

remain there. This was true of the Jews, the majority of whom did not join the group that returned in 538 B.C., or the later one that returned with Ezra in 458 B.C. This condition of intermixture, established during the first kingdom and largely continued during the second kingdom, was greatly increased at the beginning of the third kingdom, since Alexander the Great desired to join the Persian and Greek peoples into one nation. He himself married a Persian princess and induced hundreds of his associates to take a similar step.

In the early days of the fourth kingdom one of the factors that enabled Rome to become strong was its ability to assimilate conquered peoples, so that its power was not entirely dependent on the few who could claim descent from the ancient Romans. Intermixture of nations was distinctive of the Roman empire all through its history, though it became far more pronounced when barbarian invaders entered its territory in large numbers after its power declined. Since intermixture of peoples was common in all four kingdoms it can hardly by itself be the new feature of this second phase of the fourth kingdom, though it must certainly be an important part of the situation at that time.

A second suggested interpretation is that these words point to intermarriage between rulers of different kingdoms. This also would not be at all new. Babylonian rulers frequently intermarried with ruling families of other regions. The very foundation of the second kingdom involved intermarriage between the ruling families of the Persians and the Medes. During the third kingdom intermarriage between rulers of different sections was very common. Intermarriage between ruling families can hardly be taken as the distinctive feature of the second phase of the fourth kingdom.

A third suggestion has been made in recent years, that the introduction of miry clay between the parts of the iron represents the rise of democracy, weakening the former monarchical structure.

This interpretation must be considered as highly questionable. While democracy has been greatly extended in the modern world, it was by no means unknown in ancient