



**The World Before Christ, an LDS  
Perspective**  
**(4000 B.C. – 0 B.C.)**

**VOLUME 1**

**Epoch 1** – 4000 B.C. – 2344 B.C.

The Atonement, The Creation Adam & Eve, Garden of Eden, Tree of Life, The Fall of Man

**Epoch 2** – 2344 B.C. – 1900 B.C.

Abraham & Lot, Abraham & Isaac, Land of Egypt, Egyptian Mythology, The Abrahamic Covenant

**Epoch 3** – 1900 B.C. – 1570 B.C.

Jacob, Laban, The Twelve Tribes of Israel, Joseph in Egypt

**Epoch 4** – 1570 B.C. – 1095 B.C.

Moses, Israel in Bondage, The Plagues of Egypt, The Exodus of Israel

**Epoch 5** – 1095 B.C. – 800 B.C.

The Reign of King Saul, Coronation of Prince David

**Epoch 6** – 800 B.C. – 587 B.C.

Capture of the Ten Tribes, The Fall of Jerusalem, Lehi/Nephi Migration to America

**Epoch 7** – 587 B.C. – 400 B.C.

Daniel, Rebuilding the Temple, Queen Ester of Persia, Ezra the Scribe, Nehemiah the Cup Bearer

**Epoch 8** – 400 B.C. – 175 B.C.

Alexander the Great, The Hellenization of Judea, The Punic Wars, Seven Wonders of the World

**Epoch 9** – 175 B.C. – 0 B.C.

The Maccabean Revolt, The Roman Republic, Herod the Great, The Roman Civil War

(Excerpt on next page)

**EXERPT:**  
**Daniel Among the Babylonians**  
**The World Before Christ, an LDS Perspective, Volume 1.**  
**"Daniel Among the Babylonians" is found on pages 247-252.**

Daniel arrived in Babylon eight years before the migration of the 10,000 Exiles who came in 598 B.C. (see map 13 in the Appendix) This was because he was selected while still a youth to be personally trained in the ways of King Nebuchadnezzar. Bible story books usually describe Daniel as merely a child when he was first brought to Babylon, but Dr. Clarke in his Bible Commentary suggests the word *yeladim* should be translated "youths" or "young men" and not "children." It was in the year 606 B.C., while Nebuchadnezzar was still acting as co-regent with his father and serving as general of the Babylonian army, that he pushed Egypt back sufficiently far to place Judah under tribute. During this operation he took a few of the vessels from the temple as a token of conquest. He also decided to take a small body of hostages. Ashpenaz, governor of the king's palace, was told to select a number of these young captive Jews who could be trained in the language and courtly ways of the Babylonians. Among others, the steward selected Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, all of whom were given new names: Belteshazzar for Daniel; Shadrach for Hananiah; Meshach for Mishael; and Abed-nego for Azariah. The king said they were to be nourished and trained for three years and then brought before him for examination.

And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. (Daniel 1:3-6)

After being taken to Babylon, the four young Jews frightened their custodial officer by refusing to eat or drink the rich rations furnished to them on orders of the king. This officer had already gained a great affection for young Daniel. When this sudden stubborn streak appeared, he frankly told the young Jews that if they persisted in this reluctant attitude, "then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king!" Daniel did not wish to appear stubborn. The reasons for Daniel's refusal to eat the food may have included the following: (1) some of the foods used by the Babylonians were likely among the items forbidden for consumption in the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14); (2) Babylonians, like other heathens, ate beasts that had not been properly drained of blood (Leviticus 3:17 and 7:26-27) and thereby violated the Mosaic Law; and (3) the heathens consecrated the food at their feasts by offering up part of the food and drink as sacrifices to their gods. Consuming such food would be participating in the worship of false gods. Moreover, food was viewed as contaminated and unclean according to Jewish law when it was prepared by anyone considered unclean, such as the heathens (Leviticus 7:19-21). He was strictly loyal to the Lord and refused to be involved in any practice associated with anything unclean or idolatrous.

Daniel simply asked that they be fed wholesome vegetables or the kind of "pulse" such as wheat, barley, and rye, to which they were accustomed. He said the steward could judge for himself after a ten-day trial whether or not this was better for them than the king's fine wines and rich foods. The test was conducted and sure enough it proved to be a tremendous success, for the steward agreed that if Daniel and his friends continued looking as healthy and robust as they did at the end of the test, then there would be no reason for him to be criticized or punished.

Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. (Daniel 1:11-15)

During the three years of training prescribed for these four Jewish youths they demonstrated phenomenal capacities, aptitudes and skills. When they were brought before the king in 603 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar personally examined them and was astonished. He found them far superior in factual knowledge, wit and wisdom to his magicians and astrologers. Nebuchadnezzar therefore assigned these four young men to be counted among his "wise men." This

was supposed to be the highest possible compliment, but the next thing the young Jews knew, their apparent good fortune was about to cost them their lives.

### The Famous Dream of King Nebuchadnezzar

"In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar... (he) dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him." Nebuchadnezzar had ascended the throne in the year 604 B.C. This incident we are about to relate would have occurred in 602 B.C., just a year or so after the Jewish young men had graduated into "wise men." It would seem from the Bible account that Nebuchadnezzar was troubled by some sort of nightmare which he could not remember after he had awakened. The king called in the astrologers, sorcerers, and wise men, but they told him they obviously could not interpret the king's dream until he told them what it was. He challenged them to conjure up the dream for him, and when they could not, he was so enraged he sentenced all of them to execution.

The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain. (Daniel 2:10-13)

When the captain of the guard came to arrest the young Jews, Daniel asked him what crime was charged against them. Apparently he was completely unaware of what had happened. As soon as Daniel learned the reason for the king's wrath he hurried in before Nebuchadnezzar and petitioned the king to delay the execution until the Lord could be asked about it. Daniel took this action exclusively on faith.

Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. (Daniel 2:17-18)

All four of them immediately began praying to the Lord in the greatest anxiety hoping the Lord would hear their plea. In due time Daniel was shown both the king's dream and also its meaning. Daniel and his fellows offered a prayer of praise to the Lord for extending to them His mercies in obtaining not only what the dream was, but also its interpretation. Once he had the information, Daniel hurried to the captain of the guard. He urged the captain to go in before the king and plead for the life of the wise men, for he, Daniel, had the interpretation of the king's dream as he had requested. As he was brought before the king, Daniel's opening speech is a classic expression of humble self-confidence, well worth repeating.

The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;

*As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes (the condemned men, including Daniel and his friends) that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.*

*Thou, O king, sawest, and beheld a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. (Daniel 2:27-35)*

From the king's subsequent behavior it would appear that as Daniel spoke, the memory of his troublesome night vision returned to him, and he knew for a certainty that Daniel was blessed with a most marvelous and miraculous power. Daniel proceeded immediately to interpret the dream. He told the king the head of gold was his own kingdom, magnificent and glorious in all its dimensions. The silver breast and arms represented a second kingdom, the belly and

thighs of brass a third kingdom, and the iron legs a fourth kingdom which would disintegrate into many kingdoms represented by the feet and toes of iron and clay. In the "latter days," in the days when all these rulers of the splintered kingdoms should prevail, the Lord would set up His own kingdom.

*Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.*

*And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure. (Daniel 2:37-45)*

So that was it! As Nebuchadnezzar heard this swift, incisive interpretation of what he had dreamed, he was overwhelmed with amazement. Without any regret whatever, he came down from his magnificent throne and fell to his knees before the young foreigner.

*The king answered unto Daniel, and said, of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret. (Daniel 2:47)*

He commanded his attendants to offer Daniel an oblation and sprinkle his hair and clothes with sweet perfume. At this time or shortly thereafter Nebuchadnezzar ordered that Daniel should be given extravagant gifts and he appointed him ruler over the city of Babylon and the surrounding district. The king also placed him in charge of the so called "wise men" of Babylon whose lives he had saved. Once again, Daniel displayed his great faith. With such an overwhelming responsibility, he did not plead his incapacity because of youthfulness or inexperience. Daniel once more relied upon God to give him sufficient wisdom to administer these complicated affairs with the zeal of Joseph in Egypt. In fact, he wisely asked the king to let his three young Jewish associates perform the actual management duties while he "sat in the gate of the king." This was where the king rendered judgments each day and therefore this last phrase is interpreted to mean that henceforth Daniel served as "the confidant and counsellor of the king."

For many centuries scholars tried to force the meaning of this dream so that it would seem to be fulfilled in the meridian of time with the first coming of Christ. They thought the stone was the setting up of God's kingdom by the Savior and the Apostles. Had this been the true intent of the prophecy then the previous kingdoms would have to be accounted for in the events of earlier centuries, between the time of Nebuchadnezzar and the time of Christ. What they overlooked was Daniel's statement that this vision pertained to things God would do in the "latter days." He was referring to the occasion when God would establish His great kingdom for the last time, never again to be uprooted, and when it would gradually move out across the planet to eventually replace every government on the face of the earth with a divinely inspired theocracy. This will not be achieved until the Millennial reign but the foundation for it is being established right now. In fact, at our present stage of history, the entire prophetic implication of Nebuchadnezzar's dream is in the final phase of its fulfillment. The following is an analysis of the king's dream.

**THE HEAD OF GOLD:** Babylonian Empire, 605-539 B.C.

**THE SILVER BUST:** Persian-Median Empire, 539-331 B.C.

**THE BELLY OF BRASS:** Macedonian-Greek Empire, 331-161 B.C.

**THE LEGS OF IRON:** Roman Empire, 161 B.C. to 395 A.D., then it was divided into the Eastern Roman Empire (with its capital at Constantinople) and the Western Roman Empire (with its capital at Rome). The Eastern Empire came to an end in 1453 A.D. with its conquest by the Ottoman Turks. It subsequently disintegrated into many independent countries. Western Roman Empire tried to delay its disintegration by launching the Holy Roman Empire which may be

dated with the crowning of Charlemagne of France in 800 A.D., or as some prefer, with the crowning of Otto I of Germany as emperor by Pope John XII in 962 A.D. In either event, the attempt failed, and what fragments of power remained were abandoned by the last holder of the title, Francis II of Austria in 1806 when he was defeated by Napoleon.

**THE FEET AND TOES OF IRON AND CLAY:** Since the days of the Roman Empire no attempt to unite all nations has succeeded though many ambitious rulers have attempted it. This remains true today. The process of the nations is more toward fragmentation and the setting up of numerous independent nations than uniting into larger ones. Daniel later saw a temporary but fierce dictator of many nations rise up to smash God's adherents, but that too will pass. (Daniel 7:23-25)

**THE STONE CUT WITHOUT HANDS:** This represents the restored Kingdom of God in 1830 which is presently flourishing. It is laying the foundation for a Millennial world-wide theocracy. The Lord specifically identified it as the "stone" of Nebuchadnezzar's dream when he made the following statement:

*The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth. (D&C 65:2)*

Rudger Clawson elaborated on Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream:

*The Christian world of today is witness of the fact that the very things which the great image stood for have occurred so far as time has gone. History certifies to the fact that King Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold. The Medes and Persians, an inferior kingdom to Babylon, were the arms and breast of silver. The Macedonian kingdom, under Alexander the Great, was the belly and thighs of brass; and the Roman kingdom under the Caesars was the legs of iron. For mark you, later on the kingdom, or empire of Rome, was divided. The head of the government in one division was at Rome and the head of the government in the other division was at Constantinople. So these two great divisions represented the legs of iron. Finally, the Roman empire was broken up into smaller kingdoms, represented by the feet and toes of iron and clay. (In Conference Report, April 1930, page 32)*

President Spencer W. Kimball further clarifies the prophecy with the following explanation:

*Rome would be replaced by a group of nations of Europe represented by the toes of the image. With the history of the world delineated in brief, now came the real revelation. Daniel said: 'And in the days of these kings (that is, the group of European nations) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed....' This is a revelation concerning the history of the world, when one world power would supersede another until there would be numerous smaller kingdoms to share the control of the earth. And it was in the days of these kings that power would not be given to men, but the God of heaven would set up a kingdom—the kingdom of God upon the earth, which should never be destroyed nor left to other people. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was restored in 1830 after numerous revelations from the divine source; and this is the kingdom, set up by the God of heaven, that would never be destroyed nor superseded, and the stone cut out of the mountain without hands that would become a great mountain and would fill the whole earth. (In Conference Report, April 1976, page 10)*

Nebuchadnezzar had his famous dream in 602 B.C. Therefore, when the first Exiles arrived in Babylon from Judea in 598 B.C., Daniel and his three Jewish companions already had been administering the capital district of Babylon for four years. This may account for the rather liberal treatment the Exiles received. After Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem in 598 B.C., he appointed Zedekiah to be king and returned home thinking peace would now prevail in that troubled land. When we consider the prominent positions of Daniel and his friends in Babylon, it can be seen that the Lord had everything beautifully arranged for a fair and generous treatment of the vassal kingdom of Judah if Zedekiah and his counselors had just possessed the good sense to listen to God's inspired prophets. Jeremiah paraded the streets of Jerusalem with a yoke about his neck, crying, "Be ye subject to Nebuchadnezzar and live!" Yet Zedekiah behaved himself opposite to what the Lord wanted and he went off toward Egypt, and the second devastating siege of Jerusalem soon followed.