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The United Stage: Rome
Dani'el 2: 40

The united stage: Rome DIG: What was different about this Fourth Empire than all the rest? How did they treat conquered peoples? Were they stronger or weaker than the Greek Empire? How long does this element of imperialism last? How did it end?

REFLECT: Are you contending with a bully right now? How so? What stage of life are you in? A united stage? A divided stage? A Kingdom of God stage? If you're not in the Kingdom of God stage, how can you get free and get back to the Kingdom of God Stage?

ADONAI begins to reveal to Dani'el the initial revelation regarding the Times of the Gentiles (see **Ao – The Times of the Gentiles**)**. He provides an initial overview of the four empires that will govern this period. As the book progresses, God's revelation becomes increasingly specific, reaching their climax in Chapter 12.**



Dani'el introduced **the Fourth Empire** with the following description: Finally, **a Fourth Empire will appear on the earth, it** shall be as **strong as iron – for iron breaks and smashes everything – and as iron breaks things into**

pieces, so it will crush and shatter all the others (Dani'el 2:40). In the United Stage, **the Fourth Empire** embodied the Roman Empire. While no verse in **Dani'el** uses the word "Rome" as clearly as it uses the name "Persia" or "Greece," Rome is clearly in view here since the historical record shows the Greece was eventually conquered by Rome. However, it would be incorrect to refer to the entire **Fourth Empire** as "the Roman Empire," since, according to **Dani'el**, this **empire** would undergo **five distinct stages**. Only this initial phase should be called the Roman Empire.

This **Empire** was really unique, and what was really different about the Roman Empire, that was not true of the other three, was its policy of **imperialism**. When Babylonia conquered another nation, they did not send Babylonians in to rule the subjugated people. The Babylonians put leaders from the conquered country in charge, but they ruled under Babylonian authority. For example when Babylon destroyed Judah, they didn't put a Babylonian in charge of the province of Judah, they put Gedaliah, a Jew, to rule under Babylonian authority. The Medo-Persians followed the same policy. When they conquered another nation, they did not send Medes or Persians to rule the subjugated people. They put leaders from the conquered country to rule over their own people. So under the Medes and the Persians, for example, people like Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, who were Jews, ruled Isra'el under Medo-Persian authority. When the Greeks conquered, they followed the same procedure, and the Jewish high priest became the ruler under Greek authority. But that changed with Rome. When Rome conquered a nation or a territory, they sent Romans in to rule. That is why in the New Covenant you read about Roman procurators such as Pilot, Felix and Festus. There was a new policy not followed by the previous three empires, the policy of imperialism, which makes it different from the others. This element of imperialism continues through all of its five stages.[85]

The Roman Empire dominated the world from the defeat of Carthage in 146 BC to the division of the Western and Eastern empires in 395 BC, approximately five hundred years. The last Roman emperor ruled in the West until 476 BC, and the Eastern Division of the empire continued until 1453 AD when the Ottoman soldiers armed with cannons, broke down the walls of Constantinople and occupied the capital city. It seems as though the two **iron legs** of **the statue** represent the Western and Eastern division of the Roman Empire.[86]

Dani'el pointed out that this first stage would be as **strong as iron**. Just as **iron** has the strength to break other metals such as **gold** (**to see link click Ay – The**

First Empire: A Head of Gold), **silver** (see **Az – The Second Empire: Chest and Arms of Silver**), and **bronze** (see **Ba – The Third Empire: Belly and Thighs of Bronze**) **into pieces**, so would this stage **crush** the previous three empires. The Aramaic term (see **Ac – Dani'el from a Messianic Jewish Perspective: languages**) for **shatters**, *chashal*, implies that it happens through a blow from a hammer. The term is used as a participle, which points to continuous action. Therefore, Rome ruled the nations that it conquered with an **iron** hand, and like a huge **iron** hammer, **shattering** all who resisted its will.

Nothing could better characterize the Roman power than this. Everything was **crushed** before it. Rome in its cruel conquest, swallowed up the lands and peoples that had been parts of the three previous empires and assimilated their lands and peoples into itself. The Roman empire beat down the establishment of all other kingdoms; abolishing their independence, and bringing them into the most extreme subjection; humbling the pride, subjecting the will, using the property, and trampling upon the power and dignity of other countries. It was by this cruel domination that Rome was distinguished from all the rest; for many centuries, the fruit of a thousand battles were fought in which millions of men were slain. Like a battering-ram, it made room for itself, by continual successive blows; and only stopped with no resistance was offered.[87] So the distinctiveness of this first stage, namely its continual **iron** strength, would ultimately outweigh any other accomplishments.

Historians tell us that Paul's description of the Roman world is no exaggeration (see the commentary on **Romans Ak – The Pagan Gentile**). Notice, however, that none of these great empires takes center stage in **Nebuchadnezzar's dream**. Thus, not only **the king**, but all the other emperors are regulated to the role of spectators **(2:31)**. The centerpiece of the vision is **the Kingdom that God** establishes.[88]

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for being a wise and wonderful **Sovereign Ruler** over all the kings of the earth, overall in heaven and in earth. In one small sense **You** rule like the first three kingdoms of the statue, in that though **You** are the absolute sovereign ruler of the world, yet **You** allow others to rule territories of land on earth. In a more important way, **You** are like **the Fourth Empire's** ruling in an imperialistic way, in that **You** desire to rule as **the Lord** and **Master** in each person's heart! Ruling in someone's heart is so much more important than ruling over kingdoms. **Shepherd-King** is how **You** rule. **You** have absolute authority and **You** are **the King** over all, yet **You** are also gentle, kind and wise as a **Shepherd**.*

*Each of the rulers in **the Four Empires** of the statue ruled by conquering lands with military power and strength, by using force to subdue their enemies.*

***You** do not use **Your** power in any way that could ever be called cruel. **You** are merciful, gracious and wise in how **You** use **Your** power and authority.*
Then ADONAI passed before him, and proclaimed, "ADONAI, ADONAI, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth, showing mercy to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means leaving the guilty unpunished, but bringing the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, to the third and fourth generation (Exodus 34:6-7).

*As the **Shepherd-King**, **You** desire to rule in each person's heart, to be their **Lord** and **Savior**. **You** are such a fantastic **Shepherd- King**. **You** guide **Your** sheep so tenderly, watching over each one with such care. **ADONAI is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His Name's sake (Psalms 23:1-3).***

*Heaven is for family – **God the Father, Messiah Yeshua, the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** and all **You** adopted as **children** because of their **trust** in **You**. **But whoever did receive Him, those trusting in His name, to these He gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12). You** choose to include in **Your** family those who **trust** in **You**. **Amen, amen I tell you, whoever hears My word and trusts the One who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed over from death into life (John 5:24). You** are such an amazing eternal **Sovereign Ruler** of the universe. All praise and glory and honor to our wonderful **Shepherd-King** who is also our wonderful heavenly **Father**. In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*