

Daniel make any reference to the number of toes. Since the vision in chapter 7 was not given until at least 45 years after Nebuchadnezzar had his dream it is highly questionable whether its detail can be properly carried back into the understanding of chapter 2.

Some commentators carry such an interpretation so far as to say that in the statement in 2:44, "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom," the words "those kings" refer to ten kings represented by the ten toes of the image. Since there is no definite indication in chapter 2 that the toes have a specific meaning, we must regard this interpretation as unjustified. In 2:44 the words "those kings" must refer to kings mentioned in chapter 2.

It is our purpose in the present volume to expound those features of the symbols in Daniel that can be considered as certain, to point out the relative degree of probability of suggested interpretations where difference of opinion is reasonable, and to indicate clearly the error of ideas based on unwarranted attitudes toward symbolic representations.

Additional features of the symbolism in chapter 2 and in the other portions of the book will be examined in detail when we consider the particular chapters.

## **2. The Time Perspective of Prophecy**

It is sometimes said that prophecy is history written in advance. There is an element of truth in this statement, but it is not entirely true. The purpose of the historian is simply to tell what has occurred in the past and to show the interrelation of events. The work of the prophet involves urging people to obey God's law, rebuking those who oppose what is right and comforting the godly. Though prediction is an important part of prophecy, its purpose is quite different from that of the historian.

Those who expect prophecy to be history written in advance sometimes have the idea that prophecy will tell in straight chronological order exactly what is going to happen in the future. Yet anyone who has done much reading in history (and particularly anyone who tries to write a book