

Introduction

Interesting climate of economic and political predictions
What generally concerns us is our future, the future of our things,
the things we have created and established.

Evidence

Nebuchadnezzar's concern

Daniel 2:29 Nebuchadnezzar was thinking about the future
"Nebuchadnezzar": Akkadian meaning "Nabo, protect my eldest
son," or "Nabo, protect the borders."

NEBUCHADNEZZAR I

was the greatest king of Babylon during the Pashite Dynasty from 1125-1103 B.C. He was a native of Babylon. One of his great accomplishments was a decisive battle against the Elamites at Susa in which, being victorious, restored the god Marduk to Babylon that had been taken by the Elamites at the end of Babylon's Kassite Dynasty. His death marked the beginning of the return of Babylon to international impotence, with Elam and Aramaean nomads claiming authority. Babylon was in a state of political chaos for nearly two centuries.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR II

(of whom the bible speaks here) was king of Babylon from 605-562 B.C. He was of the Chaldean Tribe. Picking up where his father have left off, he set himself to position Babylon as the Queen of the world, subjugating her enemies and magnificently enriching her capital city.

- As crown prince, he defeated the Egyptians and Assyrians in the Battle of Carchemish in 605.
- He defeated the Cimmerians and Scythians
- He captured Jerusalem in 597.
- His 13 year seige of Tyre ended in compromise with Tyre accepting Babylonian authority.
- He ended his expansion of his empire by subjugating Phoenicia (585) and a campaign against Egypt (567).

- He rebuilt Babylon after the great devastations caused by Assyria and internal rebellions: Old temples restored, completed the royal palace, city rendered impregnable by construction of triple walls, bridged the Euphrates, made hanging gardens.

On the night of his dream Nebuchadnezzar was wondering:

Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun.

- Ecclesiastes 2:18-19

- Will my efforts endure?
- Will my kingdom last?
- Will the glory of Babylon remain untarnished?
- Who will get the kingdom after I'm gone – who will it be left to
- Someone wise, strong, courageous? Or a fool?
- Is there really a “forever”?

God's concern

A REVELATION TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Story of the image

Nebuchadnezzar troubled by the dream – possibly couldn't remember

wise men have no answer

Nebuchadnezzar commands their destruction

Daniel bids for time

God gives the answer to Daniel

Daniel comes before the king

Tells the dream and it's interpretation

Key Point: God came to help Nebuchadnezzar understand his thoughts of the future.

Dream Aspect	Interpretation
Head of Gold	Nabopolassar to throne Babylon (626-539)

Chest and arms of Silver	Cyrus conquered Babylon Media-Persia (539-331)
Belly/Thighs of Brass	Alexander the Great defeated the Persians at Gaugamela Greece (331-168)
Legs of Iron	Rome defeated Macedonians Rome (168-476 A.D.)
Feet of Iron and Clay	German Odavacer removed Romulus from throne Divided World (476-???)
Stone	Christ's Second Coming

THE TEMPORARY NATURE OF EARTHLY KINGDOMS

The most powerful of earthly kingdoms would pass away

They would exhibit a continual decline in greatness

The time will come when the elements of all these kingdoms will be completely destroyed and dissolved without a trace (v.35).

THE GOD-DENYING NATURE OF EARTHLY KINGDOMS

The Iron kingdom will act as only God can truly act:

Hb: *deqaq* to crush. Used 5 times in this chapter

- Used of the stone (God's kingdom) in vs.34-25
- Used of the Iron kingdom, v.40
- Used again of God's kingdom, vs. 44-45

The kingdom of iron does some activity similar to God's kingdom. When God's kingdom "crushes", it is setting itself up forever. It's possible that the vision alludes to activities of the iron kingdom that seem to be setting itself up forever, that it does a work as if it were God.

Notice that the iron endures, in part, to the very end. The crushing strength of iron endures to the coming of God's kingdom

This is the **Armageddon Plot**

Trying to set up "forever" on human terms by human planning and effort. It is nothing but the thinking of a dysfunctional system

THE ETERNAL NATURE OF HIS KINGDOM

vs. 44-45

Complete obliteration of earthly kingdoms (with v.35)

It will never be left to other people

It will stand forever

Call to Focus

God is inviting Nebuchadnezzar to shift his focus to what will work

Away from the temporal future

from those things that will fade away

from the external, the material

Away from usurping God's power

from self-sufficiency and self-glory (that will never get you anywhere)

To the true "forever"

God seeks to shift the focus of **our concern** to His coming kingdom

God's personal appeal to Nebuchadnezzar reaches across time and space and remains just as personal to us today

1. Away from temporal things that consume our attention
2. Away from self-sufficiency and practical atheism
3. Toward the eternal kingdom

What should we as a **church** think about as we consider our future?

Only a church built on the principles of God's eternal kingdom will last.

If we as a collective group of spiritually responsible individuals are not focused on living the principles of God's kingdom we have NO reason to exist.

The eternal significance of this fellowship will depend on:

- Personal acceptance of God's individual invitation to focus on the things of His kingdom
- To pursue absolute justice, not political expediency
- To love being merciful to those around us, especially ourselves, our families, and fellowship friends
- To walk humbly with our God