

merely the first among the citizens of Rome, his power over the many subject countries was absolute. Thus "emperor" was soon regarded as a higher title than "king," and in the course of time the word "empire" came to indicate control by one nation over people of a different language and culture. Present-day histories sometimes speak of the Roman power as an empire many decades before it had an emperor, since the Roman republic was already ruling over several conquered nations. The great prophecies of Daniel 2 and 7 speak of four kingdoms, but what is meant would today be indicated by the term "empire."

It should be noted that Daniel 2:4-7:28 is written in Aramaic, a language closely related to Hebrew, but differing from it in certain important features. In Daniel 2:4 the prophet quoted the Aramaic (KJV Syriack) words spoken by the Chaldeans, and he continued to write in that language until the end of chapter 7. When he began to write chapter 8, giving the account of his second vision, he reverted to Hebrew.

It is not the purpose of the present book to devote any large amount of space to discussing the precise meanings of Hebrew and Aramaic words. Such discussion will generally be confined to instances where the interpretation of a prophecy depends on the precise meaning of a word, or where a false idea has been produced by some misunderstanding.

Early translations frequently provide important evidence of the meaning of a word. The most useful early versions of the Old Testament were made in the Greek language. The earliest of these is called the Septuagint (sometimes represented by the symbol "LXX"). In the case of Daniel a very interesting situation occurs. St. Jerome, who translated the Latin Vulgate directly from the Hebrew at about A.D. 400, said that in the available copies of the Septuagint its original version of Daniel had been replaced by a later translation, that of Theodotion. This is thought to be the case in all but two of the Greek manuscripts that have survived.

At certain points in our detailed discussion of Daniel's