

Chapter Four

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

In these next two chapters we will be looking at the prophecies in Daniel Chapters 2 and 7 wherein we find no mention of Judah or Israel, which is interesting seeing as this portion **of God's Word from Daniel 2:4** through to the end of Chapter 7 was originally written in Aramaic and not Hebrew. Although the Israelite nations are absent from these portions of Scripture, the bigger picture that the dream and visions are symbolic of set the stage wherein the destiny of Judah, Israel and the Kingdom of God is played out. **This knowledge will help us in understanding the fulfilment of God's Promises for these three kingdoms.**

Because these passages contain much that is highly symbolic, both Chapter 2 and Chapter 7 have had a history of controversy as to their meaning. Both passages speak of the latter days: Daniel Chapter 2 prophesies the procession of the Gentile kingdoms that would rule **in the Middle East from Daniel's time and Daniel Chapter 7 gives us insight into what** will be prevailing over the whole world prior to the culmination of the Kingdom of God. From both these portions of Scripture we find our first prophetic glimpse of the latter days and the end of the age.

Leaving Chapter 7 for the time being, we shall begin with Daniel addressing King Nebuchadnezzar in reply to his request to understand a great vision he had seen in a dream.

Daniel 2:31-45

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. 32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, 33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. 34 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 35 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 threshingfloors; 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.

36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. 38 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. 39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

40 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.

41 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. 42 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. 43 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. 44 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. 45 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.

Let us now be careful as we handle God's Word. Most contemporary prophecy commentators declare that there are four kingdoms mentioned in this passage, the last being Rome which they believe will somehow be reconstructed in the last days. Proponents of this theory interpret the iron of the legs and the iron of the feet and toes from Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the statue to be the continuation of the Roman Empire.

Another popular interpretation also declares that there are four kingdoms, but somehow makes the breakup of Alexander the Great's empire as the fourth Kingdom. The continuation of the Greek culture and language through much of the Roman Empire is offered as 'proof' that the Greek kingdom is still with us.

The key to understanding Daniel's interpretation of the dream requires nothing but a careful attention to detail and a strict adherence to the basic laws of grammar. Now, please forgive me for being a little tedious with this portion of Scripture. There is just so much confusion over the meaning of this passage that I have found it necessary to labour the point somewhat.

When Daniel begins to interpret the dream to Nebuchadnezzar, he addresses the king **saying these words, "Thou art this head of gold" (verse 38). We could also write it this way, "You are the golden head."** The head is the subject noun and the element of gold is the adjective describing the quality and content of the head.

If we go back to the description of the dream itself we find that each of the five body parts of the statue is a noun (head; chest and arms; belly and thighs; legs; feet and toes) and the elements (gold, silver, bronze, iron and clay) are the descriptive adjectives.

Daniel 2:32-33

This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, 33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

Daniel 2:39

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

Each body part represents a kingdom. Verse 32 has "his belly and his thighs of brass" and we see in verse 39 it mentions a "third kingdom of brass". The belly and thighs are brass and the third kingdom is brass. Thus the belly and thighs are the kingdom. This is letting us know that the body parts are representing the kingdoms and the elements are serving as adjectives to describe the character and content of the respective kingdoms. The brass is describing the kingdom. This use of the different elements in the form of an adjective is consistent all through the giving of the interpretation.

Daniel 2:40

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.

In verse 40 we have the description of the fourth kingdom, where the iron is elaborated on and it is explained that the iron represents strength.

The feet and toes are the last body part to be mentioned and they represent a kingdom that shall be divided.

Daniel 2:41-43

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. 42 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. 43 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.

The mixture of iron and clay is more fully explained in verses 41-43 where it is explained that the kingdom's mixture is symbolic of the kingdom's nature being partly strong and partly "broken", or "fragile" or brittle as it is otherwise translated.

In every instance the elements (gold, silver, brass, iron and clay) are ALL adjectives within the sentences, describing the qualities of the kingdoms. It is the body parts that are the subject of each sentence and thus are the representatives of each kingdom. To remind us, here is the description of the statue.

Daniel 2:32-33

This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, 33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

The body of the statue was divided into the following five parts, the head, the chest, the belly and thighs, the legs, and finally the feet and toes; each part representing a kingdom, each with its own description. Five body parts, five kingdoms.

A common objection to the five kingdom paradigm is brought about by the use of the word **"Finally" at the beginning of verse 2:40 in three New International Versions of the Bible** (NIV, NIRV, NIVUK). I looked up nearly 50 other English versions and no other translation does this. I further discovered that there is no Aramaic word representing **"finally" in the original text to support such an addition being made. Check it out in Strong's or any other comprehensive concordance. To me it is obviously an editor's bias toward a four kingdom paradigm that has led to this abuse of God's Word. Incidentally,** while the NIV often makes verses easier to read, I have personally found too many **problems with its use of what they call "dynamic equivalence" as its method of translation.** It really should be regarded as a paraphrase rather than a translation. As a paraphrase I have sometimes found it helpful, but it also has been found to omit many words and important verses found in the KJV and NKJV. In this instance, the most unfortunate **addition of the word "finally" to this particular passage has provided a classic example of the NIV's unreliability.**

The emphasis many place on the mention of the phrase **"the fourth kingdom" in verse 2:40** is also used to support the four kingdom interpretation. They note that the third kingdom is numbered and the fourth kingdom is numbered but no fifth kingdom is numbered. From this they assume there is no fifth kingdom. In placing significance upon

the fact that these particular kingdoms are numbered, they fail to account for the fact that the first kingdom is not numbered and neither is the second kingdom. In reality, three out of the five kingdoms are not numbered. Whether the kingdoms were numbered or not clearly has no bearing on their existence.

There is one other complication that as long as I am being pedantic I may as well deal with while we are on this subject. The Hebrew language and the Aramaic from which this **passage is translated, do not use the words ‘a’ and ‘the’ as we do in English: the ‘a’ being the indefinite article and the ‘the’ being the definite article. (Note: Daniel 2:4 right through to Daniel 7:28 was written in Aramaic, not Hebrew)**

In the Hebrew and Aramaic languages there are no indefinite articles. Whenever a noun is indefinite, the context defines what is meant. To complicate matters more, when a noun **is used as a proper noun, it doesn’t have** a definite article either. So whether it is the kingdom, a kingdom, this kingdom, that kingdom, etc., is left to editors and translators to determine the meaning from the context. The absence of the article, either indefinite or definite, is apparent when one compares various English translations, for the different translators have chosen a wide variety of pronouns in their rendering of Daniel 2:40-41, **many of them even inserting the words “fourth kingdom” into verse 41 when there is nothing in the original to support such an addition.** Check it out yourself. Go to biblegateway.com and type in the verse, choose your default Bible translation and when the page comes up, click on the link for all English translations which will be beneath the verse and you will see what I mean. Be sure to do only one verse at a time or the option for all translations will not appear. Check out interlinear renderings also to confirm these findings.

The word ‘this’ is correctly used by the NIV in verse 2:41, but because they added the word ‘finally’ to the previous verse they completely changed the meaning. To me it is contrived to present a version that fits with their preconceived interpretation of the end-times. In doing so they have created untold confusion. Most unfortunate. This is heady stuff I know, however, sometimes the truth has to be diligently pursued and every stumbling stone **removed. Note: the above is not my opinion, it’s simply what I discovered and the evidence is there for all to see.** Again, check it out.

That aside, to accept a four kingdom interpretation requires one to ignore the laws of grammar common to all languages and make the iron a kingdom rather than the legs and ignore the fact that the iron is the symbolic descriptive element of the legs, and the iron is but one of two descriptive elements of the final kingdom of feet and toes. The fact that the kingdom represented by the legs, and the kingdom represented by the feet and toes are both described as having the element of iron is coincidental and only descriptive of **the reality that they both had the strength that the iron represented. Here’s hoping you** are not overwhelmed by my pedantics.

The subject of the whole passage of the dream and its interpretation is the procession of the kingdoms which were to follow the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who is identified as the head and each body part that followed represented the kingdoms that we will now show

from the historical record, knowing that the kiss of history upon prophecy is the God given proof of a correct understanding.

Deuteronomy 18:22 NKJV

. . . when a prophet speaks in the Name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously . . .

It will become clear that many interpreters of this passage have spoken presumptuously as we will now look at what actually has come to pass.

It has been noted among scholars that Bible prophecies are Middle East centred and indeed they are. It may be debated that perhaps the dream of Nebuchadnezzar is Babylon centred rather than Jerusalem centred and I am inclined to agree. But in reality it becomes a moot point, for as we follow the history we will discover that all the empires as they succeeded each other, conquered and subdued both the city of Babylon and the city of Jerusalem AND the capitol city of the previous empire. So with regard to this prophecy, **it really doesn't matter which city is used as the centre as it applies any which way. And besides, we understand that an empire's defeat and final capitulation is complete when its capitol is conquered and its government done away with.**

Whilst we will find further Biblical confirmation of this procession of the kingdoms from Babylon to the Medes and the Persians, to the Greeks and then to the Romans when we **take a thorough look at Daniel Chapter 8 and deal with Daniel's vision of the Ram and the Goat** in Chapter Seven of this study, there is also confusion that has been sowed into the historical records that we will need to confront.

There seems to be total agreement among scholars regarding the procession of the kingdoms: from Babylon, to the Medes and the Persians, to the Greeks, but when it comes to the Roman Empire and the kingdom that follows it, which will be present on earth when Jesus returns, there seems to be a general lack of attention to details. We need no longer be subject to ignorance regarding this period of history. It is well documented and supported by both archaeological evidence and ancient writings and, as I have mentioned, the information is now available online via your favourite search engine. Type this link into your browser:

history.com/topics/ancient-history/byzantine-empire

Searching for The History of the Byzantine Empire will provide literally dozens of articles that will also confirm the historical details I am about to share. You may be wondering what on earth the Byzantine Empire has to do with the Roman Empire. That will become apparent as we continue.

What follows is a brief account of the Roman Empire and its demise condensed from the history links suggested above.

Many prophecy commentators and historians, when they speak of the end of the Roman Empire, refer to the destruction wrought by the European hordes upon the city of Rome **in the fifth century as being when this kingdom's rule ended. However, the historical record reveals that well before that event, during the fourth century, the Roman Emperor Constantine, who had taken control of the empire and unified it after a period of civil war, MOVED the capitol city from Rome to a new city that he had built and named after himself. He had taken over a small town called Byzantium on the western shore of the Bosphorus Strait, lavishly rebuilt it, fortified it and renamed it Constantinople and it remained the capitol of the Roman Empire for over a thousand years! In its early days Constantinople was known as Nova Roma: which means New Rome.**

After Constantine's death (337AD), there was a series of different arrangements, from delegated authorities for the eastern and western portions of the empire, to outright civil war and contested authority, but it was always the Roman Empire. This continuing situation gradually weakened the western portion of the empire, resulting in the city of Rome being plundered in 410AD and again in 455AD and eventually Rome was completely overrun by the Europeans around 476AD. This is the date that most scholars consider to be the end of the Roman Empire, but the truth is, at that time the Roman Empire continued to maintain its rule from its position in the east at Constantinople where its capitol had previously been established for about a hundred and fifty years. It just lost some territory.

At that time the western portion of the Roman Empire was divided up among the various European non Roman powers that had arisen: the Gauls, the Franks, the Germans, the Ostrogoths, the Visigoths, the Vandals, the Burgundians, the Basques, the Saxons, the Celts and others. These powers, with a little alteration to their borders, became the foundation of the present countries that make up modern Europe.

And some years later, around the sixth century, the city of Rome and many other territories were reconquered and remained under Roman control from Constantinople for over two hundred years. Again the European hordes took the city of Rome, but the Roman Empire was still ruled from Constantinople. The power that arose via the Catholic **Church from the city of Rome was incidental to the demise of the Roman Empire's hold** on the city of Rome and Italy. The European conquerors granted favour to the priesthood who later assumed secular power. They eventually became known as the Holy Roman Empire, however, their institution never was holy, and apart from speaking Latin they never were the Roman Empire. It was another monster altogether, even though it was based in Rome.

As mentioned above, the whole idea of a divided kingdom of east and west comes from **segments of the empire's history when it was plagued by civil wars and attempts to take** over the empire. There were also times of delegated authority and shared authority. The Church in the East and the Church in the West also became divided over the issue of icons. This and other theological disputes had its effect on the geopolitical scene. Another factor was that the West spoke mostly Latin whereas in the East, Greek was the predominant language of the population, although Latin was the language of the administration and the military until the seventh century. (In the Gospels, the sign **placed above Jesus' head**

on the cross was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin: Luke 23:38; John 19:20) However, the people still referred to themselves as Roman. For a thousand years (minus 23 years) the Roman Empire was ruled undivided from Constantinople after Rome and the western part of the empire was lost to the Europeans. The name Byzantine Empire was not assigned to the Roman Empire ruled from Constantinople until a French historian coined the term in the sixteenth century. English historical commentators followed suit some time afterward and the term has stuck, probably because the new rulers had by then assumed the name Holy Roman Empire. Thankfully, in this day and age of easy access to information we can overcome this confusion of the historical record.

Another piece of support offered for a divided Roman Empire is the fact that there are two legs in the statue, which people interpret to mean that the kingdom became divided into two. However, it is the previous kingdom, the Greek Empire that is described as the **belly and thighs. Besides the fact that God's Word places no significance to the two arms, the ten fingers or the two thighs, if we were to place any significance to these details we would have to assume that the Greek Empire became two rather than four and the Roman Empire began as two and remained two. It's too silly. No matter which way we look at it, the four kingdom theory does not fit.**

The final demise of the Roman/Byzantine Empire was not accomplished until 1453 when the Muslim hordes took over the city which they then renamed Islambol, (meaning full of Islam) and later Stamboul or Istanbul, as it is known today. The entire area remains under Islamic domination to this day in what we now call Turkey which was previously known as the Ottoman Empire which had laid claim to the Islamic Caliphate.

The Muslim Empire, (yes, Islam is more than a religion, it's a theocratic political system) which arose in the area of the ancient Babylonian Empire during the seventh century, had at that time taken control of what was left of Babylon, they had taken possession of Jerusalem and finally the Roman capitol at Constantinople, thus qualifying this kingdom **to be recognised as the fifth kingdom in the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream** given to us by the prophet Daniel. Here we find that history and prophecy have kissed.

If we were to accept the four kingdom interpretation of Daniel Chapter 2, we would be faced with the reality of a false prophecy, for history clearly does not bear witness to such a four kingdom scenario. Five kingdoms have reigned in the Middle East and the fifth kingdom is still with us to this day and will be until the return of Christ. Just go and visit the Middle East and you will find, that apart from the nation of Israel, the entire area is **dominated by Islam. It certainly isn't ruled by Rome. This kingdom is different from all** the other kingdoms that have gone before it, but we will expand more on that later.

In summary: Daniel Chapter 2 serves as a Biblical Timeline of the procession of the kingdoms of the Gentiles that were to rule in the Middle East from the time of King Nebuchadnezzar through to the end of the age. Babylon was conquered by the combined empire of the Medes and the Persians. Next came Alexander the Great who conquered them and established the realm of the Greeks. After his death, the Greek Empire was divided into four among his generals and Greek dominance continued until the rise of the Romans. It was only a few years before the birth of Jesus that the Romans destroyed the

final remnant of the Greek Empire which was at that time still ruling in Egypt. Roman dominance over the area of Babylon was accomplished around 116AD under Emperor Trajan, although it was subject to several wars over the following centuries with the expansion and contraction of the Parthian Empire (Modern day Iran). Roman control of Babylonia finally ceased altogether around 640AD when the Muslim Empire began and it has remained under Muslim control ever since. It is unclear whether the city itself was finally utterly destroyed by Romans, Parthians or Muslims. The Muslim Empire expanded rapidly and within a short period of time after taking Babylonia they had also taken over Jerusalem. The Roman Empire, ruled from Constantinople, also went through times of expansion and contraction over the centuries and eventually succumbed to Muslim domination in 1453 when Constantinople was finally conquered. At that time, the Muslim Empire was known as the Ottoman Empire which was the centre of the Islamic Caliphate. Thus we have the history which fits the prophecy.

From the Scriptures:

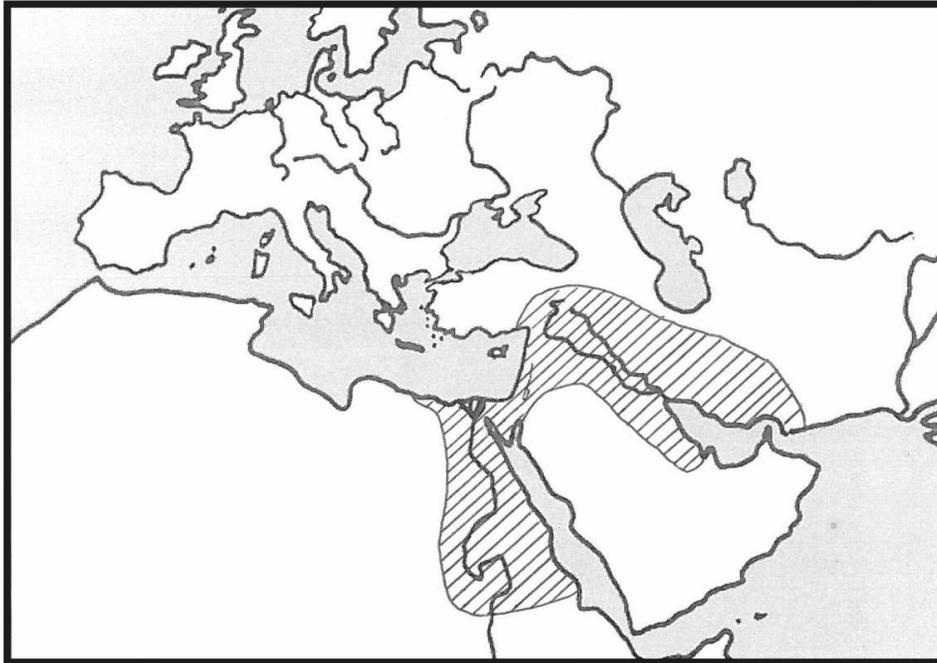
Daniel describes a statue with five parts, each part with a different composition; 1. The head of gold; 2. The chest and arms of silver; 3. The belly and thighs of brass; 4. The legs of iron; 5. The feet and toes of iron and clay.

History combined with Scripture:

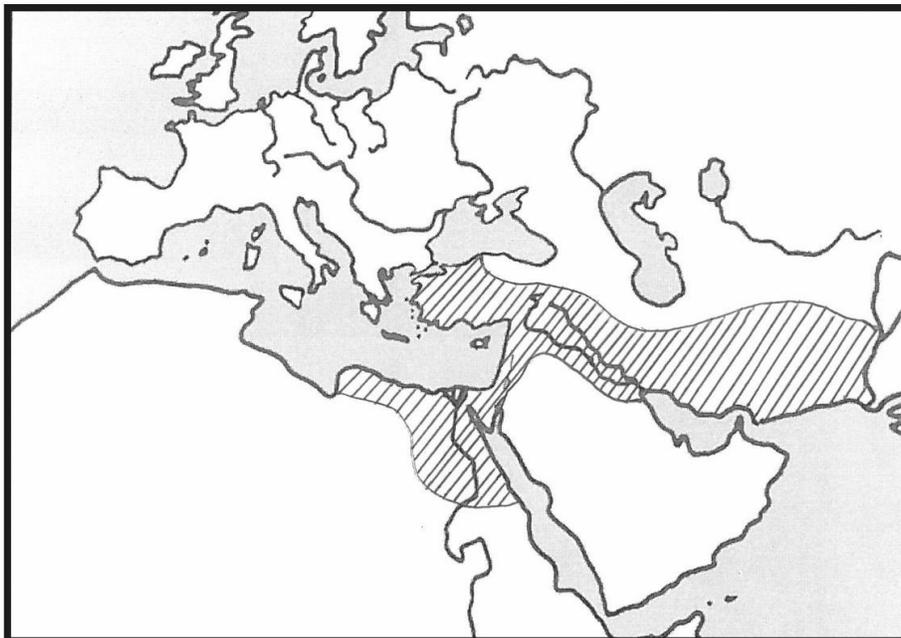
1 The head was Babylon; 2 The chest and arms was the Medes and the Persians; 3 The belly and thighs was Greece; 4 The legs was Rome; 5 The feet and toes is the Islamic Empire.

The fifth kingdom is here now and although it has had times of expansion and contraction over the centuries, it still dominates the Middle East and with the money it now gets from the sale of oil, it is **financing its infiltration of the nations at a rapid pace. I don't know if I will see it manifest its full dominion with its ten kings in my time. Somehow I think we've** still got too many prophecies to be fulfilled. That final scenario, which will come in its own time, we will read of in our study of Daniel Chapter 7 in the following chapter. In the next few pages I have presented some maps of the Middle East and Europe that illustrate the areas dominated by the various empires we have just been studying.

Babylonian Empire

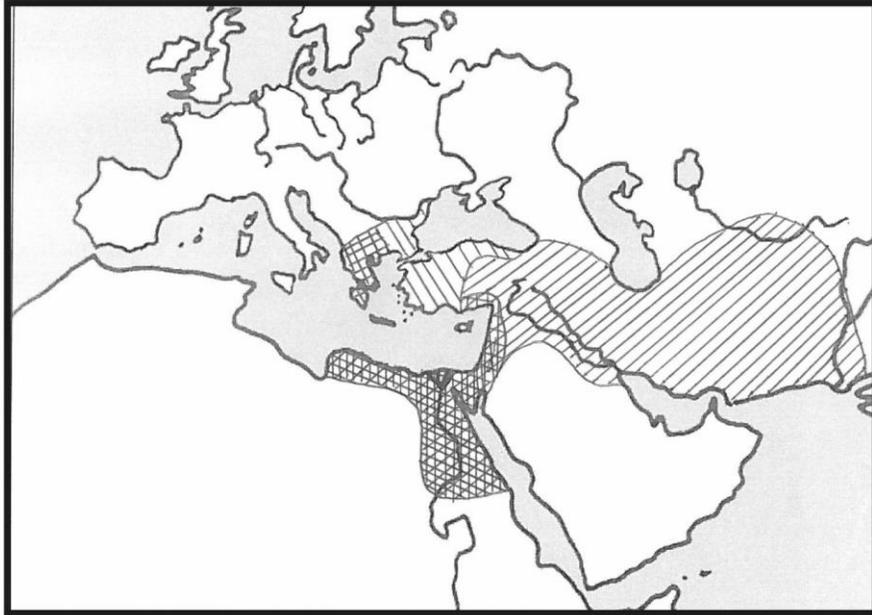


Medes and Persian Empire

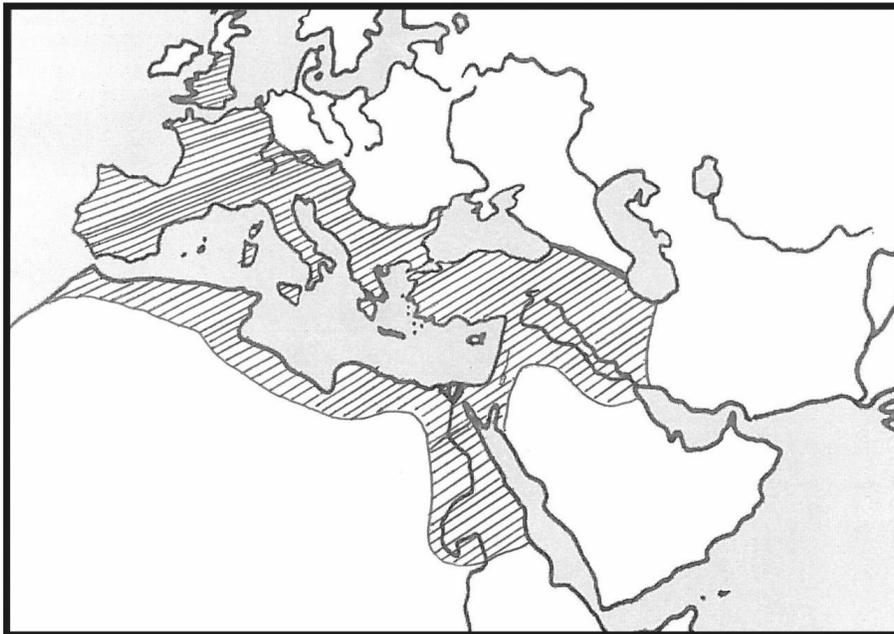


Greek Empire

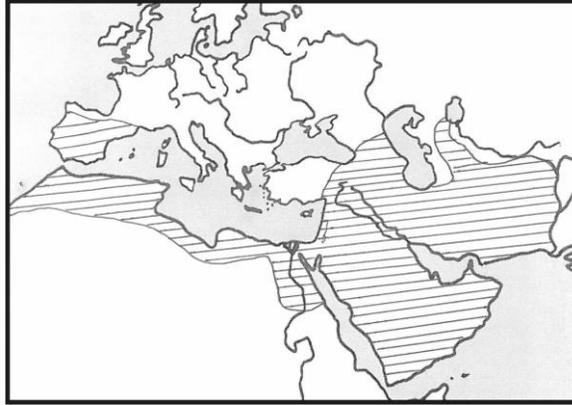
Showing the four divisions



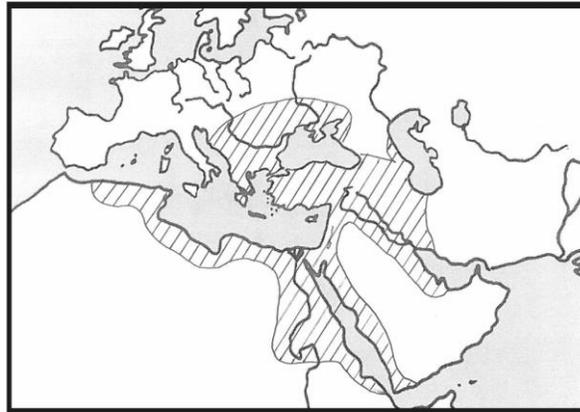
Roman Empire



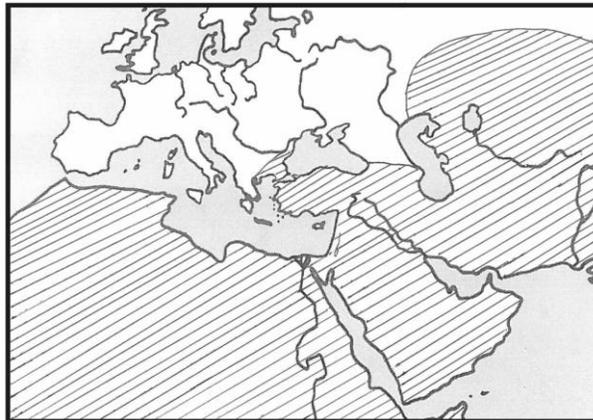
Islamic Empire 750AD



Islamic Empire 1683AD



Islamic Majority Countries 2012



Please Note: All these maps are hand drawn approximations.