

# Future Empires Unveiled

**MEMORY VERSE: “And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding” (Daniel 2:21).**

“The strength of nations, as of individuals, is not found in the opportunities or facilities that appear to make them invincible; it is not found in their boasted greatness. It is measured by the fidelity with which they fulfill God’s purpose.”—Prophets and Kings, p. 502.

**Suggested Reading: Prophets and Kings, pp. 491-502. (At the bottom of this page)**

## 1. AN IMPRESSIVE DREAM

Sun, Apr 12

**a. What did king Nebuchadnezzar command after waking from a troubling dream? Daniel 2:1, 2.**

**Daniel 2:1, 2**

And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. 2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

**b. How did the king’s counsellors respond to his unusual request? Daniel 2:3-7.**

**Daniel 2:3-7**

And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. **4** Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation. **5** The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. **6** But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. **7** They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it.

“The king knew that if they could really tell the interpretation, they could tell the dream as well. The Lord had in His providence given Nebuchadnezzar this dream, and had caused the particulars to be forgotten, while the fearful impression was left upon his mind, in order to expose the pretensions of the wise men of Babylon.”—*The Sanctified Life*, p. 34.

**c. Despite their claims to connection with the spirit world and afterlife, what did these wise men of Babylon admit? Daniel 2:8-11.**

#### **Daniel 2:8-11**

The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. **9** But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof. **10** The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. **11** And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

“Filled with fear for the consequences of their failure, the magicians endeavored to show the king that his request was unreasonable and his test beyond that which had ever been required of any man.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 492.

**a. How did the king react to the wise men’s failure to reveal and interpret his dream, and how did Daniel become involved? Daniel 2:12-16.**

### Daniel 2:12-16

For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. **13** And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain. **14** ¶ Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king’s guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon: **15** He answered and said to Arioch the king’s captain, Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel. **16** Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation.

“Among those sought for by the officers who were preparing to fulfill the provisions of the royal decree, were Daniel and his friends. When told that according to the decree they also must die, ‘with counsel and wisdom’ Daniel inquired of Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard, ‘Why is the decree so hasty from the king?’ Arioch told him the story of the king’s perplexity over his remarkable dream, and of his failure to secure help from those in whom he had hitherto placed fullest confidence. Upon hearing this, Daniel, taking his life in his hands, ventured into the king’s presence and begged that time be granted, that he might petition his God to reveal to him the dream and its interpretation.

“To this request the monarch acceded. ‘Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions.’ Together they sought for wisdom from the Source of light and knowledge. Their faith was strong in the consciousness that God had placed them where they were, that they were doing His work and meeting the demands of duty.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 493.

**b. What can we learn from how Daniel and his companions prayed on this occasion? Daniel 2:17-23.**

### Daniel 2:17-23

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. **19** Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. **20** Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: **21** And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: **22** He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. **23** I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

“In times of perplexity and danger [Daniel and his compenions] had always turned to [God] for guidance and protection, and He had proved an ever-present help. Now with contrition of heart they submitted themselves anew to the Judge of the earth, pleading that He would grant them deliverance in this their time of special need. And they did not plead in vain. The God whom they had honored, now honored them. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon them, and to Daniel, ‘in a night vision,’ was revealed the king’s dream and its meaning.”—Ibid., pp. 493, 494.

“[The four Hebrews] had not sought the mercies of God in vain. Then Daniel called together his companions, and thanked God that their prayers had been heard and answered, and they presented to God an offering of praise and thanksgiving, that was wholly acceptable to the Ruler of the universe. [Daniel 2:20–22 quoted]. Daniel and his fellows had a praise meeting, and all the universe of heaven united with them in thanksgiving.”—The Youth’s Instructor, November 22, 1894.

### 3. A PECULIAR STATUE

Tue, Apr 14

**a. How did Daniel address Nebuchadnezzar regarding the revealing of his dream? Daniel 2:24-30.**

#### **Daniel 2:24-30**

Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation. **25** Then Arioch brought in Daniel before

the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation. **26** The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? **27** Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; **28** But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; **29** 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.

“Behold the Jewish captive, calm and self-possessed, in the presence of the monarch of the world’s most powerful empire. In his first words he disclaimed honor for himself and exalted God as the source of all wisdom. To the anxious inquiry of the king, ‘Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?’ he replied: ‘The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.’”—Prophets and Kings, pp. 494–497.

“The Jewish captive stood before the monarch of the most powerful empire that the sun ever shone upon. Notwithstanding his riches and glory, Nebuchadnezzar was in great distress of mind, but the youthful exile was calm and happy in his God. Then, if ever, was an opportunity for Daniel to exalt himself—to make prominent his own goodness and superior wisdom. But his first effort was to disclaim all honor for himself, and to exalt God as the Source of wisdom.”—The Youth’s Instructor, September 1, 1903.

**b. Describe the image that the king saw in his dream. Daniel 2:31-33.**

**Daniel 2:31-33**

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. **32** This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, **33** His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

“Listening with solemn attention as every particular was reproduced, the king recognized this as the dream over which he had been so troubled; and he was prepared to receive with favor the interpretation.”—*Ibid.*

“The King of kings was about to communicate great truth to the Babylonian monarch. God would reveal that He has power over the kingdoms of the world, power to enthrone and to dethrone kings. Nebuchadnezzar's mind was to be awakened, if possible, to a sense of his responsibility to Heaven. The events of the future, reaching down to the end of time, were to be opened before him.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 498.

### **c. What happened to the image as the king looked at it? Daniel 2:34, 35.**

#### **Daniel 2:34, 35**

Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. **35** Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

### **a. What was the meaning of the head made of gold? Daniel 2:36-38.**

#### **Daniel 2:36-38**

This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. **37** Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. **38** And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

“Under King Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon was the richest and most powerful kingdom on the earth. Its riches and splendor have been faintly portrayed by Inspiration.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, September 29, 1903.

**b. What empires were signified by the following metals? Daniel 2:39, 40.**

**Daniel 2:39, 40**

And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. **40** And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

“Prophecy has traced the rise and progress of the world’s great empires—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 535.

“Daniel . . . declared to Nebuchadnezzar that his kingdom should be superseded. His greatness and power in God’s world would have their day, and a second kingdom would arise, which also would have its period of trial as to whether it would exalt the one Ruler, the only true God. Not doing this, its glory would fade away, and a third kingdom would occupy its place. Proved by obedience or disobedience, this also would pass away; and a fourth, strong as iron, would subdue the nations of the world. These predictions of the Infinite One, recorded on the prophetic page and traced on the pages of history, were given to demonstrate that God is the ruling power in the affairs of this world. He changes the times and the seasons, He removes kings and sets up kings, to fulfil His own purpose.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, September 29, 1903.

“Babylon passed away because in her prosperity she forgot God, and ascribed the glory of her prosperity to human achievement.

“The Medo-Persian kingdom was visited by the wrath of heaven because in this kingdom God’s law was trampled under foot. The fear of the Lord found no place in the hearts of the people. The prevailing influences in Medo-Persia were wickedness, blasphemy, and corruption.

“The kingdoms that followed were even more base and corrupt. They deteriorated because they cast off their allegiance to God. As they forgot Him, they sank lower and still lower in the scale of moral value.”—*Ibid.*, September 22, 1903.

**c. How were the kingdoms represented by the feet and toes unique? Daniel 2:41–43.**

**Daniel 2:41–43**

And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. **42** And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. **43** 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.

“Our position in the image of Nebuchadnezzar is represented by the toes, in a divided state, and of a crumbling material, that will not hold together.”—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 361.

5. GOD'S KINGDOM TO STAND FOREVER

Thu, Apr 16

**a. What kingdom will bring an end to the entire system of world powers? Daniel 2:44, 45.**

**Daniel 2:44, 45**

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. **45** Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

“The dream of the great image, opening before Nebuchadnezzar events reaching to the close of time, had been given that he might understand the part he was to act in the world's history, and the relation that his kingdom should sustain to the kingdom of heaven. In the interpretation of the dream, he had been plainly instructed regarding the establishment of God's everlasting kingdom.”—Prophets and Kings, p. 503.

**b. When will the reign of the kingdom of God in glory begin? John 18:36; Matthew 25:31-34; 26:64; Revelation 6:15-17.**

**John 18:36**

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

**Matthew 25:31-34**

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: **32** And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: **33** And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. **34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

**Matthew 26:64**

Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

**Revelation 6:15-17**

And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; **16** And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: **17** For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

“Our kingdom is not of this world. We are waiting for our Lord from heaven to come to earth to put down all authority and power, and set up His everlasting kingdom. . . . Prophecy shows us that the great day of God is right upon us. It hasteth greatly.”—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, pp. 360, 361.

**c. How did the king respond to Daniel’s success in revealing his dream? Daniel 2:46-49.**

**Daniel 2:46-49**

Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. **47** The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret. **48** Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. **49** Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

“Daniel’s exposition of this dream resulted in the king’s conferring honor and dignity upon him and his companions. . . . Daniel’s three companions were made counselors, judges, and rulers in the land. These men were not puffed up with vanity, but they saw and rejoiced that God was recognized above all earthly potentates, and that His kingdom was extolled above all earthly kingdoms.”—The Youth’s Instructor, September 8, 1903.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Fri, Apr 17

1. What did King Nebuchadnezzar discover regarding his trusted wise men?
2. What is significant about the fact that Daniel’s prayer of thanks is recorded, but not his prayer of request?
3. Despite being the wisest man in Babylon, what attribute did Daniel have?
4. Describe the characteristics of the kingdoms represented by the changing metals.
5. When will the part of the dream regarding the stone be fulfilled?



**Suggested Reading: Prophets and Kings, pp. 491-502.**

Soon after Daniel and his companions entered the service of the king of Babylon, events occurred that revealed to an idolatrous nation the power and faithfulness of the God of Israel. Nebuchadnezzar had a remarkable dream, by which “his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.” Daniel 2:1. But although the king’s mind was deeply impressed, he found it impossible, when he awoke, to recall the particulars. **(PK 491.1)**

In his perplexity, Nebuchadnezzar assembled his wise men—“the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers”(Daniel 2:2)—and besought their help. “I have dreamed a dream,” he said, “and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.” Daniel 2:3. With this statement of his perplexity he requested them to reveal to him that which would bring relief to his mind. **(PK 491.2)**

To this the wise men responded, “O king, live forever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.” Daniel 2:4. **(PK 491.3)**

Dissatisfied with their evasive answer, and suspicious because, despite their pretentious claims to reveal the secrets of men, they nevertheless seemed unwilling to grant him help, the king commanded his wise men, with promises of wealth and honor on the one hand, and threats of death on the other, to tell him not only the interpretation of the dream, but the dream itself. “The thing is gone from me,” he said; “if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. But if ye show the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honor.” Daniel 2:5, 6. **(PK 492.1)**

Still the wise men returned the answer, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation of it.” Daniel 2:7. **(PK 492.2)**

Nebuchadnezzar, now thoroughly aroused and angered by the apparent perfidy of those in whom he had trusted, declared: “I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can show me the interpretation thereof.” Daniel 2:8, 9. **(PK 492.3)**

Filled with fear for the consequences of their failure, the magicians endeavored to show the king that his request was unreasonable and his test beyond that which had ever been required of any man. “There is not a man upon the earth,” they remonstrated, “that can show the king’s matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.” Daniel 2:10, 11. **(PK 492.4)**

Then “the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.” Daniel 2:12. **(PK 493.1)**

Among those sought for by the officers who were preparing to fulfill the provisions of the royal decree, were Daniel and his friends. When told that according to the decree they also must die, “with counsel and wisdom” (Daniel 2:14) Daniel inquired of Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard, “Why is the decree so hasty from the king?” Daniel 2:15. Arioch told him the story of the king’s perplexity over his remarkable dream, and of his failure to secure help from those in whom he had hitherto placed fullest confidence. Upon hearing this, Daniel, taking his life in his hands, ventured into the king’s presence and begged that time be granted, that he might petition his God to reveal to him the dream and its interpretation. **(PK 493.2)**

To this request the monarch acceded. “Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions.” Daniel 2:17. Together they sought for wisdom from the Source of light and knowledge. Their faith was strong in the consciousness that God had placed them where they were, that they were doing His work and meeting the demands of duty. In times of perplexity and danger they had always turned to Him for guidance and protection, and He had proved an ever-present help. Now with contrition of heart they submitted themselves anew to the Judge of the earth, pleading that He would grant them deliverance in this their time of special need. And they did not plead in vain. The God whom they had honored, now honored them. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon them, and to Daniel, “in a night vision,” (Daniel 2:19) was revealed the king’s dream and its meaning. **(PK 493.3)**

Daniel’s first act was to thank God for the revelation given him. “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,” he exclaimed; “for wisdom and might are His: and He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings: He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him. I thank Thee, and praise Thee, O Thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of Thee: for Thou hast now made known unto us the king’s matter.” Daniel 2:20-23. **(PK 494.1)**

Going immediately to Arioch, whom the king had commanded to destroy the wise men, Daniel said, “Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation.” Daniel 2:24. Quickly the officer ushered Daniel in before the king, with the words, “I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation.” Daniel 2:25. **(PK 494.2)**

Behold the Jewish captive, calm and self-possessed, in the presence of the monarch of the world’s most powerful empire. In his first words he disclaimed honor for himself and exalted God as the source of all wisdom. To the anxious inquiry of the king, “Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?”(Daniel 2:26) he replied: “The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.” Daniel 2:27, 28. **(PK 494.3)**

“Thy dream,” Daniel declared, “and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; 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. 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.” Daniel 2:28-30. **(PK 497.1)**

“Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.” Daniel 2:31~33. **(PK 497.2)**

“Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the

stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” Daniel 2:34, 35. **(PK 497.3)**

“This is the dream,”(Daniel 2:36) confidently declared Daniel; and the king, listening with closest attention to every particular, knew it was the very dream over which he had been so troubled. Thus his mind was prepared to receive with favor the interpretation. The King of kings was about to communicate great truth to the Babylonian monarch. God would reveal that He has power over the kingdoms of the world, power to enthrone and to dethrone kings. Nebuchadnezzar’s mind was to be awakened, if possible, to a sense of his responsibility to Heaven. The events of the future, reaching down to the end of time, were to be opened before him. **(PK 497.4)**

“Thou, O king, art a king of kings,” Daniel continued, “for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and fowls of the heaven hath He given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.” Daniel 2:37, 38. **(PK 498.1)**

“And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.” Daniel 2:39. **(PK 498.2)**

“And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.” Daniel 2:40. **(PK 498.3)**

“And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters’ clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of 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.” Daniel 2:41~43. **(PK 498.4)**

“In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people,

but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.” Daniel 2:44~45. **(PK 499.1)**

The king was convinced of the truth of the interpretation, and in humility and awe he “fell upon his face, and worshiped,”(Daniel 2:46) saying, “Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.” Daniel 2:47. **(PK 499.2)**

Nebuchadnezzar revoked the decree for the destruction of the wise men. Their lives were spared because of Daniel’s connection with the Revealer of secrets. And “the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.” Daniel 2:48, 49. **(PK 499.3)**

In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will. **(PK 499.4)**

In words of matchless beauty and tenderness, the apostle Paul set before the sages of Athens the divine purpose in the creation and distribution of races and nations. “God that made the world and all things therein,” declared the apostle, “hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him.” Acts 17:24-27. **(PK 500.1)**

God has made plain that whosoever will, may come “into the bond of the covenant.” Ezekiel 20:37. In the creation it was His purpose that the earth

should be inhabited by beings whose existence would be a blessing to themselves and to one another, and an honor to their Creator. All who will may identify themselves with this purpose. Of them it is spoken, “This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise.” Isaiah 43:21. **(PK 500.2)**

In His law God has made known the principles that underlie all true prosperity, both of nations and of individuals. To the Israelites Moses declared of this law: “This is your wisdom and your understanding.” “It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life.” Deuteronomy 4:6; 32:47. The blessings thus assured to Israel are, on the same conditions and in the same degree, assured to every nation and to every individual under the broad heavens. **(PK 500.3)**

Hundreds of years before certain nations came upon the stage of action, the Omniscient One looked down the ages and predicted the rise and fall of the universal kingdoms. God declared to Nebuchadnezzar that the kingdom of Babylon should fall, and a second kingdom would arise, which also would have its period of trial. Failing to exalt the true God, its glory would fade, and a third kingdom would occupy its place. This also would pass away; and a fourth, strong as iron, would subdue the nations of the world. **(PK 501.1)**

Had the rulers of Babylon—that richest of all earthly kingdoms—kept always before them the fear of Jehovah, they would have been given wisdom and power which would have bound them to Him and kept them strong. But they made God their refuge only when harassed and perplexed. At such times, failing to find help in their great men, they sought it from men like Daniel—men who they knew honored the living God and were honored by Him. To these men they appealed to unravel the mysteries of Providence; for though the rulers of proud Babylon were men of the highest intellect, they had separated themselves so far from God by transgression that they could not understand the revelations and the warnings given them concerning the future. **(PK 501.2)**

In the history of nations the student of God’s word may behold the literal fulfillment of divine prophecy. Babylon, shattered and broken at last, passed away because in prosperity its rulers had regarded themselves as independent of God, and had ascribed the glory of their kingdom to human achievement. The Medo-Persian realm was visited by the wrath of Heaven

because in it God's law had been trampled underfoot. The fear of the Lord had found no place in the hearts of the vast majority of the people. Wickedness, blasphemy, and corruption prevailed. The kingdoms that followed were even more base and corrupt; and these sank lower and still lower in the scale of moral worth. **(PK 501.3)**

The power exercised by every ruler on the earth is Heaven-imparted; and upon his use of the power thus bestowed, his success depends. To each the word of the divine Watcher is, "I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me." Isaiah 45:5. And to each the words spoken to Nebuchadnezzar of old are the lesson of life: "Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor: if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity." Daniel 4:27. **(PK 502.1)**

To understand these things,—to understand that "righteousness exalteth a nation;" that "the throne is established by righteousness," and "upholden by mercy;" to recognize the outworking of these principles in the manifestation of His power who "removeth kings, and setteth up kings,"—this is to understand the philosophy of history. Proverbs 14:34; 16:12; Proverbs 20:28; Daniel 2:21. **(PK 502.2)**

In the word of God only is this clearly set forth. Here it is shown that the strength of nations, as of individuals, is not found in the opportunities or facilities that appear to make them invincible; it is not found in their boasted greatness. It is measured by the fidelity with which they fulfill God's purpose. **(PK 502.3)**