

dominance of Greek culture. These areas had rulers who exerted a considerable amount of absolute power. Historical evidence does not show any characteristic difference among the four empires with regard to the power of their rulers.

It is quite evident that the four metals do not represent descending value or descending importance. The first three metals simply indicate the fact that there would be very great differences between these empires, and indeed there were as regards language, culture, and ways of handling many aspects of government.

There is no special significance to the particular metal used to indicate each of the first three empires. The case of the fourth empire is different. There it is stated that the iron has a specific meaning (v. 40), and also that the mixture of iron and clay in the feet has a specific meaning (v. 41).

Thus the first part of Nebuchadnezzar's vision consisted of a prediction that four powerful regimes, of which the first was already in existence, would rise successively to power, and that the fourth would be extremely strong and very destructive.

The Second Part of the Dream

The Fourth Kingdom to Have a Distinctive Second Phase

Up to this point each part of the statue was represented as composed entirely of one metal. Now it is revealed that the fourth kingdom will have a second phase, quite different from its first part. It is declared that the feet of the statue were "partly of iron and partly of baked clay" (2:33b). The interpretation devotes three verses to the meaning of this change:

(41) Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay.

(42) As the toes were partly iron and