

Roman empire between A.D. 400 and 600. Violence and brutality existed in great amount, but mostly on the part of the invading tribes rather than of the weakened Roman empire.

The Third Part of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (2:34-35, 44-45)

The third part of Nebuchadnezzar's dream differed from its earlier parts in that it was dynamic rather than static. The first two parts merely described a statue made of various materials arranged in an unusual way. Without the interpretation we would have no way of knowing that this statue represented a continuing series of events. Now, however, things began to move. While Nebuchadnezzar was looking, he saw a stone that was cut out of a mountain without hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them, so that all the various materials of the statue were mixed together and completely pulverized, becoming like tiny bits of grain, and then were carried away by the wind so that not a trace of them remained. But the stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

The interpretation of this part of the dream is rather brief. Daniel said that through this dream God had made known to Nebuchadnezzar what would take place in the future. He said that in the days of these kings the God of heaven would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed, and that this kingdom would not be left for another people (v. 44); it would crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but would itself endure forever.

This dynamic change was not to occur until long after Daniel's time, since Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom and each of the three subsequent ones must first run its course. This is graphically represented by the fact that the stone strikes the image on its feet. If one desires to knock over a statue and destroy it, he might aim his blow at its head, its chest, or its legs, but it would hardly be natural to throw a rock at its feet. Under the natural principle that statements that are quite different from what would normally be expected are