

God's Design in the Hebrew Scriptures: Daniel

Chapter 2 — God Declares His Rule Over Gentile Nations

- I. Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the failure of his wise men (2:1-13)
- II. Daniel's request, God's answer, Daniel's thanksgiving (2:14-24)
- III. Daniel's appearance before the king (2:25-30)
- IV. God's answer to Nebuchadnezzar (2:31-35)
- V. God's interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar (2:36-45)



We now come to the detail of the time-of-the-end of this long period. We have already seen, from the interpretation by Daniel of the image-vision, that it ends in catastrophe. The stone cut out without hands is a smiting stone; and, observe, the stone did not begin to smite when our Lord appeared some 1900 years ago, because the Gentile world-power had not reached the development that brought it within the range of the smiting stone. The image is smitten upon its feet, and its feet were not yet in view. Our Lord appeared at a time when the East was under the undisputed sway of the fourth empire, Rome.—"And a decree went forth from Caesar Augustus that all the inhabited earth should be enrolled (or, taxed)." There sat Caesar Augustus in Rome, and his decree went out into all the conquered provinces and into all parts where the Roman eagles had flown. If you wish a demonstration of how absolute a decree of Caesar then was everywhere, consider for a moment that in far-off and despised Judea it brought a maiden, a virgin espoused to a carpenter, to the city of David—not a noble, not some great one with great property and titles—to be enrolled. So searching, so inescapable was the decree of Rome at that time that it brought to the city of David the mother of our Lord, that He might be born in the place and at the time that a prophet had said He should be born. The decree of Caesar Augustus did that.

C.I. Scofield, "Tested by Grace," Dallas Theological Seminary, Bibliotheca Sacra Volume 107 (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1950; 2002), 107:490.

- VI. Nebuchadnezzar's response (2:46-49)

The Times of the Gentiles

God's program for the world chs. 2—7

Daniel wrote 2:4b–7:28 in the Aramaic language. This literary change gives the reader a clue that this part is a distinct section of the book. The content of this section also identifies it as special. It concerns the future history of the Gentiles during "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). Aramaic was the common language of the world in which Daniel lived when he wrote. It is natural that he would have recorded what concerns the world as a whole in the language of the Gentiles.

The writer constructed this section of the book in chiasmic form.

- A** A prophecy of an image concerning four Gentile nations and their end ch. 2
- B** The supernatural persecution and deliverance of Daniel's three friends ch. 3
 - C** God's revelation to the Gentile King Nebuchadnezzar ch. 4
 - C'** God's revelation to the Gentile King Belshazzar ch. 5
- B'** The supernatural persecution and deliverance of Daniel ch. 6
- A'** A prophecy of animals concerning four Gentile nations and their end ch. 7

"Chapters 2 and 7 explain the succession of four Gentile empires that would exert control over Jerusalem and the Jews until God's kingdom is established. Chapters 3 and 6 warned the Jews of the persecution they would face during this period and exhorted them to remain faithful to God. Chapters 4 and 5 encouraged the Jewish remnant by reminding them that a time would come when even the gentile rulers would acknowledge that the God of Israel rules over the nations."

Tom Constable, Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003), Dan 1:21.