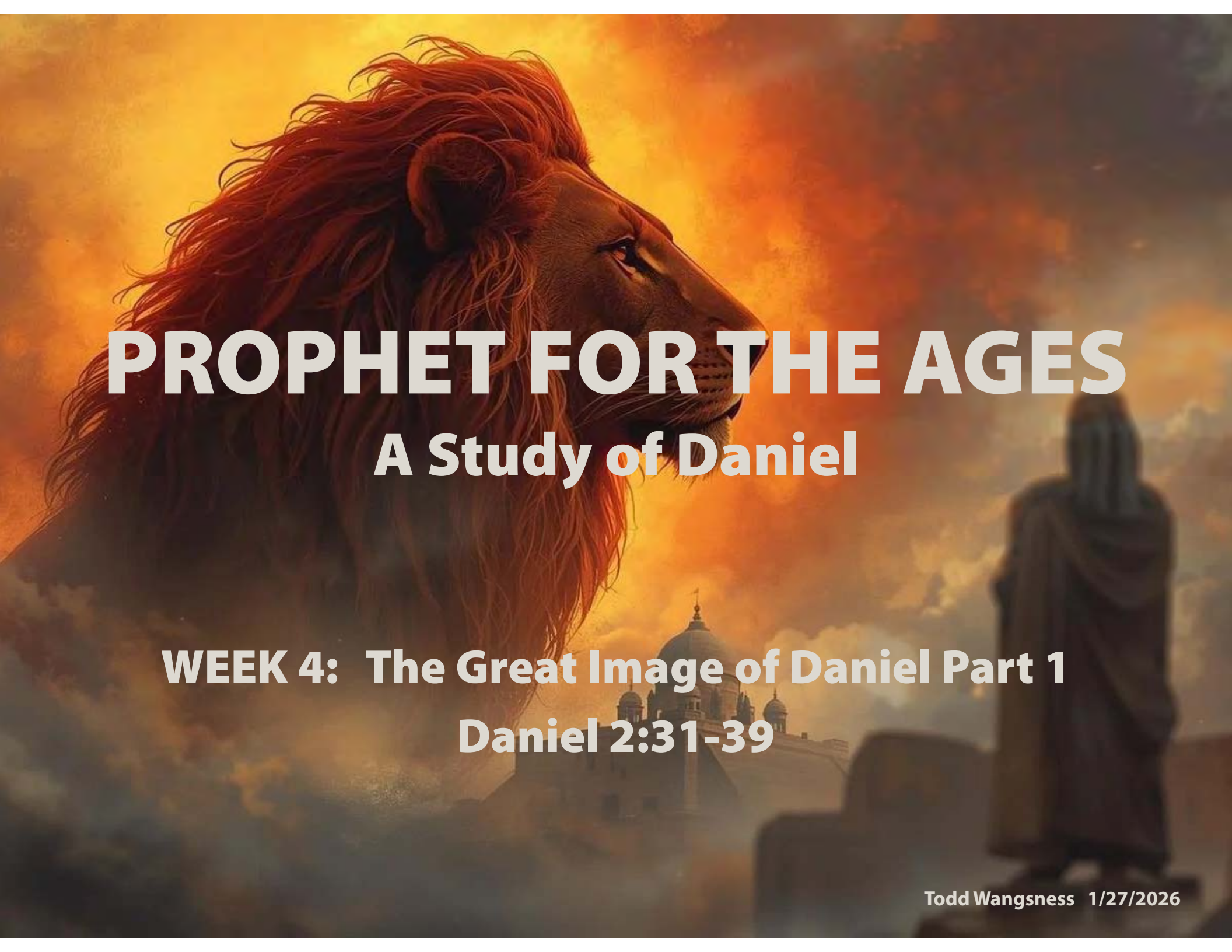




PROPHET FOR THE AGES

A Study of Daniel

WEEK 4: The Great Image of Daniel Part 1
Daniel 2:31-39

Prophet for the Ages: The Great Image of Daniel

Notable Quote About Daniel 2:31-39

"In this vision of the king, God gave a panorama of human history from the beginning of Gentile dominion until the consummation. The head of gold was Babylon; the breast and arms of silver, Medo-Persia; the belly and thighs of brass, Greece; the legs of iron, Rome; and the feet part of iron and part of clay represent the divided and weakened condition of the final form of Gentile power... But the supreme message of the vision is not in the rise and fall of these empires, but in the advent of the stone 'cut out without hands.' This is the Kingdom of God, introduced not by human effort or gradual evolution, but by direct, supernatural intervention. It smites the image upon its feet, destroys all earthly rule, and itself stands forever as the mountain filling the whole earth."

- G. Campbell Morgan

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Daniel 2:31-49 Overview

- **Daniel 2:31-49 is a pivotal passage in the Book of Daniel, describing King Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a colossal statue (or image) and Daniel's God-given interpretation. This section reveals God's sovereignty over human history, the rise and fall of earthly empires, and the ultimate establishment of an eternal divine kingdom. It serves as one of the Bible's clearest prophetic overviews of world history from the Babylonian era onward, emphasizing that God alone controls the destinies of nation**
- **Overwhelmed, Nebuchadnezzar falls facedown, worships Daniel (though Daniel redirects praise to God), and declares that Daniel's God is truly "the God of gods and the Lord of kings" who reveals hidden things. He promotes Daniel to high office over the province of Babylon and makes him chief over all the wise men. At Daniel's request, his three friends (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) are also given positions of authority.**

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Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Dan 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."

- Nebuchadnezzar's dream began with the appearance of an enormous figure
- Daniel described it as imposing and formidable
- *"Splendor was excellent"* can be interpreted as "shining in brilliance"
- The statue stood in front of him in his dream and it was terrifying!
- The dream so perturbed him, that he could not sleep
- He perceived the dream had significant prophetic portent

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The Great Image in Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

The great image that God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream was interpreted by the prophet Daniel. Each section represents a world-ruling superpower. Each succeeding metal is less valuable, but each succeeding metal is stronger, as each empire was more powerful than the last.

Gold—Head

This section represented the empire of Babylon, of which Nebuchadnezzar was king.

Silver—Chest and Arms

The silver chest with two arms signified the empire of the Medes and Persians, which conquered and supplanted Babylon.

Bronze—Belly and Thighs

This section represented the Greco-Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great, which swallowed up Persia.

Iron—Legs

The two legs of iron represented the Roman Empire. After Alexander's death, his Hellenistic empire continued in a divided form until its divisions were taken over by Rome. The two legs apparently signified the east-west division that characterized the Late Roman Empire.

Iron & Clay—Feet and Toes

Extending from the legs are feet and toes of iron mixed with clay—a brittle and unstable mixture because it would not bond well. These represent the final phase of the Roman Empire, which will be made up of ten kings, some strong and some weak.



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Nebuchadnezzar's Great Image Described

Dan 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.*

- The metals decreased in value as they descended the body
- They also increased in strength (except for the iron mixed with clay)

Body Part	Metal	Kingdom	Years
Head	Gold	Babylonian	626 – 539 BC
Chest and Arms	Silver	Medo-Persian	539 – 331 BC
Belly and Thighs	Bronze	Grecian	331 – 31 BC
Legs	Iron	Roman	31 BC – 476 AD
Feet and Toes	Iron and Clay	Revived Roman + ???	??? – 2 nd Coming
Stone Cut w/o Hands	Stone	Heavenly Kingdom	2 nd Coming – Infinity

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The Stone Cut Without Hands

Dan 2:34-35 *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. 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.*

- “Stone cut without hands” shows the stone was of divine origin
- The stone *targeted* the feet of the statue – hence, prophetically, would smash the image in the last age – keep in mind the whole image was still standing
- The result of the stone striking the image was *total destruction*
 - The entire image was pulverized as dust and blew away in the wind
 - The great image disappeared so *that no trace of them was found*
- The stone grew to become a *great mountain that filled the whole earth*

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Nebuchadnezzar's Dream Interpreted!

Dan 2:36 *"This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king."*

- Daniel was able to accurately recount the dream back to the king as revealed to him by the LORD in the vision
- He now has the king's trust, and he will now relay the interpretation to the king
- Daniel used the personal pronoun **we** to include Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah and their roles in intercessory prayer
- From the context, it appears that his companions were present during the meeting of Daniel with the king

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Babylon — The Head of Gold

Dan 2:37-38 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.

- Daniel acknowledged that Nebuchadnezzar was *a king of kings*
- However, he made it abundantly clear that the monarchy was bestowed upon him by the *God of Heaven*
- The same God that had installed Nebuchadnezzar as king is the same God who – in His Omniscience – revealed to Daniel the dream and interpretation
- ***Jer 27:6-7 And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him. 7 So all nations shall serve him and his son and his son's son, until the time of his land comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them.***

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Babylon — The Head of Gold (cont.)

- We will get into the end of the Babylonian Empire and the advent of the Medo-Persians when we get to Chapter 5 (handwriting on the wall)
- Long story short ... Babylon had been under siege by Cyrus of the Medo-Persians
- Interestingly, the final conflict was a relatively bloodless takeover without a major skirmish
 - The Babylonians were supremely confident their city was impregnable
 - The walls were 11 feet thick and chariots could drive around the wall ramparts
 - Diversion of the Euphrates: Cyrus's engineers diverted the Euphrates upstream from Babylon, lowering the water level in the river that ran through the city
 - Persian troops then marched under the massive river gates (which were normally submerged or guarded) during a festival when many defenders were distracted or drunk.
- This conquest made Cyrus ruler over Mesopotamia and completed his empire's dominance over the former Babylonian territories

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Babylon Empire Territory — The Head of Gold



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Medo-Persian Empire — Chest and Arms of Silver

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

- The empire that came on the heels of the Babylonian empire was the Medo-Persian empire
- Detractors use this verse to sow doubt about the veracity of the book of Daniel
 - The Medo-Persian empire covered a larger geographical area and
 - It lasted longer than the Babylonian empire (208 vs 75 years)
- The term *inferior* refers to quality, not inferiority in every respect
- Babylon played a major role in human history – with its origins dating back to the flood
- The Medo-Persians were united, but never fused into one people as Babylon was
- They lacked the central authority and organization that was the hallmark of Babylon

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Medo-Persian Empire Territory — Chest and Arms of Silver (cont.)



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Medo-Persian Empire — Chest and Arms of Silver (cont.)

- **Battle of Granicus**: The Medo-Persians vs Alexander the Great's army (334 BC)
 - Alexander's army secured a decisive victory against overwhelming odds
 - Alexander was 22 years old at the time of this engagement
 - They had to cross the Granicus River swollen with spring runoff and muddy banks (on the Biga Plain near Istanbul of modern-day Turkey)
 - After they forded the river, they had to fight an uphill battle against the superior forces of the Medo-Persians
 - Alexander led a bold, direct assault that was a complete surprise to the opposing generals, although his generals felt the attack was too risky!
 - He personally charged across with his elite Companion Cavalry, fought fiercely in the front ranks (nearly dying when struck on the helmet), and broke the Persian line
 - The Persians suffered heavy losses (thousands killed, including several nobles)
 - Macedonian casualties were relatively low (around 100–200)
 - The victory at Granicus marked the beginning of Alexander's conquest of the Persian Empire

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Greek Empire — Belly and Thighs of Bronze

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

- The Grecian empire began under Alexander the Great (*as the Belly*)
- He ascended the throne of Macedonia at the age of 20 in 336 BC
- He successfully conjoined the nations of Macedonia and Greece
- Alexander was one of the most amazing people to walk this planet!
 - His genius at battlefield strategy is still studied at military academies all over the world
- In 331 BC – at 25 years old – he fought Darius III in the Battle of Gaugamela (modern day Iraq)
 - Widely considered one of the most decisive battles in human history
 - Darius led a massive army of 250,000 to 1,000,000 men (estimates vary)
 - Alexander's army numbered 47,000 men
 - Due to Alexander's brilliant strategies and tactics, he was able to overwhelm Darius's forces in a humiliating defeat
- The territories held by the Medo-Persians peacefully surrendered

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Greek Empire Territory Map — Belly and Thighs of Bronze (cont.)



Prophet for the Ages: The Great Image of Daniel

Greek Empire — Belly and Thighs of Bronze (cont.)

- Alexander died at the age of 32 in Babylon after returning from a war campaign in India (323 BC)
 - He fell ill after binging, slipped into a coma, and died of a high fever
- Alexander's generals ('Diadochi' or *successors*) fought among themselves in decades of extremely brutal and bloody battles to assume control of Alexander's vast empire
- The Diadochi battles were filled with intrigue and inter-family betrayals and assassinations
- Ultimately, four generals secured various territories (map on next page)
 - Seleucid Dynasty of Asia – *important prophetically* (**Right Thigh**)
 - Ptolemaic Dynasty of Egypt – *important prophetically* (**Left Thigh**)
 - Antigonous Dynasty of Asia Minor (Turkey)
 - Lysimachus Dynasty of Greece/Macedonia

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Diadochi Dynasty Territories — Belly and Thighs of Bronze (cont.)



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Greek Empire — Belly and Thighs of Bronze (cont.)

- Rome started becoming ascendant around 200 BC
- The Hellenistic empires began ceding control to the Romans in major skirmishes, most notably:
 - Achaean War (146 BC): Rome crushed a Greek confederation and sacked Corinth
 - Third Mithridatic War (63 BC): Rome annexed the Seleucid territories under Pompey the Great
 - Octavian invaded Egypt (31 BC): Alexandria fell, and both Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide. Egypt was annexed as a province of Octavian (Augustus), ending the last major Hellenistic dynasty.
- Octavian (Julius Caesar's grand-nephew) assumed the name Augustus Caesar and became Rome's first formal Emperor in 31 BC
- Historians mark 31 BC as the end of the Hellenistic dynasty and the start of the Roman hegemony under Augustus Caesar

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Questions to Ponder

- It is so easy these days to become unsettled by the instability in the world, including our own nation. When we watch the news or read articles, we are left with the distinct impression that events are *out of control*!
 - What can we deduce from our study so far into the first three empires?
 - Are events truly *out of control*? Or does our Omnipotent God have things firmly in His hand?
 - *Isa 46:9-10 Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure.'*
- Please share any of your personal examples and testimonies of intractable situations you have been in that God turned around in a dramatic fashion!