

But it means an empire. It means a power like Nebuchadnezzar had where a group of different nations were all under his control and direction, and that it could be extended to that ~~x~~ even if your rule is not a one-man rule. You could have a senate ~~o2zax~~ or a group of leaders who controlled rather than an individual.

3. Is there a progression in the metals? Verse 39 says, "After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to you, and another third kingdom of bronze that shall bear rule over all the earth and another kingdom, a fourth strong as iron." This suggests the fourth kingdom is going to be the strongest of all! So if there is a progression, you'd think it would be a progression of strength, rather than of weakness. That would fit with history because Nebuchadnezzar ruled over an area (see map). He conquered Jerusalem about half way through his reign. Once he made a campaign down into Egypt, but he Palestine and Syria. He held Mesopotamia. The Medes were not under his control, nor the Persians south of the Medes. He did not control Asia Minor. There was much territory there he did not control.

The Persians that followed him-- Cyrus first got control over all the Medes, then he conquered Asia Minor, then he came back and conquered Babylon taking over the region Nebuchadnezzar had. Eventually his armies went clear to India conquering part of India. So the empire that followed was three times as large an area as Nebuchadnezzar's and at least twice as large in population.

Then when Alexander the Great came from Greece, this area here had not been under the Persians at all. They conquered the whole Persian empire so their area was much larger. But the area of Europe here the Romans had added still more territory to it! So if you are speaking of areas, these empires increase in size rather than diminish in size!

If you speak of population, they increase in size rather than diminish in size. So some have said there is a decrease. The second kingdom is inferior to you and there is another third kingdom which shall bear rule over all the earth, and the fourth kingdom. There must be a decrease! But there is no decrease in area, or in population. The decrease must be that Nebuchadnezzar was an absolute despot, and the next gets ~~xx~~ weaker, and the next gets weaker, etc. That idea has been advanced in recent years but there is no basis for that because Nebuchadnezzar was ~~not~~ an absolute despot even if it sounds so in his relations with them in this chapter. Nebuchadnezzar was very much bound by the laws of Babylon. In fact there has been found in Babylon a great monument put up in the central square by Hammurabi, more than 1000 years before Nebuchadnezzar, in which he shows a picture of the Sun-god giving him the laws at the top and it tells all about the Sun-god giving these laws and ordering him to put them up in the main square so that any citizen can come and read them and know exactly what his rights are.

Now today if you want to know what your rights are you pay 100 dollars to your lawyer and try to find out, and your lawyer may differ from you. But in Babylon individuals had definite rights--not ~~x~~ near as much as individuals have in this country