

What Are the Four Kingdoms? Daniel 2:31-45

Two basic options, ending with either Greece or Rome

1	Head of gold	Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon	Babylon
2	Chest and arms of silver	Media	Medo – Persia
3	Belly and thighs of bronze	Persia	Greece
4	Legs of iron, feet of iron and clay	Greece	Rome
	Stone / Mountain	Kingdom of God	

An unusual study

Three pitfalls:

- Rejecting Predictive Prophecy
- Going Too Far
- Not Going Far Enough

Four key terms:

Antiochus IV Epiphanes

Alexander the Great's Greek kingdom was split between his four generals following his death in 332 B.C. The land of the Jews ended up being part of the Seleucid Empire, and one of the later rulers in that Empire was Antiochus IV, who "assigned himself the title 'Epiphanes,' meaning 'manifest' (as a god)."

He was "known for his harsh attempts to Hellenize Judaea and Jerusalem [transform them from Jewish to Greek culture], and for his desecration of the Jerusalem temple.... Antiochus and his army attacked Jerusalem in 169 bc, resulting in the slaughter of many people. Following this attack, Antiochus entered and looted the temple. Two years later, Antiochus ... attacked Jerusalem on the Sabbath, resulting in the death of much of the male population. He banned all Jewish rights and rededicated the temple to Zeus. The people were no longer allowed to circumcise their sons or follow the Jewish law; they were also commanded to sacrifice swine to other gods, all under penalty of death. In December of 167 bc, a new altar was erected in the temple, and sacrifice for Zeus was offered on the altar. Daniel 11:31 identifies this offering as 'the abomination of desolation' (see also Dan 12:11)."¹

Type: a person, event, or institution in the Old Testament that foreshadows something that comes later and is described in the New Testament

Anti-type: the New Testament person, event, or institution (the fulfillment of the type)

Example:

Type: the bronze serpent raised up on a stake so that the people who looked upon it would not die from the fiery serpents (Numbers 21)

Anti-type: Jesus, raised up on a cross to deliver from death those who repent and believe (John 3:14)

Why should we care?

¹ Zacharias, H. D. (2016). [Antiochus IV Epiphanes](#). In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, L. Wentz, E. Ritzema, & W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Lexham Press.

Why does the identification of the kingdoms matter?

It significantly changes our understanding of:

- what the promises to Israel in the Old Testament mean
- what kind of king Jesus is today
- what Jesus is going to do on earth in the future

Sample views of the 4th kingdom in Daniel:

<i>View of the fourth kingdom</i>	<i>View of the Roman Empire</i>	<i>View of Antiochus IV</i>	<i>View of the kingdom of God</i>	<i>View of the future Roman Empire</i>
Greece = 4 th Empire (amillennial)	Roman Empire is not important in Daniel	Daniel focuses on Antiochus Epiphanes IV and the first coming of Jesus	The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, established during Jesus' 1 st coming (and someday on the new earth after his 2 nd coming)	
Rome = 4 th Empire (amillennial)	Jesus won the spiritual victory during the time of the Roman Empire			
Rome = 4 th Empire (premillennial)	Jesus initiated victory with death/resurrection during the ancient Roman Empire, but will come again during the time of some future form of the Roman Empire	Daniel focuses on Antiochus Epiphanes IV as a type of the "antichrist" who will be defeated at the 2 nd coming of Jesus	There is a spiritual kingdom today, but the earthly kingdom of God will begin at Jesus' 2 nd coming with his 1,000 year reign on this earth in fulfillment of the promises to Israel (and then continue on the new earth)	Extended Roman Empire (it continues in some sense today) Restored Roman Empire (it will be restored in some way in the future)

The closely-related question: Is there still a coming kingdom of Jesus on this earth or not?

Revelation 20:1-10 speaks of a thousand-year reign of Christ ("millennium")

The "**amillennial**" view: The millennium is figurative, and is happening right now in the spiritual rule of Jesus among His people (the church). The church is the new Israel, and the promises to Israel are fulfilled in the church. The Jesus will not reign directly on earth until He comes again and makes new heavens and a new earth. I.e., Jesus is ruling His kingdom (His church) from heaven right now, but will not reign on earth until He comes again in final judgment, makes all things new, and reigns on the new earth forever.

The "**premillennial**" view: There is a sense in which the church is a spiritual kingdom today, but Jesus is still coming again to this earth to fulfill the promises to Israel and to reign for 1,000 years. Then he will bring final judgment, make all things new, and reign on the new earth forever.

What evidence does Daniel give us to help us identify the second, third, and fourth kingdoms?

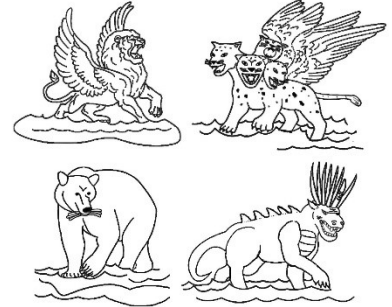
Daniel 2

- The four kingdoms are illustrated by four parts of a statue
- Nebuchadnezzar is connected to the 1st kingdom
- None of the other four kingdoms are directly identified, but there are clues about the other kingdoms in the different materials and parts of the statue



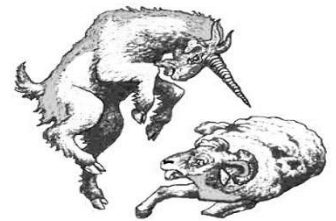
Daniel 7

- The four kingdoms are illustrated by four beasts:
 - Lion, bear, leopard, ??
- There is no direct statement about which earthly kingdoms correspond to the different animals, but there are clues about the other kingdoms in the description of the animals and what they do



Daniel 8

- Two kingdoms are illustrated by a ram and a goat, and the ram is defeated by the goat
- The text directly states that the ram represents kings of Media and Persia and the goat who triumphs is the king of Greece.
- The text doesn't directly say whether the ram and goat correspond to the 2nd and 3rd kingdoms or the 3rd and 4th kingdoms in the statue.
- There are many clues about which of the four kingdoms these might be based on the description of the ram and the goat and their actions.
- Of special importance are the four horns that come from the goat (Greece), leading to one "little horn" who sounds much like Antiochus Epiphanes, and is then "broken but by no human hand."



Daniel 9

- Gives some information about how long it will be from events shortly after the time of Daniel until:
 - the coming of a ruler who sounds much like Antiochus Epiphanes, and
 - the coming of an anointed one who sounds much like Jesus
- The total time frame described is "70 weeks," divided into segments of 7, 62, and then 1 final week that is divided into two equal parts.

Daniel 10-12

- Daniel is told about coming kings of Persia, but is not told whether Persia is the 2nd or 3rd kingdom in the statue.
- Daniel is told in great detail about coming rulers in the Greek empire, but is not told whether this is the 3rd or 4th kingdom in the dream.
 - Of special importance is the detailed description of Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the abomination of desolation.

- Daniel is told that “at that time” there will be an unprecedented time of trouble for Israel. But God will deliver his people, resulting in resurrection and eternal life.
- More time frames are given:
 - There will be “a time, times, and half a time” (3 ½) “till the end of these wonders,” and “when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things will be finished.”
 - From the time that the abomination of desolation is set up “there shall be 1,290 days”
 - “Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days”

Is there any evidence outside of Daniel?

Jesus spoke about the abomination of desolation:

Matthew 24:15-30 *“So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee.... For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.... Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”*

Revelation uses many words and images taken from Daniel. For example:

- Jesus is described in Revelation 1 in a way that is very similar to several descriptions in Daniel
- Revelation makes multiple references to a “3 ½” time period
- Revelation has a 10-horned beast
- Revelation has a leopard, bear, and lion
- Revelation has a boastful, blasphemous, persecuting ruler who sounds much like the boastful ruler in Daniel
- Revelation has a Son of Man coming on the clouds, like Daniel 7

What’s the point?