

I mentioned the Neo-Babylonian empire. There had been a great power from Babylon many centuries before Nebuchadnezzar which had wielded control over a very large area. Then that had been overcome by the Assyrians who followed the Babylonian culture very closely, so closely that we can think of them as one civilization--the Assyrians and the Babylonians. For some centuries Babylon was subject to Assyria with its capitols first at Ashur and then at Ninevah. During those centuries Babylon was constantly trying to get its independence. But there was a close similarity of culture -- a tight(?) and language between the two. Eventually the Babylonians ~~gained~~ gained their independence and overthrew the Assyrian Empire by forces of Nebuchadnezzar and of the Medes, 614. Now whether I should have said of Nebuchadnezzar, I'm not quite sure because in 604 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar was a great force. In 614 (the other date I've given here) it was probably his father.

His father had been governor of Babylon and Babylonia under the Assyrians and he had revolted. Then a group of people came to the east of them who were called the Medes who had a rather loose confederacy of these different tribes, joined together with the father of Nebuchadnezzar and in 614 they destroyed the old capitol of Assyria at Asshur. Two years later they were able to conquer Ninevah which had been its capitol for some centuries and to destroy it in 612. They destroyed it so completely that until 150 years ago no one knew where Ninevah had been. One of the great cities of ancient times.

A large group of the Assyrians fought on after that, and it was not until 604 when Nabopolassar's son, Nebuchadnezzar, was leading the army-- in fact a year after Nabopolassar died, that Nebuchadnezzar and the Medes together put a complete end to the Assyrian force. Some of the Assyrian territory was taken over by the Medes. But the greater part was taken over by Nebuchadnezzar.

Nebuchadnezzar reigned from 605-562 B.C. He was unquestionably one of the great fighters of ancient times, one of the great rulers. He deserves all the prominence he is given. "Thou O Nebuchadnezzar art this head of gold!"

But then it says (v.39), "After thee shall arise another kingdom, and another third kingdom of bronze which shall bear rule over all the earth. The fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron. When Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 he was succeeded by his son, Amel-Marduk who reigned two years, but proved not to be a very satisfactory ruler; he was assassinated and a general who had married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, Nergal-Sharazer succeeded him. He is sometimes shortened to Neriglissar. He rules four years and is succeeded by his son who was very unsatisfactory and was soon removed. Then Nabonidus became king. Does this mean the breast and arms represent Amel-Marduk who reigned two years? And that the belly and thighs represent Nergal-Sharazer? Certainly neither Labashi-Marduk nor Nabonidus would be worthy to represent as the great force of iron.

So when it says, You Nebuchadnezzar are the head of gold, and after you shall arise another kingdom, we must say this is either jumping ahead--there is a gap there between Nebuchadnezzar