

But when it comes to special revelations like this we do not expect to have them in our day. However, we do have several instances in the Bible where He gave truth that was very important for people of that time and sometimes that was very important for people in later times, as in this case. You can imagine what assurance this gave to the people of God. Here were the people of Israel who had been taken captive by Neb. Here they were subject to Neb. Many of the godly people among them saw that the Temple at Jerusalem had been destroyed. They saw that all they had considered to be representative of the fact that God was living and real and powerful was gone. It was hard to keep your faith under these circumstances.

God gave this vision to Neb. to tell Neb. something about the future, but still more to tell His people about the future. and to tell His people, Here is a great king; he is a head of gold. Tremendously powerful. The people of Israel seemed to be just like a little worm that he could kick out of the way. Just a tiny part of his whole great empire. Here is Neb., this great powerful ruler, who rules over most of the then ~~xxx~~ known world, but he says, Neb.'s kingdom is going to perish. It will come to an end, and be succeeded by a different one.

He calls Heb. the head of gold. Then he says, After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee. This kingdom was represented by a metal of less value than the gold, but perhaps somewhat stronger than the gold, for the brass or bronze things that they made in those days were some of them very strong ~~xxxxx~~ indeed. The KJV translates this "brass"; I've heard it seriously questioned recently whether brass was even known at that early time. It is more likely bronze would be the correct translation here. Today we think of brass as something that is shiny, not particularly strong. We are more apt to think of bronze as something that is strong. Actually it is very hard with physical terms like this to know exactly what they meant in ancient times. Because nobody can go back and say, Show me what you meant when you used this word! In addition, if a person is not a metallurgist, or a scientist able to determine the exact details on such matters, as this, his language is apt to be language generally understood, rather than the specific, accurate term. I suggested in this new edition of the Scofield Bible that we substitute the word bronze for brass, so if you have a copy of it you may have noticed the word bronze is used here. In the margin it says "KJV brass". I think that is probably scientifically more correct in this case; it certainly fits the figure better, too. Because brass we think of as something weak and shiny. But this next kingdom was a stronger kingdom, actually than Neb.'s kingdom, a kingdom that destroyed Neb.'s kingdom. So when the Israelites saw Neb.'s kingdom destroyed, they thought this is wonderful isn't it. A new kingdom has come in. This new kingdom which is represented by the arms and shoulders of this statue was more more friendly to them than Neb. had been. It's leader, Cyrus, gave the order that the Jews should be permitted to go back to Jerusalem, to rebuild the Temple. They must have rejoiced that this new kingdom had overcome Neb.'s kingdom, and some of them