the death of Alexander, the Greek Empire was divided between its four principal generals—"four kingdoms shall arise."

### **Historical notes**

Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.), king of Macedonia, is known as the conqueror of the Persian Empire. He began his war against Persia in the spring of 334 B.C.. During the next ten years, his conquests extended Greek influence as well as the Greek civilization and language throughout a Macedonian empire that ranged as far east as northern India and as far south and west as Egypt.

Alexander's army defeated the Persians under the leadership of King Darius in the Battle of Gaugamela on October 1, 331 B.C. Darius fled and was later slain by two of his own generals. Babylon surrendered after Gaugamela.

Alexander arrived in Babylon in the spring of 323 B.C. In June he contracted a fever and died. Following the death of Alexander, the Macedonian generals began to partition his vast empire among themselves. The disagreements arising from this division resulted in a series of wars from 322 to 275 B.C., many of which took place in Greece.

The symbolism of the Greek Empire as a belly was appropriate for a few reasons. The Greeks were known for being uninhibited about sex, and made nude statues of the human body that left the sexual organs uncovered.—It was therefore fitting that they were also symbolized by the thighs and sexual parts in the image.

The Greeks were also interested in philosophy, religion, and spiritual things.

### **The seat of the spirit.**

It is held by many religions that the seat of the spirit is in the belly. As Jesus Himself said, John 7:38–39—"Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit.

The word "heart" in this verse is from the Greek koilia which means a cavity, especially the abdomen. It stands metaphorically for the innermost part of man, the soul, the heart. Thus the term "heart" used in this translation is figurative. In the King James Version it is translated as "belly."

## ➤ **The legs of iron = Rome**

*Daniel 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.*

Since we already have the fulfillment of actual history, we know that this fourth kingdom was Rome. Rome was the tough, iron-fisted kingdom, which clamped down with iron military rule over the entire known (Western) world in the days before Christ.

Rome is symbolized here by two legs of iron: Was Rome ever divided into two parts? Yes! It was often administered governmentally as two different halves, the Western and Eastern regions, and in its decline it was completely divided into an Eastern and Western Empire. The Western Empire had its capital at Rome, and the Eastern Empire, later called the Byzantine Empire, had its capital at Constantinople.

Italy, which was the heart of the Roman Empire, is even shaped like a leg!

Rome was the strongest of all these kingdoms. That's why it is symbolized here by iron. And why was Rome not only the strongest, like iron, but also like a pair of legs? Because they were great on marching! They were the first World Empire to build a network of paved roads. They built stone highways everywhere and the main purpose of their paved roads was so their Roman legions could march rapidly to quell any revolt that would break out.

What's the longest part of the image?—The legs! And of all those empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome—which of those empires ruled the longest?—Rome! In fact Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, was only finally conquered by the Ottoman Turks in 1453 A.D., about 1700 years after Rome had conquered Greece.

### ➤ **The feet and toes = strong and weak governments of the Endtime**

*Daniel 2:41—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.*

The iron which continues from the legs down into the feet and toes of the image is sort of a continuation of the Roman Empire. After its fall, Rome was broken up into the "iron" and "clay" countries of the feet and toes. These represent the basic types of governments the world has known since the fall of Rome: Strong and weak governments; dictatorships and democracies.

"The kingdom shall be divided." Since the fall of Rome there has been division amongst the nations, with no one power completely dominant, though some—like Napoleon and Hitler—have tried. At times, equally powerful "empires" have existed simultaneously, such as the British, French, Spanish, etc., but no one nation has ruled over all of the world's people since the Romans.

*Daniel 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.*

"The kingdom shall be partly strong"—iron—"and partly fragile"—clay.

*Daniel 2:43—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.*

They "will not adhere one to another." This is seen in the political alliances of the nations in today's world.

However, the soon-to-arise empire of the Devil-possessed dictator known as the Antichrist (which we will cover in detail in a later class), will for a very brief period, unite all of these iron and clay nations, ruling the world in some kind of One World Order. Many Bible teachers have said that "the Kingdom," the Antichrist World Empire, will be a revival of the old Roman Empire. The nations represented by the 10 toes will be united under the Antichrist, and although the kingdom will be a mixture of iron and clay, he is going to unite them all with his iron hand.

### ➤ **The Rock = Jesus/The Mountain = The Kingdom of God**

The stone was cut out of a mountain completely separate from the image. Other passages also refer to Jesus as a stone.

*Matthew 21:42–44—Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" (43) Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. (44) And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."*

*1 Peter 2:6—Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."*

"The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner"—of this new Kingdom of God!

*Daniel 2:44—And in the days of these 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.*

The stone that "struck the image" (Daniel 2:34) is Jesus, and this "great mountain" that "filled the whole earth" (Daniel 2:35) is none other than the Millennial Kingdom of God, Christ's Kingdom on Earth!

*Micah 4:1–3—Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. (2) Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; he will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (3) He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*

Christ will set up His Kingdom on Earth, in the Millennium at the end of the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:11–21).

*Revelation 19:11, 19–21—Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. (19) And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. (20) Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. (21) And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.*

This stone smashes the image by force and destroys it and leaves nothing of it! It says the wind carried away the image (man's governments) "as chaff."

*Isaiah 17:13—The nations will rush like the rushing of many waters; but God will rebuke them and they will flee far away, and be chased like the chaff of the mountains before the wind, like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.*

Notice the return of Jesus was not in the legs (Rome), but on the feet, "in the days of these kings" at the very end of man's governments.

"These kings": Other passages mention there being 10 kingdoms (nations) that align themselves with the Antichrist to form the core of his empire. We will look at that subject in later classes.

God's Kingdom will then "fill the whole earth."

## ➤ **World history in a nutshell**

*Daniel 2:45—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.*

This image represents a historical sequence of the great empires of man.

"The interpretation thereof is sure." We know exactly what's going to happen!

*Daniel 2:46–48—Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. (47) The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret." (48) Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon.*

God revealed to Daniel the dream Nebuchadnezzar had forgotten, and then gave Daniel the interpretation of the king's dream. Daniel advised the king wisely, so the king made him the highest ranking man in the kingdom, aside from himself.

## ➤ **Where are we now?**

We believe that today we are living in the time of the feet.

From the symbolism of the feet we know that the final Antichrist Empire will be a very strange type of government. It will be a mixture of these iron and clay nations, ruling the world in some kind of federation of nations. There are all kinds of theories about this, ranging from it being the United Nations to the European Union.

There are also many Bible passages that tell us what happens before, during, and after the time that the "stone hits the image" and Jesus sets up His Kingdom. We'll look at these in detail in our next class.