

Daniel 2:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

Analysis

Daniel begins interpretation: "And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth." This verse skips detailed description of silver and brass kingdoms (verses 32-33 already described them), focusing on their relationship to Babylon. "Inferior to thee" doesn't mean militarily weaker but spiritually/morally inferior. Medo-Persia was larger and richer than Babylon but lacked Babylon's absolute monarchy—power was distributed among nobles, reducing royal authority. This "inferiority" continues the descending-value pattern.

"Another third kingdom of brass" identifies Greece, which "shall bear rule over all the earth." Alexander's conquests created the most geographically extensive empire to that point, spreading Greek culture from Spain to India. The phrase "all the earth" uses hyperbole common in ancient texts, meaning the known civilized world. Yet it accurately captures Alexander's unprecedented reach—he conquered territory no previous empire had united. Greek language and culture's spread fulfilled this prophecy remarkably.

This verse's brevity regarding Persia and Greece (compared to later detailed prophecies in chapters 7-8, 11) teaches that God reveals truth progressively. Initial revelation provides outline; later revelation adds detail. Nebuchadnezzar needed only general overview; Daniel received increasingly specific prophecies as time progressed. This pattern continues in Scripture—Old Testament prophecies sketch

Messiah generally; New Testament reveals Christ specifically. Progressive revelation demonstrates God's pedagogical wisdom, providing information suited to recipients' needs and contexts.

Historical Context

History precisely fulfilled this succession: Medo-Persia conquered Babylon (539 BC), ruling until Greece under Alexander conquered them (331 BC). Persian Empire was indeed "inferior" to Babylon in governmental structure—Persian kings shared power with nobility (seven princes, Esther 1:14), unlike Babylon's absolute monarchy. Greece under Alexander achieved wider geographical extent than any previous empire, bearing rule "over all the earth" in ancient understanding. This historical fulfillment over 274 years (605-331 BC) validated Daniel's prophetic authority and established confidence in unfulfilled prophecies.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What does 'inferior' meaning morally rather than militarily teach about God's values differing from human measurements of success?
2. How does Greece ruling 'over all the earth' demonstrate the progressive expansion but moral decline of successive empires?
3. In what ways does progressive revelation—outline first, details later—demonstrate God's pedagogical wisdom in revealing truth suited to recipients' needs?

Interlinear Text

וּבֵתֶךָ וְ	תִּקַּן וּם	וּמִלְכָּו	אֲחֵרִי	אֲרָפָא:	מִנְּךָ וְ	וּמִלְכָּו
And after	thee shall arise	kingdom	and another	inferior	to thee	kingdom
H870	H6966	H4437	H317	H772	H4481	H4437
תְּלִיתִי א	אֲחֵרִי	דָּ י	נְחֹשׁ א	דָּ י	תִּשְׁלֹט	בְּכָל
third	and another	H1768	of brass	H1768	which shall bear rule	over all
H8523	H317		H5174		H7981	H3606

אֲרָפָא:

inferior

H772

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 2:32 (Parallel theme): This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,

Daniel 10:20 (Parallel theme): Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.

Daniel 8:20 (Kingdom): The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia.