

THE GOLDEN-HEADED IMAGE, THE FOUR BEASTS AND THE END-TIMES IN DANIEL

CAN WE UNDERSTAND DANIEL?

DOES DANIEL CONTRADICT REVELATION?

- ❖ “Go, Daniel, because the words are made secret and **sealed up** until *the time of the end*” (Dan. 12:9)
- ❖ “**Do not seal up** the words of the prophecy of this scroll because *the appointed time is near*”
(Rev. 22:10).

It seems strange that the very opposite to that which is stated in Revelation is said concerning the last vision in the book of Daniel. This is because the words in Daniel *concerned his people* for whom the meaning of that prophecy was to remain hidden “**until the time of the end.**” Yet for anyone, from the first century on who accepted Jesus as the Messiah the book of **Daniel became an unsealed book.** This is seen by Jesus’ words:

- ❖ “When you see the Abomination of Desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (*let the reader **understand***)...” (Matt. 24:15).

So from Jesus’ time the book of Daniel could be understood by those who followed him. In fact, Matthew 24/Luke 21; 2 Thessalonians and a large part of the book of Revelation are significant expositions on Daniel thereby unsealing the book at that time. Because the book of Revelation draws upon some of the details in Daniel it thereby unseals those details as part of an already unsealed book for Christians. So for Jews who have not accepted Jesus both these books remain sealed until *the time of the end*” when the events described actually happen. Of course, many church systems have clouded the understanding with their allegorical and other faulty interpretive methods such as Preterism and Historicism.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Understanding the language structure is the key to understanding the book.

Chapter 1	Historical introduction-----	In Hebrew for Jews.
Chapter 2	Vision of Gentile domination-----	In Aramaic for Gentiles.
Chapters 3-6	Historical kingdoms of the past-----	In Aramaic for Gentiles.
Chapters 7:1-17	as above.	
Chapter 7:18-28.	The holy ones in conflict with antichrist-----	In Aramaic.
Chapters 8 - 12	Prophecies for Israel-----	In Hebrew for Jews.

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NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S GOLDEN-HEADED IMAGE

DANIEL 2:37-44:

- ❖ “You, O king [*Nebuchadnezzar*] ... —you are the head of gold. ³⁸ Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. ³⁹ And there shall be **a fourth kingdom**, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And *like iron* that crushes, it shall break and *crush all these*. ⁴⁰ And as you saw **the feet and toes**, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, it shall be **a divided kingdom**, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. ⁴¹ And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. ⁴² As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will

not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. “And **in the days of those kings** the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people.”

The *image* in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream shows empire from a worldly human perspective as strong and grand.

FOUR KINGDOMS AND ONE IS STRENGTHENED

1. Head of **gold** = Nebuchadnezzar as the head of the Babylonian kingdom. Daniel gives this interpretation in 2:38.
2. Chest and arms of **silver** = Darius and Cyrus heading the Medo-Persian kingdom. Daniel gives this interpretation in 8:20 and 11:1, 2.
3. Middle and thighs of **bronze** = Alexander as the “large horn” - first king of the Greek Empire which splits into two as the Seleucid and Ptolemaic extensions of the empire i.e. the two thighs. Daniel gives this interpretation in 8:21, 22 and 11:3, 4. The statement that this kingdom will “rule over all the earth” simply refers to the people in its full territory and not the entire planet, but with the potential to encompass the entire planet.
4. Lower legs of **iron** = The Islamic Empire of the future consisting of several kings of the North and the South. This interpretation can be gleaned from 11:6:20. This includes the Antichrist in his “little horn stage (7:8; 8:9 and 11:21-28).
 - Feet and toes partly **iron/clay** = The extension to the fourth empire with the last King of the North — Antichrist in his final powerful stage with control over the 10 kings. This interpretation can be gleaned from 11:29-45. This extension to the fourth kingdom is indicated by the wording of verses **40, 41**:
 - ❖ “And there shall be a **fourth kingdom**, strong as iron...And **the feet and toes**, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, it shall be a **divided kingdom**” (*Dan. 2:40, 41*).

The feet and toes in being “partly of iron and partly of clay” i.e. “a divided kingdom” must be something additional to the fourth kingdom which is a kingdom entirely of iron. Nevertheless this phase is an extension of the ‘iron legs’ of the Islamic Empire of the future. The 10 toes parallel the 10 horns (Dan. 7:24) and represent the 10 final kings of antichrist’s empire (Rev. 17:12). This extension to the 4th kingdom being partly iron (possibly Sharia Law?) and partly clay (possibly democratic) makes it a divided kingdom and involves end-time Islamic powers. So moving from top to bottom the image demonstrates:

- A progressive division of sovereignty in multiplication of the significant body parts from one head to ten toes.
- A progressive deterioration in the character of the authority of the ruler i.e. moving from gold down to iron and clay.
- A progressive hardening of the metals and their strength.
- A single centre of gravity so that all four empires radiate from the same central city of Babylon.

NOTE: It may seem strange that the two legs representing the fourth kingdom comprise powers, namely, the king of the North and the King of the South which war against each other. However, they are viewed as **one empire in their opposition to Israel** and in the destruction they cause to her. In the end time both powers will join forces on Israel’s land and cause significant damage:

- ❖ “*In that day* the LORD will whistle for flies from the **Nile delta in Egypt** and for bees from the **land of Assyria**. They will all come and settle in the steep ravines and in the crevices in the rocks, on all the thornbushes and at all the water holes. In that day the Lord will use a razor hired from beyond the Euphrates River—the king of Assyria—to shave your head and private parts, and to cut off your beard also. In that day, a person will keep alive a young cow and two goats. And because of the abundance of the milk they give, there will be curds to eat. All who remain in the land will eat curds and honey. In that day, in every place where there were a thousand vines worth a thousand silver shekels,^[g] there will be only briars and thorns. Hunters will go there with bow and arrow, for the land will be covered with briars and thorns. As for all the hills once cultivated by the hoe, you will no longer go there for fear of the briars and thorns; they will become places where cattle are turned loose and where sheep run” (Isa. 7:18-25).

WHY ROME IS NOT THE FOURTH KINGDOM

A KINGDOM CONTROLLING THE CITY OF BABYLON

1. **Nebuchadnezzar** made Babylon the centre of the first kingdom of prophecy.
2. **Cyrus** made Babylon the centre of the second kingdom of prophecy.
3. **Alexander** made Babylon the centre of the third kingdom of prophecy.
4. The future Islamic Empire comprising the **Kings of the North and South** will therefore, also have Babylon as their empire’s centre. This empire will occupy all of the territories of the previous three, with **Antichrist** eventually being the final **King of the North** and leading this final Babylonian Islamic kingdom.

The common factor for the first three kingdoms was having control over the city of Babylon. This therefore means that the traditional interpretation that the 4th kingdom is Rome is incorrect, because the Roman Empire never had any control over the City of Babylon. Furthermore, there are no notable prophecies concerning Rome in the Scriptures. It is only assumed from history that Rome was the 4th Kingdom even though it never crushed Babylon or Medo-Persia as the fourth kingdom is described as doing. Just as the histories of those first three Kingdoms prior to Nebuchadnezzar’s, Cyrus’ and Alexander’s rulerships from Babylon were of little concern in the Bible, so too is the early history of the fourth kingdom. This rules out all attempts to fit subsequent history into the legs of the image until the fourth kingdom - the Islamic Empire of the future appears on the scene. Therefore the 2 legs could not be the Eastern and Western divisions of the Roman Empire as in the standard interpretation. Otherwise the image would have to stand on one leg for the time represented after the end of the western empire in AD 476 until the fall of the Eastern Byzantine Roman Empire which fell to Muslim Turks in 1453. Furthermore, being made of iron indicates government by a religious, hard, inflexible and cold system of law such as exists with Islamic law. Nevertheless, the last kingdom before “the Kingdom of God” is that of Antichrist. Because Antichrist arises in the Middle-East could Antichrist be Muslim? The focus is on the feet/toes. The clay of the feet may represent the weakening effect of democracy in the Islamic world.

BABYLON’S DESTRUCTION STILL FUTURE

The Babylon of Biblical prophecy is not the ancient City that was rebuilt by Nebuchadnezzar:

- ❖ “And Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans’ pride, Will be **as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah**. It will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation; Nor will **the Arab** pitch his tent there,” (Isa. 13:19-20).

In contrast to this unfulfilled prophecy ancient Babylon declined over a very long period of time.

4. THE FUTURE TERRIFYING BEAST

This corresponds to the legs, feet and toes of the *image*. It is the coming final world empire in the hands of Antichrist and pictures the full development of human evil:

'Terrifying and strong' = ruthless terrorizing with ample resources.

'Large iron teeth' = tearing to pieces and annihilating, intolerant.

'Devouring the whole earth' = consumes everything in its path.

'Crushes and tramples down' = as in threshing.

'Claws of bronze' = as emphasizing its destructive power.

'10 Horns' = the 10 toes of the image = the 10 nations that ally themselves with the 4th Beast.

After the 4th beast is "*slain and its body destroyed*" the remaining beasts are given "*an extension of life for a...period*" (7:12). This cannot, therefore, refer to the *ancient* empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece or Rome, but refers to modern-day kingdoms swallowed up by the various kings of the North and South.

This vision reveals the inner, essentially beastlike character of final human rule from God's viewpoint. Rather than being a mere repetition of the empires of the Daniel 2 image, these beasts show the political movements of the end-times kingdoms. The only parallel concerns the 4th beast and the fourth kingdom of the image and its feet and 10 toes, the 10 toes being the same as the 10 horns of the fourth Beast i.e. 10 particular nations that eventually come under the authority of Antichrist. So just as the 10 toes grow out of the feet of the image so the 10 horns come out of the fourth kingdom (verse 24) and correspond to the 10 toes.

WHY THE FIRST THREE BEASTS DO NOT PARALLEL THE KINGDOMS OF THE IMAGE

- Because the beasts all come out of the Mediterranean (*The Great Sea*) successively but at one tempestuous time (7:2) and exist contemporaneously unlike *the image* which maintains its downward continuity and whose ancient kingdoms did not all arise in a tempestuous time.
- These 3 beasts cannot include Babylon or Medo-Persia which are not adjacent to the Mediterranean. The emergence of these beasts from the Mediterranean is likely a picture of 'peoples' (the sea) of countries in that general area. Foremost in biblical identifications would be Lebanon, Turkey (Ezek. 38, 39), Egypt and Libya. The turbulence may well be of a political or military nature.
- If two of the beasts were the same as the image there would be the problem of mixed images with ancient Medo-Persia as being both a ram and a bear, and ancient Greece as being both a he-goat and a leopard.
- Additionally, *the image* is destroyed in one go, but after the destruction of the fourth beast "the 3 remaining beasts are granted an extension of life" (7:12).
- In contrast with the original kingdoms of the image, this vision is totally in the future because verse 17 says: "**4 kings will arise.**" However:
 1. Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon existed at the time of the vision and was close to its demise.
 2. The bear does not have to be a dual power (Medo-Persia) because in the phrase "raised up on one side", '*on one side*' is not in the Hebrew text. It could be "raised up one dominion."
 3. The leopard cannot be the Greece of Alexander's time because it arrives complete with its four heads, whereas the four generals only came to power after Alexander's death.

THE FOURTH - THE TERRIFYING BEAST

- ❖ “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, **a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong**. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was *different from all the beasts that were before it*, and **it had ten horns**. It is dreadful and terrifying.”
 - It is extremely strong.
 - It has large iron teeth.
 - It devours and crushes and tramples the remainder.
 - It is different from all the beasts.
 - It devours the whole earth (verse 23).

WHY THE LOWER LEGS OF THE IMAGE ARE THE SAME KINGDOM AS THE 4TH BEAST

- ❖ “And there shall be **a fourth kingdom**, *strong as iron*, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And *like iron* that crushes, it shall break and *crush all these*. “And as you saw **the feet and toes**, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, it shall be **a divided kingdom**, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. “And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle”
(Dan. 2:40-42).

There appear to be enough similarities here with the description of the fourth beast such that the reference is to one and the same kingdom, namely, the Empire of the kings of the North and South. Whereas the extension to this fourth kingdom in Daniel 2 is that of the feet and 10 toes, the extension to the 4th beast kingdom is its 10 horns out of which an eleventh springs up.

SEVEN HEADS

Because the third - the leopard - beast has four heads, when added to the single heads of the other three beasts we have a total of 7 heads as with the composite beast in Revelation 13.

THE 10 HORNS

These 10 horns represent the same as do the 10 toes of the image, namely, 10 kings. These rule over the 10 last kingdoms which, in confederacy, represent the fourth beast and which come into existence before “the little horn” i.e. before the Antichrist appears. This is the final stage of worldly empire – a strengthened Islamic Empire under the control of the Antichrist:

- ❖ “And the **ten horns** that you saw are **ten kings** who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. ¹³These are of one mind, and *they hand over their power and authority to the beast* ... ¹⁴And **the ten horns** that you saw, they **and the beast** will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, ¹⁵for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled”
(Rev. 17:12, 13; 16, 17).

THE LITTLE HORN – THE 11TH = ANTICHRIST

- ❖ “I considered **the horns**, and behold, there came up among them **another horn, a little one**, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.” (Dan. 7:8).

These three horns are subjected to *little horn* but are still part of the 10 as seen in Revelation 17:16. This is part of the first seal of Revelation 6 which says that: “*he went out conquering and to conquer.*” As this ‘*little horn*’ comes up among the 10 this makes him an 11th horn.

DETAILS FROM REVELATION

- ❖ “And I saw **a beast rising out of the sea**, with *ten horns and seven heads*, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. ²And the beast that I saw was like a **leopard**; its feet were like a **bear’s**, and its mouth was like a **lion’s** mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. ³**One of its heads** seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marvelled as they followed the beast. ⁴And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?” ⁵And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise **authority for forty-two months**. ⁶It opened its mouth to utter *blasphemies* against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. ⁷Also it was allowed to make **war on the saints** and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, ⁸and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain” (*Rev. 13:1-7*).

This beast from the sea (Rev. 13) is a composite of Daniel’s 4th beast + characteristics of the 3 other beasts. This beast has 7 heads and 10 horns with 10 diadems on the horns. The heads are simply to associate him with the Empire corporate. The horns are diademed because at the end of the age it is not the 7 heads but the 10 kings that will rule. In this scene the Beast and the 10 kings are shown as already ruling. This picture derives from Daniel 7:2-7, where the four beasts, whose characteristics John combines, represent worldly empires. One of its seven heads is *as if* it had been slain, and his **fatal wound was healed** = The beast is now seen as an antichrist system with the slain head as antichrist himself. His wound should have been fatal but he survives it. During the early part of the second half of the 70th ‘seven’ the antichrist appears as slain. It is a mimicking of Christ’s death and resurrection, Satan being the one to make it appear that he has brought his son from the dead.

THE INVESTITURE OF THE SON OF MAN

- ❖ “As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat ... the **court sat in judgement**, and the books were opened. “I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. As for **the rest of the beasts**, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”
- ²⁶ But **the court shall sit in judgement**, and his [*the 11th king*] dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end. And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them”
- (*Dan. 7:9-14, 26, 27*).

This vision runs parallel to the vision in Revelation 4 and 5 where the Lamb is given the 7 sealed scroll. The vision in Daniel was not fulfilled when Jesus ascended to God’s right hand but rather is a future event. This is evident for the following reasons:

1. *The time of the visions does not harmonize with the 1st century ascension.*
 - The vision of Revelation 4 and 5 was given in c.96 A.D., long after Jesus had ascended.
 - The court sits in judgment when the antichrist—the 11th king—has his yet future dominion removed (Dan. 7:26).

- Psalm 110:1 places Jesus' rulership as beginning after an interval of his sitting at God's right hand so that he did not receive the kingdom at his ascension.
- Hebrews 10:13 quotes Psalm 110 to show Jesus "waiting" so that the rulership is to be granted long after the ascension.
- In both Daniel 7 and Revelation 5 Jesus is not on a throne but "came to the Ancient of Days" and was standing in front of "him who was seated on the throne." This moves us to a time when Jesus is no longer sitting at God's right hand.

2. *The throne to which Christ ascended in the 1st century is not the throne of these visions.*

When Jesus ascended he "passed through the heavens" (Heb. 4:14). "He also ascended far above all the heavens" (Eph. 4:10). God's throne is even above "the heaven of heavens" (1 Kings 8:27). So this is God's permanent, eternal throne. However, when Jesus is given a kingdom he has his own throne (Matt. 25:31; Luke 1:32; Rev. 3:21)—one that never previously existed.

3. *The present position and service of Christ is not that which is disclosed in the visions.*

- Jesus' present work in heaven is that of intercession as advocate and high priest (John 17:9; 1 John 2:1, 2; Heb. 4:14). He ministers to the needs of the seven churches and not to the world. His work includes judging those of "the household of God" (1 Pet. 4:16, 17).
- However, the moment Jesus is standing and takes the seven sealed scroll (Rev. 5:8) **a change occurs** so that the priestly service on behalf of "the holy ones"—the Christians—is now rendered by the 24 elders (vs. 9).
- However, once Jesus takes the scroll his attention is focussed on the world scene as portrayed in the scroll and leading to his pouring out of the wrath of God. So his role changes as he breaks each of the seals of the scroll. He now becomes the executioner of the judgments on mankind as stated in the scrolls so that he now has the dominion that is detailed in Daniel 7.

4. *The details of Daniel are distinctly against a 1st century fulfilment.*

Whatever view one takes of the timing for the arrival of the four beasts in Daniel 7 it is evident that the 10 horns on the fourth beast and "the little horn" did not arise before the ascension of Jesus. Yet in Daniel 7 these events do occur before the investiture of the Son of man.

THE INAUGURATION OF THE KINGDOM

7:18: The saints of the Highest One will receive the Kingdom—for all ages to come.

7:27: The dominion of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the saints.

THE RAM, THE GOAT AND THE LITTLE HORN

DANIEL 8:

THE 2,300 EVENINGS AND MORNINGS = 2,300 DAYS

DANIEL 8:9-14 NLT

- ❖ "Then from one of the prominent horns came a *small horn* whose power grew very great. It extended toward the south and the east and toward the glorious land of Israel. ¹⁰ Its power reached to the heavens, where it attacked the heavenly army, throwing some of the heavenly beings and

some of the stars to the ground and trampling them. ¹¹ It even challenged the Commander of heaven's army by **cancelling the daily sacrifices** offered to him and by destroying his Temple. ¹² The army of heaven was restrained from responding to this rebellion. So the daily sacrifice was halted, and truth was overthrown. The horn succeeded in everything it did. ¹³ Then I heard two holy ones talking to each other. One of them asked, "How long will the events of this vision last? **How long will the rebellion that causes desecration stop the daily sacrifices? How long will the Temple and heaven's army be trampled on?**" ¹⁴ The other replied, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the Temple will be made right again."

The New American Commentary on Daniel explains that:

Keil argues quite convincingly that the 2,300 evenings and mornings represent a total of 2,300 days, and many scholars follow this view. First, Keil points out that in the Hebrew text the phrase is literally "until evening morning, 2,300." He then demonstrates that in Old Testament usage an evening and a morning specified a day (e.g., Gen 1). Second he shows that when the Hebrews wished to make a distinction between the two parts of the day, the number of both was given, for example, "forty days and forty nights" (Gen 7:4,12) ... S.J.Schwantes presents additional problems with the 1,150-day view. (1) "Daily sacrifice" (*tamid*) does not appear in v.14 at all. It is found in 8:13 and is simply assumed to be the meaning of the "evenings and mornings" in this verse. (2) The term encompassed both sacrifices offered in the morning and evening (cf. Exod 29:38-42). The word *tamid*, therefore, represents one entity, not two. Thus "2,300 evenings and mornings" denotes 2,300 days with both a morning and an evening offering. (3) When the two daily sacrifices of the *tamid* are specified in the Old Testament is always morning and evening. Therefore Schwantes concludes with Keil that the expression reflects usage in Gen 1 and must represent 2,300 full days. p. 229.

This therefore is a period of 6 years and almost four months and begins at the same time as the 1290 days:

- ❖ "How long will it be until the end of these wonders?... **a time, times, and half a time**; as soon as they finish *shattering the power of the holy people*, all these events will be completed...my lord, what will be the outcome of these events?...these words are sealed up until the end-time...From the time that the **regular sacrifice is abolished** and the **Abomination of Desolation** is set up, there will be **1,290 days**" (Daniel 12:6-12).

CONCLUSION

1. To the extent that Christians today can understand the prophecies in the book of Revelation, they can also understand the prophecies in the book of Daniel.
2. Although it is commonly held that the four beasts parallel the four parts of the image, the details preclude this and present three end-time kingdoms as precursors to the final Antichrist's kingdom.
3. The commonly held view that the legs of the image represent Rome is inappropriate because Rome is never mentioned in Bible prophecy. The legs with the toes represent the final Antichrist Empire the centre of which will be a rebuilt city of Babylon.
4. The future final evil kingdom is depicted not only by the legs and toes of the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream (Chapter 2) but also by the fourth terrifying beast (chapter 7).
5. After the future investiture of Jesus as king of God's kingdom he will destroy the 4th beast—Antichrist's Kingdom, but the other three kingdoms continue their existence for a while.

6. The temple is brought into its rightful condition after 2,300 days which began when the 1,290 days began at the setting up of the Abomination of Desolation.

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