

king of the Medo-Persian Empire. He did this by diverting the River Euphrates that ran through Babylon while the Babylonians were having a drunken feast. But Medo-Persia was also conquered by the “brass-clad Greeks,” as Homer calls them. Alexander the Great began his conquest when 20 years old and within a mere decade he had conquered the entire ancient-day world. But Alexander died and his kingdom was divided into four parts. About 200 years later these Hellenistic kingdoms were successively defeated by the “iron monarchy of Rome” (Gibbons, *Decline and fall*, 4:161). The Roman Empire ruled from Scotland to Arabia. It was during the time of their dominion that Jesus was born.

A Colossus with Clay Feet

But this colossus had clay feet. It has given rise to an idiomatic expression of a big but brittle entity. On commenting on the clay feet, Daniel explains: “the kingdom shall be divided... the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile... they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.” (Dan. 2:41-43). A divided kingdom is here presented – some parts strong and some parts weak – which will try to be united but will utterly fail. The Roman Empire fell apart into 10 distinct “barbaric” kingdoms. These kingdoms eventually established the nations of Europe. Over and over again, rulers have tried to unite Europe. But 1500 years after the fall of Rome, the prophecy of Daniel still stays true. The Muslims, Charlemagne, the Mongols, the Ottomans, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm, Hitler and Stalin have all tried to conquer Europe, but in vain. Though the European Union came close to uniting Europe, a breaking apart was inevitable according to prophecy. Many politicians and journalists even use the prophetic idiom about the EU, describing it as “a colossus with clay feet”. The only kingdom that will be able to establish an everlasting kingdom is God Himself. That stone kingdom will be established when Christ returns on the clouds of glory (1 Cor. 15:23-24, Dan. 2:44-45). If all other predictions have come to pass, we can be assured that this last one also will happen (John 14:29). Would you want to be ready for this coming kingdom?



EU, Brexit and Prophecy

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Ever since the fall of the Roman Empire, kings and politicians have done their utmost to unite Europe, but without success. Lately, many politicians and writers have made an attempt to create a United States of Europe through the EU. When the iron curtain fell the thought arose to try to unite Europe economically. It proved somewhat successful for a while. But then the financial crisis struck in 2009. Politicians barely managed to steer clear of that disaster, when the refugee crisis became the straw that broke the camel’s back for some. June 23, 2016, the referendum in Great Britain, made Brexit a reality. Once again, the hope of unity for Europe was crushed. Why is it so hard to unite Europe? Is there hope for a sustainable union? Many will be surprised to know that Brexit was a fulfilment of a 2600-year-old prophecy in the book of Daniel of the Bible.

The Dream of the Babylonian Monarch

Around the 6th Century BC, the Israelite nation was taken captive by the Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II. Daniel and his friends are among the captives. In Nebuchadnezzar’s second year of reign, he has a dream that troubles him. There was something so unusual about the dream that he was impressed to call all his magicians, astrologers and sorcerers together to interpret the dream. But when they arrive the king has forgotten the dream. Frustrated and unreasonable the king requires the “wise men” to tell him both the dream and its interpretation. But none of them are able to do this. Realizing that he has a bunch of frauds on the royal payroll, Nebuchadnezzar in rage demands that all the wise men shall be put to death.

Since Daniel and his friends have been placed in the Babylonian school system, they are also considered to be among the wise men of Babylon, and will therefore have to be killed as well. But Daniel requests before the king a little time, and promises then to grant the king the dream and the interpretation. The king approves and Daniel and his friends pray for deliverance. In a vision at night, Daniel receives the same dream as Nebuchadnezzar had and is also given the interpretation by God.

Happy for God's deliverance, Daniel confidently requests the king not to put the wise men to death. Then he tells the king, not only what he dreamed, but also the thoughts that he had prior to going to bed: "As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be." (Dan. 2:29) The dream is obviously about the future. Then Daniel clearly tells the king what he had dreamt: "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. This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay." (Dan. 2:31-33). Then a stone, cut out without human hands, struck the image on its feet and crushed the whole image (v.34-35).

The Interpretation of the Dream

By now, Nebuchadnezzar is probably quite amazed over the accuracy of Daniel's words as his memory is reviving. Daniel then goes on to explain the interpretation of the dream: "You, O king... are this head of gold. But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 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." (Dan. 2:37-40). The explanation was clear: Four successive world-ruling empires, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon, would emerge on the world stage.



Head of Gold = _____ (Dan. 2:38)

Torso of Silver = _____ (Dan. 5:28)

Thighs of Bronze = _____ (Dan. 8:21)

Legs of Iron = _____ (John 11:48)

Feet & 10 toes = _____ (Dan. 7:24)

Stone = _____ (Dan 2:44)

History Confirms the Prophecy

To our amazement we can see that this prediction has come true to the last detail. Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian empire had conquered the whole then-known world. Yet, though the king hoped his empire would last forever, Babylon would fall and be given to another kingdom. History confirms to us that Babylon was conquered in 539 BC by Cyrus the Great,