

Daniel 2 and 7: Are They Equal or Not? **(Part 3)**

The fact that the statue of Daniel 2 has 10 toes and the diverse beast of Daniel 7 has 10 horns has clearly led many to suppose that these 2 chapters convey the same basic history about the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. This is a point often pressed to support the conclusion that Daniel chapters 2 and 7 are equal. Leon Wood's comments are typical and reflect the reasoning of many who take this position. He states, "The toes, and the toes only, carry reference to the millennial kingdom, signifying that it will have ten contemporary kings. The existence of these ten contemporary kings is symbolized also by the ten horns of Daniel's first vision."¹

It should be stated frankly that there is nothing in the text that forms an explicit basis for this conclusion. It is perfectly clear that nothing happened in connection with the Roman empire that resembles the details outlined in Daniel 7 concerning the fourth kingdom – either during the ministry of our Lord, or the later history of Rome. Therefore, to advance their argument, Daniel 2 must stop at a certain point during the Roman empire and then begin again later with the details of Daniel 7 in connection with Daniel's final week of prophecy as detailed in Daniel 9:24-27. For those who take this position, it seems to have escaped their attention that the statue of Daniel 2 also had ten fingers. Yet, nothing is made of this fact. The fact that Daniel 2 puts a special emphasis on the "toes" is not enough to conclude that the "toes" represent ten kings. Nothing in Daniel 2 supports this conclusion.

Throughout the Book of Daniel and the revelation given to John, kings are represented by "horns." Daniel explicitly states what the significance of the "toes" are. When he first relates the basic content of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel does not refer to the "toes" at all (Daniel 2:31-35) – in distinction with his mention of the horns in both the overview of the dream in chapter 7 and the interpretation. The "toes" of the statue of chapter 2 receive attention in the interpretation only. Daniel relates, "And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom...and as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle (Daniel 2:41-42)."

It should be immediately clear that the point Daniel is making about the "feet and toes" is the issue of division: one part strong and the other part brittle. The issue of division will evidence itself in that the kingdom will be both strong and brittle at the *same* time. The exact nature of this division in the Roman empire is not easily determined. However, we can safely say that based on Daniel's statements there is nothing significant to be discerned from the ten toes regarding 10 kings. To draw this conclusion, one has only the coincidental fact that the human body has 10 toes and Daniel makes a point of the diverse beast having 10 horns. One must read backwards to

¹ Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973) p. 70.

make the association between the toes of Daniel 2 and the horns of Daniel 7. This opinion has no exegetical basis whatsoever. It is nothing more than conjecture based on similarities.

Daniel makes the point explicitly that the special “stone” strikes the statue on its *feet*. Specifically, he says, “It struck the image on its feet of iron and clay.” Following the line of reasoning of those who take the traditional view, we would expect the stone to strike the “toes.” The idea of a revived Roman empire demands far more than the text can support. Nearly fifteen hundred years now exist between the feet and the toes according to the theory, but at some point in the future 10 nations are going to see themselves as the continuation of the 15-century comatose empire. These 10 nations will want to pick up right where ancient Rome left off: weak, divided, and quasi-Christian. The more I personally think about it, the less I am inclined to see the remotest possibility of such an event. There is no indication in the statue of a broken division between the feet and the toes.

Another point that is pressed regarding the relationship between Daniel 2 and 7 involves Daniel’s phrase, “in the days of those kings.” This phrase is used to argue that Daniel must be referring to the “toes” of the statute, which in reality are 10 kings even though he never makes this point in chapter 2. Those who take this view assert that since Daniel only refers explicitly to one king in chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar, the “toes” as represented by 10 kings is the only way to explain the term “kings” in the plural in verse 44.

However, once again this is nothing more than wishful thinking that requires building a case from innuendo and similarities of events. Any student of the Book of Daniel knows that he uses *king* and *kingdom* interchangeably at various times. For example, in 7:15-28, Daniel refers to *kings* and *kingdoms* without offering any clarification. His first reference in 7:17 indicates that “these four great beasts are kings.” However, in 7:23, the interpreting angel tells Daniel that the fourth beast is a kingdom. Therefore, it is much more likely that Daniel is doing the same thing in chapter 2. Having described one king who stood for the kingdom of Babylon and three kingdoms making no reference to individual kings per se, Daniel make a summary statement: “in the days of those kings.” He is referring to the four kings/kingdoms: Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. To suggest otherwise is to introduce a conclusion that does not have exegetical support whatsoever.

The phrase “in the days of” (plural) occurs in the NASB more than 55 times, and differs from the singular form, “in the day of”. In the plural form it refers to “(in) *the days of* (i.e., life-time, reign, or activity of).”² In other words, the plural term refers to the life-time of a particular person. It can also refer to the years and days, or the length of a king’s reign. As this term is generally used throughout the Old and New Testaments, it refers to the life span of the particular

² Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (2000). *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (electronic ed.) (399). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems.

person in view. Therefore, Daniel 2:44 must refer to *kings* living at the time of the events in view. Since Daniel is speaking about the four kings/kingdoms which includes Nebuchadnezzar, it is grammatically impossible for “in the days of those kings” to refer to kings living 2000 years after the death of Nebuchadnezzar. This conclusion would require that the time from Nebuchadnezzar to the final kings of the end-time be included in the phrase “in the days of those kings.” Therefore, the days from Nebuchadnezzar to the days of the 10 kings would involve more than 2500 years. This includes almost 1500 years when no king was alive on the earth. To take this position requires that Daniel 2:44 be the only biblical example of this phrase being used in this unique way. It is highly unlikely to be the case here.

Therefore, God must inaugurate his kingdom during the period that involves the kings/kingdoms of Daniel 2. History confirms that God did, in fact, set up his kingdom during the final king’s reign – Rome. Only this line of reasoning makes sense of the text and removes contradictions.

Part 4 coming soon!